

A HALF-WAY HOUSE

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A
**HALF-WAY
HOUSE**



By DOUGLAS DEUCHAR.

vis. 10.012/17

This Pamphlet is a plea for a simpler State.



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DEDICATED TO
GEORGE LANSBURY:
Pro Populo!

ÚSTŘEDNÍ KNIHOVNA
PRÁVNICKÉ FAKULTY UJEP
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Č. inv.:

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WE are told that one of the best ways of preparing for the realization in fact of an aim or ideal is to contemplate it often and clearly in our minds, not to allow it to remain vague and cloudy at the edges, or in any part of it; coolly and wisely, but firmly and specifically, to go over every part of it, and thus have and keep a simple, portable, immediately remembered outline of it always ready in the pocket of our brain.

It should not be a freehand map, which is too sketchy—(that was all very well for a first draft of our idea)—but, rather, a perfectly accurate bird's-eye outline; nothing far wrong with it, but it is incomplete. The proportions ought to be preserved, in miniature.

This sort of simple but (if possible) proportionate and discriminate Plan I wish to form as a memento and reminder to be

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kept in the brain's pocket and reconsidered now and then as we have time to pause in the pursuit of satisfaction in the improvement of the life of mankind.

There are two obvious temptations, two opposite difficulties, in the way of the social reformer. He may (if he is emotional and of large, loosely-fitting mind) become a Utopian, looking very far ahead, drawing what are thought easy pictures of places in which few of our present evils exist, filling up awkward corners with rhetoric, omitting (whether with or without apology and excuse) all details of the story of how, from stage to stage, the great changes, or the One Great Change to the Ideal State, occurred.

An able economist tells us that "Utopias annoy the plain man." This may be disputed. But they annoy the able economist. Good Utopias, like Morris's, Bellamy's and Wells's, are enormously useful. They may all disagree in a score of ways; they may tell us far too little about how the changes came into being; they may in themselves contain blots, defects, excesses. They may be too complicated, or too unnaturally simple. They

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may seem to suggest a small canton or a village put in order, rather than the vast complications of an incredibly variegated world, which (notwithstanding improved forms of government) might be expected to grow more and more subtly raveled. But even the weakest of Utopias usually serves the purpose of aiding us to dwell upon what is needed to make society better, what objects we ought to work towards. By contrast, by its very defects, or by filling out the rough sketch in our own minds, the Utopia helps us to form or to strengthen that pocket plan which I am seeking. Perhaps, however, Utopias ought more often to be written by practical economists, so as to correct the tendency towards the unreal, while works on immediate reforms ought more often to be written by imaginative people, for the same reason. Be it noticed that the words above are "*for the same reason,*" not "*to correct the tendency towards too much reality.*" For the truth is that the second temptation of the social reformer is akin to the first, though it may be called "opposite."

The second danger is that he may lose himself in the present, or in the network

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of the intricate changes of next year, which is all as likely to be fantastic as the far future.

Every evil soon comes to represent the intellectual "vested interests" of various sincere reformers.

"We first endure, then pity, then embrace!"

Statisticians are apt to fall in love with their columns of trouble. Men of arithmetic are likely to lose patience with pages which have not got the appropriate array of 000,000's down the middle, just as a seasoned Army officer may be annoyed by buttons lacking or dull. Some people would be very sorry if the revolutions required came about without any long adjustment of finance, without twenty thousand committees and commissions paving the way.

The second temptation or danger of the social reformer is that he may lose sight, and even choose to lose sight, of the future aim, in his knowledge and enjoyment of the present process and the present problems. We require to keep our little map handy; and let it be a comparatively pretty and pleasant map, however clear and careful; do not let it merely be a

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time-table of trains towards improvement. Let it be at least a sketch-plan, as simple as possible, but as clear, of a half-way country, through which we may pass towards the Ideal Life of mankind. I might have written the phrase "The Perfect State," but "State" has lately gathered such ugly associations; it is possible that the ultimate improvement of human life and intercourse on the earth will not be a framework that you could call a "State" at all.

Of course the practical reformer, the man of figures, has his excuse ready: no need to bother too much about Utopias because we cannot foresee them. And the Utopian has almost the same answer ready in the opposite direction: no need to specify ways and means too exactly, for we cannot foresee them,—but we *can* foresee the more eternal thing, the goal to which all souls have aspired, more or less, in all ages, out of all sorts of conditions and all kinds of "ways and means."

I aim here, very briefly and imperfectly, at drawing a clear, simple little map, to be kept handy and corrected according to the taste of the reformer, of a half-way

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country, or call it a plan of a half-way house.

If it should turn out to be farther on ahead than half way, then it can be modified accordingly by the reader. If it does not go far enough, ask yourself and answer specifically (if you will trouble, on paper) where it falls short. Or where does it exceed? Let us have a greater number of people, ordinary people, people of all sorts—(for perhaps none of us is “ordinary” any more than we care to be thought so)—thinking simply, clearly, sensibly, humanly, without cant and without too much previous “knowledge” or preconception, upon these problems. Do not let it be left to specialists, but let us ask them, too, to try to simplify, and to lend us their advice and facts.

I have said deliberately that I mean my sketch to be “imperfect,” because I know that if I tried to fill it in with complete care and complete proportion, it would take too long to write, and it would not have the effect upon the reader which I desire.

We cannot foresee anything like the ultimate aims of mankind. We can clear

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away a lot of hampering thicket, but we do not know how big the young trees thus eased will grow, nor which way their topmost branches will gesticulate in the future, nor how long they will last. This does not mean that it is useless to try to predict these things. Science has indicated that it is by reaching out after the unattainable (at present) that the power of attaining is at last developed: everything is impossible when we begin to try. But I am here attempting a compromise between prophecy and conservatism, without details, yet with clearness. However obvious some of the points are, they are quite easily forgotten, especially in the heat and dust of informed controversy; and they need to be often consulted, perhaps as often as a watch, if we are to use our time proportionately.

What then are the outlines of necessary reform? What are the rooms of the half-way house, and what are the principal objects in each room? What measures of law must be carried out soon, in order to deliver mankind for the creation of its Utopias, or whatever else it may devise? To the reader I say: Give your own

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answers. Write them, if you like, carefully, but not despairingly, on paper. Do not trust to mine, nor dismiss them as inadequate and wrong. No doubt they *are* inadequate; perhaps, wrong. Use them to give better answers.

I now give my own tentative diving to find answers; there may be a few, there may be many such reforms, or new things and new thoughts, immediately needed. Perhaps there is only one thing.

Whether the final answer be a few things, or many, or one, it is best not to seek too narrowly at first, nor in a little pamphlet must we attempt a comprehensive search. It is best to give simply the first answers which occur in response to my own thought, and if possible simplify them afterwards, reduce them to fewer, or at least give them an order of importance. From the start, be it remembered, in writing and thinking, as in reforming, we should aim incessantly at being simple, for complexity will come, whether we wish to have it or no.

At first, order does not matter, and overlapping will happen, as in the work of cataloguing a number of books.

A recent economic study suggests, very

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sensibly, such reforms as the following, for an immediate beginning:—

Wages for the young, sufficient to sustain a decent existence.

Adults, including unskilled, to be paid on a considerably higher scale.

Old Age Pensions at 60.

Widows with children, and orphans, to be freed from charity and drudgery.

This student (Mr. F. W. Bach in "The Way of Escape") says that the Housing problem, the Social Evil, the Poor Law, and Public Health, are all bound up with the above, and so are many other questions.

My own hints are, in the first instance, as follows:—

A Minimum Income or Bonus for all, not merely a Minimum Wage, but an income per week which may be as small as a present-day Old Age Pension, but will be guaranteed to all, good or bad, workers or non-workers, men and women and children. This is no brand-new idea, and has been worked out cleverly by a special Society. One version of the idea is that a percentage should be taken off every income, weekly, big or little, and a weekly

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income be paid, equal for each person, minus the percentage.

For the sake of example, it may be suggested that 10% be taken off each income, and a State bonus of 10/- per week paid to each person. Thus a man with an income of £50 per week would lose £5 and gain 10/-: a net loss of £4. 10/-, reducing his living to £45. 10/-.

A man getting £2 to-day, his wife earning, say, 10/-, and three children, two of whom earn 0 and one (say) 3/-, would benefit largely. The father's net gain would be 6/- (10/- minus 4/-): the wife's net gain would be 9/- (10/- minus $\frac{1}{10}$ of 10/-): one child would have 10/- minus threepence and a fraction, added to its previous 3/-. The other two children get 10/- each. Of course the children's bonuses would have to be paid to the parents, or in unsuitable cases, to someone *in loco parentis*. With 50,000,000 inhabitants, a bonus of 10/- each means £25,000,000 per week; but, by this 10% of the original income deduction, it can easily be shewn on a reference to tables that a very much smaller sum per week would be required because so many in-

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comes would increase by less than 10/-, and a huge number (all over £5 per week) would take no part of the weekly ten shillings, but would (justly, I think) contribute in ratio towards the bonuses of the others.

It is an ingenious and reasonable scheme in principle, though the details of percentage and pension can be modified in its practical application. The period of collection might be annual rather than weekly. The basic value of the scheme is the recognition of the right to live. When the millions of pounds per week are considered, it is well to bear also in mind the fact (so often and so relevantly cited) that the war cost us a good many millions per day.

What great advantage do I foresee from the Minimum Income scheme? In the first place, it seems a very short road to the abolition of extreme poverty. Nationalisation of the Land, etc., etc., are often spoken of as fundamental. It is argued that they are fundamental, because (for one great reason) they will ultimately abolish poverty, and undue wealth of individuals. But this goes much more straightly to the point.

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On the other hand, it may be charged with lacking many points of advantage which would come with the Nationalisation of the Land, and I am not leaving the latter proposal out of account.

Another great gain in the Minimum Income scheme, if the gains can easily be separated from one another, is that such large numbers of people at present handicapped by poverty would be enabled to attain comparative safety *and to look round and think.*

I trust the heart and common sense of the average man and woman, when it can really be seen; and the more we remove economic encumbrance and disability, the more the vote and voice of the people will become real. It may go wrong at first, and many times; but the more it is freed, the more it will tend rightly, and thus, growing freedom rightly used, will produce greater freedom. But with much use of such words as "freedom" a rhetorical atmosphere would be suggested, and that is far from being my wish. All the same, that word represents a real thing, with an economic value now and in the future.

Dishonesty in the statement of income

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would disappear gradually as incomes became equalised. Much as coal is consumed by the fire which it resists.

The Minimum Income ought to be increased, perhaps by the increase of the percentage on larger incomes, perhaps by other means, and as it increased its benefits would become manifest.

But with it would have to go a regulation of prices of all necessary things. For we have too clearly seen how the growing price eludes the growing income in a fantastic blind man's buff. With price-regulation goes, as almost a corollary, careful and thorough inspection of quality, both of goods and other commodities. For it is obvious that in almost any line of goods regulation of prices can be defeated by dilution of quality. But does this involve an "Army of Inspectors"—one of the favourite bogeys of the anti-socialist case? Here lies the importance of insuring, if possible a minimum income *first**: for there is no doubt that a vast number of cases of adulteration, and of all sorts of

* Prices, where influenced by the bigger incomes (struggling to recover the amount of tax) would presumably soar. But not immediately, I should think. And the better economic basis would help to destroy the root of dishonest gain. Price regulation would, however, be applied.

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commercial dishonesty, are due to the fear of actual poverty : not to the greed of gain above a maximum, but to the dread of destitution. No doubt there will be many swindles done—there always have been—by people who are well-off, but we are thinking in averages and probabilities. The average mind does not keep cheating and swindling without the “incentive” of the dread of poverty. Our minimum bonus will not at once abolish poverty, for 10/- a week is worse than poverty and many unsupported persons will have no more at first under such a scheme; but it will help, and it must be accompanied by many other aids. Work, for instance, must be found for at least the vast majority of those who seek it; employment must be organised as it has never been. Both employers and employees must be induced to register, and the system of registration must be simpler and must be closely overlooked by the general public, and by employed and unemployed themselves, instead of being left to officials, whose sole common instinct may be to go on sitting in their offices. This department, like others, must be debureaucratized.

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Governmental machinery, like these Labour Exchanges, soon gets dehumanised, so that anyone who wishes to see it useful will all the time be trying to devise means of making it more human, alive, and natural. One means towards this is that men with sympathy for the unemployed and experience of their lot, as well as industrial experts, should have an active hand in running the Exchanges.

Shorter hours and more leisure in all hard-working trades would ease unemployment through the spacing out of workers,* and would also contribute to that necessary reform, namely that the working-class, and others, should have more time to think and to cultivate real views on politics, and to read. That they should have good papers to read is another immediate requirement, and with these good and honest papers, plenty of honest good books, old and new: cheap. There are books and newspapers which show the way, but it should be one of the first aims

* It ought, surely, to be practicable, with unifying control of industry, to avoid such unemployment as might otherwise indirectly result from shorter hours and better wages adversely affecting a few small enterprises? Even as I write, things are moving; and if they move rightly, these words will soon be out-of-date.

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of all people of good will that sincere and scrupulous literature be increased greatly, and that the present few papers of this type be strengthened. It is astonishing how much sensible thinking there is, and sound knowledge, when good books and papers are so "snowed under" with inferior ones.

A recent pamphlet "The Capitalist Press"* gives an idea of the forces of darkness or fog! Nobody is asserting that the Socialist Press is flawless and infallibly honest, but it is rather in material power than in moral character that it is lacking. Every self-respecting person who needlessly buys copies of a newspaper or magazine sent out by any of the big combines has less right to respect himself, or herself; for, as has often been pointed out, these combines owe their power to our pennies, twopences, and sixpences. Do you think it right that a few people should have power to flood the minds of the public with one point of view through a hundred different names of newspapers? If you think it wrong, it is as senseless to support them with your coppers as it would have been to furnish munitions for the Germans and Turks in the War. More senseless; for

* N.L.P. Johnson's Court, London.

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newspapers can do what is beyond munitions, and can find munitions, too, when the forces of evil require them.

A matter which to many social reformers and revolutionists will scarcely seem fundamental, yet which is at least very nearly so, is the matter of the cruelties upon which so much of our present society depends. The rights of Animals is a comparatively modern question, just as the Rights of Men was a hundred years ago, and the Rights of Women at a more recent date. Some economic reformers, including one like Bernard Shaw, who himself practises and supports every humane reform, think that little can be done in this direction until the whole unjust framework of society is righted. But it happens that "cause" and "effect," here as elsewhere, are not so much parent and child as partners whose activities react upon one another. Cruelties to animals, and especially the wholesale cruelties of the meat trade, react in the economic degradation of such large numbers of mankind; for there can be little doubt that small cruelties, if these could be called such!) educate the conscience of those who do and sanction and profit by

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them, so that cruelties of a more generally condemned character become easier to individuals, and where the "greater" cruelties are *not* condemned, it becomes less easy for the conscience of mankind to develop towards condemning them. It may seem a far-fetched argument to some, but really this acceptance of animal bloodshed on a huge daily scale, this familiarization of our children from their very perambulators with the gore and brutality of the butcher's shop-window, coarsens the whole national standard in morals. "International" may be said. But it is to be noted that in modern Germany and in most other countries, as well as our own, a strong Food Reform movement seems to be going on.

German chemists, not entirely making a virtue of necessity, are declaring not only that meat does not excel vegetable and fruit foods in aggregate nutriment, but that meat has been much over-rated even in nitrogenous value.

The coarsening of the moral standard, and the endless series of "stimulants," so-called, or narcotics and deluders (such as alcohol, followed by strong tea or coffee

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to correct it, followed again by strong tobacco to act as a sedative after the "nervy" drinks),—all this has really and truly a great deal to say to the muddled minds, often very clever on non-essentials, the over-heated tempers, the wrong sense of proportions (however *brilliantly* wrong in many cases!) which prevent people from making a better job of the State, and helping their fellows in life. No doubt showers of exceptions and contradictions could be sent in upon me, but the broad fact remains, though it may be often overstated.

A general law may be noticed thus:—that when man neglects the voice of conscience, sensibility and the higher reason in one matter, and does so over and over again, it becomes gradually harder to obey it in others. The seat of insensibility spreads. This is happening to all who sanction, and especially who directly sanction, the cruelties of the meat trade. It is easy to retort that the area of sensibility in vegetarians may spread morbidly; they *may*, as Chesterton has suggested, "touch fewer and fewer things" and become useless for general life. But final utility is

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not to be ascertained by a casual comparison of lives; and the general tendency of the human mind is to be too insensitive. Its advance in true civilisation consists in becoming more sensitive to the right things. It is desirable that it should become more sensitive to cruelty, and also to all forms of injustice.

Marriage, and the whole treatment of sexual questions, still stands in great need of reform. I say "still," though many will deny that progress has been made of late years: rather it often seems like a going-back. Ignoble laxity in marriage is, of course, no better than ignoble slavery and cowardly or meaningless loyalty. In the general public view of sexual questions the War seems to have produced a broadening which is also a coarsening, in England. Any coarsening which is not founded on honest principle (such as the necessary dulness of feeling as to trifles which is caused by a strong will fixing the attention upon some good purpose and pressing forward through unavoidable dirt and dust)—is a loss. But the broadening may develop into something that we need.

Is the broader view honest? Was the

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narrower view honest? That is a great question.

Someone has said that inconsistency between a sexual standard and the lives of the people who hold it may indicate progress, the ideal preceding the ideal life.

But honesty is the only foundation of an ideal. To try to escape from animalism by professing a higher standard, and then winking at lapses, is useless. We must (up to a point) fulfil our ideals; and then admit frankly where we fall short. It may be said that in a prim, hypocritical community the morality of some individuals is coarser than that of the ruling opinion, and that this may be a sign that the community is tending upwards. But so far as individuals are suppressed it tends downwards. A community cannot sanely (and closely) be likened to a man.

A man suppresses or represses one part of his being in favour of a higher part: perhaps the whole man gains. The equivalent process does not seem to hold true in the case of communities. If their parts are only institutions, well and good; if the human individual souls are considered just as parts of the community, the equivalents

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of the portions of a man's mind, then the analogy does not apply. The Human Soul is something different. Every individual is something different, not a mere factor or fraction, not a mere part of a nation or community. The rot that is talked about nations and communities is largely caused by the fat and easy assumption that these are gigantic individuals, and that where it is right for an individual to move and act, etc., etc., it is right, too, for a community or nation (a big individual). No more utter trash and fudge has ever been said or written than all this talk of "she" and "it" about a nation or a town. There is such a thing as a number of related individuals more or less separated from other groups; but when we drop into calling them "she" and "it" we are on the verge of folly, and we had better remember not to confound them with that mystic unity—the human body, brain, and soul.

It need hardly be said that the whole Sexual and Marriage question is closely linked to economic injustices. So many wrong marriages are made because of economic influences. People are too poor to

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avoid such marriages, or too rich to have any sense. The economic muddle makes us all lose our heads, and we are fussed into errors. Again ("cause" and "effect" changing places, as they do so often) wrong marriages tend to perpetuate economic evils. Thousands of men and women whose minds had been fairly set upon trying to deliver us from the economic chaos are "softened" and dulled by marriage, or a wrong idea of marriage.

The whole coarsening of the public view of sexual matters tends in this way too. Conscience and refinement of feeling are not listened to in one matter, and the area of insensibility soon spreads in the mind and heart. I am not saying that moralists and reformers are more clever, nor their brains more alive in every respect. It may be put rather thus:—that disregarding the voice of conscience makes morality enter less and less into our thoughts. The thoughts may go on, and may be abler than ever, but something is left out of them more and more.

When I speak of Marriage and reform of the public view on the whole sexual question, I am not advising easier di-

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voiced nor shorter marriages. The line of improvement lies rather in prevention than cure. Wrong marriages should be discouraged by the redress of the two injustices of poverty and wealth. Also by the opening and cleansing, the honest treatment, of all sexual questions. Honesty and barbarity are not the same thing, and there may be as many lax people opposed to honesty as there are prudish people. With regard to divorce, Jesus Christ's words are given. Tolstoy's beautiful and wise thought, springing out of Christianity, should also be remembered for ever—that a married couple must, beyond all else, and beneath all else, and whatever they are, be *good neighbours* to one another—be good to each other as they ought to be to their neighbours, respectful, gentle and honourable.*

Of security against War, and of the League of Nations, there will be a few words later on.

Connected with War, and with the League of Nations, there must be "Open Diplomacy" in foreign affairs. This

* Theodore Price, of Alvechurch, has written and published some valuable counsel on this matter.

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platitude should be interpreted in a very wide sense, and should have its equivalents at home. Industrial negotiations should be carried on in the open. Every Party and Society should apply the same principles, and "truth it in love"; and this improvement would become very much easier if some of the previous steps towards mental and physical health were taken. War with arms, and unnecessary war in industrial matters would disappear before the inroads of daylight. I am not here very closely connecting the two; much of the talk about "Class War" is an attempt to give a dog a bad name. It is an attempt to blacken and condemn many inevitable struggles for freedom. The argument that laying down tools is the same as taking up arms might have as its logical outcome that the useful person who is never born does the greatest wrong to society!

I do not believe that any Socialist State could finally be content with the idea of *compelling* men to work; and the idea that it is wrong to withhold a service from the present very faulty form of community and from certain pernicious employers in that community, is absurd. Withhold-

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ing the material service may be doing the nation a spiritual good, and it needs that.

Ultimate gains to everybody, in physical welfare also, may result from a great strike; the strikers themselves often benefit the least.

To return to the question of "open diplomacy" in industrial affairs. Simplicity, which may be taken as one main point of this pamphlet, should be accompanied here by general simplifying of the proceedings of all Parties and Societies. There is far too much copying of parliamentary procedure and phraseology. It would be better to lean now towards the commonsense methods of (say) the old Russian Mir, as given by Morrison Davidson in his "Christ, State, and Commune." He is quoting Princess Kropotkin:—

"There is no voting in the Mir, no chairman, no secretary, no special time or place of meeting. Whenever a matter turns up that concerns the whole village, the men and women gather together at some place of their own choosing—in summer-time this is always out of doors—and they talk and talk over the affair until they

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arrive at an agreement. If the subject be one of importance, the meeting will be convoked again and again until it is settled, for *unanimity** is indispensable in the Mir decisions."

No special time or place of meeting! This looks fantastic; and one imagines interminable talk. But there have been "thirty hours of talk many times repeated" (as a great English statesman said in, perhaps, more democratic days than these) before any important question was settled in Great Britain. Does simplifying public business mean slowing it? In the long run? We see very little speed—in good legislation—under more complicated conditions, and this applies to the "minor legislation" within the great Parties. There is speed enough in the passing through Parliament of Doras and Emergency Powers Acts and Conscription. But wholesome things wait. In Trade Union decisions, the complicated business of voting and amending, and substantively voting, must take quite as long as the Mir

* We are told that the "Far Eastern Republic" of Russia allows every elector to introduce a Bill into the National Assembly. (1921).

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method, and it all puts people into an inhuman, formal, indirect, state of mind, so that they can scarcely stamp a letter without calling a committee and appointing delegates! We require to get our minds more alive, more human, not less so. I ask the reader, does he not agree?

We require to have more control of all parts of government by the average individual; "Government ownership" (which must be popular ownership); at first by Governments which may not be much better than the present, later by others.

A point that catches my attention in the account of the Mir is that the summer meetings were out of doors: it may be said that with more Outdoor Life and better air in our buildings (as with purer food) will generally come a cooler, truer sense of proportions; and that is one of the first necessities to guide mankind aright. Not that I assert that Hyde Park has all the brains, and the House of Commons none. There is no need to make merry over Fresher Air as a means of reform and revolution; we have got to take

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some "little things" seriously and despise some great big pomposities. Anyone who doubts if small matters of health can do much towards reforming the world should be recommended to read Mr. Eustace Miles's thoughts on these things.

I hope that the Minimum Income scheme, and other measures, will gradually bring better health and sounder judgment to the masses of the people. But again, we need not wait for any one reform before we try to apply others. Strike at evils wherever they appear, without caring too much whether you are hitting a cause or an effect first. It is a pity to wait too long, and put them all into alphabetical order!

Most good cures of causes are accompanied by the relief of symptoms, and sometimes the symptom can be, and must be, relieved before the cause is touched. Also, in hoeing weeds, we are told that if we keep smiting the leaves of the weed away, we shall end by starving the root, which is sometimes easier than trying to get it out. Perhaps in the case of social weeds too, destroying the symptom or the leaf is sometimes to destroy the cause or the root.

In seeking to allay and moderate the

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symptoms of the root troubles of society, one must constantly bear in mind that the ultimate aim is deeper. Almost any "palliative" can be accepted and used by the mind and the multiple mind that has a bigger thing inside to master a palliative; this is just another instance of the great law divined by David Hume, that one force which meets another and overcomes it, and survives, gains by the conflict.*

It is necessary to appeal to the better instincts of the classes and individuals whose wrongdoing is so ruinous to the whole people. We must, in various ways, appeal to the best instincts of the Lloyd George class, but we cannot (to say the least of it) rely wholly upon such, and as soon as possible these rulers must be superseded. This may sound a Cain-like sort of brotherliness, but it is sensible; while these people are there they must rule ill, or worse, or rather well; and no good will come by their being encouraged in bad ruling. The best discouragement is the constructive attitude, the hope and expressed wish (without cynicism or credu-

* See Hume's Essay on the Tragic Drama.

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lity) that they will use their opportunities better. This does not imply that at any moment we should accept as true the repentance of misrulers, and serve under them gladly. True repentance would usually involve resignation from all power in the case of men who have erred utterly. People awaiting with open arms the prodigal statesmen whose repentance has cost nothing, are foolish people. Those who have failed as rulers must learn for a long time to be servants, a wisdom which they ought to have adopted at the beginning.

But while misrulers are in power, while we cannot easily dislodge them, we must spend part of our time in trying to persuade them to rule better.

The only basis for reform, and I say for real revolution, is to be able to make the best of the present circumstances. Faithful over a few, we may become masters over many.

So we may appeal to Cæsar. By all means, we must compromise (keeping the further purposes in view). But let it be *open* compromises which are made, let everyone concerned know what is going on. In the Industrial "War" and the

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political "War," as in the German War, there must at last (and during it) be negotiations; but again, let them be open!

In "the old days" the workers (and even the level "above" them) never dreamt of getting members of their own class to rule; the method was to petition the rulers. It was perhaps as effective as the present arrangement—by which a few workers "rule" among the others, and are unclassed and changed. Why not combine both methods?—put up Socialist and Labour candidates *ad lib.*, but also appeal to the existing rulers. This appeal might often come most favourably, not from "enemies," not from the candidates' parties, but from outside impartial persons such as Christians; individuals, or perhaps organised numbers. On the other hand, pressure by "enemies" is often useful, because dreaded. It is often very tempting. Arrangements, compromises, are come to, and ought to be come to. Wars always contain, and end with, negotiations. If we cannot negotiate, it must be our aim to exterminate, and unfortunately if we *were* to exterminate all the people we disagree with (or might justly

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condemn), "the blood of the martyrs" would be "the seed of the Church," in *their* case also, and a fine denomination that would be!

This passage may strike some readers as approaching to the fanciful. But I want to throw in a sort of "New Thought" doctrine, which is really as old as tyranny itself. We must, to a large extent, persist in well-thinking. We must not be weary of well-thinking, which is almost as important as well-doing. We must not be always expecting the worst of our rulers, or of our man in the street; for expectation does bring events, many times. There is often a perverse desire, in the hearts of us rebels, to see wrong things, and it is a question whether the bad fact comes first or the thought (and even the wish) that things may be bad.

Appeals to Cæsar may be accompanied by appeals to Dives. I do not care, though that should awake scornful laughter from fellow-rebels who have not really thought far enough ahead. They have not visualized Dives, in relation to their new State

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which they are hurrying on (as I, too, want to hurry it on.) What *is* to become of Dives? You may water him down in the course of generations, but his instincts will not be altogether killed when your new State is building. Personally, I am going to recognize *now* that Dives is a man. He is still a man, or part of one, and there is no use making him out an incarnate caricature or Devil. The Spirit of Evil has indeed some sort of existence, but Dives is not it, pernicious though his work is.

We must appeal to the man in Dives. He or his posterity, creatures full of his blood, and very like ourselves, will be in our State, or our Utopia, and we have got to begin and give him a little bit of Utopia now. He had better begin to take it now, for he may need more than do the rest of us.

Some while ago, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Hobhouse appealed to Dives to come and see them, and be "good neighbours," as *they* are, in the slums which Dives and the rest of us have created and maintained. *That* is one way of getting hold of old Dives. It requires patience, and the aim

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of being "good neighbours" to the poor is too profound to be understood at a first glance. But there is no better way of reforming the world than by following a divine instinct which does not lend itself to portentous paragraphs and even to such laborious reasonings as I have given here.

One thinks of the ugly sights or the risk of infection, in dingy districts. One sees the fear that a body and brain, full of utilities, may be extinguished soon by an unheard-of sacrifice: and so on. Perhaps it is easier for some of us more fortunate ones to venture into that other danger-zone, where the infection is apt to be more complex—the brightness of wealth, of which poverty is the shadow.

There is a tale that someone was strong enough to go down into Hell in order to save us. Perhaps lesser souls can try this pleasant way of doing it, but there are plenty of other tasks worth doing without undertaking what we are not ready for.

If Cæsar will not be persuaded to govern rather well, and whether he be, or no, we must superannuate him soon: he

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and his kind have been at their work too long.

If Dives will not be persuaded (he *will* in many cases) to renounce, there remains the question of compulsion. All legislation, as it is understood at present, depends on compulsion: so we are told. Debates, however, could be worked up on this question. What did Edmund Burke so deeply (if fallibly) say in his most famous American oration?—Was it compulsion which did so much to ensure the fulfilment of laws? No; it was “*the love* of your people!” Without stopping to ask if anyone loved George III. and Lord North (they had their friends) we may apply the generalisation widely. I have recommended legislation such as the Minimum Income scheme. I consider that it, like all good legislation, carries within itself the seed of freedom. It may require a few laws to get rid of many: or many simplifying laws may be useful, if we *use* them instead of fixing them on a pedestal and bowing down to them. Or, to vary the phrases, laws may be used as the parallel railroads running out to the open country, by which is meant a country

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that does not *need* laws. Such laws which will go half way and beyond, towards Utopia, should be as simple as possible, comprehensible even to those who frame them!

Laws must, as far as possible, be derived from privately consecrated thought. For this, will be needed more health, purity of food, drink and air, wise conduct of the body and brain, concentrated contemplation.

It will be seen that I have somewhat rubbed and extended my proposed clear outline of reforms. These teachings are all converging upon one point, as I had more than half expected that they would do. It was all tentative; the practical proposals were but specimens. It is eternally true that One thing only is needful, and it is because we lack it that we seek (and often may be entitled to use for a while) substitutes.

Now, it is obvious that readers who have followed me so far, and borne with the repetitions which I found necessary in working towards fundamental points, have

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wondered when I was going to talk about the Nationalisation of Mines, Land (so briefly referred to), and various things. Other writers might have made a bee-line for Guilds, for the general principle of Nationalisation, and for cut and dried plans to apply it; for a shorter working week, with specific minimum wages in all trades, also a general National Minimum of all forms of life; for the relief of Urban Congestion (an immediate and urgent danger to progress of every kind); the topics of the Garden City, Proportional Representation, improved schooling, or the ever-pressing lack of houses; and many other important reforms might have been advocated by different writers, under this same title of "A Half-Way House." Unemployment and Maintenance are vital topics to-day, and must be so till they are justly dealt with. Elaborate changes in our physical environment are indeed called for; and some critics will think that my notions are too negative, that we must build, build, build—specify and plan and be architects: that it is not enough to try to clear a great space and release the forces of mankind

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to build their own new institutions and lives in their own way.

Alas, it takes long to build; art is long; and by the time we have got all our beautiful structures and statues ready for the squares, the more emancipated minds of another generation will look at these trophies and call them early-Georgian or mid-Albertian.

A specific plan stales in a year, but some of my points will stand, for they have been seasoned by long life in the souls of the teachers of the past.

"Refined policy ever has been the parent of confusion . . ."

Marxian Socialism, Historic Materialism, or perhaps some inexact derivative from it, would have us count almost wholly upon "environment," and would disdain the suggestion that every Socialist ought to try to be to-day a small, rough sketch of the sort of man he desiderates for the future. *Yet the end is the means.*

If we have not the germ of it now, we never will achieve Anarchist Idealism by Socialism, nor any other Ideal. If a child were not a man-child or a woman-child he would never grow into man or woman

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by feeding and tending him. But untended, unfed, he would become the poorer adult, if, indeed, he grew up at all. Unfed, he would not grow up. The most promising pig, tended and fed, of course would never in this life grow into a man. But our present human species has in it the promise of adult anarchism; not that it will grow up to throw bombs, except to throw them harmlessly away!

It may be complained that I have not reduced my list of needs to "a short leet," and indeed it would be better to do so.

But the exercise of every reader's own proportional judgment will be at least as valuable as mine. It seems to me that we ought nowadays to do things more co-operatively, not because we should be less individuals, but because we shall be more individuals, and content (without inactivity) to contribute our own part, to speak with our own small voice, and not to try to be the whole choir.

Thus it is true individualism to co-operate in an unservile way, and reader should co-operate with writer, audience with speaker, much more than is usual. Old teaching like Socrates's was better than a

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silent class and a rampant professor. Old religious preaching, where questions gave a new turn, every now and then, to the sermon, was better than the solid congregation, framed and fettered and rubricated by pews, while the often preposterous teacher poses above a cloud of ceremony.

Even if I claimed the knowledge and wisdom to be such a teacher, I hope I should not steal much solemn authority; for it is far healthier to shake and shuffle the crowd and have a rotation of pundits. *Anybody will do.* In fact it is far more important to make the average man think (which he will do if he leads) than to encourage leaders to go on leading until they are sick with illusion and have led themselves up into the clouds and moonshine.*

If my ignorance or indolence could only be made a spur to many readers to carry on the social criticism more actively and faithfully, it would be all right.

It may be argued that my "Real Democracy," a comparatively emancipated people, thinking more, and without much dread of poverty, (and be it recalled that

* "Self-government is better than good government"
—*Campbell-Bannerman.*

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my Minimum Income is going to be increased steadily, so that poverty would in this way, and others, disappear)—this freed public opinion, might decide in anything but a progressive way. Our real democracy might sell itself into slavery of some kind.

John Stuart Mill in his Essay on Liberty has considered the case that a free man might choose to sell himself into chattel slavery: ought he to be allowed? This indeed is the paradox of freedom: just as in all great lines of thought we come up against a paradox. I do not think there is much danger of a free democracy deciding to become shackled under some tyrant. Even so, if it is to be free—!

But Mill goes upon *the assumption of the normality* of a man; he is arguing for the average, not for extreme and almost unimaginable cases of the abnormal. So also of a people; we may assume normality; and the voting (if it be real, and the *more* it is real) will more often be right.*

* This analogy is useful, but, as stated elsewhere, the likeness between individual and community is never very complete.

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Democracy, however, consists in trusting it and preferring it, so long as it is more real and free, whether it seem right to an individual or wrong, rather than having an individual's or minority's view thrust violently or subtly upon many.

Democracy is becoming rather a hateful word; if any word is misused often enough it becomes useless.

But there was a fine idea in that assumption of equal souls; it was mystical and therefore practical. It is a pity that it became connected with folding a crossed paper and slipping it ashamedly into a huge tea-caddy, and having it counted afterwards, together with a bale or two of "forgotten" "extras" handed in at the last moment to bring up the figure to the right total.

The object of my plea for the Minimum Income (in whatever variety of detail it may be worked out) is to get a Minimum Bodily Basis. It is true that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses; but his life on this earth does always require food, air, and a few other things not so obvious; in *some* quantity he must have these to live

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at all. The fallacy of materialists lies in supposing that the more of them he has the better. Those Socialists who are materialists have merely got to learn that insisting on "division of inheritance" (i.e. all of us grabbing heaps of material goods) is not worth while, and that "*of ourselves we can do nothing.*"

Christ did not deprecate the sharing of necessary things. But the division, or rather the surrender (as with the young man of great possessions) has to be accepted by him who is rich; and there is no good in anyone thinking that enough butter and eggs and beer and coffee, and even paintings and books and games of tennis, will make him happy and satisfied for ever.

It must be recognised, as in the picturesque platitude, that nobody ought to have cake till all have got bread, or rather that all have got to be given bread and a little cake at once, if cake is necessary; and that other distributions must follow, and the source of all these things be owned in common: at the same time it should be recognised that they do not matter so much as do truth, love and courage. The latter things function on earth, only

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through bread and cake, butter and the rest of it, but they function and arise elsewhere.

Equality of Wages is a subject that might be tacked onto the Minimum Income. But it is quite a different question, and more doubtful. Bernard Shaw has argued almost conclusively on the point. He once compared himself, Hackenschmidt the wrestler, and Professor Paterson, a Scottish theologian, and asked how anyone was going to estimate their respective wage-value: it could not be done. I might advise a referendum on the relative value of services, but it seems to complicate rather than simplify. There might be *slight* differences of income within our better "State," to compensate for unpleasant work, e.g. the work in sewers; this arrangement has often been mooted. It might be better to spread such employment over many. Why should not the intellectuals and "easy" workers take dirty and dangerous jobs in spare time, occasionally? There could be proportionately thorough training, to take the place of constant experience. Honours might be accompanied by such "dis-

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honours," until the feeling of degradation ceased to be connected with such toil. Though I wish to avoid too crude a use of the Bible, I cannot help remembering the washing of the feet, which all were enjoined to do for one another; and the sayings that the greatest must be prepared to be the servant, and the first last.

To repeat:—

Neighbourliness in Sex; in all things a sense of the relative weakness of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; in commerce an attempt even now to exercise our moral muscles and not let ourselves be made cynical by a system which hands over the control (say) of a vast number of newspapers and the doctrines they teach, to a man who happens to have bought so many shares; a perception that worldliness consists, as F. W. Robertson declared, in doing one's wordly duties ill—while one's life is lived in this phase of the world; an abolition of Hate Thought; recognition that all hate of persons is wrong. This type of change must accompany more mechanical means of progress.

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War will not *necessarily* cease with the Capitalist system, though Capitalism so often shoves the soldiers onto one another's guns. But with the conquest of Hate Thought, War will vanish like a nightmare to one waking. Leagues of Nations, and League of Nations' Unions are useful so far as their real aim is to conquer the spirit of hate and its forms of expression, and not just to act as the "Police" of the world, doing the too usual business of police, protecting the big bits of property and creating "cases"! It is not vindictiveness that makes me scrutinize the Vice-Presidencies of a League of Nations Union. Without a bit of rage or hate, one may feel sceptical of the conversion of masters of blockade, and active supporters of the War which was the great test of human quality in our time. *If* they repent, it is noble, and their knowledge will be useful. (There are newer tests, such as Ireland.)

My appeal is to the Individual. True Socialism ought to mean the individual's greater freedom, *and* it will only come through greater independence of judgment and action: cause and effect are

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here parts of the circumference of the same circle, or enfolding curves of the same spiral.

Can anything make mere Community-Morality self-respecting? Must not character always be individual, not regulated and organised for us? We must allow a wide margin for character varieties in our future (I hope loosely-fitting) "State." All fine acts would lose their dignity if *dictated* by custom. Utopias often attribute all their individual goodness to improved custom. But all great people hate custom, or transcend it. Certainly Christians must do so. Christianity comes to fulfil not destroy the Law, but the fulfilling is contrary to custom.

A recent scientific study of democracy, from America, concluded that though it was too much to say:—

For forms of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered, is best,"—

still the factor of humanity moving the machine was enormously vital. The wrong sort of humanity might get into control everywhere of a very fine mere machine.

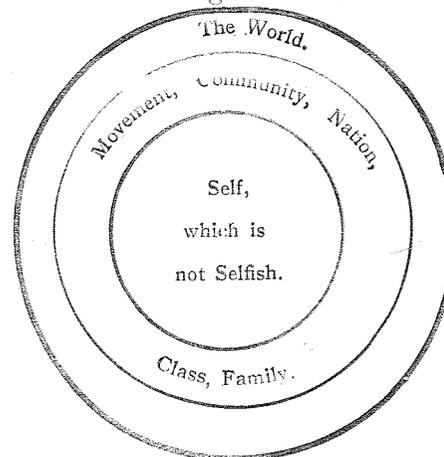
I do feel that the Personal Factor is under-rated in politics; it is supremely

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important to have honest men in powerful places. No amount of cleverness and knowledge should weigh with honesty. Any promise may be made; what are the probabilities of its being kept? That is the first consideration if we are to bother much about selecting representatives. No honest man (so far as I have seen them) is so devoid of sense and knowledge that he could do as much harm as an able person of cunning.

If we are continuing with our present too cumbrous and complex system of representation, it is well to keep the test of honesty and character always before us, in selecting men, while we must also give ample study to measures.

I shall set a diagram here:



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In my word to the Individual, I wish to italicize the need for proportionate conceptions. Have always in mind that we are all companions in a world; inside that, be loyal to your movement, party, friends, community; but before all things to yourself. As Lansbury bade us in a May Day message, "We must possess our own souls!" This is not selfish, for the Self reaches something quite different, outside the rings of a category. Serving one's true self is like putting coal into an engine. It must have coal before it runs to work; it cannot run to work and then have the coal.

* And now concluding, we must take a leaf out of the book which is called "Christian Science" and which practising humourists are apt to use as a joke: we must go on the assumption that things are easier than we are told by case-hardened students of the world. Read Emerson's beautiful early discourse on Peace or War and remember how well he pictures the impotence and fragility and docility of matter beneath the power of ideas. Apply this to the steps I indicate. Such steps as these might at least take us nearly half-

* See Note at end.

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way. The whole way passes this half-way country or half-way house, and goes on far beyond. The whole way is "The Way, the Truth, and the Life." Many people are turned back from Christianity by the much-preached idea that it requires all or nothing. It may seem dangerously slack to suggest that this is not so: or not all at once; we are allowed to be apprentices and to learn, in this matter as in others. Quite true, we read that he who is not with Christianity is against it; but also, strangely, that he who is not against it is with it.

A more conclusive sentence might be quoted:

One incomplete apprentice was told, not that he must immediately accept all or nothing, embrace every extremity of sacrifice; not that there must be no near and no far, only absolute and instant identification of our wills with Love; but:—

"Thou art not *far* from the Kingdom of God."

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NOTE, re Minimum Wage :

(From Prof. A. C. Pigou's "Some Aspects of the Housing Problem" in Lectures on Housing, Rowntree & Pigou, 1914.)

"I shall not attempt here to answer the difficult question whether the establishment of such a wage is or is not, on the whole, desirable.

But, however that question be answered, it is certain that its establishment would not secure the universal prevalence of adequate earnings. For earnings depend, not on the wage level alone, but on the wage-level coupled with the amount of employment; and the setting up by law of a wage-rate superior to that which many persons can command in a free market could not fail to act injuriously upon the employment they obtain. Whether or not, therefore, a legal minimum wage is established, the fundamental difficulty, that the earnings of many persons are inadequate to the totality of their reasonable needs, still calls for a solution."

(I here contend that the solution is partly to be found in the Minimum Income or "State Bonus." D.D.)

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Further NOTE re Wages.

"The minimum wage for a man or woman respectively would be determined by practical inquiry as to the cost of the food, clothing and shelter physiologically necessary, according to national habit and custom, to prevent bodily deterioration."

S. & B. Webb's

"Industrial Democracy."

Why not adopt the principle of minimum income for all, as a basis of reform, and gradually supersede all wage differences, levelling upwards? Skill and ability are quite sufficient rewards in themselves; they have also the rewards of praise and reputation. Why in our future State add needlessly to their emoluments? Or if we are to add, why not give a clever worker and an industrious worker 100% more air and more pavement and more of the causeway than others, more water for his water-rate, etc., etc.? Wages are an artificial and unnecessary method of encouraging efficiency. Surely there are other methods?

D.D.

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NOTE re Minima of Life.

"It is the duty of a civilised State to lay down certain minimum conditions in every department of life, below which it refuses to allow any of its free citizens to fall. There must be a minimum standard of conditions in factories, a minimum standard (varying of course with the strain involved in different industries) of leisure, a minimum standard of dwelling accommodation, of medical treatment in case of illness, and of wholesome food and clothing. Each one of these standards, so far as practicable, must be enforced separately. No such plea must be admitted as that, if a man is allowed to work excessive hours, or to live in a cheap and ruinous house, he will be able to attain independently to the required minima in all other departments of life. The standards must be upheld all along the line. . . The exact level at which the standards should be set is naturally different in different countries. It should be higher of course in those that are rich than in

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those that are poor. But everywhere I hold *some* system of standards should be set up."

Prof. A. C. Pigou.

NOTE re Minimum Income :

This would be independent of special unemployment benefit at abnormal times. The great beauty of it is that it recognises *the essential right to live of every human being.*

Nor should it interfere with the Minimum Wages in each industry, and the "National Minimum," nor with many other more or less desirable parts of the great reform.

Obviously, a maximum wage, and maximum incomes and capital in all material possessions, are also due; whether or not the whole capitalist system be now replaced by complete economic equality.

NOTE re "Things being easier."

Marvellously learned books like "Industrial Democracy" (Webbs), etc., assume, *and thus may increase*, the great complexity of public problems.

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