



FOUNDATIONS:

A Study in the

Ethics and Economics of the
Co-operative Movement.

PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF THE

CO-OPERATIVE CONGRESS

HELD AT GLOUCESTER
IN APRIL, 1879.

Edited by

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AND ' t ^

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Preface to Revised Edition.

THE power for good of any movement must necessarily be determined by its basic principles, but its progress depends upon the power of appeal in these principles to attract to its service men of the highest moral and intellectual type. The co-operative movement has attracted many such men, and to them owes its real progress. Amongst those who have served it in the past there stands out, however, two pre-eminent figures. The original Manual for Co-operators was the joint production of two men who incontestably head the list of co-operative immortals. Many of us have yet to realise the debt we owe to Neale and Hughes. They were more than teachers; they were prophets, and in this movement the seer is indispensable.

In the Preface the figures have been brought up to date, as has also the Constitution of the Central Board.

Those portions, too, of the Manual dealing with the

practice of co-operation were written for the purpose of meeting the needs of co-operation as expressed at the moment. With the passing of time and the developments which have taken place the needs then expressed have been outgrown, and therefore in the section dealing with the " Practice of Co-operation " some chapters have been omitted and others modified. At the same time the Publications Committee of the Co-operative Union realised that there was much in it that was permanent and ought to be preserved; that there are parts of it which, however great the progress of the movement in the coming

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years may be, will never be outgrown, and which forms a body of teaching we cannot afford to lose. Nowhere else in the literature of the movement are its problems approached from the same standpoint; nowhere has a deeper note been struck, or a higher appeal been made. It is fitting, too, that this volume — one only of a series to be published — should come first, for in it the serious student will find revealed the rock on which the structure of the movement should be reared, and a response to its teaching will supply the most effective antidote to the gross materialism which in later years has eaten like a canker into the movement, obscuring its vision and retarding its progress.

A. STODDART.

W. CLAYTON.

August, 1915.

Thomas Hughes, Q.C.

Edward Vansittart Neale.

Preface to First Edition.

IT has seemed desirable to explain to those who are responsible for this Manual, by way of preface, whence it comes, whom it represents, and why it is put forth.

Whence it came. — The present proposal came from the Southern Section of the Central Co-operative Union, who, in December, 1878, resolved that it was desirable that a Manual should be prepared, and that an outline should, in the first instance, be submitted for their approval. This was done on February 19th, 1879, when the following outline was approved, and referred to the United Board: —

Introductory — Historical Sketch of Co-operation.

Part I — The Moral Basis of Co-operation, and its Relations to —

- (a) Religious Faith.
- (b) Other Philanthropic Movements.
- (c) Socialism, Communism, and other Politico-Social Movements.

Part II. —The Economical Basis of Co-operation, and its Relations to —

- (a) Competition.
- (b) Current Economic Theories.
- (c) The State.

Part III. —The Practice of Co-operation —

- (a) In Distribution.
- (b) In Production,
- (c) In Social Life.

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Adoption by Central Board. —At the annual meeting of the Central Board, held at Gloucester on April 12th, 1879, the above outline was laid before the members from all the sections, and adopted by them; and it was resolved to recommend it to the Congress then about to be held, in order that, if approved, the necessary authority should be given for its preparation and publication.

Sanction by Congress. —Accordingly, at the Congress held at Gloucester in the month of April, 1879, the proposal was brought before the general meeting of the representatives of the societies in union, and was unanimously approved, and the duty of preparing and editing the Manual in conformity with the approved outlines was, in the first instance, entrusted to myself, with the General Secretary, Mr. E. V. Neale. On Mr. Neale's suggestion, the United Board resolved, on December 5th, 1879: "That each Section of the Board be requested to appoint one, to act as a committee with the Editors to revise the work." It is under this authority and supervision, therefore, that this Manual is now published.

It will thus be clear to all readers acquainted with the constitution of the Co-operative Union that every precaution has been taken to ascertain and carry out the wishes of the societies who are members of it. To them the words Southern Section, United Board, and Congress will be familiar; but, as it is hoped that this Manual may reach many persons not in any way connected with the Union, and having no knowledge of its history or constitution, it may be well here to give some short details on these points.

Origin and Constitution of the Co-operative Union. —The Union, then, is composed of societies registered under the Industrial Societies Acts, the first of which (the 15 and 16 Vict., c. 31) was passed on June 30th,

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1852. (At that time there were already upwards of forty societies in existence, some of which were represented by a Central Board sitting in London — of which, perhaps, the present Union and Board may claim to be the legitimate successors; but, for present purposes, the Act by which such industrial combinations were first legalised may be taken as a starting point.)

It is needless to give in any detail the history of the movement in the first years after the passing of the Act which legalised industrial societies. They grew and thrived apace under its protection, but soon began to understand from their own individual experience that some union between them was necessary, if the full benefit of the Act was to be realised. What each society had

done for its individual members, a central organisation to which all might belong might do for the societies as a body. The chance of injurious rivalry between them might thus be avoided, commercial advantages might be obtained, and the sound principles and high tone which characterised the early associations might be preserved and extended to the whole body.

For some years, however, this desire for union took no definite shape, beyond conferences of delegates from the Lancashire and Yorkshire societies, which were held from time to time —generally on Good Friday in each year. At length the time for a practical effort seemed to have come; and at the conference of 1863 —after the 25 and 26 Vict., 1861-2, had given to the societies a corporate existence, and allowed one society to hold shares in another in its registered name —it was resolved to establish a centre of supply, of which every society in its corporate capacity might become a member. Accordingly, in the autumn of that year* the Wholesale Society of Manchester was founded and commenced business. The necessary capital

* The first half year's accounts are dated April, 1864.

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was subscribed by fifty societies, numbering in the whole 17,545 individual members.

The experiment was at once successful. The first balance sheet showed average weekly sales of ^{^^}800. Its progress up to the close of 1880 may be gathered from the fact that in the September quarter for that year the average weekly sales were £70,844. In the March of that year 591 societies, with 333,324 members, held shares in the Wholesale Society, which had supplied goods during the quarter to 757 societies and done a business amounting in 1879 to £2,929,456. Branches have been established in London and Newcastle, and purchasing agencies in Ireland, France, the United States, and several of the British Colonies.

But we must return to an earlier period —to 1868, when the members of societies which formed the Wholesale numbered in the last quarter 74,494, and its sales for the year amounted to £381,462 only, in place of the large numbers quoted above. Still, even then, those who had watched the growth of the movement from the first felt that the time had arrived to stimulate the desire of union for other purposes than the utilisation of joint capital for the purchase of goods in the best market on the most favourable terms. The initial steps for this object, which are described in the preface to the Report of the Congress for 1869, were taken in London, principally through the exertions of an indefatigable veteran of co-operation, now unhappily lost to us, the late Mr. William Pare. Communications were opened with the Conference Committee of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operative Societies, and, with their approval and support, a Congress was held in the Theatre of the Society of Arts, on May 31st and the three following days of 1869, which was attended by sixty-two delegates from fifty-seven societies or companies, twenty-three in London or its immediate neighbourhood,

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aid a considerable number of visitors. It led to the appointment of a committee, which afterwards combined with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Committee; and out of this combination arose, in 1873, by resolutions of a Congress held in Newcastle-on-Tyne, the organisation of

the present Co-operative Union.

The Union at the end of 1914 included societies which subscribed to the funds of the Union for that year for carrying on its work the sum of £15,242.

It is governed by a Congress, held annually, composed of delegates elected by subscribing societies, and a Central Board of seventy persons. The area covered by the operations of the Union in Great Britain and Ireland

is divided into eight sections, as under: —

No. of Societies. No of Members.
Ireland (excluding Dai ry -, Agricultural , Speci al ,

&c.) 79 •••• • 22,518

M idland 215 ... 409,650

Northern 141 ... 352,149

North-Western 465 ... 1,217,325

Scottish 279 ... 467,270

Southern 201 ... 498,962

South-Western 79 ... 114,672

Western 93 ... 105,594

This Central Board meets twice a year — immediately before Congress, when it accepts responsibility for the report to be submitted, and afterwards* to arrange for carrying out the instructions of Congress.

Selected from this Central Board, and approximately in proportion to its total representation, is a United Board which meets at least four times a year and is really the executive authority of the movement.

Each section is divided into districts, and in each of which there is an Executive which organises local conferences, carries on propaganda work, and brings before the Sectional Board matters that affect them as a

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district. The Sectional Boards meet monthly, and the Conference Associations quarterly. The secretary to the United Board is also general secretary of the Union, and is in regular correspondence with the secretaries of the various sections who in their turn are in close touch with the various associations. The Union is thus, as it were, in permanent session, always ready to give advice and take action wherever and whenever it may be necessary or desirable. The Union is also in close touch with the co-operative societies in other countries through the International Co-operative Alliance, an organisation supported by societies from other twenty^ countries. International Congresses are held every three years, so that the co-operative movement in all lands is closely related and working together for the establishment of co-operative principles and practices in every land.

Now from this Union the following Manual comes. Dealing as it does with principles affecting the deepest sentiments of human nature, and applying them as it endeavours to do, with unflinching logic to the matters where men's interests are directly concerned, it cannot be expected either that the foundation for co-operati\`e

action laid in it should be universally accepted by all members of the Union, or that all should agree in the practical conclusions built on this foundation. But to lay a solid foundation for co-operative action and raise upon it, in idea, the structural development of a social system whose quiet but all-transforming growth may recall the beautiful lines applied by Bishop Heber to the Temple of Jerusalem —

No axe was heard, no ponderous hammers rung —
Like some tall palm the graceful fabric sprung,

this was the difficult duty imposed upon my colleague and myself by the Congress which asked us to undertake the preparation of a Manual for Co-operators on the lines

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stated above. We should have been false to this duty if we had laid any "other foundation" than the one on which alone we believe human progress can firmly rest; or if, on that foundation, we had presented a commercial instead of a social edifice, as the outcome of co-operative work.

If the Congress had desired to see co-operation referred to some utilitarian basis, or the hopes of human progress identified with the grinding down of labour beneath the Juggernaut of cheapness, it should have laid down a different programme, and must have entrusted the preparation of the Manual to other hands than ours.

It does not follow, nor does either of us ask, that the Congress, in publishing this Manual as edited by us, should attempt to clothe it with an authority to which it does not lay claim. The Manual is written throughout in the style the least assuming possible, namely, in the singular number, as if there had been one editor only instead of two; and it never appeals to any authority but that of the facts adduced and the reasonings stated. It makes no attempt to pledge any member of the Union to any propositions beyond those laid down in the Rules and Orders as the basis of the Union. That it will help to spread our convictions of the true foundation and proper development of co-operation, we, being ourselves convinced that the foundation is solid and the development legitimate, both hope and expect. But we do not ask the Congress to pass any other resolution about it than that it shall be published as we have edited it. We desire no acquiescence either in our premises or our conclusions, but one resting on the conviction that the premises are true and the conclusions logical.

What has just been said will, I trust, suffice to remove the misapprehensions which I find to have been entertained in some quarters that, in putting forth this Manual,

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Mr. Neale and I seek to narrow the basis of the Co-operative Union to a creed of our own. There is another and more important matter on which it seems advisable to say a few words, in order to remove, if possible, once for all, misapprehensions concerning the objects and principles of the Union itself.

These misapprehensions are at present twofold. On the one hand, this Union is supposed to be the representative in England of the movement known by different

names^by the generic title of Socialism. On the other, it is looked upon as a mere effort of the working class to take the trade of the country into their own hands and carry it on for their own benefit on the old lines. Each of these views has truth in it, but 3-et is not true, as it is the object of these introductory remarks to show as shortly as possible.

First, then, what is the moving power which inspires and gives its ominous significance to the Socialism of the Continent and this country? It is undoubtedly the hopelessness of the surroundings of life for the vast majority of the people under the present organisation of society in all European States. That organisation seems to these majorities to have been expressly framed in the interests of the few who possess wealth and power, against the many who have neither. And so far from there being any prospect of better things while that organisation is left standing, it would seem as though the great material changes wrought by the conquest of steam electricity, and other natural forces, while enormously increasing the wealth at the command of mankind, have only placed that wealth and the power and enjoyment that go with it more absolutely under the control of the few. So long as the strong are allowed to grow stronger, the rich richer, at the cost of the weak and the poor, this state of things will continue; or rather the conditions of

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life will constantly become more and more intolerable. Therefore, they say, it must be swept away. Society must be reorganised in the interest and with a view to the well-being and well-doing of the many. To this end the State, which has hitherto been their oppressor, must be made their servant, and, as a first and necessary step, must become the owner and distributor of the national wealth, both real and personal.

This, in a few words, is the contention of the people, waking up as they are all over Europe to a consciousness at once of their own misery and of their own power. It is formulated most scientifically, as might be expected, in the State Communism of Germany, as advocated by Ferdinand Lassalle, and pushed to more extreme issues by Karl Marx and his followers. It involves confiscation of the possessions of the rich by the State, and the forcible repression of one great class of the community — probably the strongest, as would be proved in the throes of the revolution by which alone such a change could be brought about.

How far, then, is our English Co-operative Union in sympathy with this vast and threatening continental movement, which no doubt would gladly claim us as fellow-workers, and with which many amongst ourselves who do not look below the surface have been ready to identify us?

It must be frankly admitted that the same motive power has been at work here in England as in Russia and Germany. It is the hopelessness of their condition under the present social and commercial system of England which has led to the banding together of our members in this Co-operative Union. They see, as clearly as the followers of Lassalle or of Karl Marx, that under that system they have no more chance in the future than in the past or present of raising the condition of themselves

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or their children ; that the mainsprings of commerce and manufactures, of producing, buying, and selling^ —in fact, that all the most potent material factors of modern life are here also getting into fewer and fewer governing hands; that under this system the strong are year by year becoming stronger, the rich richer, at the cost of the weak and poor; and they desire as ardently as any German Socialist or Russian Nihilist that this state of things should cease.

Again, they hold as firmly as any continental Socialist the belief that this can only be brought about by association amongst the poor and weak, that the wider and deeper such association can be made, the more firmly it can take hold, not of this or that isolated portion, but of their whole lives, the sooner will the desired change be possible. Therefore they look forward to, and desire to promote in all ways, the organisation of labour as ardently as Fourier or Louis Blanc. Their successes hitherto, as well as their failures, have only confirmed them in this faith, the former being clearly due to adherence to, the latter to departures from the true principles of association, as they understand them

And they have done their best to leave no doubt upon the question what these principles, as they understand them are. They are set forth as the definition of objects on p. 25 of the Report of the Congress held in London, in an address to it by myself. The acceptance of them by the Congress is recorded on p. 41 ; and they are stated as the objects of the Union in the first of its Rules and Orders, to which every member assents by joining it. They are as follows: —

" This Union is formed to promote the practice of truthfulness, justice, and economy in production and exchange.

"i. By the abohtion of all false dealing, either [a] direct, by representing any article produced or sold to be other than what it is known to the producer or vendor to be, or {b) indirect, by

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concealing from the purchaser any fact known to the vendor, material to be knowTi by the purchaser, to enable him to judge of the value of the article purchased:

" 2. By conciliating the conflicting interests of the capitalist, the worker, and the purchaser, through an equitable division amongst them of the fund commonly known as profit:

"3. By preventing the waste of labour now caused by unregulated competition."

They have been summarised by the General Secretary in the paper read by him with general approval, at the Congress held at Newcastle in this year as twofold.

1. Moral —to promote truth, just dealing, and equity.

2. Economical —to prevent waste in production and exchange. And they are in truth only an application of the more comprehensive summary of principles laid down by the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations, of which the late Rev. F. D. Maurice was president, namely: —

1. That human society is a brotherhood, not a collection of warring atoms:

2. That true workers should be fellow-workers, not rivals :

3. That a principle of justice and not of selfishness should regulate exchanges.

It would be difficult, probably, to find anyone who would have more deeply sympathised with the Socialists of the Continent in the ideal of a higher social state after which they aspire, or more decidedly rejected the means by which they seek to attain it, than the late Mr. Maurice. I claim for English co-operators generally that they share both these sentiments.

The aim of our English Co-operative Union is, like that of continental Socialism to change fundamentally the present social and commercial system. Its instrument for this purpose, as well as theirs, is association. Here,

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however, the likeness ends. Our co-operators, thanks to their English training, do not ask the State to do anything for them beyond giving them a fair field, and standing aside while they do their own work in it in their own way. They want no State aid—they would be jealous of it if proffered. They do not ask that the State shall assert its right, and reclaim all land and other national wealth for the benefit of all; they want no other man's property, but only that they shall not be hindered in creating new wealth for themselves.

In this lies the broad distinction, and here the ways branch off. One type of Socialist would use association for converting the State into the sole national landowner, capitalist, and employer of labour. The English Co-operative Union would use it to control and bring into obedience to the highest moral law the processes of production and distribution of material things. The difference—and it is fundamental and irreconcilable—lies in the uses to which the same instrument—association—is to be put. It would be as fair to identify those who blow up a house full of people with those who blow up a rock which impedes traffic because both use gunpowder, as to identify the English co-operator with the State Socialist because they all use association. The fact is that co-operation, as understood and practised by the Union, is the surest protection for England from those dangers to society and property which the democratic wave is threatening to bring on many other nations.

The second misunderstanding above referred to is, however, wider of the mark than that which would identify the Co-operative Union with State Socialism and under present circumstances more plausible and more dangerous. It need not be concealed or denied that perilous times for co-operation are at hand. The commercial success which has resulted from the methods of

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trading always in use amongst our united societies has gained them a host of imitators, who seem to think that some charm lies in the word "co-operative," and that the whole of their success was due to combining to purchase and enforcing ready-money payments for all goods delivered.

In all other respects these bastard associations, founded for the most part by gambling traders, follow in the old ruts. Their first objects are profit and cheapness, and they compete with each other as recklessly as any rival tradesmen. The scandalous failures which have already begun, and which will inevitably multiply, involving, it

is to be feared, much loss and misery to a number of innocent persons, will soon bring the name of co-operation into discredit, and meantime may have a malignant influence on the development of a movement which, widely as it has spread, and valuable as has been its influence, is still only in its infancy.

It is, then, the main object of the present publication to make clear to all whom it may concern that co-operation, as understood and practised by this Union, though it takes hold, in the first instance, of buying and selling, as that department in human affairs which lies nearest to hand and most needs a new and reforming spirit, has aims outside and above trade. Even in this trading department it comes into direct conflict with prevailing practice and theory, substituting "fair exchange" for "profit" and "fair payment" for "cheapness." These, it asserts, are attainable by well-ordered fellowship in work, but have never been attained, and are proving themselves every day more unattainable, by the method of unrestricted competition.

But while it seeks in the first instance to make the material business of men's lives — production, buying, and selling — wholesome and honest, it does not stop here.

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Its object is to work out in practice the true relations between man and man, which can only be done by frank acknowledgment of the ground upon which human society is based — that we must be fellow-workers and not rivals, brethren of one family, to whom indeed the great inheritance of this earth has been given, but only on the condition that it shall be used and enjoyed in the spirit and according to the will of Him who created it.

In the effort to carry out these principles the Union has found itself face to face with the deepest problems of human life, those which are generally known, in fact, as religious. Our societies have come to acknowledge that the mere fact of membership in a retail store involves more than paying ready money, attending once a quarter, and drawing dividends. As the years pass they find themselves constantly brought into new and more intimate relations with their fellow-members, in their own association and in the Union. In the primary sense of the word, *id quod religat*, "that which binds together," they have already found that co-operation has been a religion to them. It is well for the nation that it has been so, for the industrial history of England during the past few years has made it clear enough that unless trade can be mastered and informed with a new spirit it will destroy the national life; and no spirit is strong enough to master and reform it except the religious spirit in the highest sense, which is the spirit of Christianity.

But religion is not only that which binds men together, but that which binds man to what is above him to that which he looks up to and worships. It must not therefore be supposed from anything which has been said, either here or in this Manual, that the compilers, in claiming for co-operation a distinctly religious side, suppose that any co-operative union can be a substitute for the Church of Christ, or co-operative action for that conscious inward

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union between men and their Maker, which is religion at its highest power.

There is truth, no doubt, in the saying, "Iahorare est orare," but only potential truth. It should be written, not "est," but "potest esse."* What we do claim then, is, that so far as outward things go—for us men, in contact with the visible things of this world, which we are meant to master, to use, to enjoy—this method of fellow-work is the right, and just, and true, and therefore the religious method, and the only one which will bind us to our fellow-men, and to the Father of men, and not divide us from one another and from Him

What we do say, further, is, that this method of dealing with visible things is only possible, in the long run, for men who keep before their minds the ideal of righteousness, truthfulness, and brotherly love in the daily round of their working lives—who, in other words, keep before themselves the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth as the practical goal of all their efforts.

It has been, no doubt, ably maintained of late, that the worship of humanity is enough of itself to keep alive this ideal of righteousness, truthfulness, and brotherly love, and to satisfy men's spirits in their devotion to the service of mankind. The service of humanity, or, we prefer to say, of our brethren, is involved in co-operation; and we gladly admit that "he who serves men most" is the best co-operator and member of our Union. We prefer, however, to read something more into the formula, in order to make it hold at all times, and under all circumstances. We would read it, "he serves God best who serves man most." For the witness of all times—and of none more than our own time—the experience of all men's hearts and consciences, and of none more than our own hearts and consciences—

* Not "is," but "may be."

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proves that he who would not get weary of serving his brethren, whom he has seen, must become aware within himself of a spirit which he cannot see but may feel—a spirit higher than his own spirit—higher than the spirits of all other men—yet working in those spirits, and with which he and they must become one before they can find and do their true work, or enter into their true rest.

THOS. HUGHES.

Part I.

THE MORAL BASIS OF
CO-OPERATION.

FOR A FULL TABLE OF CONTENTS,

By means of which the course of the argument may be followed in its main outlines, see the end.

FOUNDATIONS :

A Study in the Ethics and Economics
of the Co-operative Movement.

PART I.
Chapter I.

The Relation of Co-operation to Religious Faith.

TO trace the connection between co-operation and religion may seem to many persons at the present day injurious rather than beneficial to it, since they look on co-operation as a principle of union, while religion, notwithstanding the "binding" character implied in its name, they have, unhappily, been used to think of mainly as a cause of division. Nevertheless to point out this connection is a duty imposed on the editors of this Manual by the programme adopted at the Congress of Gloucester; and the consideration of what is required in such a work as that committed to them will, I think, show that the Congress was right in making this requirement.

Every important scheme of social reform hitherto proposed has been founded on some theory about the nature of man, his place in the universe, and destiny, which are precisely the subject-matters of religion. To confine ourselves to the two most noted modern instances: —Robert Owen

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founded his system on a conception of the influence of circumstances in forming character, which was afterwards formally adopted as a creed by the body formed by him called the Society of Rational Religionists. Again, Charles Fourier laid down as the basis of his system a theory of congenital impulses, named by him "passions," implanted in man by his Maker, which would find their satisfaction in his proposed scheme of association, and ensure its success and the general well-being, by making labour universally attractive. Both these great reformers founded their systems on what was practically a new religion, whence the new order of society contemplated by them should arise. Co-operation, if it would be regarded as a reasonable scheme of social reform must follow the like course, only in the manner peculiar to itself, that is, by showing that what is new in its proposals grows naturally out of what is old.

It has been the special characteristic of co-operation to start from the present, and look to the future which it anticipates as a state to be slowly evolved out of the actual, by transforming without rudely destroying it. This process co-operators have presented as the only safe road to permanent progress. If the conception is conformable to the true nature of things, it ought to hold good in regard to religion, of which, as has been said, it is the special function to deal with the fundamental relations subsisting between man and the universal power whereby he is sustained. That is, we ought to find in the religious faiths subsisting among men some one at least, and that not an insignificant, unimportant faith, which will supply, in conceptions proper to itself, a solid basis for the modes of action through which we think that co-operation may effect the social reforms sought for by its means. Now what thus ought to be I shall endeavour to show is the fact —that the most living, influential religious faith

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existing at the present time —the Christian religion —in the conception which formed its historical foundation, and is common to every body of any numerical importance professing to belong to it, does supply such a basis — and that the history of this faith has brought to the fore

that application of this conception which makes it serve as a basis for social reform pointing it out as the true outcome of the religion.

It is notorious that for many ages the great and highest aim of Christianity was considered to be the withdrawing of men, so far as was consistent with their human existence, from all active part in the business or pleasures of earthly life, in order to fix their attention on an inner life of prayer, praise, and meditation, with acts of charity, as the fitting preparation for an unending future existence to follow this life. But the sixteenth century after the birth of Christ brought with it a great modification of these ideas, which, beginning among the nations professing a reformed Christianity, has gradually extended its influence over those who continued to adhere to the old faith. The opinion grew up that a life of active industry, accompanied by the natural pleasures of family union, if it be pervaded by the spirit of love to man, is more conformable to the will of God than a life withdrawn from such employments and pleasures, though spent in a round of prayer, praise, and meditation, diversified by acts of benevolence.

Modern society, both in Europe and America, may be said to have been built on this idea, which has continually gained ground, through the enormous development of industry in recent times, strengthened by the vast increase of scientific knowledge, till it threatens to expel as a foolish superstition the mediæval idea that the true object of individual life is to sink its individuality in union with the Divine Being.

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Yet modern society itself bears witness to the imperfection of its own ideal. Against this outburst of individualism the great and rapid growth in the present century of socialistic systems, carried, at least in theory, to the extent of sinking individual possession in common property, is a protest, full of significance to those who would trace in the involved course of human affairs the footsteps of a Divine guidance. The subject will be more fully considered in a subsequent chapter. But I would remark here, that this rebuke to the excess of individualism by the common feeling which leads to these social tendencies, has its deep root in the conviction that man finds his true well-being in devotion to a being higher than his own, which pervaded the religious thought of the Middle Ages, and grew up under the shelter of a vast organised system the precursor, I trust, of another organisation destined to bear, in these later days, for the benefit of mankind, fruits such as those unquiet days could not have produced.

The ideas which I shall endeavour to trace to their logical issue in social institutions are, then, not an artificial growth forced on Christianity, but a natural outcome, whose connection with it is shown by a long historical development. The Church of the Middle Ages manifested herself as a powerful spiritual influence for delivering man from the burden of his own selfishness in a way which, if it did not exhaust the Divine action, but fell short of what we hope to achieve, is yet to us an example of the principle on which institutions for the common good should be founded, and an encouragement in the difficult attempt to introduce them. She has been a pioneer, clearing away obstacles, cutting out paths, throwing bridges over rivers, and thus preparing the way for the advance of the main body, which may occupy the lands and utilise them for the general good.

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This preliminary work the Catholic organization of the Middle Ages has done for us. It has taught us the enormous power possessed by voluntary associative effort, when concentrated in institutions adapted to give effect to it. It has shown us, in its great monastic orders, that large bodies of men can be held together, without any external compulsion, to live in common a life from which the ordinary motive of individual interest is excluded, and its place is supplied by motives entirely independent of this individual interest, resting upon hopes which look for their fulfilment to a future discerned only by the eye of faith. It has shown us that these remarkable results have been attained, not only in some particular ages, under some peculiar conditions of race, or climate, or locality, but in all parts of the earth, among every variety of race or national character, and for a long succession of generations, each ready to take up and carry forward the work that its precursors had commenced or continued; with no apparent exhaustion in the efficiency of this voluntary power, so long as the arbitrary interference of the State did not oppose it. It has been left for Christianity in our age to apply to ordinary human life — which Protestants have declared to be, in their opinion, more truly divine than the monastic life — that principle of organised combination for realising a life consistent with the objects accepted by us as its true end, which our Catholic ancestors systematically and successfully applied to establish the monastic or ascetic form of life, believed by them to be the most truly conformable to the Divine will.

We need not bid for cloistered cell

Our neighbour and the world farewell ;

The common round, the daily task

Will furnish all we ought to ask :

Room to deny ourselves — a road

To bring us daily nearer God ;

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says, in well-known words, a poet of the Church of England. He expresses the feeling common among the Protestant religious communities — a sentiment which I regard as profoundly true, but requiring to be qualified by the proposition that, in order to keep alive among men generally the practice of this divine principle of self-denial, it is indispensable that the current of their lives should not continually carry them in the opposite direction. In other words, there are wanted institutions adapted to do for religious principle in its application to daily life what churches have done for this principle in its application to the act of worship, and monastic institutions did for it in its application to that ascetic life, which formed the ideal of perfection for the Middle Ages, and still continues to do, in some measure, for the large body who adhere either to the Greek or the Roman communion.

The experience of the centuries which have passed since the Reformation furnishes what, to me at least, appears to be conclusive evidence that — however completely the liberty of individual action may be secured in any community, however generally the duty of everyone to " love his neighbour as himself " and " do unto others as he would be done by " may be admitted by the mem-

bers of that community as indisputable, and however vast the increase of material advantages in that community may be, this liberty will not produce among the mass of the population a state corresponding to the ideal set before us by the Lord's Prayer, which ought certainly to be the Christian's ideal, that "God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven." Or, if the contrary be affirmed, I can say only that the God whose will is supposed to be realised by such a social state as this individual struggle for existence produces, can be no better than the "Unconscious Being" of Hartman; and the sooner mankind can arrive at the solution of the problem of

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existence proposed by that high priest of pessimism and by a concentrated effort of their united wills, put an end at once to the fruit of individual life and its unconscious root, the better.

But not so, I hope, have we learned the lesson of Calvary. Not this philosophy of despair are we, I trust, disposed to accept as the outcome of the unnumbered ages since the patient earth began her unwearied revolutions round the sun, setting us, according to Goethe's instructive epigram an example of the spirit in which we should possess our souls, while she inaugurated that long development of ascending forms of being recorded in the leaves of the "Stone Book."* Individual liberty is a precious possession—a late gift of Time to mankind; who, indeed, as yet, are far from having generally attained it, and when they have attained it, are for the most part very far from knowing how to make a good use of it—if by a good use we mean such a use as is consistent with that example which all Christians profess to set before themselves as showing the spirit by which human life should be guided. How, then, are we to make a better use of this great gift, of the power which, in Britain and many other countries that we call civilised, men now possess, to wield in entire security of person and property a command over natural forces unexampled in any former age, and yet increasing with every decade so rapidly that, but for old age and death, we might imagine ourselves about to be transformed into beings of some higher species than mankind? I reply—by inspiring the body of science with the spirit of religion; by using this material liberty as a means of lifting ourselves into the spiritual liberty

* If e'er I'm impatient, I call to mind
How patient the old Earth I find;
Who turns on her axis every day,
And twirls round the sun her yearly way.
Why am I here, but the like to do?
Dear Lady Mæra, I follow you. —Free translation.

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of the "sons of God"; by substituting the genuine freedom of working together for the spurious freedom of working against each other; and showing that man is as competent to construct instruments of general well-being as he has unhappily proved himself competent to construct those fearful instruments of destruction—the ironclad fleets, the gigantic armies, the hundred-ton guns, and weapons of precision, of modern warfare.

The claim that I make for co-operative industry and associated life, to be the true outcome of the Christian religion, is not a claim antagonistic to, or condemnatory of, or a substitution for, any previous phase of that religion. It is simply a further development for which I

think the time is now ripe; a new manifestation of the counsels of God for the redemption of man out of the slavery of the flesh to the freedom of the spirit; no more opposed to what has gone before it than the fruit is to the flower, or the flower to the leaf, or than primitive Christianity was in itself opposed to the Judaism out of which it sprung. It is not a new form of worship, or a new phase of theological teaching, but a new application of the spirit which has uttered itself in worship and produced systems of theology. It is the application of this spirit to solve the great problems of practical life; how to fill up the gap between rich and poor; how to destroy the antagonism between capitalist and worker; how to make the application of science to industry ease the toil of the worker, instead of ousting him from his work; how to prevent the fact that the labourer has made the existence of other men more full of enjoyment, from rendering his own livelihood more precarious. It is to ask Christianity to do for free labour, which it may be said to have created in the nations where it has taken root, what it did for slave labour by suppressing slavery. To appeal to it to correct the evils attendant on

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the good of its own creation is surely no unreasonable demand.

The light of Christianity arose on a world of slave-owners and slaves, a world where the free labour of men dependent for their subsistence on wages formed a very insignificant part of the toil which filled the cities of the Roman empire with their accumulated wealth. The New Testament contains no condemnation of slavery. But when the master had learned to look upon his slave as a "brother beloved in the Lord" the days of slavery were numbered. The maintenance of such a state of absolute dependence and arbitrary power was logically so inconsistent with the feeling of spiritual brotherhood involved in the idea of a new birth, by water and the spirit, into a "new moral world" of the sons of that God whose name is "Love," that, as this idea took hold on men's minds, it naturally put an end to what was thus irreconcilable with itself.

Now, what Christianity has thus done in the past, those who regard it as the mighty agent provided by God to redeem men from that slavery of the spirit out of which the slavery of the body springs—the slavery to selfishness—may fittingly ask it to do for the present and the future. We who appeal to Christianity to evolve co-operative industry and associated life are, in truth, asking it to tame into obedience to the law of brotherhood, which is the law of reason, those energies that, left to the law of nature, can produce only "the struggle for existence" known to modern political economy under the name of free competition. Is this request unreasonable? History, I think, may assure us that it is not.

Man is at once a natural and a supernatural being. He belongs to nature by his passions and his strength, and, as a natural being, is involved in that struggle for existence dependent on the assertion of self, which

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is the law of all natural being—that is to say, of every creature which is unable to determine the ends of its existence for itself, but finds them determined for it by its constitution and its surroundings. The will of such a creature, when it has attained to consciousness,

is guided in its actions by the pleasures or pains which stimulate it to do what is useful, or deter it from doing what is injurious to itself individually; or where, as with bees and other social animals, the welfare of the great body of individuals depends on their association—stimulate it to do what is useful, or deter it from doing what is injurious, to the society, though the individual may be in some cases sacrificed in the process. But in man there appears a higher power, linked, it is true, by insensible gradations with natural being, and dependent upon it for its own capacity to act, but standing above it: a supernatural power of will which determines its ends for itself, and uses natural powers, in the freedom of choice and with the persistency of deliberation, to do that which it has so determined. Man possesses not only Strength and Passions, but Reason. He is not only stimulated or deterred by Pleasure and Pain, but is capable of rejecting pleasures and accepting pain for the sake of objects so distant or so vast that, individually, he can scarcely hope to realise their accomplishment, yet deliberately works for them, because they are the choice of his reason, and to him the satisfaction of his reason can become superior to the baits of any natural pleasures, or deterring impulses of any natural pains.

Now this governing Reason is in itself essentially a principle of unity. It has built up sciences, by perfecting conceptions which can give unity in idea to the endless diversity of appearances presented to us by natural beings, through the different ways in which

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they affect our bodies by what we call our senses; and thus has given us a knowledge continually growing more complete of the modes of action of these beings. It has created States, in order, by the unity of political institutions, to set bounds to individual selfishness, and give protection to individual weakness. The great philosophers of Greece, while Greece was yet free to act as well as to theorise, saw in the perfecting of these political institutions the instrumentality through which they hoped for the attainment by mankind, or at least by the privileged body of Hellenes, of that complete social unity which was the avowed though unattained object of the political institutions of Hellas in their own age. But they had selected a wrong road, though to a right end. Time unfolded, as the outcome of this political road to unity, the despotism of Rome. But at the epoch when the vast machinery of Roman power, consolidating its own action under the rule of Augustus, showed at once how mighty this sort of unity could become, and 't how little it satisfied what Greek philosophy demanded from the principle of unity applied to human affairs, there began to be heard a voice which, originating in a despised race, promulgated by men who made no pretensions either to the philosophical insight of Greece or the practical wisdom of Rome, and finding a response chiefly among those whom the great contemned, declared that the principle of unity was to be sought for from within, and not from without, and depended, not on political institutions, however wisely instituted, but on the union of the will of man with One who had submitted to be crucified as a malefactor, that he might resolve the discords of human selfishness into the harmony of the eternal divine love. From the faith in this manifestation of the infinite tenderness of God to man sprung up that rich crop

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of tender sympathy between man and man which marked the Church of the first centuries, and conquered the world, as the Emperor Juhan declared, " by the ministry of tables " ; by a social institution, resting on the free will of those who strove to realise in their own lives the truth that " it is more blessed to give than to receive. "

It is to an extension of similar institutions, resting, like the " ministry of tables," on the free will of those who maintain them that the social reformer who would deduce his reforms from the Christian spirit appeals, as the instrument to give effect to his desires. He looks to such institutions to put an end to the present antagonism between the owner of the accumulated labour called capital and the owner of the present labour, to which this capital is indispensable, while, in turn, it is indispensable to make that capital fruitful of benefit to its owners; or, between the man who distributes what others want and those among whom the distribution is made —an antagonism than which nothing can be more entirely opposed to the spirit animating the New Testament, or more completely incapable of removal by legislative regulations, without the voluntary help of the persons for whom the legislation is made. Surely we are justified by history in believing that, in looking for the help required to this source, we shall not look in vain.

No one, probably, will dispute that the Christian spirit, if it is brought to direct itself seriously to these objects, could accomplish them; that is to say, no one who calmly takes count of what this spirit has done in the past, and is doing in the present —for the formation and support of cathedrals, churches, monasteries, schools, colleges, hospitals, almshouses, for the promotion of temperance, the suppression of slavery, the mitigation of the horrors of war, and its ultimate removal, and

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other benevolent purposes, including the spread of Christianity among non-Christian nations. That without this spirit the task cannot be performed will probably be admitted, even by those who hold that the spirit may be separated from the name, and will do its work better from the separation. No doubt there are, at the present time, many —and among them very zealous advocates of social reforms —who repudiate the name of Christianity, which to them symbolises only intolerance, redundancy, and superstition. But in so far as these men are really animated by the spirit that makes social reform possible, they are Christians without intending it; men who have the spirit of Christ in them by whatever name they choose to call themselves; and whom those who hold the Catholic faith in the Divine nature of their Lord must recognise as true children of Him from whom all life proceeds, by that mark ascribed in the Gospels to His own teaching, " By their fruits ye shall know them "

As the ultimate result of Christianity, if it is to become universal, must be to merge the present distinctions of Christian theology in the unity of a Christian life, so the opposition of the Christian and non-Christian name must merge in the harmony of a spirit which is not satisfied with any institutions but such as exhibit in action that profound solidarity of the whole with every part, and every part with the whole, which St. Paul held out to his Corinthian converts eighteen hundred years since as the relation that should subsist between the members of the body of Christ. But this anticipated universality of the time when Christianity and Humanity shall be

seen to be interchangeable names for the same idea, does not make it the less important to point out the support which this idea has in the Catholic faith. The belief that the Eternal Father manifested Himself in the

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person of Christ what the power underlying all natural phenomena is in its essential character, and what we must be to become like Him, crowning, as this belief does for those who hold it, the long development of natural and intellectual forces, with the anticipation of an age when the will of man shall find its repose in voluntarily accepting the law of love, must be admitted to afford a solid basis for that idea of the universal brotherhood of mankind which historically arose out of this Catholic faith.

Now we must not forget that this Catholic faith sums up the religious conceptions of all the cultivated races of mankind. Religion has appeared on the earth under two great phases: (1) The belief in the immanence of the Divine in the world and its incarnation in man; (2) The belief which sets God over against the world and man. These conceptions appear to have slumbered together in Egypt; they diverged afterwards; the first giving rise to the Aryan, the second to the Semitic religions. But they crossed and spontaneously united in the Catholic faith as to Christ; where the sublime trust of the Jew wedded the philosophical insight of Greece, and, allying itself with the practical sagacity of Rome, constituted what must be called the scientific conception of religion.

On those who would separate the development of Humanity from the development of Christianity, we venture, then, to urge, as fellow-strugglers with them in the hard battle against egotistic impulses, not hastily to reject the help which the history of Christianity offers; lest in the endeavour to grasp the fruit whilst they spurn the tree that bore it, they should sink back from the law of love to the law of force; and instead of founding universally liberty, equality, fraternity, and solidarity as they desire, should perpetuate that "struggle for existence" out of which the Christian Church emerged.

Chapter II.

The Relation of Co-operation to Other Philanthropic Movements.

BENEVOLENCE—goodwill to other men—is the common starting-point of all plans of social reform, the rendezvous where all social reformers must meet. From whatever side they approach these ideas—whether they appeal to the conception of Christianity presented in our first chapter, or to any other conception of it entertained, say, by members of the Greek or Roman communions, or of any other professedly Christian body; or rest upon some general conception of religion; or, rejecting any religious ground, appeal to "a stream of tendency" shown in the history of mankind, or to another notion of man's true nature and the conduct suitable to it, resting on philosophy, on science, or on our common sense—from whatever side they come, at this gate of Benevolence they must arrive, as the door through which the way lies to social reform. Without goodwill to men generally no one would ever trouble himself about the improvement of society.

But Benevolence is no stranger among mankind. She is quite at home in our race, and has expressed, and does

express herself, in a thousand plans of goodwill, with more or less successful issues. In what special relation, then, does the idea of co-operation stand to this widely active principle? I think the reply must be taken from the motto of Lord Stafford —because it is "Thorough"; because it strikes at the root of all those evils of which Benevolence, in her unceasing efforts at the present day,

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is only endeavouring to keep under this or that ever-fresh-growing offshoot. To anticipate shortly what will be more fully dealt with in subsequent chapters, I would say that while Benevolence has hitherto dealt only or principally with the use of income by individuals, the co-operator sets before her the duty of dealing —first, with that which creates income, in order to secure to all that share of income to which by their work they are equitably entitled; second, with the collective use of this income, with a view to form such general conditions of existence that the income of each individual may be able to produce to its possessor as great benefits as it is capable of affording, without interfering with the like enjoyment by others. In society as it is, the determination of what income each individual shall have, and what shall be the general conditions under which it has to be used, has been left, with exceptions, important, but yet only exceptions in the case of certain works of common utility undertaken at the common cost, to be determined by what, in modern political economy, is called free competition. The co-operator maintains that it is the duty of Benevolence to obtain this determination by reasonable agreement.

It may be objected that competition is a law of nature to which all must be subject, and that, therefore, to call on Benevolence to fight against it is to impose upon her an impossible task. I admit the premiss, but deny the inference.

That the tendencies which lead to competition must always exist I do not deny. They belong to that "struggle for existence" producing the "survival of the fittest," from which man can no more withdraw himself as a natural being than he can withdraw his body, or the materials he deals with, from the influence of gravity. But why should he abandon himself and his doings to the one form of natural action more than he does to the

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other? He has taught iron to float on water, though gravity orders it to sink; and made the stones which would, at the bidding of gravity, fall through the air into a river below them afford him a safe passage through the air above the water. This he has done not by getting rid of the force of gravity, but by studying its action, and the nature of the bodies subject to it, till he has discovered how to make gravity secure his purposes in place of thwarting them. The fact that this principle of competition must be admitted to be a law of nature is, then, no ground for treating its operation as withdrawn from the control of reason. For it is characteristic of the action of reason to use natural powers for its own higher purposes, by subduing their natures into obedience to its own higher nature, without attempting to destroy them. Why should it not be able to do as much with the natural force of competition?

No doubt we pass in this case from the nature which acts on man to nature in man. We have to deal with the resistance of the impulses which naturally urge men to

act to that power whose proper function is to govern these impulses by harmonising them. The need of that appeal to the influence of Christianity dwelt on in the first chapter arises, as I conceive, from the fact that reason, although able to point out how men ought to act, in order to harmonise the discords of conflicting impulses, and convert the scorching heat of competition into a life-giving, cheering warmth, the fosterer of invention and incentive to progress, requires the assistance of some power capable of moving the will by the influence of emotion, to choose to do what the reason points out as fitting to be done.

But assuming that by this influence, or any other motive which those who have no faith in Christ may substitute for this faith, the wills of men are thus swayed

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—why, I ask again, should the natural law of competition prove less amenable to the control of reason than those other natural laws which Reason now uses, and is learning every day more completely how to use, so as to convert Nature from her master into the obedient minister to her desires?

What Benevolence has to do in order to satisfy the requirements of the co-operator, as I conceive them, I have already stated—I hope with sufficient clearness for the purpose of this chapter. But it may be desirable to make a few observations, which, perhaps, may be useful, on some points bearing on the subject of the relation of co-operation to other philanthropic efforts.

That which has been already done by Messrs. Leclaire and Godin in France, by the Rochdale Pioneers and other distributive societies in England, and what the various friendly societies and savings banks and other institutions of a self-supporting character among the poorer classes have done and are doing in Great Britain and elsewhere, proves that if the profits of production and distribution, beyond the necessary charge for capital, became applicable for the benefit of the workers by whom they are produced, and of the population among whom they are distributed, a small percentage of the total amount would be sufficient, as an assurance fund, to provide against all the contingencies (including old age) for which Benevolence at present, by a heavy burden on a comparatively few benevolent persons, inadequately provides in her manifold philanthropic institutions. And yet those who now devote both time and money to the support and supervision of these institutions might find a more useful field for their benevolent activity in the administration of these common funds. For they would thus confer all the benefits attending almsgiving without its manifold evils, and turn what "blesses the giver more than the receiver"

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into that truly Divine quality which is twice blest— which "blesses him that gives and him that takes."

In truth, although it may, perhaps, seem at first to some philanthropic persons, that in a reformed society such as co-operators look for they would feel that

the hellos' occupation's gone, true Benevolence would gain greatly by being relieved from all that part of her work which is open to doubt, and suspicion of imposture, and allowed to expand in acts of kindness of a nature to admit of no doubt—in imparting

instruction or affording pleasure, in the solace of suffering or sympathy with delight, in helping affliction to bear its burdens, or adding to the joyful ness of light-hearted innocence.

That there is in all plans of social reform an element repulsive to benevolent feeling, as it is trained by our modern habits, I do not deny — namely, that they deal, and from the nature of the case cannot but deal, not merely with the use, but with the acquisition, of wealth ; with matters of business ; with buying and selling. They must face that " higgling of the market," those keen attempts to take advantage of the necessities or ignorance of others, against which Benevolence bears energetic protest. But, in truth, these immoral practices furnish precisely one of the strongest reasons why Benevolence should interfere, in order to arrest this outgrowth of the spirit of competitive struggle, by stopping the source from whence it springs. That it can be stopped I see no reason to doubt. Even in the present day these practices do not affect all commercial transactions. The conduct of many businesses is free from them either through their magnitude, which enables their managers to fix the conditions on which they will act, or through the general practice in the particular case, as with assurance companies, which work upon tables at fixed rates. In retail

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sales, the habit of bargaining is most unequally diffused, existing generally in some countries, and scarcely at all in others. The most successful businesses have been carried on without it, such, for instance, as that of the late Mr. Stewart, of New York, who had one price only for each class of goods, and would dismiss, instead of rewarding, any employe who obtained more. What has thus been done partially might, it would appear, be easily done universally, among any body' of men who should make it a rule to take no advantage of each other, but in every transaction to state exactly all that the other side could wish to know. In such a society all bargains would be made with full knowledge of the circumstances; and the abatement of price, inevitable if the rates fixed by the seller in any case cannot be obtained, might be effected by methods not involving individual bargaining, such as an auction.

When we consider the great effect on the character of any people inevitably produced by these daily transactions of buying and selling, it is difficult to name any matter better deserving the earnest attention of true Benevolence than the purification of the atmosphere of trade, by the general introduction of institutions where ordinary business shall be conducted in such a way as strict morality can approve.

If these considerations are borne in mind, I cannot but hope that the indifference which many — I fear I must say most — modern philanthropists show to plans of social reform would give place to a prudent, but hearty and persevering, determination to aid them by every means in their power. The effect of such a determination would, I am satisfied, be most beneficial on the present advocates of social reform. The sort of ostracism suffered by their wide-reaching proposals, affecting the well-being of countless millions, if the future history of mankind is to be

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a sequel worthy of the enormous period during which the earth has ripened into fitness for being " ordered and

dressed " by man, has thrown some of those who profess to call themselves co-operators off the rails, so to speak. Losing sight of the high aims and noble principles of social reform which is nothing if it be not regarded as the introduction of —

Nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws —

such as shall

Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be,

they have represented co-operation simply as a safe and efficient machinery for enabling consumers to obtain, by union among themselves, such articles as they desire to possess, reliable in quality, at the lowest possible cost. It is not wonderful that Benevolence should turn away from such a parody of true co-operation, with an impatience perhaps somewhat unjust to the intentions of those who have proposed it, and with great loss to herself. Since in advocating the self-help on which co-operation rests, and preventing it from degenerating into selfish help. Benevolence would conquer for herself a field of action entirely free from the suspicion of selfish motives which often attends upon the Benevolence of almsgiving.

The examination in detail of the theory[^] above noticed belongs to a subsequent part of the present Manual. I am concerned with it here only in reference to the motives of co-operative action, and to that estrangement of the body of philanthropists from this all-important work, which the considerations adduced in the present and the first chapter will, I hope, tend to remove. Then may we hope to see organised into a united phalanx those who ought to be working heart and hand in this cause as the great problem of humanity, the true task, in my judgment, to

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which Benevolence is called in the present age — a task to be carried on in reliance upon that Divine aid, which has never failed those who, comprehending the depth of meaning lying in the apostolic conception of the good man, as a " worker together with God," lay their hand to the plough, and do not look back.

Chapter III.

The Relation of Co-operation to Socialism Communism and other Politico-Social Movements.

THE preceding chapters have spoken of co-operation in language applying generally to plans of social reform. This they have done, because it is only when regarded as a mode of action having the far-reaching scope which these words imply that the idea of co-operation acquires the importance claimed for it by the writers of this Manual, and therefore can excite the interest which, in their judgment, it ought to awaken. It may be asked, if your conceptions of the aim of co-operation are so extensive, how can it be distinguished from socialism? What is socialism but social reform? ^ I would reply, the difference is this. Systems of socialism are essentially theories, embracing the whole range of relations subsisting among men, which, in one way or other, they propose to bring into conformity

with these theories. But social reform, as it is presented in these pages, and is embodied in the name of co-operation, is rather a practice than a theory. It is an attempt to introduce into the world, as we now find it, modes of action embodying principles, generally admitted among the nations called Christian, even by those who more or less completely separate themselves either from the Catholic faith in Christ, or from the Christian name, to be such as they ought to act upon; though, from various causes, they either do not act upon them at all, but only hope that they may do so in another world, or act upon them so imperfectly and inconsistently that their action

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has scarcely any effect in producing such results as ought to flow from their principles. Our English co-operation, so far, at least, as it has proceeded hitherto, is an attempt founded on the belief that these principles, when generally applied in practice, will work out true relations among men by their own operation, and would be hampered rather than aided by the endeavour to build up a complete theory of them beforehand.

Co-operation rests not on a new theory of human conduct, but on the development of the tendencies which it traces in past history, and seeks to give more entire expression to in the present and the future. The special connection claimed for it with Christianity is, in truth, only a claim for its historical filiation with the progress of humanity, which has been historically associated in the nations of Europe and America with this religion. While, as the previous chapters have argued, Christianity does present to us conceptions of the Divine action, and the mutual relations of man springing out of that action, eminently adapted to sustain our hopes and guide our steps in the arduous task which the idea of social reform opens before us.

But, to the distinction drawn now between co-operation and socialism, this special historical connection, important though it is in itself, is not essential. The essential distinction is that co-operators are those social reformers who approach the great problems of social reform with their eyes open and their hands free. Admitting the greatness of the end which the prophets of socialism have set before their disciples, they claim for the end to be greater than the insight of the prophets; and, refusing to be bound by the words of any master, investigate their social systems in the free spirit of scientific inquiry, not blindly adopting, nor having any ^ prejudice against them. The freedom belonging to

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\ co-operation enables the co-operator to use these systems, or any parts of them which appear to him useful, as means for the better giving effect to his ends; only he does not set them up as systems to which he is to pin his faith, or by which he is bound to regulate his conduct.

Fourier, for instance, unfolded, with all the anticipating minuteness of genius, the principles by which manual labour may be made attractive, instead of being so wearisome as it now usually is. Robert Owen has dwelt upon the vast influence of the surroundings of men (or circumstances as he said) on their characters. It is open to the co-operator to study the teachings of both these eminent thinkers; to adopt the suggested means of rendering labour attractive; to study carefully the influence of men's surroundings on their characters;

without basing his action upon the assumption that " man's character is formed for him and not by him " or substituting for the maxim " Bear ye one another's burdens, so shall ye fulfil the law of love," the apophthegm " Destinies are proportionate to attractions," in which Fourier summed up his theory. The free spirit of social progress, proper to Christianity, whether it adopt the Christian name or not, will be at liberty " to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good," when it comprehends, as I trust it is beginning to comprehend, what work lies before it if it really would do God's will on earth.

So it may " prove," but I cannot think that, as a general rule, it will " hold fast " that system of communism which has continually appeared within the Christian Church, constituting the outward life of the monastic and conventual orders, and forming the external bond of union of a number of Protestant bodies existing in the United States.

Indeed, with the exception of Oneida, all these

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communities are either, like the monastic and conventual institutions of Catholicism founded upon, or tend to, a practice which makes their adoption by mankind generally impossible, because, to borrow Sterne's pithy antithesis, " if it pleases heaven it displeases earth " —the practice of celibacy. Otherwise, economically considered, the results of the mode of life are, according to Mr. Hind's description, generally satisfactory. Plenty appears to be their common character —a plenty obtained without burdening the inmates with any excess of work, and that not because all the members are able-bodied; for, besides containing a large number of old people, these communities, at least in many cases, receive families of the children of persons joining them who become a charge on the common fund. The notion that the stimulus of individual gain is necessary in order to produce industry is also negatived by these accounts, which uniformly describe the members as industrious. While at Oneida, where the advantages derivable from a united home are appreciated to an extent not shown in most of these communities, the inventive faculties of the members are actively exercised to discover labour-saving contrivances, which, in an institution where all participate alike in the common produce, are obviously an unqualified advantage to all.

The advantage is very great, but there is no sufficient reason why it should not equally exist under a system of associated labour, in any community which places at the command of its members a variety of occupations open to all, so that the labour saved in one employment may be taken up by another, without sacrificing the natural constitution of the family to the demands for union in work, made upon us by the progress of invention and the growth of capital. In truth, if we except Icaria, all these communistic societies, including Oneida, have the primary

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object of realising some special religious theory; Oneida being distinguished by the peculiarity that the theory of what they call the system of Perfection does not involve the extinction of the human race as a necessary consequence of its general adoption. On the other hand, it does involve the same sort of sacrifice of the family to the community, though not carried out with a consistency

so complete as Plato provides in his ideal republic.

But Plato wrote as a Hellen for Hellen, having before his mental vision the conditions of life existing in the small republics of Greece, where a free State meant a free town. All his proposals have in view the so training a body of citizens, who would constitute the armed force necessary to protect the liberties of all against aggressive neighbours, as to prevent them from abusing, to their own private advantage, the absolute power over the lives and liberties of the other citizens, which their position gave them. With keen insight into human motives, Plato desired to free these "guards," as he calls them, from the subtle temptation to selfishness latent in that plausible excuse, "Don't think I am working for myself; but it is my duty to raise my family." Therefore, he said, the "guards" must have no individual families. All of them must be one family, supported by the body of citizens whom they protect, with whose welfare they will then be identified, and among whom being themselves free from unjust motives, they can preserve just action.

Given the conditions of Greek life, this theory of Plato has much to say for itself. Under the altered conditions of our days the case changes. In the great States which modern times have made familiar to us, where order has wedded freedom and the overpowering strength of the whole united community is exerted, when necessary, to restrain the governing body in any association from

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abusing to their own advantage the powers committed to them for the good of all, there is no sufficient reason for merging the national dualism of human life in an artificial universalism. The striking example of the Familistere, formed at Guise* by M. Godin, has shown that it is possible to attain all the social advantages of communistic institutions — the care and training of children from their earliest years; their subsequent education; the provision within the unitary dwelling, to the degree permitted by the means of its inhabitants, of whatever can assist want, promote convenience, or facilitate enjoyment; the creation among its inmates of an active concern for each other's welfare, by the part which each is able and invited to take in this or that branch of the general administration; — while yet the inmates possess a domestic privacy more complete than can be enjoyed by the occupants of ordinary town dwellings; earn various incomes, according to their capacities; have entire liberty of disposing of their own property; and, in short, retain all the individuality of natural life, superadding to it an associated life which makes this individual life more full of enjoyment as it becomes less selfish.

It may be urged, perhaps, that if the last proposition is true, a system of complete communism would increase enjoyment to the highest degree possible, by extinguishing selfishness altogether. This was apparently the idea of Robert Owen, who, in consequence, believed that the attractions of a communistic life to all who ever experienced them would be so great, that the system, once introduced, would rapidly spread over the earth. But he overlooked the fact that the happiness which an unselfish spirit does produce to its possessor, according to the uniform experience of all who ever strove to attain it,

* Department de l'Alsace in France.

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comes from within, and cannot be imported from without, whence can come only, the occasions where this spirit may display itself and thus increase its energy by the opportunity for its exercise. Now, these occasions would be afforded by an associated dwelling, which left the homes of its inmates in their individual distinctness, but placed alongside of them as objects of the common care, institutions conducive to the general welfare, not less completely than it can be by a system where this domestic life itself is made a matter of common regulation. Moreover, the danger would be avoided of that constant jarring which must be liable to arise between the general regulations and the variety of individual tastes, wherever the distinction between public and private affairs has disappeared, by the public life having swallowed up the private life.

N Thus, then, the relation between co-operation, as a system of association, and communism resembles that subsisting between certain mathematical lines, which may indefinitely approach, but can never touch. The spirit of true co-operation will lead those on whom it has taken hold to feel dissatisfied with any appropriation to themselves of advantages capable, by their nature, of communication to others who are excluded from them. Obviously, in proportion to the degree in which this spirit IS the living principle of conduct among any associated body, its internal constitution will spontaneously approach communism. All will feel themselves to be trustees of their natural or acquired powers for the general good, and ask only to share in this good equally with those to whom they impart it. But between communism as a rule, and this communistic feeling there must remain always the difference that there is between law and gospel, between thou shalt and thou wilt, between the freedom of the self-governing will and the yoke of submission to a majority.

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The regard for individual freedom which thus distinguishes co-operation from communism distinguishes it also, though still more emphatically, from all attempts to attain the end of free association by the compulsory intervention of the State. Now, this is the aim of the theories of socialistic legislation which have, of late years, fascinated the sober judgment of large masses of the population in Germany, in whom long habit of subjection to State regulation may be pleaded in excuse for their notion that the State could do everything they desire if only it would. But the same idea appears to have taken hold also on the free life of the United States, perhaps, from the opposite habit of the people, to look on its own will uttered through the ballot box, as irresistible. The objection to this system in the peaceful form proposed by Ferdinand Lassalle, who urged only that the State should use the common purse to obtain for the mass of its members the means of self-employment, has been very clearly stated by Dr. Schulze-Delitzsch in his speeches and lectures. For, whence is the State purse, if it is not swelled by forced contributions from the rich, to be replenished except by the very persons to whom it is to give employment? If, however, to avoid this difficulty, the theory is carried to the length advocated by Karl Marx, who would confiscate the property of the richer classes for the benefit of the general body, into which they are to be compelled to sink by the might of the strongest, then, in opposition to such a tendency, however it may originate, it must be emphatically asserted, from the point of view taken in these pages, that only by free self-help can co-operation

procure for man the good claimed in them as capable of being produced by it. Because its whole power comes from the acceptance by the will of man of that Divine

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law of love, affirmed by us to be the true law of humanity, on which the well-being of mankind depends.

If even in political life those "who take the sword shall perish by the sword," as the Gospel declares, and historical experience has confirmed, with a uniformity of result disguised only by the fact that in many nations the assertion of strength has been accompanied by the assertion of principles of eternal life which have qualified the action of this principle of death—assuredly, to think that the victory of reason is to be earned by the exercise of force, and the reign of love to be the natural fruit of a reign of terror, must be the maddest of mad delusions.

Not by cutting the Gordian knot can the genius of social progress found its beneficent empire. At the present day, in England most certainly, and, I believe, in every Christian European country, except, perhaps, Russia, and assuredly in the United States, the road to a peaceful social revolution, fraught with unmeasurable benefits to the mass of the population, and attended by injury to none—except it can be called an injury to shut men out from the hope of future gains to be made out of other men's pockets—is open to the whole population, by free association, for objects which recent experience has proved that association can successfully effect, if only the masses, who may thus benefit themselves collectively and individually, are willing to associate. If the blindness of selfish interest prevents them from so associating, all the laws which could be passed, to give them the benefits of association while they are strangers to its spirit, would be as powerless to quicken true social life—

As are the blasts of autumn wind,

Which through the withered foliage sing,

To call forth from the sapless boughs
The bloom and verdure of the spring.

Part II.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF
CO-OPERATION.

PART II.

Chapter IV.

The Relation of Co-operation to Competition.

COMPETITION has been more than once admitted in these pages to be a law of nature, a part of the "struggle for existence," by which all nature is pervaded, applied especially to those conscious agents who can compete with each other for the occupation of any locality, or the enjoyment of any object which more than one of them may desire to occupy or enjoy. The more varied the faculties, the more diversified the surroundings of any such creatures, the stronger must be the tendencies to competition called forth in the beings thus circumstanced; whose desires must in such a case in truth compete with each other, the stronger expelling, or, at least, overpowering the weaker. Man possesses

the most varied faculties of any inhabitant of the earth, and from his facilities of locomotion, and the ability gradually acquired by him through the progress of invention, to transport the produce of one part of the earth to other distant parts, can, in a certain sense, make the whole earth part of his surroundings. In man, therefore, this competition of desires naturally rises to greater intensity than in any other creature known to us. But, in itself, so long as any body of men remains in the natural state of every animal capable of existing, namely, the state of having access to the means of subsistence, the natural law works for good, by tending to diversify

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the pleasures, and through this diversity to stimulate the industrial activity of the human beings subject to it.

In speaking of the good attending the natural competition of various desires among men who have at their command ready access to the means of subsistence, I assume the absence of violence. Of course, I am aware that the assumption is very far from borne out by the history of mankind. Only very slowly, and still imperfectly, has the natural disposition of the stronger animal to seize on what it desires by pure strength been brought under such control as exists within the civilised States of the present day; where, however, the good is qualified by evil in another way soon to be stated. But, assuming the co-existence of these two conditions — the absence of violence and command of the means of subsistence — I say the competition of desires among men would be essentially beneficial; because, admitting of satisfaction only by exchange, it stimulates the inventive faculties of one man to produce something desired by other men, that he may be able, by satisfying their desires, to satisfy his own. For thus is overcome that apathetic indolence into which savage races are prone to fall, shutting themselves out by it from intellectual progress, and consequently, too, from moral progress, which is impossible when the intellect slumbers. Thus, too, with the growth of more numerous wants may arise also that greater refinement, which is the condition of aesthetic taste.

Long periods may elapse in the history of a nation during which this natural competition of desires continues to operate to the general advantage of the citizens. It continues thus to operate so long as, at least in the great majority of cases, there is no question of the means of subsistence depending on the power of individuals to exchange the produce of their own labour for that of

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other men; so long as the competition is between desires, affecting only the enjoyments of life, but not the means of living; which, therefore, cannot be said to exercise a pressure greater than that healthy stimulus to inventive action above noticed. But, as population multiplies, as the cultivation of the ground, followed as it always has been in some shape or other by its appropriation, shuts out an ever-increasing number of the population from the direct natural means of obtaining their subsistence, and drives them to depend for their living upon their success in exchanging what they make only in order to exchange it, the natural law of competition begins to show its inadequacy to satisfy the requirements of reason. Instead of stimulating the industry of the worker to make it more fruitful of benefit to him by the competition of his own desires against each other, it begins to

lessen the benefits of that industry by the competition of one worker against another, to obtain the means of living by underselling each other's labour. The process once begun has a continual tendency to extend, and draw in perpetually an increasing proportion of the population under the wheels of a competition which has ceased to be beneficial 'to them unless from any cause the demand for work should grow faster than the number of workers, when the competition for their work would begin to tell in their favour.

Now, the chance here stated must mainly depend upon two circumstances —(1) the rate at which capital tends to accumulate in any country; (2) the degree of enterprise in its employment existing in that country; while this very accumulation and enterprise, so long as they are employed —not on account of the whole body of workers, but b}' individuals who endeavour to make out of them a special advantage for themselves —have a constant tendency to destroy, by the competition among the

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employers, the benefits which, in another way, they tend to produce.

When the channels to which the employment of capital shall be directed are determined, not with a view to the general interest by a careful study —of the existing demand for any class of articles, of the means of supplying it, of the probability of an increase of consumption in that class of objects, and of the prevention of waste in making articles not wanted —but simply by the expectation entertained by this or that person, or group of persons, of reaping individual}' some special benefit from the enterprises, the determination what enterprise shall be selected is very likely to be based on the knowledge or belief that someone else has made large profits out of that particular work; and, therefore, that there is what is called an "opening for business" —in other words, a chance of snatching some of these profits away b}' offering to the purchaser somewhat lower terms. Now, in order to unite these cheaper rates with the desired profit, there is one easy way —to diminish the cost of production. Hence there arises out of the struggle of the owners of capital amongst each other for possession of the branches of business believed to be the most profitable, a tendency to reduce the wages of labour, to which the workers, notwithstanding all attempts to arrest it by union for this purpose, may find themselves driven to submit, after vainly using up all their own resources in a fruitless resistance, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. The histor}' of the coal, iron, and cotton industries, during the last four or five years, furnishes a striking illustration of the proposition advanced here; which must not be confused with a denial of the great benefits that have been conferred on mankind through individual enterprise, where it has been directed to perfecting and developing new processes or discoveries.

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and thus has multiplied the means of human well-being, by employing the labour saved to produce some desirable object hitherto unknown.

But this great triumph of human genius, the progress of invention, with its marvellous results, multiplied as they have been of late years with a rapidity unknown, I may

say undreamt of, in former ages, furnishes an additional and very striking illustration how impracticable it is to found a human society satisfactory to the demands of reason, upon the action of the natural law of competitive struggle left to itself. It is almost impossible to estimate, with any approach to accuracy, the increase in the productive powers of the inhabitants of Great Britain during the last one hundred years, arising from the introduction of steam as a motive power, and the growth of machinery connected with its use. Still more difficult would it be to estimate what might have been done by the use of this "ministry of fire," to which, pace Mr. Ruskin, I look as the great magician who shall charm away in the world of harmony the ills which he produces in a world of struggle —if his mighty agency had been systematically used for the common welfare as reason would prescribe. But a powerful picture has lately been drawn, not by one person, but by a Committee of the American Social Science Association, in a paper read at its meeting at Cincinnati, in 1878, of the progress of machinery in the United States, where the changes brought about have been more rapid, and, therefore, more startling than with us; while the fact that in the United States enormous tracts of fertile land are still uncultivated; that, in the cultivated parts the laws of primogeniture and practice of entail do not prevail; that no vast bodies of men are withdrawn from production while maintained at the cost of the producer, either for military or naval purposes; and that there is no fetter on individual enterprise, which is generally remarkably

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active, makes the picture of the results which have come from the progress of invention under its influence the more striking.

At the commencement of the present* century very little labour-saving machinery was in use. Then the farmer's best plough was of wood, iron-shod, drawn by from one to four or more yoke of oxen; one man to drive the team another to hold the plough, and often another to keep it clear. Result: say about 11 acres ploughed per day, by, say, two men. Now are used ploughs in gangs of two or three, or more, of polished steel, drawn by horses, controlled by one man who rides at ease. Result: five or more acres per day, ploughed by a single man, and much better than by our fathers. Or steam is used, with still greater results, ploughing an acre or more an hour.

Our fathers sowed their seed by hand, taken from a bag slung from their shoulders. Now a machine, controlled by any boy who can drive a single horse, will do more than three times the work in a given time, and far better. Similar changes have been made in all the preliminary processes of agriculture.

When the grain was ripe for the harvest our fathers would go into the field with their sickles in their hands, and a long day of hard work would result in one-fourth of an acre of grain per man. Now, a man will take a reaping machine drawn by one or two pairs of horses, and reap his twenty or more acres per day, one man now doing the work of eighty but about fifty years ago.

In the case of the sickle the day of our fathers would exceed, rather than fall short of, fifteen hours. But I estimate upon ten hours for a work day.

The reapers here referred to are those in common use in New England and other places where the land is quite uneven, rough, or hilly, having cutters about five feet long; but for the great grain regions of the West, for the smooth, flat, or prairie lands of Illinois, or other sections of the valley of the Mississippi, and in California, cutters are made and in common use of 10ft. and 12ft. in length; some 15ft. and 18ft., and even 24ft. long are used, cutting swathes of these widths, and proportionately is the

reaping hastened and muscular labour displaced.

Our fathers bound the wheat in sheaves after it was cut, and stored it in their barns for the winter's work for themselves, their boys, and their men-servants, in thrashing it with flails. Now, machines are sent into the field, which gather it up and pile it in
* 19th century.

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great heaps, where it is taken by other machines, and in a few hours, or a few days at most, it is thrashed, winnowed, sacked, and ready for market.

But in California machines are made and used which at one and the same time, in moving over the field, cut the grain, thrash, winnow, and sack it, and the filled sacks are left in rows, where, but a few moments before, stood the golden grain, untouched, inviting to its harvest.

For our great (Indian) corn crop the corn planter is used, as is the seed sower for similar grain. Then, instead of using the hoe, as did our fathers in working their corn, where a man found a hard and long day's work in hoeing half an acre, a man or boy will now seat himself upon a cultivator, with a pair of horses before him and work an acre an hour; one man now doing with this machine as much as could be done by twenty with hoes. Please bear in mind also, that the ploughing with our modern ploughs, and cultivating and working with our modern cultivators and harrows, so improve the condition of the ground as to make a marked increase in the crop. After the corn was harvested our fathers would turn a shovel upside down over a box, sit on it, and, drawing the ears of corn with vigour across its edge, shell 20 bushels in a long day; and hard work it was. Now, two men will take the ordinary improved corn-sheller, and shell 24 bushels in an hour, or 240 bushels in a short day; leaving out of account the difference in the length of the day's work, this shows that six times as much is now done with this machine as our fathers could do by the old methods. With the three classes of horse power machines, two men will shell 1,500, 2,000, and 3,000 bushels respectively per day of ten hours; one man and machine now doing the work of 37, 50, and 75 men respectively, without machinery.

So also in our important hay crop, the machine power is first put in, one man with team cutting as much grass as twelve men with scythes; then follows the tedder, with a man and horse to scatter and turn it, to facilitate its drying, doing the work of 20 men with the hand fork, and so much better as to reduce the time between cutting and harvesting at least twenty-four hours. Then follows the horse-rake, raking 20 acres a day, while a man with the ordinary hand-rake can rake but two. Here the machine and man can do the work of 12, 20, and 10 men respectively with the old appliances.

In all these operations in agriculture there is a displacement of labour; by improvements in machinery, of from one doing the work of three in sowing the grain to 12 in ploughing, and 384 in cutting

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grain at harvest, according to the work done, and the class of machinery used for the particular operation.

And machinery digs potatoes, milks the cows, makes the butter and cheese. There is now nothing in food production without the labour-saving process.

Our fathers, with all their boys and men-servants, had a full

winter's work in thrashing their wheat, shelling their corn, &c., and getting the small products to the mill or the market. Now, after machinery has done its work in the field and barn, the iron horse drags the product over its roads of steel for hundreds and thousands of miles, at less cost and in less time than it took our fathers to transport the same to distances not greater than fifty miles. Upon those roads where our fathers had hundreds and thousands of men and teams constantly employed in hauling products to market and goods to the country, nowhere now is a man or team so employed — men and animals are released from all that labour — new forces take up the work, guided and controlled by comparatively few minds and hands. Even our cattle and hogs are no longer required to walk to the shambles; the iron horse takes them to the butcher, labour-saving processes slaughter them, dress them, prepare their flesh for the market, for the table, and stop only at mastication, deglutition, and digestion.

To-day, one man with the aid of machinery will produce as much food as could be produced by the naked muscle and tools of a score of our fathers. There is now no known limit to the power of its production. In consumption there is no corresponding increase. Our fathers required, obtained, and used as many ounces of food per day as we do. It might have been different in kind and quality — nothing more.

Not long ago the farm found constant employment for all the sons of the farm and many of the children of the city. Now, the farm furnishes employment for but a very small number of its sons, and that for a very few weeks or months at most in the year, and for the rest work must be had in the cities and towns, or not at all.

Here we find the true reason for the stagnation in the population of the older agricultural sections, and abnormal growth and crowding of the cities.

In the time of our mothers they, with all their daughters, had an abundance of employment in their homes. Throughout our country every farmhouse possessed its looms and spinning-wheels. From the sheep reared upon the farm was the wool taken and carded by our mothers ready for spinning. The flax grown upon

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the place was by our fathers broken and hatched by hand, and made ready by the women-folk, who, day after day, week after week, month in and month out, for fully or more than one-half of the year, were all constantly employed in carding, in spinning, and in weaving the woollen and linen cloths that clothed the family, or were traded at the store for tea and coffee, and sugar, or other necessaries or luxuries of life. The household music of that time was the hum of the large spinning-wheel, that rose and fell as the spinner receded or advanced, in concert with the more steady flow of the tones of the flax wheel, as, with foot on treadle, other members of the family, or women-servants, spun the flax which was changed to linen yarn or thread. At the same time the constantly-repeated rattle of the shuttle could be heard as the dexterous hand sent it flying through the warp to add another thread to the web, followed by the stroke of the swinging beam. These operations were in constant progress in all the farmhouses, and in a very large portion of the town houses.

The never-ending labour of our grandmothers must not be forgotten, who, with nimble needle, knit our stockings and mittens. The knitting-needle was in as constant play as their tongues, whose music ceased only under the power of sleep. All, from the youngest to the oldest, were abundantly employed, and all decently clothed.

Now all is changed. Throughout the length and breadth of our land the hand-card, the spinning-wheel, and the handloom are to be found only as articles without use, kept as curiosities of a past age.

Now the carding machine, machine spindles, and power looms have taken their places, and the labour of one pair of hands,

guiding and controlling machinery, turns out a hundred yards of cloth where but one yard was produced by our mothers.

The occupation of our grandmothers also is gone ; no more does the knitting-needle keep time to the music of their tongues. The knitting machine, in the hands of one little girl, will do more work than fifty grandmothers with their needles.

The consequence is, there is no more work at home for our farmers' daughters; they also must seek the towns and cities, where they find their sisters equally idle, and in thousands are found upon the streets spinning yarn and weaving webs, the warp of which is not of wool, neither is the woof of linen.

So the sewing machine has been generally introduced, and where formerly all the sisterhood were expert seamstresses, now many hardly know the use of the needle; the machine relieves them of this labour also.

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Our fathers in building would begin at the stump, and with their hands work out all the processes of construction. With their whip-saws they would turn the logs into boards ; they would hew the timber, rive and shave the shingles; dress the tongues and groove the flooring; dress and prepare all the lumber for doors, windows, and wainscoting; make the doors and windows with their frames; work out mouldings, ornaments, and finishing of all kinds. With their hands and feet they worked the clay for their bricks, and moulded them by hand. A house carpenter would then, with his hands, from the forest, build and finish a house from sill to ridge-pole, and was furnished with all the tools to do it with, many of which he also made.

Now all these various processes are wrought out by machinery. Machinery makes the bricks and saws the logs; the planing machine does the tonguing and grooving; the moulding machine makes the moulding; the doors, the windows, the blinds, the shingles —all, everything is done by machinery, and muscle is required only to put the parts together and in their places. Machinery does nine-tenths of the labour, and muscle the little remainder.

We will note the work of some half-dozen of the machines now in general use in building and carpentry. The circular saw, controlled by one man, will saw more in one hour than can be done in ten hours with a hand saw ; with the moulding machine one man can work out more mouldings than ten men by hand ; in planing, the planing machine, controlled by one man, will do the work of fifteen or twenty men with hand planes; in cutting mortises and making tenons, one man with a machine will do the work of ten men by the old methods ; with a jig saw he will do the work of eight men with the old tools ; and with the hand saw will do the work of twelve men by the old methods. These facts show a general displacement of muscle by machinery of at least 90 per cent in our great building interests.

The Crispins of our fathers' time were thorough boot and shoe makers, and a numerous class. But now, after labour-saving processes have killed the ox and skinned him and tanned his hide and dressed it, it does seem as if the leather was put in at one end of a machine, and at the other end is delivered a shower of boots and shoes, caught by girls and boys.

Until within the last twenty years all the watches worn in our country were of European hand make, mostly English and Swiss — a business in those countries that employed thousands. But within

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the time mentioned, in Waltham Mass., and in Elgin, 111., two

establishments commenced making machine watches, followed quite recently by some half-dozen other establishments in other places; and now in this country there is no more sale for hand-made watches. Swiss and English are alike knocked out of time; large communities in those countries are in great want — absolutely destitute because of our machine movement. The hand watch-maker also must find other employment, if he can.

Even the graders of our towns, cities, and roads are displaced by machinery. The pick and shovel, wielded by brawny arms, until within a few years were the only forces used. Now the steam paddy displaces brawn; the pick and shovel are too costly and too slow. In San Francisco its hills, covering miles of territory, have been removed by labour-saving processes. The steam paddy, controlled by two men, digs down and removes the hills at the rate of two or three scoops to the cartload, and then in trains of a dozen or more cars are run to and dumped into the bays and hollows to be filled, compelling thousands of muscular workmen, with their picks and shovels, horses and carts, to find other employment.

Twenty-five years ago the miner in California and Australia washed his gold in a pan, or in a cradle into which he had placed a couple of shovelful of earth, rocking the cradle with one hand and pouring in water with the other. Now, the gold miner conducts the water from some high point to a favourable position over his placer, giving a large fall, and from that position in hose to the washings, where, rushing with irresistible power through a small nozzle, it is turned against the solid hills of dirt, gravel, stone, and cement, which it cuts down, dissolves, and through sluices carries miles away to a favourable place for dumping, leaving the gold deposited in the sluice. In this manner hills 300 and 400 feet high, of the hardness of stone, melt and disappear like a bank of snow before the summer's sun; half-a-dozen men, by this labour-saving process, doing the work that would require an army with picks, shovels, and cradles only.

Now, let us see what have been the general effects which have resulted from the use of labour-saving machinery'. I will briefly sum them up in a few distinct conclusions.

1. It has broken up and destroyed our whole system of agriculture as practised by our fathers, which required the whole time and attention of all the sons of the farm and many from the towns, in the never-ending duties of food production[^] and has driven them

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to the towns and cities to hunt for employment, or remain in great part idle.

2. It has broken up and destroyed our whole system of household and family manufactures, as done by our mothers, when all took part in the labour and shared in the product, to the comfort of all; and has compelled the daughters of our country and towns to factory operations for ten or twelve hours a day in the manufacture of cloth they may not wear, though next to nakedness in the shivering blast; or to the city to ply their needles for eighteen or twenty hours a day, in hunger and cold; or to the street in thousands, spinning yarns and weaving webs that become their shrouds.

3. It has broken up and destroyed our whole system of working in wood and iron and leather in small shops of one, two, or it may be half-a-dozen workmen, in every town, village, or hamlet in the country, with blacksmith shops in near neighbourhood upon every road, where every man was a workman who could take the rough iron or unshaped wood and uncut leather and carry it through all its operations, until a thoroughly finished article was produced, and has compelled all to production in large shops, where machinery has minutely divided all work, requiring only knowledge and strength enough to attend a machine that will heel shoes, or cut nails, or card wool, or spin yarn, or do some other small fraction of a complete whole.

4. It has broken up and destroyed our whole system of individual and independent action in production and manufacture, where any man who possessed a trade by his own hands could at once make that trade his support and means of advancement, free of control by any other man, and has compelled all working men and women to a system of communal work, where, in hundreds and thousands, they are forced to labour with no other interest in the work than is granted to them in the wages paid for so much toil; with no voice, no right, no interest in the product of their hands and brains, but subject to the uncontrolled interest and caprice of those who, too often, know no other motive than that of avarice.

5. It has so enormously developed the power of production as to far outstrip man's utmost power of consumption, enabling less than one-half of the producing and working classes, working ten hours a day, to produce vastly more than a market can be found for; filling our granaries, warehouses, and depots, and stores, with enormous amounts of products of every description, for which there is no sale, though never before offered at such low prices, with

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multitudes of men and women in the greatest want —being without food, clothing, shelter —without work, and consequently without means to obtain the simplest necessities of life.

6. It has thrown out of employment substantially one-half of the working classes. In fact, it has utterly destroyed all regular or constant employment for any considerable class in any industry, and is constantly and steadily displacing able and willing men, and filling their places with women and children; leaving no place to be filled by, and no demand for, the constantly-increasing numbers developed in our increase of population, in this way adding to the number of the unemployed. It takes married women in thousands from their maternal cares and duties, and children but little more than infants from the schools, putting them to the care of machinery and its work, until quite one-third of the machine tenders in our country are women and children: thus breaking down the mothers, slaughtering the infants, and giving employment to any who obtain it only upon such conditions of uncertainty, insecurity, competition with the workless, and steady reduction in wages, as create a constant struggle to obtain the little work they do have, and get such compensation for it as will barely support life even when in health.

These points show clearly the changes which have taken place in all our industries within a period of little more than half a century —changes greater than the world has before known during its whole existence.

Surely such a picture as this, relating to a country where circumstances are at present so favourable for securing the welfare of the masses, as is the case in the United States — a country not long since regarded as the paradise of the working man —should lead to the most serious consideration whether the universal freedom to struggle can produce the universal good often ascribed to it; whether this "law of nature" can be the true law of life for reasonable beings, and is not rather a law to be studied and made subservient to human progress, but not one which can form the solid basis of a human society.

It is my position that this is the case —that human work ought to be carried on upon a system not of struggle but of fellowship, where the results of the common labour are

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distributed with equity, and the conditions of life generally

are wisely adapted to facilitate the use of these results in the way which will enable the mass of the population to derive from them the largest attainable measure of advantage.

It is my position that arrangements may be made by which such effects as those above indicated can be produced, without in any way interfering with the liberty of anyone to deal with their own property[^] as they please, so that they observe the general conditions necessary for the common welfare; without any attempt to effect an "equal division of unequal earnings"; simply by studying the natural law of competition to determine how to obtain from it the good which it may yield, without the evil now accompanying it. Let us examine this matter calmly.

To what cause have we found that the injurious effects traced out above are attributable? Mainly to this: that the progress of industry, when we allow it to adjust itself by the natural law of competition left unrestrained, separates a perpetually increasing proportion of the population from the natural condition of life—the direct access to that minister of the Divine bounty, our common mother Earth, to obtain that gift of food which she is not niggardly in bestowing when applied to in a fitting manner.

That the appropriation of the land by individual ownership will certainly lead to this result where that appropriation is left at liberty to settle itself, we see from our own experience. That this effect cannot be prevented, even by an interference with the rights of ownership so considerable as prevails in France, where the law apportions the lands owned by anyone at his death among his children, we see by its effects there. For, though this law has been general in France for nearly a century, and

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the practice of sub-division in many districts was in full force in the sixteenth century, and has been carried to an extent very injurious to the effective cultivation of the soil, which, with a climate better suited than that of England to the production of wheat, does not yield on an average two-thirds of the amount of English produce; still, the total number of landowners did not exceed one-tenth of the whole population (3,800,000), according to the return of 1866 when Alsace and Lorraine were still included in France, of whom 3,236,000 were actual land occupiers; while the tendency of the rural districts to become less populous from migration to the towns, so marked in England, and which the statement above quoted shows to be rapidly increasing in the United States, is beginning to show itself in France also.

Now, if the case be as is here stated; if the tendency of competitive industry is to separate men from the natural source of life, and the injurious effect upon the worker is directly traceable to this separation, can we show that in co-operative trade and industry there is any natural tendency in the opposite direction? any mode of action which, counteracting this injurious effect of competition, may, as it becomes general, leave us in possession of the good arising from this natural force without its evil? I think that such a natural tendency may be pointed out, and I will endeavour to bear out this position by shortly tracing the way in which co-operation can deal with the competition of existing society, in which, clearly, it has to grow up if it ever takes its place as an important influence in human affairs. This method essentially consists in using the resources put into our hands by the present system in order gradually to replace it by another

where the struggle of interests shall give place to their reasonable adjustment. To begin with the theory of co-operative distribution, what is it but a union of

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consumers, who say: why should we run about to this or that man, who, for his own advantage, undertakes to supply what we want, and is under continual temptation to defraud us, because his interests and ours are opposed? Why not unite to obtain what we want on the best terms, namely, by paying ready cash for it, through persons appointed by ourselves, in whom we begin by having confidence, and all of whose acts are open to us; with whom we make definite agreements for payment for their services; and whom if there is ever occasion for calling their conduct in question, we can remove?

Plainly, here is a step, and a very important step, made towards the substitution of reasonable accord instead of competitive struggle in a class of transactions of daily occurrence, yet a step such that its success is entirely within the power of any moderately numerous number of persons, who have the good sense to take it, and the patience to persevere in what they have undertaken. This is the first step to get free from the meshes of competition. It is a step in no degree involving any loss of the advantages which competition may have brought within our reach in obtaining the articles to be distributed, or the neglect of any means of economising labour, or increasing convenience or efficiency in the process, introduced by it. It is simply saying: this act of our daily lives shall be performed so as to bring with it the least of cost and the most of confidence attainable; and, as a most valuable means to this end, under the condition of cash payments, with no capital needlessly lying out unproductively; no bad debts swelling the cost to those who pay by the loss from those who do not.

Now, on this solid foundation, when it has attained a breadth proportioned to its solidity by the multiplication of separate centres of supply, it becomes possible to build with equal solidity, and without any departure from the

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accustomed methods of business the further step of a central association, which may be to the separate stores what they have been to these individual members—the means of concentrating their purchases, and thus enabling them to be made on the best terms, from their magnitude, and by the best judges, from the greater power of securing the services of the persons best qualified to judge, which one wholesale establishment must possess over a number of retail establishments. While associations of this kind may, by a further application of the same principle of union, be federated among themselves for any purposes going beyond the separate resources of any one of them, such as the importing any of the articles they require in ships of their own; and thus, without departing from the usual habits of competitive business, may apply for the advantage of the co-operative union whatever arrangements competitive trade has brought men to use in these businesses for their private advantage.

With this union for the means of transit, which may apply to land as well as water, we come pretty well to the end of what co-operation has to do in the province of distribution. But men cannot generally live on distributing. Distribution rests on the previous process of producing what can be distributed. I proceed to show

how co-operative union can help us to escape from the competitive struggle, in this primary sphere of production, with the like prospects of general advantage which accompany its operations in the secondary' sphere of distribution. It acts by a course of operations of which the wholesale centre of supply forms the natural pivot, and the rule to be adopted in fixing or settling the price of the articles distributed, an institution not yet noticed, furnishes the natural lever.

To commence production successfully at the present day, the producer needs an assured market. To carry on

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production at all he needs capital. And for the workers to carry it on so as to derive from it all the advantages that their work can give them they require to get this capital on easy terms, i. e., at moderate rates of interest. Now, to get capital at moderate rates of interest, it is indispensable to give its owners security that the payments shall continue. Produce this conviction, and experience proves conclusively that in a country such as Great Britain the rate at which capital can be obtained is so moderate that it ceases to form any burden upon industry. Now, a body of distributive societies, united by such a central association as above described, have in this centre the natural means of ascertaining what is their total demand for any manufactured articles which they can produce and consume; and when that consumption rises to a height to support a manufactory of these articles, they have in them the means of providing the first condition of success, a market for their produce, where they may anticipate at least a fair trial.

But further, this machinery of distribution may supply them with the means of obtaining the capital required at the lowest cost allowed by the circumstances, by means of the savings on their own consumption. If they provide that the articles obtained by them through their unions for distribution shall be sold at ordinary prices, and return to their members the surplus, after providing for the total cost including the interest on the capital employed in this operation, as dividends on their purchases instead of by an immediate reduction of prices, they will gain two great advantages —

1. They can ensure the division of these savings down to the last farthing, without leaving, in the charge made to provide for expense, a margin which shall be a temptation to any body of shareholders to appropriate it to

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themselves, and thus practically obtain a benefit at the cost of their neighbours.

2. They will create, in the permanent incomes resting on their own consumption, a fund which, used by a union of these societies as a guarantee for the interest of the capital they may desire to appropriate to any productive works, would provide a security sufficient to enable them to obtain this capital on the best terms that the state of the money market in the country where they were formed would allow. While the produce of these works would supply them with the resources for paying the charge, and relieve the guaranteeing income from any real burden.

Here, then, without departing at all from the social conditions created by the present world of competition,

adhering to the prices fixed, and the modes of conducting exchanges established by it, we see the way opening to the quiet, gradual introduction of that world of co-operative union, where the mass of the population shall no longer be shut out from the natural source of subsistence, and all the advantages of wealth and the civilising influences of high cultivation may be brought within the reach of all men. For the co-operators, having by union attained a market in their own requirements for what they desire to produce, and the facility for getting capital on the easiest terms on the security of their own consumption, would obviously have in their own hands the power of regulating the mode in which work should be conducted, and its profits dealt with. While securing that this work was honestly done; that they got full value for what they paid, and escaped entirely from the dominion of adulteration and shams, and providing for the greatest economy in production by arresting the formation of unnecessary centres of supply, they might do for the worker what M Godin has done at Guise —destroy

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the antagonism between labour and capital, and gradually fill up the gulf between rich and poor by the insensible effect of institutions where the wealth created by work may do for the worker all that, by the wise use of it, can be done.

This might be effected even if the laws of England were far less favourable to associated enterprise than they actually are under the present law, which clothes societies of working men with all the rights of bodies corporate, together with the right of holding land in any quantity. It is clear that societies formed for productive purposes under the conditions above supposed might, as they multiplied and became wealthy, and spread over the country, combine with their manufacture those pursuits of horticulture and agriculture, on whose advantages the late Mr. Gladstone once dwelt with his usual eloquence; and open the way, by the pleasant conditions of residence under which their work was carried on, for that social union with the classes now separated from them which the progress of competitive industry, with its tendency to crowd the masses of the population into cities, makes perpetually more remote, by destroying all the natural friendly ties of residence in the same locality. This might be done, too, under our existing laws relating to land without any change; requiring nothing more than preparedness to buy the land perpetually offered for sale. And it might be done with far greater facility in a country where land is habitually held and disposed of in large quantities than would be the case in a country like France, where, to acquire an estate of a few hundred acres, might need a long process of purchases and exchanges of land bought in fragments. We approach in this picture a state of things so far removed from what now prevails in a society[^] of rural districts which the progress of invention is perpetually depriving of their

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population, and cities overflowing with a population which the same progress is continually depriving of the means of subsistence, that those to whom it is presented as an accomplished fact, rather than as a process gradually accomplishing itself by natural tendencies, may be apt to greet it with that cry of "Utopia" with which selfish indifference is always ready to throw cold water on large proposals of social improvement; if not by that favourite stalking-horse of pessimism, the more rapid increase of

men than of food —of which I will say only that a race among whom cultivation and the means of well-being were generally diffused would be able to deal with it in a satisfactory manner far better than our present population.

But on what, after all, does the operation I have here endeavoured to depict rest, but on the assumption that bodies of men, collectively acting for their mutual advantage, would do for their joint benefit what we find that individually men are disposed to do for their private benefit, when competitive industry places the means of so doing in their hands. Have we not seen generation after generation of manufacturers, when by their successful industry they have rolled up from the profits of their business accumulated stores of capital, investing them in the purchase of land, and erecting thereon for themselves and their families stately dwellings, where wealth was made to minister in a thousand ways to the means of enjoyment? If, then, the mass of the working population —those through whose toil this accumulation of wealth has been made possible —find the way by association among themselves to make the source of riches flow over for their joint benefit, why should it seem strange to suppose that they too may seek collectively to invest their accumulated savings in the land, which to them might be not mere acres cultivated by others

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who had to sell the crops to pay their rent, but the site of homes where these workers themselves dwelt —homes where the pleasures of the social intercourse now afforded only in towns could be combined with the pleasures of that rural life from which the towns of our industrial England ever more and more shut out their inhabitants? Even at the present day Lancashire and Yorkshire are full of mills and factories, which by their situation would offer all the facilities for such a combination of rural and urban existence, if the profits derived from their work were concentrated and applied in the way now indicated, to promote the well-being of the workers. The spread of rail and tramways makes the raising of such centres of industry more easy every day. Surely, then, it is a reasonable hope that, as the workers obtain through association increased means of producing such results, there would be a corresponding increase in the results produced; so that the progress of invention and accumulation of wealth would tend to redistribute over the country the population which this same progress now banishes from it; not as the semi-pauperised tillers of cottier lots, which they were too scattered and too poor to cultivate properly, but as the wealthy and intelligent inhabitants of unitary dwellings, where all the resources of agricultural and horticultural science would be applied to make the produce of the earth keep pace with the produce of the industries by which its owners were enriched.

That cities would disappear I do not suppose. Emporiums of commerce, centres of education, centres of art would, no doubt, exist where circumstances favoured their existence; but they would be transformed; resembling Dr. Richardson's City of Health rather than our present deserts of brick and mortar. A thickly peopled country would be something like what

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may be seen now along the shores of the lake of Zurich, only in greater perfection: a succession of palaces, each

with its farms, gardens, and orchards, interspersed with centres of work, all smokeless; and with now and then more thickly aggregated masses of a population who, unlike the residents of our present towns, would never be so closely crowded together as to lose the pleasure of life in their search after the means of living. This would be the outcome of a co-operative world such as I conceive it.

I stop here, not because the subject-matter does not invite me to go on, but because any attempt to trace out the relations subsisting between the different productive bodies which might be formed by such means as I have attempted to trace, carries us into a state of things so far removed from the present state that the description may be charged with being as impossible as it must be imaginary. But that it must be imaginary does not prove it to be impossible.

I have desired to point out what, in the present competitive world, could be effected without any departure from the usual conditions of business, simply by using the results of this business for the general good, instead of letting them be appropriated to individual advantage. I have endeavoured to show that co-operation, in the two principles traced out, both consistent with the ordinary course of competitive industry'—the union of consumers to secure the greatest attainable economy in distribution, and the union of producers to make the work by which they live as rich in benefits to them as it is capable of being—possesses the means of solving that social question which now "perplexes nations with the fear of change," and is growing with every returning year to more alarming proportions; the upshot of the whole process being that it would

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gradually bring men, in the fulness of knowledge and the indefinite increase of wealth, back to that natural constitution of things where competition, being directed not to secure subsistence but to multiply the means of enjoyment, would be seen to have a fitting place in the "best possible world" of Divine order.

Note on Natural Law. —The position taken up in this chapter in regard to the "Law of Competition," in truth, assumes only that the same principles which apply to all other so-called Laws of Nature apply to it. All such laws have a natural sphere of action, in which they are beneficial to man; and if he passes beyond this sphere, will produce results working to his injury, to be avoided only by carefully studying their action, in order to preserve what is beneficial, and avert what is injurious. For instance, our powers of motion and exertion depend upon the fact that the earth pulls us to itself, in virtue of the so-called Law of Gravitation. But if we try to leave the natural sphere of activity allotted to us—the dry land—and would swim like fish or fly like birds; or if, upon the land, we seek to move large masses instead of contenting ourselves with moving our own bodies, the force of gravity will drown or crush us, unless by constructing boats, or balloons, or cranes, we make it serve our purposes. But what everyone admits to be reasonable in the case of other "Natural Laws," is disregarded in respect of the "Law of Competition," which is often presented as if it were a Divine teacher, with a special mission to construct human society upon a solid basis; a teacher under whose guidance we ought to place ourselves, in humble confidence that he cannot lead us astray. It is my position that this is a total error, and that competition is simply a natural force which can no more be trusted to construct a true human society than gravity can be trusted to construct a bridge.

Chapter V.

The Relation of Co-operation to Current Economic Theories.

TO investigate the different economic theories current at the present day in detail, in order to see how far they agree or disagree with the principles of co-operative action, would require a volume. I do not propose to engage in any such task. But as what is called the science of Political Economy is often, appealed to—usually with a great deal of ignorance of what its teachers do say, but not, therefore, with the less confidence—as if it put an extinguisher on all schemes of co-operative action, labelling them one and all as "impracticable," it may be well to consider generally—what is the relation of co-operation to these doctrines. We shall see that, properly speaking, there can be no antagonism between co-operation and the doctrines of political economy, because they deal with distinct subject-matters.

Let us bear in mind what has been more than once stated, that co-operation is not a theory but a practice. Co-operation, as it is presented in these pages, is an attempt made by men profoundly convinced of the eternal reality of moral truth, to embody the high ideal of duty in institutions applying to the daily events of our ordinary lives, in order that thus, goodness may become more prevalent than it is among men because its practice will be more easy, and selfishness diminish because there will be less temptation to it. But the doctrines of Political Economy, at least of the school

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best known in England, relate not to the mode in which men ought to act towards each other, but to the way in which they—do commonly act in acquiring wealth, and to the results which are found to follow—from their thus acting.

Now, in so far as what man may thus do agrees with what ought to be done, it is obvious that the co-operator cannot, as such, have any quarrel with the political economist, whose teachings, like those of any other scientific teacher who deals with ascertained facts and logical deductions from them, continually offer to him much useful information.

On the other hand, in so far as men's present conduct is not what it ought to be, doctrines concerning their conduct must of necessity—cease to apply to persons whose conduct has changed, and therefore can affect co-operation only as demonstrations of the evil consequences of drunkenness may affect a man of sober habits—namely, as a caution into what an abyss of degradation and wretchedness he would fall if he were ever betrayed into such habits.

It may be alleged: what you now say in truth admits the great charge of the political economists against co-operation—that it is impracticable; a mode of acting in which men will not act in numbers sufficient to make it worth anyone's while to spend his labour in trying to get them so to act. But from the point of view taken in these pages of man and his history—from the conception of it as a moral progress, in which the idea of human brotherhood gradually becomes evolved as an active power, by the more complete transformation of the individual man into the likeness of that Divine ideal in whose manifestation the change began, or from any other conception of human history which sees in it a story of moral progress, the answer is clear.

It is —we do believe, that men's conduct will generally come to be such as it* ought to be far more generally than it is now, and we believe that men will be brought thus to act by means of such institutions as we are endeavouring to set up. They will require to be formed by men profoundly impressed by the principle of human brotherhood, full of faith in its reality and enthusiasm over the splendid outlook for the future of mankind offered by it. But in and by them will be gradually produced among other men, not necessarily a spirit such as animated these founders, but at least a disposition to act in the way recommended, though, perhaps, with a view to personal advantage.

For this must not be forgotten —any institution deliberately planned with the object of promoting the welfare of all whom it may sensibly affect, must, unless it is very badly adapted for the purpose intended by it, be advantageous to the great majority of men. Only that small but strong minority whose talent enables them to "get on," as it is called, meaning, to get up on other men's backs and so be raised above the crush, to come to the front and roll up wealth and the power given by wealth, may feel themselves placed relatively at a disadvantage, by having to work for the common good, and to be contented with the common advantages placed within the reach of all with such special share of the total produce as in the general opinion their work deserves, instead of keeping all that they could get "off their own bat." Now, no doubt, this powerful minority is the greatest difficulty in the way of co-operation. Dealing as it does with matters of business, and requiring, therefore, when it advances beyond the comparatively simple phase of distribution, that union of qualities which go to make successful traders or manufacturers, it has to induce such men to devote themselves to its service, with nothing

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to offer them but the consciousness that if they give up much of what they might have acquired, they have gained what is more worth gaining —the conviction of having faithfully used their powers to promote the well-being of mankind.

The hope of the success of co-operation depends upon the assumption that men may be found possessing the required capacity, to whom such considerations as those above alluded to are supreme; who, without demanding, what it would be suicidal in co-operators to offer, a personal remuneration rivaling that offered by the competitive world to those who succeed in serving themselves, will give to the service of Humanity by co-operation work as persevering, and far more faithful than the competitive world is able to purchase, from men whose services are determined only by the calculation of comparative individual advantages. Is this hope unreasonable? I conceive that it is not.

The real antagonism between co-operation and the political economists of the school referred to lies not in the science of Political Economy, that is, the principles by which labour has to be carried on in order to acquire wealth, but in the assumption continually made by this class of writers that men are beings whose conduct in commercial matters will always be regulated solely or mainly with a view to their individual selfish interest; while the co-operator, though he admits that this tendency is lamentably prevalent at the present time, looks upon it as a "false skin," developed to an unnatural vigour by the effort to cast off a mediæval worn-out skin, that had

become too tight for the growing energy of the body social, but destined itself ultimately to slough off, and give place to the permanent human skin, at once firm and elastic, which will give free play to the activity of each individual member, while it holds all firmly

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co-ordinated in the unity of the social body. Let us examine whether this assumption of the co-operator is justified by ascertainable facts.

It needs, I think, only that we rub the dust from our eyes and look around us in the world as it is, to see that assiduous, unwearied, concentrated, enduring labour may be obtained from men in pursuits which interest their higher nature, by considerations in which the idea of working for immediate self-interest becomes entirely subordinated to other motives. The pursuit of knowledge of almost any kind, the pursuit of art, the desire to promote the welfare of other men, whether in an assumed future existence as among the majority of religious teachers, or simply from the wish to alleviate human suffering as among very many members of the medical profession, are instances of this sort.

The service of the State in all its branches —military, naval, and civil —furnishes a similar and, in some respects, more instructive lesson; because if we do not usually find here the enthusiastic devotion often displayed by the scientific inquirer, the artist, the priest, and the doctor, we keep within the broad recognised lines of ordinary human action, so that what it is possible thus to call forth cannot be considered a flight beyond the common reach of mankind. Now, if we look at this service of the State, either in our own or other law-abiding countries, such as France or Germany, we may satisfy ourselves that, in order to obtain the best work of men of high ability, very moderate payments suffice, if they are combined with two conditions —(i) the certainty of their continuance except through forfeiture from misconduct; (2) the prospect of an advance to higher positions, regulated by merit and not by capricious favour.

But these two conditions a co-operative union would be peculiarly able to assure, from the very fact of its

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being essential!}^ a system in which united action would gradually supersede individual struggles. In such a system the uncertain chances of competitive rivalry would naturally disappear before the establishment of centres of production and supply, carefully arranged with reference to the wants of the population, and embracing districts federated together, so that each centre, while free to act within its recognised limit, would have the sphere thus defined undisturbed. Such a system would naturally lead to the permanence of employments and to a hierarchy of offices. In truth it would transform the whole machinery of production and distribution into public functions, and thus bring into general operation those motives which are found, in the world as it is, to be reliable means of combining efficiency in the work done with economy in the payments made for it.

How large a fund co-operative organisation would have at its command for reasonably rewarding its most efficient workers, while yet it gave a largely increased individual advantage to the mass of the population, the actual results obtained by co-operative societies in their savings

upon the enormous cost of the present system of competitive distribution show. We find by a wide experience that, even among the poorer classes, from 10 to 12 and 12 1 per cent on the ordinary price of articles in the most constant demand may be saved, after paying all the necessary costs, including £5 per cent a year on the capital used, simply by union among the consumers to do the work of getting what they want to their own dwellings in the most economical manner for themselves, instead of allowing anyone who chooses to set up a shop to compete for their custom.

It can scarcely be doubted that much larger savings may be made on the dealings in those articles where, the sale being less quick, the percentage of profit charged on

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each article is greater. But, independently of this saving in the cost of distribution in each particular case, there is a mode of possible saving, often little thought of, in the suppression of the needless centres of supply - which now add to the expense without any corresponding increase of convenience, on which I would say a few words, availing myself of the careful computation contained in reference to London in one of the Central Board tracts on the " Economy of Co-operation " : —

That there is an enormous waste of labour in the system of distribution in use at present, anyone may satisfy himself who will consider what arrangements it would be natural to adopt, if we had to supply any of our great centres of population with their daily demands of food, or any other articles of ordinary consumption, as a commissariat department would supply a camp of equal size. A person charged with such a duty would, I suppose, begin by asking what is the furthest distance beyond which no dwelling shall be removed from a centre of supply; and when this had been settled, would map out the place to be supplied into as many areas as would be required to secure this end if a centre were placed in the middle of each, and would set up his establishments accordingly. Considering the distance at which people are now content to live from the shops whence they get their ordinary supplies, I think it may be said that if there was no dwelling more than one-third of a mile from such a centre, the great majority being of course much nearer, the object would be sufficiently attained, in those cases where the demand is most frequent; cases where the demands were more special or less frequent being met by a diminished number of centres, always, however, systematically arranged. That is to say, a city might be supplied with whatever its inhabitants ordinarily required in a thoroughly convenient and efficient manner, if one good centre of supply were placed in the middle of every square third of a mile — nine in every square mile — for, in this case, it is clear that the furthest distance which anyone would have to go from his dwelling to this centre, if the streets were laid out on a regular plan, would be two sides of a square, each one-sixth of a mile long. How many of such centres would be wanted to supply London, and how many actually exist ?

The Post Office Directory of London contains the names of all the traders who carry on business in that vast centre of population.

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classified under their occupations. The map prefixed to the issue for 1877 represents 108 square miles. But of this space certainly

scarcely more than half is included in the area containing the dwellings of those traders whose addresses the list furnishes. For the map takes in a tract of at least an average breadth of a mile, 36 square miles in all, forming suburbs whose residents are not included in this list. And large deductions must be made from the remaining 72 miles to allow for the irregularity of outline of London, and the spaces occupied by the parks and the Thames, within those portions where the population is dense. Fifty-four square miles might, I believe, be fairly taken as the area to be dealt with. But, to err on the right side, I will assume this area to be two-thirds of the whole 72 square miles. The computation of nine centres of supply to each of these miles would give 648 central bazaars as the number of retail establishments required for the convenient supply of London with the articles of most common consumption. What is the actual number of establishments which London contains in this area? I have taken 22 trades connected with the supply of (1) alcoholic drinks and tobacco, (2) food and household wants, (3) clothes and personal wants, (4) books, medicines, and stationery, and obtain the following results, which, I should add, do not profess to be more than tolerably near computations (1879): —

Trades connected with the supply of —

1. —Intoxicating Drinks and Tobacco.

Excess over 648.
Trades. Numbers.

Beer sellers 1610

Publicans 5814

Tobacconists 1824

Wine Merchants 2052

Totals 11300

2. —Food and Household

Bakers 2394

Butchers 1594

Chandlers 2479

Cheesemongers 826

Coffee-room Keepers 1721

Confectioners 1015

Dairymen 1824

Greengrocers 1881

Grocers and Tea Dealers —2747

Oil and Colourmen 1379

Actual.

Per cent

962

.. 148

... 5166

•• 797

... 11 76

.. 166

... 1404

.. 216

... 8708

335

) Want s.

... 1746

.. 269

... 948

146

... 1831

.. 281

... 178

26

... 1073

.. 165

... 370

••• 57

1 1 76

.. i 8i

••• 1233

190

2099

•• 324

••• 731

112

Totals 17865 ... 11385

175

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3. —Clothes and Personal Wants.

Boot and Shoe Makers 3477 ••• • 2829 ... 436

Hairdressers 1083 ... 435 ... 67

Linen Drapers 1368 ... 720 ... iii

Tailors 2679 ... 2031 ... 313

Watchmakers 1309 ... 655 ... loi

Totals 9916 ... 6670 ... 205

4. —Books, Medicines, and Stationery.

Booksellers 912 ... 264 ... 40

Chemists and Druggists 893 ... 245 ... 37

Stationers 855 ... 207 ... 32

Totals 2660 ... 716 ... 36

Adding up the four lists, we get a grand total of 41,735 centres of supply, against 14,256 wanted —27,479 too many according to our previous computation, or 26,903, even if, in the case of public-houses, we suppose one placed at each corner of each area of one-third of a mile square, in addition to one in the middle — 251 existing shops, on the average of all these trades, for every 100 wanted.

It is out of my power to form any accurate estimate of the unnecessary cost caused to the public of London by the present wasteful system of distribution beyond what they would have to pay if this indispensable office of bringing the things wanted and the persons who want them together were discharged with the economy which a well-ordered organisation might secure. For, on the one hand, when we take those trades which deal in articles not so constantly required as the articles enumerated above, each case would have to be considered by itself, in order to form an estimate of the number of centres of supply reasonably wanted, so as to compare them with the number that competition gives us; while, on the other hand, the list of London traders contains a large number of producers, who must be struck off upon an inquiry into the waste of distribution; and, after all, unless the actual cost of the existing distributive centres and the amount of business done could be ascertained and compared with what we know by experience to be the ordinary cost of doing this amount of business

in a system of well-organised co-operative distribution, we should get only guesses, which we might make pretty nearly as well without the labour of such a computation. Even if we confine ourselves to the trades above enumerated, where in every instance there is a large excess, the great irregularity in the degrees of this

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excess, ranging, even if publicans are excluded, from 26 per cent in the case of cheesemongers to 436 per cent in that of shoemakers, and the very great differences which there doubtless are in the average turnover of a shop in one trade as compared with that in another trade, makes it impossible to form more than a very rough estimate of the increased cost of distribution with which London allows itself to be charged, because its citizens do not combine in a reasonable method of supplying themselves with the things which they want every day. However, to give our ideas some little definiteness in the matter, consider this. In the 22 trades enumerated above, we have found that there are 26,903 shops more than are necessary. No doubt many of these shops are small. Suppose that, one with another, the cost of each shop is, for rent, rates, taxes, light, fuel, &c., £100 a year, and £150 for the wages or cost of living of the persons employed, we get a sum of £6,725,750 as the total cost of these shops, of which it is, I think, a moderate supposition that at least one-third of the rent, &c., and two-thirds of the service, would be saved if the work was done by the 14,836 centres needed, instead of the 41,735 existing. There would be a direct saving to the citizens of London of over £4,000,000 a year in these trades only, by suppressing the useless cost of unnecessary establishments; independently of the great economy produced by turning the profits of the seller into savings to the buyer, which, we know, would give to the customers of the reduced number of establishments, after paying all costs and the interest on capital, from 6d. to 2s. 6d. in the £, on whatever may be the turnover of the 41,735 shops with which we are dealing; an amount probably much under-estimated at an average of £2,500, or £100,000,000 a year.

Nor must it be forgotten, when we are considering what might be saved by co-operation in distribution, that the names of the traders mentioned above occupy 367 columns only of the 1,565 included in the Trades Directory of that vast magazine of addresses furnished by the Post Office, of whom by far the greater part are engaged in distribution. It represents but a fraction of the waste which lies at the door of competition in London only; though, for the reasons already given, I refrain from any attempt to reduce this waste to an amount appreciable by figures.

Now this great saving which association for distribution can effect would not be purchased by a diminution of the convenience offered by the present system. On the contrary, there would be an increase of this convenience,

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The actual needless multiplication of shops does not prevent a large part of the residences in London from being much further than the one-third of a mile assumed by me as the extreme distance of any house from some centre of supply; for these centres are distributed with reference, not to the greatest convenience of the inhabitants, but to the opinions entertained by their proprietors of the situations where they will have the best chances of attracting notice and obtaining custom. Therefore they fill the principal thoroughfares in continuous lines, while they leave large areas of population with a very scanty number of

shops. And these shops are not as they would be upon a system of organised distribution, all first class, where in every instance entire reliance might be placed on the quality of the goods supplied and the fairness of the prices charged, because all would be supplied from the same wholesale centres with which they would be connected in federal union; all would be conducted by managers, appointed by committees of purchasers who would overhaul all their proceedings, and liable to summary dismissal at least, if not to other penalties, for any detected roguery. The actual shops may be said to be of all degrees of goodness or badness, agreeing with each other only in one respect, that the ordinary buyer can never get any knowledge of the amount of additional charge beyond the cost price to which the supposed economy of competitive trade subjects him

Now, London is only a specimen of the system universal over the whole country. How large a fund would be placed at the disposal of the co-operators by this mere saving of useless cost in distribution, out of which to reward useful activity, is, I think, made very clear by such facts as these. They may relieve us altogether from the apprehension that co-operation must give up the hope of raising the masses because its resources would be used up in paying its chiefs. There are ample funds in the saving on competitive waste to effect both objects.

The considerations adduced in the last sentence apply to life as it is in our competitive world, and the isolated homes natural to a life so circumstanced. But in contrasting the motives which may lead men to energetic work in a co-operative society, we must not leave out the

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advantages which the co-operator would derive from the principle of association when it is applied to the formation of unitary homes, as it is applied already by M Godin, at Guise, and, with the growth of co-opciativ2 union, must certainly be applied more and more extensively.

Unitary homes will, I conceive, be to co-operation what monasteries were in the Middle Ages to the Church: the fortresses by which it will take possession of society, and gradually convert mankind to obedience to the new faith. Life in them will be greatly more full of physical enjoyment for the mass of mankind. Life in them will be infinitely more full of moral satisfaction to all the noblest spirits of our race. They will see in these homes the means of abolishing that ever-deepening dyke, dug by our competitive society between the "two nation^" of rich and poor, and look forward to the ever-increasing means of general well-being which such institutions will secure to mankind by the deposit of accumulated wealth left behind by each successive generation. So that the desire for that isolated family existence which is the great source of the perpetual race after wealth will cease. It will yield to a desire to maintain institutions felt by everyone alike to be the permanent source both of individual happiness and general well-being; until the notion prevalent among many political economists, that this race after wealth is the only efficient motive to human activity, will come to be classed among the comical absurdities into which clever men have fallen, who, hving in an age just emerging from barbarism fancied that the society wherein they lived had spoken the last word in the "History of Civilisation."*

* The views advocated in this chapter will be rejected by those who conceive that, because the struggle for existence is a law of physical being, it must also be a law of spiritual being. To all objectors of this class I reply: You are confusing the root with the fruit, which indeed depends upon, but is very different from it. Self-assertion is the

first condition of individual being; it does not follow that self-assertion is its end. On the contrary, the theory of development, which I accept as scientifically established, teaches that, in the progress of existence on the earth, the opposite principle, of

Chapter VI.

The Relation of Co-operation to the State.

CO-OPERATION has been presented in these pages as essentially a voluntary system. Its root has been traced back to that deepest of all principles known to us: free, that is, self-governing, reasonable will; that power which, being, as I believe, the ultimate source of all existence, has come out on this earth where we dwell as the result of the long succession of advances conditioned by the struggle for existence, during the unnumbered ages recorded in the fragmentary leaves of the "Stone Book." When Ichthyosauri, Plesiosauri, Megatheria, and all the other tribes of monsters had improved themselves away; when the huge fern forests of the past had stored up in beds of coal the force radiated in times long gone by from the central orb; then, amidst a world of flowering and fruit-bearing plants and shrubs, a world of bright-hued insects and many-voiced birds, man, the contemporary of the dog, the elephant, the camel, the horse, the sheep, and the cow, appeared, to "order and to dress" the abode, made lit by the natural development of

combined action, has manifested itself with continually increasing completeness. Gases have combined into liquids and solids; liquids and solids have united to form plants. On the plant has reposed conscious animal life. With the consciousness of surroundings has appeared the intelligence capable of combining them as means for its own ends. And beneath this intelligence there has become manifest a reasonable self-governing will, which claims the right to determine those ends. To go back to the struggle for existence as the law of reasonable life, is to ignore this vast progress, and treat men as if they were only bags of gas. No doubt the struggle continues. If it ceased, individual existence must disappear. But to appeal to it as a principle capable of producing a true human society is, as has been noticed on page 86, much like appealing to the force of gravitation to build a bridge.

[Though of a controversial character, the last two paragraphs of this chapter have been left in, so that the student unacquainted with the earlier edition of this Manual may have an opportunity of seeing what was the mental attitude of the writers to this question. Any further reference to unitary homes has been eliminated. —W.C.]

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struggle for the dwelling of a creature who could resolve the discords of nature into the harmonies of reason.

Our first chapter has traced the character of that process by which the Divine Author of the universe, working always through appropriate means, struck the chords from whence this harmony can be evolved; by the manifestation of His own infinite love in the person of Christ, awaking in the heart of man the echoes of a responsive love, which should gradually substitute its divine melody for the discordant tones of natural selfishness. But harmony consists in many different sounds combined so that each, while preserving its individual distinctness, contributes to the all-embracing ideal unity. Naturally, therefore, the idea thus introduced into the world created for itself an organisation — a state which, under the name of the Church, soon began to assert over against the empire of the Caesars, the claim to a sway larger even than that colossal centre of political might — a kingdom of God, including alike "Greek and Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, slave and free," combined in common willing obedience to its Divine head; whose power rested, not on the visible force swayed by the master of forty legions, but in the invisible power that constrains the hearts of men.

Between these rival states, each claiming unlimited obedience, soon arose a deadly contest, where the victory declared, not for the external, but for the internal power; not for the flesh, but for the spirit; not for the strongest battalions, but for the deepest influences; not for the Eagles, but for the Cross.

The time came when the genius which was throned on Mount Palatine had to yield to the genius that presided over the " Lord's Table " —when the new Christian State swallowed up the ancient State of Rome, and began to mould, according to its own tendencies, that powerful agency of legal might which it had been for more

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than three centuries engaged in a " struggle for existence " ; an issue which may reassure those who fear, as many seem at the present day to fear, that in this " struggle for existence " the outward will prove too strong for the inward, the bark too strong for the sap, and that to preserve moral truth from perishing it is necessary to feed it upon a dietary of undemonstrable assumptions. That this legal state was a tough morsel for the Church to digest I do not deny. It had to swallow an enormous mass of material very little prepared for assimilation, and still suffers from the indigestion thus occasioned. Yet it has done an immense work, of which at the present day we are liable not to appreciate the importance, because the work has been done so completely that scarcely any trace of the old state of things remains in our world; and because few of us are sufficiently well acquainted with the past to reproduce it as it was. The Church in digesting the old body politic has expelled from it slavery. Thus it has made possible that more perfect organisation wanted to complete the development of the good seed sown in, 800 years since in the land of Palestine; to realise that " more excellent way " set by the great Apostle of the Gentiles before his Corinthian converts in words that cannot be bettered; and to make of the body politic such a body as shall fulfil the ideas of a true state, which the same Apostle presents as the natural outcome of this " way." By the elimination from human society of this indigestible element of slavery, and the contemporaneous growth of orderly political freedom, the natural attendant on its elimination, and nowhere at the present age more completely attained than in our own United Kingdom, the way is prepared for the second great step in the evolution of humanity —the formation of a Church which shall not only teach men everywhere to pray that God's kingdom may come, His will be " done on earth as it is in

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heaven," but shall nourish in them the earnest determination that His will shall be done, for they will do it; that this kingdom shall come, for they will not rest from their labours till they see it established.

Now, this determination the co-operator who takes the view presented in these pages of what co-operation has to do, must set before himself as his determination. This state is the state that he has to bring about, carrying on the work of the Church of the first centuries to its logical issue. As the Christians of the first three centuries raised over against the political state an ecclesiastical state or Church which absorbed it, so has the co-operator to raise over against the present politico-ecclesiastical state a new social state; a voluntary body

growing up by its inherent energies like the Church of old, but fulfilling what the Church of old could only indicate in hope; till it may say with far deeper truth what was said of the Bible Society by one of its early presidents — "If it cannot reconcile all opinions it unites all hearts." Because taking as its starting point that sentiment of general benevolence, that sympathy with human necessities, which is the common outcome of all Christian teaching, however widely the teachers may differ in the theories connected by them with it, this social Church will be able to reconcile the manifoldness of belief in the oneness of practical action.

Co-operation, then, is called on to create a new social state, which, growing over against the present state as the Church did of old, only now under its shelter instead of in conflict with it, may, like its precursor, ultimately absorb the law-making power within its own circle, and can then complete what may be requisite for its perfect consolidation, by the same sort of authority, as that whereby, in all ages and countries, the minority have been required to give up for a reasonable compensation,

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rights of which the majority feel that the cession is necessary for the general welfare.

But as of old, so now, this new state must spring up freely, in that soil which the action of the older Church, or the intelligent and moral culture fostered directly or indirectly by it, has delivered from the incubus of slavery and the despotism of the body politic. Its claim on the existing state is simply for leave to grow and develop its own power in peaceable obedience to the laws which, in the United Kingdom at least, afford it all that it can require, by clothing the members of co-operative societies with corporate privileges for trading purposes, and giving them the unrestricted right of holding land.

A great confusion of ideas has prevailed on this matter, not in England so much as elsewhere, on the Continent of Europe, and latterly in the United States of North America. Because all social reformers look, and must of necessity look forward, to the formation, as the outcome of their reforms, of a state of things where the customs and rules of the reformed society will be identical with the laws of the countries where it flourished; therefore it has been supposed that a short cut to this reformed condition of things lay through the law-making power, to be exercised by means of universal suffrage by the mass of the population, who should substitute for the spirit of God actuating the will of man the words of man ordering men's lives.

The delusion has been already denounced in these pages, and cannot be denounced too strongly. One more fatal to the hopes of an abiding social reform it is impossible to imagine. It is analogous to the folly of a child who plants flowers to get a garden quickly. It is to suppose that a tree can grow without roots, or that we may gather "grapes of thorns" and "figs of thistles." Whether that development of the principle of love, of

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which the Christian religion has been the historical nurse, has yet attained a growth deep and wide enough to produce the social reforms sought by co-operation is a legitimate subject of question. To the writers of this Manual the signs of the times seem hopeful, otherwise

it would be useless for them to undertake the labour of writing it. On this matter they can only hope, without venturing to dogmatise. But of one thing they must assert their undoubting conviction, that if the co-operative spirit, with the facilities of action now open to it, cannot succeed in forming a reformed social state, the existing state will be absolutely powerless to create a co-operative spirit. As well might we suppose, that if St. Paul had succeeded in converting the Emperor Nero to the Christian faith, that religion might have been established as a true spiritual influence by the javelins and swords of the Roman legions.

Part III.

THE PRACTICE OF
CO-OPERATION.

PART III.

Chapter VII.

The Application of Co-operation to Distribution.

A PART from the moral benefit attending all modes of /-\ co-operation, if they are animated by a genuine desire to work for the common good, the beneficial results arising from its application to distribution rest upon the fact illustrated in the chapter on the Economical Basis of Co-operation—that there is in the present system of competitive trade an enormous waste. Not that those who undertake this office do not endeavour to do their work as economically as they can, but that, from circumstances which it would take more space than can be conveniently spared to trace in detail there is actually absorbed in the operation of bringing the desirable things produced in the world to the hands of those who require them a part of these things much larger than is needed in order to get the work done thoroughly well.

On this fact the economical strength of co-operative distribution rests in practice. The surplus over cost thus put into the pockets of the consumers, as the result of union to supply themselves, forms the backbone of co-operation. It gives to that system of trade a solid commercial basis on which to build the co-operative edifice, in what is undoubtedly, in my judgment, at least, the safest, the most useful, and best plan for every one who does not want co-operation to stop at distribution. This plan, popularly known as the Rochdale scheme, from its having been introduced to general acceptance

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by the Equitable Pioneers of Rochdale, is to sell all goods at the prices charged by respectable private traders, and returning the surplus over cost and interest on the capital invested to the members, as dividends on their purchases.

As the success of a distributive society must depend upon the amount of trade which it can do, it is desirable to place as little impediment as possible in the way of members joining by not requiring as a condition of membership the holding of more shares than the majority of those likely to join can easily afford to pay up. Some societies admit persons to the privileges of membership free, believing that nothing should be placed in

the way of anyone wishing to join ; others demand the payment of sums varying from 6d. to 1s. 6d., in each case the member agreeing to take up from one to five shares of the value of [^] each, these sums to be made up either from subscriptions or deductions from dividend until the whole are paid up.

In regard to the framing and registering of rules, or alterations of rules, the best plan is to communicate with the Co-operative Union, who will give all the advice and assistance necessary. The past and the present generation of co-operators is largely indebted for the advantages they now possess, and it ought to receive the hearty support of all who have learned to look upon co-operation as a connected scheme of action, having as its aim to use the vast powers of modern industry for the gradual elevation of the masses now crushed beneath the grindstone of competitive struggles. There is another class of benefits more commonly valued perhaps, which co-operative union has already placed within the reach of the co-operative body — those arising from the action of the Co-operative Wholesale Societies, both of England and Scotland.
 _ The present generation, perhaps, cannot fully appreciate

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the extent of this benefit, but those who fought through the hard battle which co-operative societies, formed before any such Wholesales existed, had to fight against the opposition of the private retail traders, in order to open the way to get the articles they wanted to sell of as good quality and on as easy terms as their opponents. But this is entirely altered since co-operative union has created great central institutions, which, from the magnitude of their transactions, can afford to employ skilled buyers and get access to the best markets, where these buyers, dealing for ready money and buying on a very large scale, can obtain the most favourable terms, which the magic of association places at the command of the smallest societies equally with the largest. Large and prosperous societies sometimes imagine, and, I believe, are in general mistaken in imagining, that they can obtain for themselves in the open market on better terms than they can secure from the Wholesale Societies, not only articles where the cost of carriage may give a great advantage to a local centre of supply, but even articles where there is nothing to be gained in this respect. But many of the largest societies, after trying both plans, have found that to be supplied through the wholesale centres is more advantageous to them than the attempt to get their supplies independently of them. Their experience confirms what might reasonably be anticipated — the advantage to be derived from a well-organised system of collective purchases, which shall utilise the custom of the whole body for the benefit of every member. Further, societies would do well to remember that every sovereign spent outside the organisations created by themselves to meet their needs, and which have no existence apart from themselves, is making it easy for the outside trader to compete with them. Just as we preach loyalty on the part of the individual member to

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his own society, so as societies we should, for the same reasons, be loyal to our own wholesale institutions.

An important question about which a great deal has been said and written is : \What rate of dividend should societies endeavour to pay ? The reply is : As large a dividend as the prices prevailing in the locality where the

society is established make possible. Taking account of the purpose co-operation on the Rochdale plan had in view, this is a better plan than that in operation in Civil Service Stores, at which goods are sold at such prices as will just pay the cost of management. Those who founded these stores did not profess to have, and no doubt had not, any other object in view than obtaining articles genuine in their kind and on the cheapest terms practicable by buying them in the gross. The system originated in the action of four clerks in the Post Office who joined to buy a chest of tea and divided it amongst themselves. Finding that they saved a considerable sum by the operation they determined to repeat it, and afterwards extended it to the purchase of other things which they required. The constitution of the Civil Service Stores is precisely what would reasonably arise from union for such objects, and such only.

Now if these were our main objects something might be said for adopting their methods, but as we have far more important objects to work for than merely to supply articles good in their kind at the least attainable cost; if we aim at what has already been outlined in earlier pages, then the constitution of the Civil Service Stores is not at all adapted to promote these aims, and, therefore, should not be imitated by any persons who set these further objects before them as their goal.

To achieve those ends we have in view we must have, as an indispensable condition of effective action, collective income. When every £1,000 of business done, after paying

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al) cost, and a dividend of, say, £5 per cent on invested capital, will yield a surplus income of from £100 to £125 gained by the members out of their household expenditure, without need of stinting any part of their usual outlay, it will be seen at once what a collective power they may thus acquire for any common purpose. Taking last year's sales (1914) of the 1,390 distributive societies we find that after providing £1,556,160 as interest on share capital, £49,758 as bonus and wages, £110,130 for educational and £6,408 for charitable purposes, there was left as dividend £13,501,825. This sum however, represents a dividend of 3s. in the £, which is from 1s. to 1s. 6d. in excess of what societies would pay if they sold their goods at the prices at which such articles could be obtained from the private traders in the district. It has been objected to the dividend system that it prevents the growth of co-operation by checking purchases at the stores in consequence of the high prices charged. This can only be true where prices are charged higher than those current in the district, and which is sometimes done in order to pay a higher dividend. Even then, experience has shown that where members can, they are even willing to pay prices slightly in excess of what are charged by private traders, and that a society paying a dividend of 2s. in the pound will be more likely to make progress than one paying 1s. 6d., even if the latter is giving the difference in the price to goods. It is obvious, however, that for a society to pay 4s., as some societies in the North of England do, means charging such prices as those earning low wages cannot pay, and they are thus deprived of any of the advantages which co-operation brings to those who are better off and can pay these prices. Further, it is becoming quite a custom for the private traders to fix their prices just as much below those of the store as will attract purchasers to

their shops. It has been proved that the poor in a district have had to pay more for their goods because the store gets high prices and pays a high dividend. This practice is not general, but it is a strong argument against high prices and high dividends.

Much has been said, and said justly, on the value of the system as a means of encouraging individual saving. Many members own the houses in which they live, and others have large accumulations in the society that they never would have had but for the fact that they were saved for them in insensible sums.

Another matter bearing on the internal management of societies deserves notice, because very incorrect ideas often prevail about it. This is the powers of general meetings, more particularly of special general meetings. It seems often to be supposed that the resolutions of such a meeting override the decision of the committee of management on matters expressly assigned to them by the rules without any reservation to the members of a revising power. But this is a complete mistake. The rules bind all the members, and the acts of any officers of the society under the powers given them by the rules have the force of the rules, and can be set aside only in a way consistent with them. Where the rules are silent, a society, as a body corporate, has power to bind its members by resolutions passed at a meeting properly convened until some other meeting similarly authorised rescinds or varies them. But these resolutions have no power at all against the rules, which rest upon the authority of the Act of Parliament, and confer a like authority on those who are acting under the powers derived from them.

The last case is one where a minority, standing on the rules of a society, can control a majority which would act in opposition to them. But other cases may arise

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of a more difficult kind, where a minority, finding itself overruled on some point which it feels strongly — it may be the discharge of a manager in whom they have confidence, or, perhaps even one of so much importance as a determination to allow sales on credit — may be disposed to avail themselves of the power of withdrawal, if the society is so constituted as to allow of its exercise without restriction, to secede from the society and form a new one of their own. It is sometimes asked: Is such conduct justifiable? The answer must depend on the light in which we regard the functions of co-operation. If co-operative societies are regarded only as separate units, each striving to do the best it can for itself, there is no good reason to be alleged why these units should not split into lesser units if any of the members composing them think it more to their advantage so to do, than to remain part of the larger unity. But, if co-operation is what in these pages it has been represented to be, union for the purpose, by the joint strength of its members, systematically to work out for the mass of mankind a social state higher than any hitherto attained, then whatever tends to weaken this spirit of union is treason to the great cause of humanity; and, therefore, all such secessions, since they unquestionably have this tendency, must stand condemned at the bar of those nobler aims which the co-operator is bound to keep in view. Men have been driven, unwillingly, to secede from those who have endeavoured to force upon them professions of belief, contrary to their convictions of what is true. But no such interference with the liberty of thought is to be feared by the members of co-operative bodies,

whose differences resolve themselves into differences of means for producing a common end, and should, therefore, never be permitted to divert them from the principle of union with which the attainment of this end is bound up.

H

Chapter VIII.

Co-operation in Its Application to Production.

MANKIND cannot generally live on distributing. Only a comparatively small proportion of the population, which it is the object of co-operative distribution to reduce to the smallest number required to do this work, can thus live upon the amount of produce that other men are willing to give up to them in consideration of the services they render in facilitating the use of the remainder. But on production the material well-being of the whole body of mankind depends. The sum of enjoyable things which can be distributed among any population necessarily depends upon the mass of enjoyable things produced. The degree of enjoyment placed within reach of the body of the people in any locality largely depends on the conditions under which the production constituting the means of their subsistence is carried on there. Even their moral character is influenced directly or indirectly by these conditions, which in countless ways continually affect every part of their lives from infancy to old age. Hence the vast importance of co-operative production.

It is often said, and said truly, that the evils under which the poorer producers suffer arise rather from defects in the distribution of the enjoyable things now produced than from the mode of their production; but the imperfections in distributing alluded to in this saying are scarcely touched, far less remedied, by the system of co-operative distribution explained in the last chapter. For all that ^ hi system does for the

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poorer class is to make their existing incomes go a little farther than they would otherwise do. It does nothing at all towards adding to these incomes, except in so far as it offers inducements to save by making saving easy. "The store," it has been said, "is open to every one." Yes, every one who can pay for what it supplies. "Its benefits are for all." True, in proportion to their independent means of appropriating them "The larger a man's family," it is argued, "the greater the advantages conferred on him by co-operative distribution." Certainly, if his income grows as fast as his family. But the family may starve without the store coming in any way to his assistance. Its gifts are strictly bounded by what it first receives. Its bounties are always for "him who has," not for him "who has not"; to whom it denies, and, if it is conducted on sound principles, must deny even that amount of trust which he will often receive from the private trader. For he may hope to be recouped at some future day for all these advances, and has in the profits of his business a fund, which he can apply in making them while in a distributive society this fund is strongly pledged to pay the dividends due to a body of purchasers who need no trust.

That the distribution of profits on purchases has been of great advantage to large bodies of the working classes, from the savings which the system has led them to make, I do not for a moment question. That numbers who,

before they became members of a store never had a shining but what they forthwith spent, have found themselves the owners of many accumulated pounds through the savings made by the store for them out of the shillings which they spent at it, I am fully aware. I do not dispute the value to them of this result. Still, I must say, the store will not give them the original shillings. They may grow rich, as the old Yorkshireman

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said, only by eating and drinking, but they must get elsewhere than at the store wherewithal to pay for what they eat and drink. To obtain this " wherewithal " by co-operation, they must pass from co-operation for distribution to co-operation for production. They must press into their service that more fundamental sort of distribution attached to production, which determines what men shall receive directly in exchange for their labour. They must not rest satisfied with the sort of distribution affected by the distributive society, which simply enables them to exchange what they have thus earned for other things which they happen to desire.

Those who set the present distributive ball rolling, the justly celebrated founders of the Equitable Pioneers Society of Rochdale, clearly defined this object of the system which they introduced, in words often repeated, but still well deserving repetition, because by the co-operators of the present day they are far too much lost sight of. They declared the objects of their Society to be: —

To form arrangements for the pecuniary benefit and the improvement of the social and domestic condition of its members, by raising a sufficient amount of capital by shares of £1 each, to bring into operation the following plans and arrangements: —•

1. The establishment of a store for the sale of provisions, clothes, &c.
2. The building, purchasing, or erecting a number of houses, in which those members desiring to assist each other in improving their domestic and social condition may reside.
3. To commence the manufacture of such articles as the society may determine upon, for the employment of such members as may be without employment, or who may be suffering in consequence of repeated reductions in their wages.
4. As a further benefit and security the members of the society shall purchase or rent an estate or estates of land, which shall be cultivated by the members who may be out of employment, or whose labour may be badly remunerated.

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5. That as soon as practicable the society shall proceed to arrange the powers of production, distribution, education, and government, or, in other words, to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests, and assist other societies in establishing such colonies.

They were not afraid, these " owd " weavers, of the ridicule certain to be poured by the unbeheving world, if they thought them worth any notice, on the smallness of their means, twenty-eight shares of £1 each, con-

trusted with the greatness of their ends. Still less should co-operators draw back from them now. For these are the true ends to be set before themselves by all who desire to realise the ideal of co-operation—the gradual substitution of a state of society resting upon reasonable agreement determining the action of natural forces, in place of the present system which rests on the play of natural forces, determined by the struggle for existence. Now, in this scheme distributive co-operation appears in its proper place, as the road leading to production, which again is placed in its true position, of a means to the improvement of domestic and social conditions. The impotence of distribution, taken alone, for effecting the ends of co-operation, is clearly indicated in this memorable programme.

But the idea embodied in the distributive store is not only thus impotent as an instrument of social progress, but if it gains a decisive hold on men's minds, it may even become an obstacle to that progress for the reasons following. The store deals essentially and primarily with things. Its function is to enable its members to obtain that of which they stand in need, better in quality or cheaper in price, or both, than they could do without its aid; and there its proper office stops. Distributive societies have, indeed, often gone beyond this point to employ their collective funds in various ways for the benefit

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of their members. They have established convalescent homes, formed libraries and reading-rooms, have published periodicals, have established science and art classes, have instituted musical and other entertainments for the advantage of their members, for whom prosperous societies commonly provide meeting places of their own in co-operative halls. They have gone even farther in the direction pointed out by the Rochdale Pioneers, by purchasing lands and building houses, to be sold to their members and paid for by instalments, spread over long periods so as to make the payment easy, or advancing money to enable them to purchase lands or houses, or to build houses which shall be a security to the societies for the repayment of these advances in a similar way.

But all these beginnings of collective action, useful as they are more or less in themselves, and valuable especially as evidence of an instinctive sense that co-operation has more to do for the good of mankind than that which the distributive society can supply, are but feeble expressions of that profound human sympathy, that mutual regard for each other, that higher spiritual life which, as they constitute the co-operative disposition, it should be the especial work of co-operative institutions to develop and spread, so far as this lies within the power of any institution.

Now, what distribution cannot do in these respects it is the function of production to do, and thus co-operation will be raised from the ignoble office of a union merely in order to get things cheap and good to the noble function of an institution by which men may be gradually made better, and therefore both happier and better off.

Chapter IX.

The Practice of Co-operation in Social Life.

CO-OPERATION—regarded as a systematic course of action by which the mass of the population may

gradually raise themselves out of the evils attending a society, where the great majority are engaged in a ceaseless struggle to promote their own interests without regard to those of other men, to the good attainable by a society where the great majority are united by reasonable agreement to carry on work and promote institutions for the common interest — naturally falls into two great divisions : —

1. The formation of a collective income — of united resources, by which the weakness of the individuals who form the mass may derive strength from association.
2. The employment of this collective strength to create new conditions of life, adapted to foster the exercise of mutual help, and divert the spirit of competitive struggle into directions where it may become useful instead of injurious.

The first of these functions has been fulfilled in England by the distributive system of retail and wholesale societies, which, if carried on upon the Rochdale plan, create collective income for their members ; while they serve as excellent savings banks, where the economies produced by the suppression of unnecessary middlemen may be accumulated. In Germany this function has been discharged hitherto mainly by the people's banks. But, in either case, if co-operative union should stop at this

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stage, it would have very imperfectly accomplished the task here assigned to it. Distributive societies and people's banks may apply part of the profits of their business for the formation of libraries or reading-rooms for educational purposes, or the construction of halls where social as well as business gatherings may be held; but these operations leave the ordinary lives of their members almost untouched. So they may facilitate for a few of their members the obtaining houses of their own by acting as building societies for the outlay of the savings which they have helped them to accumulate. But those who occupy these houses, except they are themselves employed by any society, must look for the means of living in them elsewhere than to the society. And, as the societies must regulate their own situation by the places where their members find the means of supporting themselves, they can, at the best, do very little towards bringing within their reach the conditions of life, better suited than the life of our towns and cities is, to form men into beings worthy of their vocation as children of God — as the highest manifestation on earth of spiritual life. Hence arises the importance of co-operative production. It is the indispensable intermediary between co-operation as an agent for giving to the mass of the population the power arising from their collective income and accumulated savings, and co-operation as an instrument through which this income and these savings may place within the reach of their possessors the largest amount of material

advantages attainable by the use of their accumulated resources, combined with the conditions most favourable to the development of their moral and intellectual natures.

Modern industry, from the vast scale on which it is carried on in its manufacturing centres, and the great facility of conveyance produced by the extension of railroads, has become, to a great extent, independent of

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places. With the exception of mines and quarries, which must necessarily be worked in the localities where the substances to be extracted from the earth are found, it may be said generally of any manufacture for which there is a good sale, and the site of the manufactories may, in the present day, be almost wherever those who carry them on please, and the ground required can be obtained. Now, since this good sale is precisely that which co-operative union would have peculiar facility for securing to co-operative manufactures, those who carried them on might, without injury to their economical production of the articles manufactured, be guided in the choice of their sites for their buildings by reference to the general well-being of the inhabitants. They might place these centres of work in pleasant situations. They might certainly surround them with gardens, in which the workers, or as many of them as are so disposed, might find an agreeable and profitable variety in their labours. And by taking advantage of favourable opportunities they might, through the acquisition of larger estates, combine agriculture with manufactures. So that they would begin to exercise, on an extended scale, that collective ownership of land, that close connection of the population with the source of their food, which, as has been already pointed out, would be the great security to the whole body of workers, that, if the progress of invention enabled one man to do what it required two to do before, this saving of labour shall work to the benefit of all without detriment to any.

It is tempting to continue a picture of a world free from those social evils which now aggravate to an incalculable extent the difficulty of that contest with selfish desires, the expression in ourselves of the struggle for existence pervading all natural being, which all of us must fight out in our own breasts. But to yield to this

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temptation must carry us so far away from the existing state of society, that the picture would be in danger of losing all practical usefulness. It would be a dream banished to that golden age which must always flee before the experience of life, till men learn that the heaven from which the Divine vision shall descend is to be sought within themselves; and that the Kingdom of God on earth will come, as soon as they heartily will that it shall be realised, by the simple method of uniting to give generally to those around them the advantages which they seek to secure personally for themselves.

Chapter X.

The Perils of Co-operation and How to Escape Them

TO enter at any length into the matters forming the title of this part would be to repeat much of what

the other parts have contained. It is not my intention to weary the reader by carrying him again over the ground we have traversed, but in a matter of such vital importance to the mass of the population as co-operative action must be, if it be regarded from the point of view presented in these pages, a few words to sum up the teaching of this Manual may not be thrown away. Like the barbed head of the arrow, they may help to make the thoughts, which constitute its shaft and give force to the blow, stick.

Co-operation, as described in this Manual, is a serious effort to unite in the business of life the ideal with the real, or, in the language of the New Testament, to realise on earth the " Kingdom of God and His righteousness " in the assured conviction that all else shall be added to those who thus place themselves in harmony with the all-sustaining power, that Divine unity on which the infinite differences of individual existence rest, and of which they are the expression. Co-operation will be helped by whatever promotes this disposition. It will be hindered by whatever checks it. Its danger and its safety depend on the absence or presence of this spirit; of unity.

It has been the object of this work to trace how that spirit can realise itself in the busy world of industry

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which, in modern times, has assumed such gigantic and ever-growing proportions. Its writers have endeavoured to point out that the means for effecting this realisation be ready to our hands; that, in our days and our country, they require no sweeping changes in existing institutions; no violent revolutions; no reigns of terror; no alteration of the law, extorted by the many from the fears of the few. On the contrary, it has been argued that any attempt of this nature would interfere with and thwart the progress of co-operation, by destroying that peaceful atmosphere of law-abiding activity, in which alone the institutions, whence we look for these results, can grow up and thrive.

That, by the wise employment of these funds, in bettering the dwellings of the producers, and providing against the contingencies of life, that they make the profits of production secure for one group of workers after another the comforts and advantages which, as now used, they can bestow on a few only, but bestow on them in a superabundance detrimental to the higher life of the spirit rather than conducive to it. And that thus, by the gradual accumulation of wealth and the ownership of land which naturally follows it, they may attain, by a process of peaceful evolution, that collective property of the soil and the instruments of labour which are necessary for economic emancipation.

Looked at in its successive steps, the path to the emancipation of labour by converting the capital indispensable to its activity from an exacting master into an obedient servant seems, and indeed is, easy; but only on condition that it be followed in a spirit thoroughly co-operative. For, doubtless, the way is long, far longer than will allow any of the generation now alive ever to see more than the beginning of the end. Only a comparatively few, and these exceptionally

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favoured, may succeed by their unassisted efforts in

reaching the desired goal. It may be lost for the many, through that selfish impatience for immediate results, which refuses to sow the seed because it cannot expect to reap the corn. And precisely here lies the greatest danger to co-operative effort.

Co-operation has prospered hitherto in Britain under the form of union for distribution, as it has prospered in Germany under the form of union for people's banks, greatly because so many persons have found their immediate individual advantage in the effects of the union originated by those who had higher objects in view.

The distributive store has given to all who joined it not only articles on which they can rely that they are what they profess to be, but an increased power of buying these articles. When they are formed on the Rochdale plan they have given them besides, admirable savings banks —banks which save for them without trouble, and can afford to pay at least one-third more interest than ordinary savings banks, with a security which, in societies that have outlived the perils of infancy, may justly claim comparison with that of any other banks. So the people's banks of Germany have prospered because the confidence inspired by them has enabled their members to deal with loan capital much larger than their own capital, for the use of which they paid much less than they received from this use; and thus have added to the savings from their own income the earnings of a business at once safe and profitable. Each of these institutions, therefore, found support in that principle of direct self-interest, to follow which it costs us no effort, because it belongs to our nature as animals, and is kept in constant training by the struggles of competitive society.

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To confine ourselves to our own case —that, under these circumstances this first step in co-operative progress —union for the accumulation of capital —should have been taken by the large number who have taken it is not more than might have been reasonably expected to happen, as soon as the eyes of the consuming public became opened to what the late John Stuart Mill saw very clearly, namely, the very large share of the total produce of labour actually used up by the charge for distributing the remainder. But the case entirely changes when we pass from distribution to production.

The bridge which the profits on production would allow the workers to build over the river of poverty that now separates them from the advantages of wealth is barred by the twin giants, Individual Self-seeking and Collective Indifference, the last-named being the most formidable.

How, then, can we overcome the indifference of the masses to that employment of capital which is indispensable to the improvement of their position without attempting the impracticable task of supplying them with the fruit before the tree is grown?

There appear to be two possible ways to this end — one inward and the other outward; the second dependent on the first.

By unwearied persevering appeals to the principle of unity it may be possible to diffuse among men more generally the feeling that a life of perpetual struggle after objects which perish in the using must be petty, ignoble, and unsatisfying; but that life may become

great and noble if it is brought into constant harmony with that Divine spirit which dwells in those who are animated by love of their fellow-men. By the appeal to reason and experience it may at the same time be possible to spread the conviction that only by means

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of institutions suitable to the exercise of this spirit can it become a pervading influence in the ordinary lives of ordinary men. The problems of social reform depend for their solution upon the joint operation of both these principles. Without the last men cannot see what to do; without the first they cannot obtain the strength to do what they have learned to see should be done. That the work of diffusing this double conviction will be easy I do not say. But there is in the ruling tendency of the present age — its scientific spirit — a characteristic which may make this work easier.

Man has always been urged by the demands of his spiritual being to seek for certainty—for that which may be surely known and relied on. But throughout vast regions and during long ages he has sought this reliable knowledge in affirmations about unseen worlds, where no testimony of sense exists to qualify the assertions of his imagination; whence he could assign to these imaginary creations qualities of grandeur and permanence, capacity of conferring infinite happiness or unending pain, before which earth, with its transitory joys and sorrows, necessarily fades into insignificance. European life has been no exception to this disposition. On the contrary, in what we call the Middle Ages, it exercised over all European thought the profoundest influence, as anyone may realise who will read the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, and remember that the universe depicted there is the universe in which Dante and his contemporaries firmly believed. In Europe then, no less than in Asia, among the Brahmans, Buddhists, or Mahometans, the all-important inquiry with those who rose above slavery to animal passions was: What shall I do to attain the infinite joys or escape the infinite pains of this true reality—the lasting existence which is to succeed my present fugitive being? The

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peculiarity of the Christian answer, on which my hopes for the future of mankind rest, has been that it always included the position: You must strive to become in spirit like that Divine Being of whom the Gospel tells us. Hence arose, as is observed in the first chapter of this Manual, those countless works of benevolence by which the nations professedly Christian have been and are distinguished from all other nations of whose history we have any record. Hence must come, according to my conviction, that persevering determination to work out the deliverance of mankind from the evils produced by competitive selfishness, which constitutes the ideal of co-operation. The moral strength required to do this work thoroughly must, in my judgment, be derived from that faith in the manifestation of the Divine, from which the good works of the Christian world have either directly proceeded, or to which they may be traced through the indirect influence of the mental atmosphere which this faith has created. But for the direction of this moral force to work out the collective benefit of mankind we shall be indebted, I conceive, mainly, to the results of modern scientific research.

This scientific thought desires to attain certainty as ardently as the thought of any previous age. But it has laid down as a maxim not to be questioned that certainty can be attained only through the verification of the ideal by the real; only in proportion to our power of testing what we imagine by what we can observe, training ourselves up to the difficult task of explaining what is, instead of launching out into the free construction of what we only suppose to be. It is clear that to such a disposition the invisible world of the Middle Ages, instead of being, as it was to the thinkers of those ages, the true reality, must become unreal and worthless. It

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is a matter about which the scientific thinker can have no inclination to busy himself, since his researches have destroyed the only motive that could have led him to pay attention to affirmations which he cannot test — the conviction that those who made them had access to some source of knowledge denied to himself — for these researches have proved to him that those who made the assertions were entirely ignorant of the constitution of the world in which they actually lived. Astronomy and geology, to say nothing of other sciences, have swept away the universe of the Divina Commedia. "It lives no longer in the faith of reason." How is it possible for the scientific thinker to place any confidence in affirmations about an invisible world made by men who can be proved to have been entirely mistaken in what they affirmed about the visible world? Necessarily the scientific thinker must dismiss the whole subject from his mind, and concentrate his thoughts upon that about which alone he has the hope of attaining to any certainty — the earth and the universe in which it has a place. But does it, therefore, follow that the tendencies of scientific thought are only "of the earth earthy." By no means. It is the object of the scientific inquirer to apprehend the universe in which he finds himself as it is; to trace back its phenomena to the powers that actually underlie them of which they are really the expression. If, as is maintained in these pages, the human race, as it is certainly the latest stage of an enormous series of developments, so is also that form of individual being in which the universal life returns, so to speak into itself, by the voluntary act of the individual will, merging the animal desire for selfish gratification in an unselfish desire for the general good, we must expect that the patient and honest search after the key to the series will lead the searchers to this true solution of

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their investigations. And, as might be anticipated, so it has been. From various thinkers who take their stand on the scientific basis, refusing to listen to the voice of any master but that of their own reason, dealing with the materials given her by observation — thinkers who must be classed among the most fearless assailants of traditional beliefs — comes the concurrent testimony that in the negation of selfishness, in altruism in the placing our own good not only in what we receive from others, but in what we can do for them lies the true welfare of man, individually as well as collectively; his real work upon earth; the true end of his being. How is he to attain this end, to do this work, to grasp this well-being? Can any other answer be given bearing even a show of probability than this — by union, in order to make the enormous and yet constantly increasing command over natural forces now possessed by men, productive of the whole body of mankind of the greatest

attainable amount of those advantages which the earth can offer to them while through the same principle of union, the external element may become the nurserj- and training school of those noble inner qualities, whose growth the present competitive struggle for individual possession tends to stifle.

I have noticed the change in mediæval modes of conception made by modern science, in the extent to which it turns men's thoughts away from the world not manifested to our senses to fix them on that which is thus manifested. Let me observe also that, in so doing, scientific thought really brings us back to that mode of thought by which the Bible, Old and New Testament alike, is pervaded, though, no doubt, with the modifications belonging to the difference between our conception, that the Divine action, or what we call nature, is essentially unchanging under all circumstances, and the

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Biblical conception, that it changes as human action does, according to circumstances. The Bible is full from beginning to end of the deepest trust in the unseen presence with man of that great Being, to whose will it traces all phenomena. But this will is, according to the Bible, a will to be realised on earth. The Jewish prophets look forward, with ever-brightening hope, to the glories of the reign of the Messiah. But this reign is to have its seat at Jerusalem whence its blessings are to flow over all nations. The New Testament takes up the same strain. The Lord's Prayer calls on us to hope, and desire that the will of God be done on earth as in heaven. The Apocalj'pse, after a preliminary thousand years' reign of the saints, preceding the final struggle of evil against good, brings down the Heavenly Jerusalem the Temple of the Living God, to earth, among the nations, for whose "healing" the "leaves" of the trees which grow along the banks of the river of life flowing from the Divine throne are destined. Looking, as I do, upon the whole development of existence upon earth, crowned by the history of man, as the continuous manifestation of the Eternal Invisible Power, who would lead men to that co-working with Himself in which alone their activity will find entire satisfaction, I cannot but consider this earthward track of science as destined to bring piety back to the sphere of Biblical thoughts and aspirations, and teach it to find its abiding reward in earnest efforts to spread the kingdom of God over the earth by creating such conditions of human life, as good men can feel to be worthy of this kingdom the fit expression of the spirit of Him whose name is Love. How they might realise these conditions, and that in a very few years, if only they will, these pages endeavoured to show. May they help to forward that great consummation by showing to the will a practicable way.

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This is the internal road to association on which the external road necessarily depends. For, unquestionably, the outward must grow out of the inward; the will to act must precede the action; and the will to work with persevering energy for the creation of a truly Messianic condition on earth, must be determined to undertake this work by the conviction that such a condition can be realised. But assuming that this inner power is brought into persevering activity among a body of men numerous enough to make their action perceptible, there would come into play a second force, not to be despised, which I have called the external road to association,

namely, the help given to the progress of the ideal by those who never would have originated it, who have, strictly speaking, no faith in it; men who aid it only because it aids them and whose conduct is, in truth, an illustration of the saying, "Nothing succeeds like success."

Men's minds, for the most part, resemble soil: they respond to skilful cultivation. This is the truth that Robert Owen laid hold of, and embodied in his doctrine of men's characters being formed by circumstances, which at New Lanark, where he really did mould these circumstances in a great measure after his own ideas, produced marvellous results; failing afterwards because, in fact, while he talked about controlling circumstances, they controlled him and made, if not himself, yet at least his institutions, illustrate his own theory.

To sum up what has been here argued: co-operation, regarded as a system of social reform has two great perils, on either of which it may be wrecked.

1. The impatience of the masses for some form of society less oppressive to them than the system of industry based on competitive struggles must be, may lead them to waste their energies in vain attempts at

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reaching this better state by a short cut through the mere will of the greater number, expressed in political or social changes.

2. Indifference may stifle, or scepticism paralyse, the attempt to build up this better state by higher forms of social institutions freely developed.

The way to escape from both dangers is really the same, namely: to persuade men into choosing this better way by clearly pointing out where it lies; showing the facilities which existing circumstances offer for entering upon it; and the clear indications on many sides of the success that must follow the attempt if it is made wisely and perseveringly.

