

## LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

From one end to the other of history, from one extreme to the other of the social scale, we can find no status in which men realize the kind of liberty which consists in doing as one pleases, or in unrestrainedness of action. If we should go on to consider the case of the learned man, or the statesman, or the monarch, or any other class and position, we should find the same. The Emperor Nicholas of Russia, who left the reputation of a military autocrat behind, complained that his Minister took a position before the chimney, and, to everything which the Emperor proposed, simply answered: "It is not permitted to do it." Liberty to do as one pleases is not of this world, for the simple reason that all human and earthly existence is conditioned on physical facts. The life of man is surrounded and limited by the equilibrium of the forces of nature, which man can never disturb, and within the bounds of which he must find his chances.

If that seems too ponderous and abstract for the reader, it may be interpreted as follows. Man must get his living out of the earth. He must, in so doing, contend with the forces which control the growth of trees, the production of animals, the cohesion of metals in ores; he must meet conditions of soil and climate; he must conform to the conditions of the social organization, which increases the power of a body of men to extort their living from the earth, but at the price of mutual concessions and inevitable subordination. Organization means more power, but it also means constraint, and,

at every step of advancing civilization, while we seem to get nearer to this form of liberty, the means of emancipation proves a new bond. Such being the case, it is a plain delusion to suppose that we can ever emancipate ourselves from earth while we are upon it.

Yet men have, in all the higher forms of civilization, been determined that they would have this liberty. They have, as it were, determined that they would fly. They have made liberty a dream, a poetic illusion, by which to escape, at least for an hour, from the limitations of earth; they have put liberty at the beginning of all things, in the "state of nature," or far on in the future, in a millennium. Within the last century, especially, they have elaborated notions of liberty as a natural endowment, belonging to everybody, a human birthright. Their experience has been that they did not get it, and, when this clashed with the smooth doctrines in which they had been educated, they have become enraged.

Now it will be most advantageous to notice that this notion of liberty has a certain historical justification, and, when historically considered, a relative truth.

The mediaeval social and political system consisted of a complex of customs and institutions such that, when we come to analyze them, and find out their philosophy, we find they imply all the time that men are, but for political institutions and social arrangements, under universal servitude. The point of departure of administration and legislation was that a man had no civil rights or social liberty, but what was explicitly conferred by competent authority, and that the sum of rights which any person had were not such as belonged generally to all members of the society, but such as each, by his struggles and those of his ancestors, had come to possess. The modern view gets its interpretation, and its

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relative justification, by reference to and in antagonism to this; the doctrine of natural liberty as an antecedent status of general non-restraint was a revolt against the doctrine just stated. It meant to affirm that laws and state institutions ought to be built upon an assumption that men were, or would be but for law, not all unfree, but all free, and that freedom ought to be considered, not a product of social struggle and monarchical favor or caprice, but an ideal good which states could only limit, and that they ought not to do this except for good and specific reason, duly established. The nineteenth-century state is built on this construction. We are obliged all the time to assume, in all our studies, certain constructions, of which we say only that things act as if they were under such and such a formula, although we cannot prove that that formula is true. Institutions grow under conditions into certain forms which can be explained and developed only by similar constructions.

Modern civil institutions have been developed as if man had been, anterior to the state, and but for the state, in a condition of complete non-restraint. The notion has been expanded by the most pitiless logic, and at this moment a score, or perhaps a hundred, eager "reforms" are urged upon grounds which are only new and further deductions from it. At this point, like the other great eighteenth-century notions which are also true relatively when referred back to the mediaeval notions which they were intended to combat, the notion of abstract liberty turns into an independent dogma claiming full philosophical truth and authority. In that sense, as we have seen, it is untrue to fact.

When we turn to test the dogma of liberty by history and experience, we find immediately that the practical

reason why no man can do as he likes in a human society is that he cannot get rid of responsibility. It is responsibility which fetters an autocrat, unless he is a maniac. It is that which binds the millionaire, which limits the savage who is responsible to his tribe, which draws narrow lines about the statesman, and which will just as inevitably fetter a democratic majority unless such a majority proposes social suicide. Responsibility rises up by the side of liberty, correlative, commensurate, and inevitable. Responsibility to nature is enforced by disease, poverty, misery, and death; responsibility to society is enforced by discord, revolution, national decay, conquest, and enslavement. Within the narrow limits of human institutions, liberty and responsibility are made equal and co-ordinate whenever the institutions are sound. If they are not equal and co-ordinate, then he who has liberty without responsibility incurs a corresponding loss of liberty, or servitude. Those men and classes who at any time have obtained a measure of abstract liberty to do as they like on earth, have got it in this way — at the expense of the servitude of somebody else. Thousands of men died that Napoleon Bonaparte might, in a measure, have his way; great aristocracies have won wide unrestraint by displacing the lives and property of thousands of others, when the aristocracies have been built up by a remission of responsibility.

The worst modern political and social fallacies consist in holding out to the mass of mankind hopes and affirmations of right according to which they are entitled by prerogative to liberty without responsibility. The current political philosophy, having fallen under the dominion of romanticism (except as to war and diplomacy), has apparently no power to do more than to fol-

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low and furnish platitudes for the popular tendency, or to oppose all forms of liberty in the interest of socialistic equality. The prosecution of that line of criticism, however, lies aside from my present purpose.

I have now arrived at the point where the true idea of liberty, as the greatest civil good, can be brought forward. The link between liberty and responsibility can be established and upheld only by law; for this reason, civil liberty, the only real liberty which is possible or conceivable on earth, is a matter of law and institutions. It is not metaphysical at all. Civil liberty is really a great induction from all the experience of mankind in the use of civil institutions; it must be defined, not in terms drawn from metaphysics, but in terms drawn from history and law. It is not an abstract conception; it is a series of concrete facts. These facts go to constitute a status — the status of a freeman in a modern jural state. It is a product of institutions; it is embodied in institutions; it is guaranteed by institutions. It is not a matter of resolutions, or “declarations,” as they seemed to think in the last century. It is unfriendly to dogmatism. It pertains to what a man shall do, have, and be. It is unfriendly to all personal control, to officialism, to administrative philanthropy and administrative wisdom, as much as to bureaucratic despotism or monarchical absolutism. It is hostile to all absolutism, and people who are well-trained in the traditions of civil liberty are quick to detect absolutism in all its new forms. Those who have lost the traditions of civil liberty accept phrases.

The questions in regard to civil liberty are: do we know what it is? do we know what it has cost? do we know what it is worth? do we know whether it is at stake?

### Liberty and Law

Sir Robert Filmer defined freedom to be "liberty of every one to do as he lists, to live as he please, and not to be tied by any laws"; on this definition he based a philosophical treatise on absolutism in government, affirming its natural necessity and political propriety. He was perfectly right, for that definition of liberty is the one which would lead to despotism. At the same time, it is the anarchistic definition. There is no contradiction in this. Sir Robert meant by his definition to lay a basis from which to affirm that liberty is impossible, absurd, irrational; the anarchists affirm the same definition, and take it to be rational, real, and true. Around this issue all the great controversies in political science of the last two hundred years have raged, and around this issue they must revolve without solution so long as the metaphysical notion of liberty is accepted.

The liberty to do what one lists can never be complete, unless it is supplemented by the further liberty not to do anything. A man who had this liberty might, therefore, be in the society but not of it, living upon it and enjoying a privilege to exert his energies in any way, no matter how harmful to other men. The notions of social rights, social duties, and liberty are, therefore, all born together, and correct definitions of them all will be consistent and coherent. The notion of liberty which we have been criticizing, however, is hostile to all notions of rights and duties; the man who had that liberty would have no duties, nor any rights, properly speaking, because he would have privileges. Rights and duties, in a combination consistent with liberty, constitute the social bond. Such rights, duties, and liberty

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are the elements of political institutions which give them their form and value.

We who live in the midst of a modern civilized state, with high security of persons and property, with well-defined rights, with no burdensome duties, with no privileges secured to some at the expense of others, easily assume that this all comes of itself, that it is the natural order of things, and that any departure from it would have to be forced by injustice. We believe that men have easily made up their minds that they would have it in this way, and that, by adopting proper resolutions at the right moment, they have brought it about. We therefore suppose that all we have is secured to us by the most stable and unquestionable reality, that we run no risk of losing it, that we can afford to find fault with it, throw it away, despise it, and break it in pieces.

The facts are far otherwise. The peace, order, security, and freedom from care of modern civilized life are not the product of human resolutions; they are due at last to economic forces, which, by expanding the conditions of human existence during the last three hundred years, have made all which we possess possible. Our history has been written on politics almost entirely; and, without joining in the current easy abuse of it on that account, we may fairly say that people have not learned at all to understand the extent to which political resolutions are controlled by economic conditions, or the extent to which political and social institutions are conditioned in economic facts. It is not too much to say that economic facts are always present and controlling in the apparently arbitrary acts of constitution-makers and legislators. Our whole history must be reconstructed with a view to this fact. If that is once done, we shall understand better the narrow range within which the

law-givers, philosophers, constitution-makers, and legislators can work.

It is the opening of the new continents and the great discoveries and inventions which have made this modern age; they account for the power of man, and they have, by their form, conditioned the mode in which that power might be used. It has been wasted and abused to such an extent that man has never enjoyed more than a small percentage of the real power which was at his disposal for the enhancement of his earthly existence; and the modes in which it has been wasted have been chiefly those of social policy and political device. The ignorance, folly, and wickedness of statesmen, together with the incompetence of the social philosophers, seem great enough to have brought the world to universal penury, if the discoveries of science and the inventions of art had not been rapid and strong enough to bear all the losses and leave a surplus, by virtue of which mankind could gain something. The chief source of new power, however, has been the simplest of all, that is, an extension of population over new land. If a half-million proletarians in Europe should inherit each an estate, no one would think it any mystery that they were not proletarians any more; why, then, should it be a mystery that they are not proletarians when they have inherited an estate in America or Australia by going to it? To this we append, in passing, another useful reflection. If the statesmen and philosophers of the past made such mistakes, which are now visible to us, how do we know we are not making equally gross mistakes, which somebody will expose a century hence? We do not know it. We should hold this ever in mind. It is exactly the reason for distrusting our wisdom and for "letting things alone."



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The political and civil liberty which we enjoy has issued out of all the stumbling and blundering of the past. The errors have been cured, to some extent, by bitter experience. The institutions which are strong and sound have only grown up through long correction, and have been purified of the stubborn folly of men only after long and bitter suffering. They are not stable; they are not founded in immovable facts; they are delicate products of care and study and labor. They could be easily lost and they require high good sense and self-control for their maintenance. Civil liberty is in the highest degree unstable. If we should fill libraries with written constitutions we could never guarantee liberty. Terms change their meaning, ideas move through a development of their own; nothing stands still here more than elsewhere. Intelligent conscience and educated reason are the only things which can maintain liberty, for they will constantly be needed for new cases and new problems. We could not make a greater mistake than to suppose that we could throw down all social institutions and guarantees, and still keep all the peace, order, security, and freedom from political anxiety, which we now enjoy. Time and again in history men have sacrificed liberty rather than incur anarchy. When anarchy comes and every one tries to realize the liberty to do as he likes, the man who has anything knows that he will not be able to do as he likes, because it will take all his energies and more to protect his property. He knows that some of the other people who will be doing as they like will be sure to rob him. The man who is too young or too old, or physically weak, and the women, know that they will not do as they like, because somebody else will make them do as he likes. These will all flee to any protection which can save them from plunder and abuse,

because liberty and anarchy are totally inconsistent with each other, no matter what the definition we give to liberty. Filmer was right when he held that, if liberty meant license to do as you list, it made despotism the only rational and possible form of civil government.

There is, therefore, no liberty but liberty under law. Law does not restrict liberty; it creates the only real liberty there is — for liberty in any real sense belongs only to civilized life and to educated men. The sphere of it is not in the beast-like non-reflection of savages; it is in the highest self-determination of fully educated and responsible men. It belongs to defined rights, regulated interests, specified duties, all determined in advance, before passions are excited and selfishness engaged, prescribed in solemn documents, and guaranteed by institutions which work impersonally without fear or favor. Such are the institutions under which we live. Their integrity is worth more to us than anything else in the domain of politics; their improvement, that they may perform their functions better, is the highest political task of our civilization. That is why liberty in its true sense is worth more than the suppression of intemperance, or the restriction of trusts, or the limitation of corporations, or any other pet reform. Liberty which consists in the equilibrium of rights and duties for all members of the state under the same prescriptions, liberty which secures each man, in and under the laws and constitution, the use of all his own powers for his own welfare, has not therefore the slightest kinship with the spurious liberty of doing as we please, but is the prime condition of happy life in human society. The thing to which it has generally been sacrificed in the past has been “the reason of state”; that is, some other object than the happiness of men, an object selected and im-

posed upon the society by some arbitrary political authority. There is a modern abuse which is exactly parallel to this, and which consists in using the law to impose pet social aims on society, which use up the time and energy of the citizens in other aims than those chosen by themselves for their own happiness. Thus the most difficult problem in respect to liberty under law is now what it has always been, to prevent the law from overgrowing and smothering liberty.

### Liberty and Discipline

The proposition that "every man should be free to do as he likes, without encroaching on the similar liberty of every other man," is commonly used as if it were a simple and final definition of social and civil liberty. It is not so, however. It is only one of those formulas which we get into the habit of using because they save us the trouble of thinking, not because they are real solutions. Evidently any two men might easily disagree as to the limits set by this formula to their respective spheres of right and liberty — if so they would quarrel and fight. Law, peace, and order would not therefore be guaranteed; that is to say, the problem would not be solved.

Civil liberty must therefore be an affair of positive law, of institutions, and of history. It varies from time to time, for the notion of rights is constantly in flux. The limiting line between the rights and duties of each man, up to which each may go without trenching on the same rights and liberty of others, must be defined at any moment of time by the constitution, laws, and institutions of the community. People often deny this, and revolt at it, because they say that one's notions of rights and

liberty are not set for him by the laws of the state. The first man you meet will undoubtedly tell you that there are a number of laws now in force in the United States which he does not think are consistent with liberty and (natural) rights — I who write this would say so of laws restricting immigration, laying protective taxes, etc. But it is to be observed that behind the positive law existing at any time, there is the moral reflection of the community which is at work all the time. This is the field of study, debate, and reflection, on which moral convictions are constantly being formed; and when they are formed, they find their way into laws, constitutions, and institutions, provided that the political institutions are free, so as to allow this to take place. If not, there is opened a gap between the positive law and the moral convictions of the people, and social convulsions ensue. It is a constant phenomenon of all exaggerated philosophers of the state, that they obscure this distinction between public morals and positive law. The older abuse was to suppress public morals in the name of positive law; the later abuse is to introduce public morals into positive law directly and immaturely.

If now we turn to individual liberty, still it is true that all liberty is under law. The whole life of man is under law — it is impossible to conceive of it otherwise. It is impossible to understand society except we think of it as held and governed by forces which maintain equilibrium in it, just as we have learned to conceive of nature. The objections which are made to this notion are exactly parallel to those which were formerly brought against the same conception of physics, and it is impossible to argue against them, because, if they were true, there would be no thinking or arguing possible. If social science deals only with matters of expediency,

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then there is no social science. It is a question of expediency whether there shall be two Houses in the Legislature or one; whether the Cabinet ministers shall have seats in Congress; whether men shall work ten hours a day or eight; whether we should use more or less paper money inside the requirement of the country; whether university education should be based on Greek; whether women should have the suffrage; and so on. If all the questions of social science are of this nature, there is no social science; there is nothing to find out. All that can be said is: "Go on and try it"; and the people who have "views" may be listened to if they show what they think to be the advantages of one or another arrangement.

In truth, however, the field of expediency is very circumscribed. It is surrounded by the domain of forces, so that when we seem most free to adopt such plans as we please, we find ourselves actually controlled by facts in the nature of man and of the earth, and we find that it is the sum of our wisdom to find out those facts and to range ourselves under them and in obedience to them. Then our science and our art have their proper places and fall into due relation to each other.

Thus we come to this: that there is no liberty for the intelligent man as an individual, or in voluntary co-operation with others, except in intelligent obedience to the laws of right living. His first task is to know the world in which he finds himself. He must work and he must study. He is not turned out to riot in self-indulgence because he is free; he must conform to the conditions in which he finds himself. He must obey. When he has broken all the bonds of old institutions, of superstition and human tyranny, he wakes to find that he can have no liberty unless he subdues himself; labor and self-control are the conditions of welfare. He must not

cry out that liberty is only a delusion and a juggle; he must understand that what liberty properly means for the individual, is intelligent acceptance of the conditions of earthly life, conformity to them, and manful effort to make life a success under them.

Not to follow this line of thought into the domain of private morals, I turn back to the relation of individual liberty to civil liberty. Civil and political liberty cannot release a man from state burdens. It is interesting and instructive to notice that free yeomen in the United States have to take up, of their own accord, many of those burdens which, in the Middle Ages, were regarded as the heaviest feudal obligations. The farmers in a New England township have to maintain roads and bridges, do police duty, and maintain all public institutions as much as if they lived upon a manor. A farmer who works out his taxes on a road does not know how near he comes to reproducing a mediaeval villain. The burdens are there, because society is there; and they must be borne. If the state does them on a larger scale than the township, then they must be paid for; and when we see men eager to work them out if they can, we must infer that the burden is increased, not lessened, by being turned into taxes.

When the peasant obtains freedom, therefore, and sets up a democratic republic, he finds that that means only that he must turn about and do again voluntarily, as an intelligent citizen, what he did before under human compulsion. When he gets self-government, he finds that it still means government; only that now it is turned into personal discipline instead of being governmental compulsion. If he gets his personal liberty, then civil liberty is nothing but a guarantee that, in doing his best to learn the laws of right living and to obey them, to the

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end that his life may be a success, no one else shall be allowed to interfere with him or to demand a share in the product of his efforts. That is what the function of the state is; and if it does more or less it fails of its function.

Discipline, therefore, is the great need of our time. It should be the first object of education. By it we mean something much more than the mental training about which we used to hear so much. We mean training of thought, feeling, and emotions, so as to apprehend and appreciate all things correctly; and habits of self-control so as to hold one's self within the limits which enable free men in a free society to live in harmony and pursue their ends successfully without encroaching on each other. Our children need it. Their freedom and fearlessness give them spirit and courage; but they lack form and training — they would not be any less free if they were considerably chastened. We need it as parents; we should discharge our responsibilities in that relationship much better if we were schooled to more patience and to more rational methods of exercising authority or instruction. We need it in social relations, because it is only by virtue of discipline that men can co-operate with each other. The notion that co-operation is a power which can take the place of the intelligence of well-trained men, is itself a product and proof of undisciplined thinking. Men increase their power indefinitely by co-operation and organization; but in order to co-operate they must make concessions. The prime condition is concord, and it is only disciplined men who are capable of attaining to that. It has often been said that men have to surrender their liberty in order to organize; but it is better stated that they gain new power consistently with liberty by organizing. We

need better discipline in science, at least in social science. There is a great luxuriance in the production of "views" and notions in this field; and the greatest need is of a set of guarantees and criteria by which this exuberance could be trimmed down. There is one set of persons whose liberty would certainly gain by the production of such tests and guarantees, *viz.*, those who are now likely to have to pay the expense of all the social speculation which is on foot, if any of it should be put to experiment. We need more discipline in public affairs. Our freedom would lose nothing if it were more sober, and if a great many abuses which the law cannot reach were more under the ban of public opinion.

Thus liberty in a free state, and for intelligent men, is limited, first by responsibility, and second by discipline.

#### Liberty and Property

M. de Laveleye says: "Property is the essential complement of liberty. Without property man is not truly free." It will be worth while, taking this dictum as a text, to unravel it and distinguish its elements of truth and falsehood; for it is as pretty a specimen as could well be found of the sort of social philosophy in which confusion of terms and unclearness of thinking set apothegms in circulation which easily pass as the profoundest wisdom, when they are really null, or, still worse, are true or false just as you take them.

The specimen before us may mean either of two things. It may mean that every man has a right to be, and expects to be, a free man, that to be such he must have some property, and that, therefore, the authority which is responsible for securing him his freedom is bound to see to it that he gets some property; or, it may mean



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that freedom is a thing which every man should seek to win and acquire, that it is not possible to acquire it without property, and that, therefore, every sober, industrious, and socially ambitious man should properly seek to get property. Which of these two does the proposition mean? By its terms it is impossible to decide. It is a proposition which two persons might understand and employ at the same time in the two opposite senses with perfect good faith, and thereby lay the foundation for a "social discussion" of great magnitude, the only fruit of which would be to find out at last how they had misunderstood each other from the beginning. We have seen numerous instances of this kind and it can hardly be disputed that the propositions which admit of such differences of interpretation are extremely mischievous.

If the proposition is taken in the former sense, the notion of a "free man" is taken to be something simple and definite, which can be made the basis of deductions, and upon which obligations of social duty can be constructed, aimed especially at the state, which guarantees liberty as a political right. Property then becomes a right of the individual, in his relation with society or the state. He would not forfeit this right to have property unless he should get some property by his own effort — if he did that he would fall under the "duties of wealth," the first of which, as we learn from current discussion, is to subscribe to or contribute the fund by which the state makes others free.

If the proposition is taken in the latter sense, the notion of a free man cannot be set up *a priori*. A free man is such a man as results under the limitation of earthly life, when he has individual and social power sufficient to bear up against the difficulties which harass us here. The proposition would then say that no man

can do this without property — property would, therefore, be a duty, not a right. A man could not lay claims to it against anybody else; he would be bound to produce it from his own energy, and by the use of his own resources. Property would, therefore, arise in the social organization from the obligation of every man to pay his way in the body of which he is a member, and to carry the burden of others for whom he is responsible — first of all, of his wife and children. It would not arise, as under the first interpretation, from the fact that he needs something which he has not.

According to these two interpretations, the proposition contains neither one nor the other of the two great philosophies which are now in dispute on the social domain. They might, in fact, be defined as affirming, one, that property is a right of him who has it not and a duty of him who has it, looking always simply at the distribution of that which is; the other, that property is a right of him who has it, and a duty of him who has it not, *viz.*, a duty to work and produce some.

We need not stop for any long discussion of the definition of property, for it does not seem to be involved in the issue before us. By property I mean the sum of things which serve the wants of men, and the appropriation of which to individual use and enjoyment is assured by the power of society. Such, also, seems to be the sense in which the word is taken in the passage quoted, so that we are at least free from the constant confusion between property, the metaphysical notion of property, the right of property, and the moral justification of property. The author of this thesis has not, therefore, a balloon at hand, so that when he is beaten on the ground he can take to the clouds. The property which a man needs to make him free is food, clothes, shelter, and fuel

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to release him from the slavery of want. These are material things, goods, wealth, products of labor and capital, objects of appropriation, sources of exclusive satisfaction to him who consumes them on himself; they are therefore objects of strife, occasions of crime, definitions of *meum* and *tuum*, things about which law turns, chief subjects of the moral law, leading facts in the history of civilization, having their origin far back before it was sufficiently developed to leave traces which we can follow. That is what is meant by property when it is said that without property a man cannot be free, no matter which interpretation we give to that proposition.

One of the best mediaeval scholars of this century, Guerard, wrote: "Liberty and property entered the hut of the serf together"; "Liberty and property increased together and justified each other"; and he often repeats statements to the same effect. Another scholar, Pigeonneau, has written that in the boroughs which were built up around the seats of bishops, princes, and abbots, commerce created wealth, and wealth created liberty. The history of the Middle Ages, when studied objectively and not romantically, fully sustains these dicta. The history of modern civilization from the ninth and eleventh centuries, about which these writers were speaking, down to the present time, reveals the course by which liberty and property have been developed together; but at the same time it reveals that they have grown together only when property has been secure, and the right of property has been strictly maintained, and that nothing has ever been more fatal to liberty than socialistic abuse of property.

In the view of liberty which I have tried to present, liberty is a conquest. It does not lie at the beginning

of history and of the struggle of the human race on this earth; it lies at the end of it, and it is one of the richest and finest fruits of civilization. We should not, therefore, if we gave up civilization, fall back into permanent rest in the primeval state of "natural liberty"; we should, on the contrary, lose liberty, if we lost civilization. It is liberty which is unstable and always in jeopardy, and which can be maintained only by virtue and diligence. The two great means by which men have won liberty in the course of civilization have been property and knowledge; whenever the distribution of property has been arbitrarily interfered with, either because the state became too strong or too weak, liberty has declined. Civilization has not always suffered, because, as in the formation of the great states, under certain circumstances, civilization might win, although liberty was arrested — civilization will win any time at the expense of liberty, if discipline and coercion are necessary to the security of property. Therefore the truth is that liberty and property go together, and sustain each other in a glorious accord, but only in the highest and best civilization which men have yet attained; and to maintain them both together, or to maintain that order of society in which they are consonant and co-operative, is a task which mankind has never yet succeeded in accomplishing save in a most imperfect way.

The serf first obtained chattels and then land in property; on them he won his first power, and that meant his first liberty — meaning thereby his personal liberty. His title to these things, that is, his right to appropriate them to his own exclusive use and enjoyment, and to be sustained by the power of the state in so doing, was his first step in civil liberty. It was by this movement that he ceased to be a serf. This movement has

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produced the great middle class of modern times; and the elements in it have been property, science, and liberty. The first and chief of these, however, is property; there is no liberty without property, because there is nothing else without property on this earth. How can any one dispute this who will think for a moment that property means food and shelter — the first things necessary that we may exist at all; and that we use the word property rather than wealth or goods when we mean to refer to their appropriation to the exclusive use of individuals? Therefore liberty and property are not inseparable, and if they are separated it is property which is fundamental and permanent, and not liberty.

Hence the proposition which we undertook to examine does not bear analysis well. The dictum that no man can be free without property is entirely true or false as we construe it one way or another. Freedom and property, I say, are not inseparable, and if they are separated, it is liberty and not property which is the adjunct. If they are united, they do not simply coalesce, but their combination belongs to a new and higher order of civilization, calling for new social knowledge and for wisdom to maintain it.

### **Liberty and Opportunity**

Among popular beliefs whose existence is manifested in current discussion and which ought not to pass unchallenged, is the notion that a chance in life is a positive and certain gain or advance. A chance, however, is a chance, and nothing more. Every chance involves a possibility of two opposite issues. If a chance or opportunity is used one way it results in gain or advantage; if it is used the other way it issues in loss or disadvantage. A

chance, therefore, has no moral quality or value; the moral question is: what will be done with it? Hence the fallacy of all the captivating suggestions about ethics in economic or other strictly impersonal social forces. The moral relations are in the personal domain.

Capital has no moral quality; it is a chance, a power, an opportunity. Capital means tools, weapons, food, etc. A pistol has no moral quality; it can be used for good or for ill, as men count good and ill. The same may be said of an axe, a spade, or a locomotive; it may also be said of food, for a man possessing a store of energy derived from food may spend it in benefit or in mischief. Food furnishes energy to a laborer or a murderer indifferently; the morals are in the man, not in the bread; they go with the intelligence, or with the intelligent responsibility, and turn on the question: what will he do with it?

All capital, therefore, is power; it furnishes a chance to do something. It brings with itself, however, the double possibility as to the use to which it will be put. The man who has tools, weapons, or food, is able to accomplish far more in any direction in which he determines to apply it than the man who has no capital; but then the question how he will use it has become so much the more serious; his power for mischief is enhanced just as much as his power for good. As to himself, the chance is no less serious; he has power to make far more of himself than if destitute of capital, and he has power to hurry himself to personal ruin and destruction so much the faster.

The same may be said of education. The moralists have never been satisfied with the old adage that knowledge is power. They felt the lack of the moral element in it, that is to say, they felt the lack of the element

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which it was their business to supply. The adage, however, was true; knowledge is power, and, in itself considered, it is nothing more. The notion that knowledge makes men good is one of the superstitions of the nineteenth century. Knowledge only gives men power and it furnishes a chance; it brings with it, however, the grim alternative already cited: will the man who has it use it for good or for ill? That is a moral question. It finds its answer in the springs of character, and the independent self-determination which lies deepest in the essential elements of each man's personality. This, by the way, is one of the reasons why there is no sound social or personal strength which is not founded on the training of the individual; it is the reason why individual character is the spring of all good in man or the state, and why all socialism is profoundly immoral. Wherever collective standards, codes, ideals, and motives take the place of individual responsibility, we know from ample experience that the spontaneity and independent responsibility which are essential to moral vigor are sure to be lost.

The things which men call "goods," therefore, because they are means or powers, are not positive gains; they only open the lists and give the chance for a struggle.

Leaving the matter of morals now, and turning back to the practical utilities for which men value all "goods," we find that every chance which is opened means gain or loss according to the wisdom with which it is employed. Very few men of fifty can look back on their lives and see anything but chances misapprehended, opportunities lost, and errors in the use of powers. It is simply a wild speculation to guess what a hundred men would attain to if they should correctly understand and use every opportunity in life which opened before them,

and should exploit it to the utmost of which it was capable without any mistake. The suggestion of such a thing will suffice to show how far we are from anything of the sort. It is said that the great reason why savage tribes remain in their low state is that they cannot keep what they gain and use it to get more, but are constantly slipping back and beginning over again, but in truth, the most civilized societies are only slightly better. Methodical, regular, and rhythmical progress is a dream as yet.

There is a new and useful line of work yet to be opened which will consist in an examination of biography, as a comparative and analytical study, in order to note and generalize the conditions of successful use of opportunity, and to perceive the effects of opportunity misunderstood or abused. An opportunity missed may be a mere negative loss, but an Opportunity abused becomes a cause of positive harm or of ruin. The career of every man who wins distinction affords ample proof of all phases of these observations, because opportunities present themselves over and over again. Every time that an opportunity presents itself a new decision must be made, and the perils of mistake must be incurred again. Like every other social fact, this one also is intensified in our time. Our fathers attained to routine which was adequate for all the opportunities or chances which came to them, and they were able to generalize rules which embody "the good old way," and were in fact in those days correct and adequate wisdom; but we cannot live that way if we would. The rules do not hold; the cases are more various; the elements are all the time changing, or at least recombining. If a man makes a correct judgment once, that is more likely to lead him astray the next time, because he will have con-



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fidence in his experience and will not note the differences in the cases. Throughout the business world this observation forces itself on our attention.

I have gathered these observations together in order to lead up to a more correct apprehension, as I think, of the purpose and achievement which we have a right to expect from civilization. Civilization does nothing but open chances. It does nothing to guarantee their advantageous effect. Between the chance and its effect lies the all-important question: what will he do with it? Personal liberty is nothing but a name for a series of chances, or for a life to which chances have access; civil liberty is nothing but social security for such use of the chances, within the limits which are set by the criminal law, as the subject of them sees fit to make. Neither affords any security that the use will be a wise one or that it will issue in a result which the individual will later regard with satisfaction. If he gets his liberty he must take his responsibility; for he may be assured that if he finds any one else to take the responsibility, he will speedily lose the liberty and with it the chances.

The sanctions of virtue and wisdom are, therefore, all the time increasing, and above all they are all the time increasing for the mass of mankind. It must be reiterated over and over again, that it is the greatest of all delusions to suppose that we can make what we call gains without meeting with attendant ills. The added power which mankind has won within a century or two brings with it all the peril of the alternative which has been described for each of us and for our society. We take the new powers and opportunities at the peril of correctly understanding them and using them. If the masses are to take the social power, they will have to look to themselves how they use it. No revolution in

social order has ever been brought about by the oppression, or folly, or wickedness of the rulers — if such things as that could cause revolutions there would be little else but revolution in history. Revolutions have been caused by holding out hopes of bliss which the ruling powers were not able to bring to pass. Democracy will take power subject to the same penalty; it must wield power under the same conditions. So far it has been lavish with its promises and has had no responsibility because it has only been applied in new countries where there were no hard social problems. It has, in general, promised not that men should have more chances, but that they should realize greater fulfilment of what their hearts desire with less need of study, training, and labor. I hold that that is the very opposite of the truth, and that all the new social movements, including democratic political institutions, demand, and demand especially of the masses, painstaking, knowledge, philosophical power, and labor far beyond what has ever hitherto been necessary. The reason for this opinion is in the fact that the latest social movements have issued in increase of social power, and that all such increase involves an alternative which can be successfully solved only by added mental and moral power, and by more work.

### Liberty and Labor

We are told that the justification of labor “is to be found in the imperfection of human nature/” It betrays a singular state of mind with regard to social phenomena to talk about the “justification of labor” — the justification of labor is that we cannot live without it; we might as well discuss the justification of breathing, or of existence itself. It is idleness which needs justifica-

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tion. It is also singular that anybody should find satisfaction in giving definitions to labor, poverty, etc., from which one can argue that labor and poverty may be brought to an end; thus it is said that labor is the pain of doing what one does not know how to do, so that it may be rendered non-existent by acquiring skill. This is what the Germans call "fighting a mirror." It is only literary sleight-of-hand. Labor remains just what it always was — a pitiless fact, an inevitable necessity. A man who has capital on which he can live without work is living on past labor accumulated and re-applied. There is no way in which one of the sons of men can live without labor except by enslaving some of his fellowmen to work for him. Therefore the essence of personal and civil liberty must be found in a state of things in which each one labors for himself, is secured against laboring for any one else, and is assured the enjoyment of the fruits of his own labor. Civil liberty, when considered by itself, must consist in such laws and institutions as secure an equilibrium of rights and duties, and allow no privileges to arise on one side and no servitudes on the other.

Labor is all expenditure of human energy, by which the sustentation of society is carried on. It is expenditure of human energy, and never can be anything else. Therefore, it wears men out and consumes them. In a limited measure, and, in youth, for a limited time, it may be pleasurable, but, as it is sure to surpass the limits of degree or the limits of time as a man grows old, it is certain to be an oppression and destruction to the individual, against which his will must revolt and under which his happiness must be sacrificed, because his physical powers are sure to decay while yet his will is strong to wish and to undertake. The "sustentation of soci-

ety" is also the purpose of labor, because the individual earns his living, in modern civilized society, by holding a place and bearing a share in the collective enterprise of the whole.

It is in vain now that we attempt anywhere in this domain to reduce the notion of liberty to something positive or hard and fast; it presents itself to us as a set of dissolving views, which are forever changing with the changing aspects of social relations as they go on their course of evolution. The state by its power frees men from anarchy, fist-law, slavery, etc., but it imposes a new set of restraints of its own, which take away liberty on another side. The state is necessary for the first function; it must be tolerated in the second. There would be no rest, no finality, except when each one had everything at no cost, or with no offsets and attendant ills. This, therefore, is the true Utopia, the true social ideal, and a great many have recognized it and begun to proclaim it, who have not yet formulated or understood it.

It is an instructive fact that modern methods of poor relief and modern poor laws grew up as slavery, serfdom, and villainage passed away. A slave could never be a vagabond or a pauper; he could not starve to death unless there was a general collapse of the entire social order, so that his master could neither feed him nor find a purchaser for him. The most ingenious apologies for slavery ever made in this country consisted in developing this fact into an argument that slavery was the only cure for socialism, the only sound organization of society in which there could be no poverty, and that free society was destined to destruction by the war of competition and unchecked struggle for existence within itself. A great deal of the socialistic declamation which

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we hear meets this argument on a completely even footing and concedes all its effect; the declaimers do not see it, because they have not thought out the matter as well as the old slaveholders had. In fact, there is an indisputable element of truth in it, which is this: liberty of labor is not a social finality. It is not a definitive solution of the social organization, but only alters the forms of the problems; it alters nothing of the social forces. It sets free some personal interests which were not free before, and in so far it adds to the internal warfare and confusion of society. It does sharpen and intensify the competition of life. The struggle of the forces rises in intensity, develops more and more heat, puts stronger and stronger strain upon political institutions, subjects the sober sense, the high self-control of men to severer tests, demands more intelligent power of criticizing dogmas and projects. The men who supposed that, under liberty, they were going to soar away from irksome limitations of earthly life, find that, though the restraints have changed their form, they are as heavy as ever.

The master of a slave or serf secured the subject person against all the grossest calamities of human life; but he made the slave pay him a high insurance rate for that security. The master carried all personal and social risk for the slave. This element of risk is one of the leading phenomena of social organization. In a barbarous society, where there is scarcely any organization, each person carries it for himself, and it produces no social problem, because, so long as it turns out well for the individual, he makes no complaint. When it goes against him he perishes. It is with advancing organization that the risk element becomes distinctly differentiated, becomes an element of status or contract,

and enters into the rights and duties of the parties as they are related to one another in the organization.

It is one of the few things which are, I believe, agreed upon by all, that it is the function of capital to carry the time delay, and to bear the risk; it is an interesting question, however, whether the laborer has to pay the employer for carrying the risk. Lasalle demanded that the employee should be admitted to a share in the risk, because it is, as he assumed, only through the risk that the great gains come, and, therefore, on that view, the employee, if excluded from the risk, had no chance of the great gains.

The wages system is undoubtedly a high and intense organization, involving strict discipline upon all its members, employers as well as employees. It is therefore an intense constraint upon personal liberty. Some of the phrase-makers wax indignant at the notion that the laborer is viewed and treated "as a ware;" such indignation serves easily the purposes of rhetoric and declamation, but, in the cold light of fact and reason, it is only ludicrous. The Greeks called a laborer an "ensouled machine," which may be regarded as a more or a less offensive figure of speech than the other, but neither of them is anything else than a figure of speech. Such figures aside, the fact is that the laborer binds himself by a contract: his time and service are the subject matter of the contract, which binds his liberty. The employer is also bound by a contract: he is bound to furnish means of subsistence, according to the terms of the contract, whether the enterprise in which he and the laborers are jointly engaged is successful or not. Every man who earns his living is bound in contracts of this sort; employers and laborers, as we use those words technically, are only special cases. Our whole organization is held

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together by contracts, and we are all "wares," if anybody is. If the name is offensive, we may change it to some other, but we shall all stand just where we do now, viz., under the necessity of subjecting our individual wills and preferences, that is, our liberty, to the conditions of the contracts by which we hold our places in the organization. The term "labor" cannot be taken in any narrower sense than that of contributions of any kind to the work of society, and, in that sense, we see that when we labor we set aside our liberty for the sake of some other good which we consider worth more to us under the circumstances.

The advantages of the wages system are that the man who has nothing makes a contract which throws the risk on capital, and is able, reckoning on a fixed and secure income, to make plans for the accumulation of capital under his circumstances, whatever they are, without any element of speculation. The defects of the wages system appear in so far as the wages income is not fixed and secure, and in so far as the laborer does, in fact, find himself involved in the business risk. I am of the opinion that the path of improvement and reform lies in the perfection of the wages system in these respects, and not in any of the pet notions which are propounded for supplanting the wages system by some other.

Therefore we find that in the historical development of the industrial organization there have been, in the forms and modes of laboring and of combining ourselves for greater power in supplying human wants, changes in status and relation, but that the necessity of working for a living has been and is a thralldom from which there is no escape. The century which has seen slavery as an institution cease to exist almost throughout the whole human race, has easily come to believe in an ideal state

of things in which existence should cost no pain or self-denial at all. Emancipation provided that a man should work only for himself. It is very evident that many are enraged, and declare liberty all a delusion, because they had persuaded themselves that liberty meant emancipation from the need of working at all, or emancipation from all the hardships of the struggle for existence. Hence the denunciations of "wages slavery." But we have seen that liberty is not, and never can be, anything but an affair of social institutions, limited by their scope, and never reaching into any field of poetry or enthusiasm. It can never make toil cease to be painful or sacrifice cease to be irksome; it can never be enthroned above contracts as a regulator of the relations which are necessitated by the social organization, because it is on the same plane with contracts and exists only by and in connection with them. There could never have been any abolition of slavery and serfdom but by capital. The rise and development of capital have forced higher and more stringent organization; and this means new and in some respects more irksome restraints on individual liberty, in order to acquire greater power and win more ample sustenance for society. The socialist program consists in resolving that we demand the liberty we dreamed of and the easy security we used to have and all the new capital and wealth, while we declare that we will work only eight hours a day for it and will not study for it at all.

### **Does Labor Brutalize?**

Those who live a hundred years from now will doubtless see strange results from a period in which men discuss their own position on earth not by facts but by



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ideals. To start from an ideal of what one thinks, judging by his own tastes, that a man of moral "elevation" ought to be, in order to find out what must be true in regard to man's position on earth and what laws we ought to pass, is a mode of proceeding which may easily be popular, but is silly beyond any folly which human philosophy has ever perpetrated. It is evident from the simplest observation that men are always under compulsion to do the best they can under the circumstances so as to attain as nearly as possible to the ends they choose. The whole philosophy of existence, and the entire wisdom of policy, either in individual or common action, is bounded by the terms of this proposition; therefore the field of study and effort is in the understanding and modification of the circumstances and in the intelligent choice of the ends. The field of speculation which embraces imaginary conditions is a field of folly.

A man who works twelve hours a day may do it because he likes it, or because he hopes by it to accomplish something which he thinks will bring to him an adequate reward; but most probably he does it because he does not know how else to meet the demands which are made on him, as he admits, legitimately, or with an authority which he cannot repel. I once heard the question put to one of the most learned scholars of this century, whether he liked to work all the time. He answered: "What difference does it make whether I like it or not? I can never finish what I have to do anyway." No serf ever worked as persistently, enthusiastically, and restlessly as that man did. It is time to stop this insulting talk about labor as if nobody labored but a hod-carrier or a bricklayer; the hardest worked classes in the community are those who are their own

bosses. Therefore I distinctly include the latter in what I have to say about labor.

It is one of the pet phrases of modern times that labor is dignified or has dignity. It is a good, safe phrase, because it sounds well, and the people for whose consumption it is provided cannot tell whether it makes any difference whether labor has dignity or not, or what would happen if it was not dignified. In truth, dignity is just what labor does not possess; for it always forces a man into strained posture, ungraceful motions, dirt, perspiration, disorder of dress and manner. It is leisure which has dignity. Moreover, if any man, no matter who he might be, was without dinner, he would undoubtedly pocket his dignity and go to work to get one.

Just how the current phrase took this form I do not know; but, although it is somewhat ludicrous when strictly analyzed, it has a history behind it which makes it anything but ludicrous. It is only in the most recent times, and then only in limited circles, that the notion has been rejected that labor is degrading. The intention of the phrase that labor is noble, or is dignified, was to contradict that traditional opinion or sentiment. In the classical states the sentiment was universal and undisputed, that manual labor in itself, and any labor when prosecuted for pay, was degrading; personal services which involved touching the person of another were also regarded as especially demeaning to him who performed them. If bread and butter were obtained in return for social functions performed, it must be disguised in some form of honorarium; it would dishonor a man to take wages. The only honorable forms of effort were fighting, ruling, and ecclesiastical functions. This is the militant theory of the comparative worth of social functions; it proceeds logically and properly

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from the standpoint of fighting men as the predominant and most important class in the community.

We have to thank the commanding influence of classicalism in our modern education for the strength which this tradition still has in the modern world. It has less weight in the United States than anywhere else in the world; but it must be borne in mind that the United States constitute the first human society of any importance in which other notions have ever prevailed or have ever been generally professed. An American will be sure to be astonished, on the continent of Europe, by the scruples and mannerisms with which professional men surround the acceptance of the remuneration which they are quite as eager to get as any Yankee; it looks as if they were ashamed of their livelihood, or felt themselves lowered by taking what they have fairly earned. It is not worth while to seek such evidence of the remnants of the same sentiment as one could find among ourselves.

The feudal period produced a new and still more intense development of the same sentiment in a somewhat changed form. All the industrial forms of livelihood were regarded as servile in comparison with the functions of the fighting classes and their ecclesiastical allies. The learned class were on the line between, unless they sought ecclesiastical rank, or, later, as legists, made themselves independently necessary.

It is only very slowly that the notions of an industrial and commercial civilization have fought their way during the last five hundred years against the militant notions. The latter have had and still largely retain the aroma of aristocracy; therefore, they are affected by many who do not understand them. The dictum that labor is noble, or dignified, has been a watchword of industrial-

ism in its struggle to assert itself against militancy; but the industrial classes, as fast as they have attained wealth, have deserted industrialism to seek alliance with aristocracy, or to adopt the modes of life which the militant tradition marks as more honorable.

The revolt against the notion that some forms of useful service to society are in themselves more worthy than others, is as yet, therefore, by no means complete. The so-called labor movement is full of evidence that the old notions still prevail in the manual labor classes; that those classes do not themselves heartily believe in the dignity of labor; that they are not proud of their own social functions; that they have been imbued by their leaders, not with honorable self-respect and a spirit of determination to vindicate their own worth in the social body, but only with enough vague aspiration to produce an irritated sense of inferiority. The socialistic movement bears strongest evidence to the strength of the old traditions; the assertions of fact from which it starts, in respect to the position, relations, rights, and wrongs of classes, are all obtained by applying the feudal traditions to the existing situation. The socialists by no means urge that the hod-carrier and the statesman in existing society shall be regarded as performing functions each in his way useful to society and both equally honorable if performed with equal fidelity. That is the bourgeois and capitalistic doctrine. The socialists assume that the two are not now equally worthy in popular esteem or social weight, or, consequently, in industrial fact, and they assert that the existing order must be changed so as to make them equal, not in worth, but in the personal enjoyment which can be won from the social functions and in the ideals of humanity which can be attained through them.

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I have before me an article produced by this discussion, but belonging, not to the socialist or semi-socialist but to the sentimental school, in which it is affirmed that manual or operative labor is brutalizing. This is in direct contradiction with the doctrine that labor is ennobling, which is what the sentimentalists have been telling us for a century. The contrast which the writer has in mind is between manual or factory labor and labor with a larger intellectual element in it; he seeks to establish his contention by describing the long factory hours, the close confinement, the irksome constraint, etc. 'What, then, shall we infer? Is the sweet doctrine that labor is dignified and ennobling all wrong? Were the ancients right? Is labor for pay always degrading, and does it become worse and worse as we go down the grades from those occupations which have the most brain-work and least manual work to those which have the most manual work and least brain-work? The issue is clear and it is not difficult; it would do great good to solve it completely, for it would clear up our ideas on many topics which are at present in confusion.

I maintain that labor has no moral quality at all. Every function in social work which is useful to society is just as meritorious in every way as any other; each being suitable and an object of choice to the person who performs it. The moral quality depends on the way in which it is performed. The social estimate and the personal worth which should be ascribed to social functions depends on the way in which the man we have in mind does his duty. It is not capable of generalization, and there is no reason for generalizing it.

The educational value of different social functions is equal, and the degree of human perfection which can be got out of them is equal. It develops a man in all moral

excellence, and in all that vague "elevation" which plays such a prominent part in social speculation just as much to be a good and faithful hod-carrier as to be a good and faithful statesman.

Labor does not brutalize — the distinction between manual and other labor in this respect is invalid. The people who are accustomed to factory work are not conscious of the hardships which a literary man may easily imagine that they must feel in it, any more than other men are conscious of hardship in the confinement of the editorial sanctum or the laboratory. It is only in literature or in the semi-loafer class that we find people actually reflecting and moralizing and complaining about whether the way in which they get their living is irksome. It is overwork which is brutalizing, and it is immaterial whether it is manual or intellectual work; but, as I said at the beginning, it is rarely that a man who is really overworked is in a position to say freely whether he will submit to it and be brutalized or not. Probably that is the reason why so few of that class pay any attention to the discussion, or ever make any complaint.

### Liberty and Machinery

A great deal of stress is often laid on the assumed fact that men who labor, at least in manual occupations, are paid for their nerve and sinew, and inferences are deduced from this assertion of fact which are believed to establish especial hardship for that class of persons.

I am not able to find any case whatever, at the present time, in which a human being is paid for anything but intelligence. It may be that some one can bring forward a case; if so, I should be interested to see it. Any mere exertion of animal energy can be converted into

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pounds of coal, and can be supplanted by steam. The limitations and conditions are, however, that the task to be done must present uniform requirements over a considerable extent of time or place, so that it may be economically possible to apply machinery without intelligence. Some examples will make this point clear.

We see men employed in shoveling and carrying coal from the side-walk into the cellar. Are they paid for pure energy, or for intelligence? If it was the fact that the coal-bins of all houses were built in the same shape and in the same position relatively to the sidewalk, then coal carts could be fitted with apparatus for passing the coal into the bin without any shoveling or carrying. In fact, carts have been invented, and are in use, which do this in that great number of cases where the position and shape of the bins conform to a general plan of house construction. Or, if coal had to be put into the cellar every few days, apparatus could be arranged for each house, in spite of differences of construction, to put it in without hand labor. In fact, therefore, at the present time, the services of the coal-heavers are required to adapt the task to the varying circumstances of the different cases; that is, to apply intelligence where it cannot be dispensed with.

Another case, familiar to our notice, in which human beings expend much nerve and muscular energy, is in hod-carrying. Steam hod-hoisters are familiar, but it is obvious that their applicability and utility is limited to the cases where a large building is to be constructed at one spot; otherwise it does not pay to put up the apparatus. Therefore the case is that the task can be reduced to routine and machinery can be applied to it, if the amount of it is sufficient, within the limits of time and space, to give the machine simply machine work to

do, namely, the plodding repetition of a set operation. In other cases the man does the work because he must use his intelligence all the time to produce the ever-changing application which is called for.

A steam shovel will transfer sand or gravel from the bank at a rate to defy the competition of men, so long as the task is to transfer it in the same way, or within narrow limits; but a machine to apply steam-power to the excavation of a trench for a sewer, through hard soil and under constantly varying conditions, is hardly imaginable. Here, therefore, we find the human power almost unrivaled.

On the other hand, we find in mills and factories machines which, as the saying is, "can almost talk." They perform very complicated operations with perfection, provided only the task is to be repeated without limit of time, in some process of manufacture. Hence the machines and the power are all the time invading the domain of intelligence, wherever the task can be put in the mechanical form, and made to comply with the mechanical conditions; the man stands by and supplies the intelligence at the points where the intelligence is still indispensable. Some machines seem more intelligent than some men, but no machine can "feed itself" with new material. The operations of the machine are often immeasurably more worthy of intelligence than the operation of going after more material and feeding it into the machine, but not always so; for the arrangement of the machine and the material, that the machine may do its work well, is often no trifling demand on intelligence.

I believe, therefore, that it is a correct statement of the case that, where the task calls for brute force only, the steam or other engine supplants the man, and that



where the man holds the field because his intelligence is indispensable, it is his intelligence that is paid for. If it is indispensable, it is also well remunerated in proportion to the time and capital which must be spent in preparing for the task, while great physical vigor, if necessary, helps to make a natural monopoly. This is why the modern laborer constantly turns to demand the help of machinery wherever it can possibly be applied, and the notion is finding especial illustration just now in the case of the stokers in modern steamships of high speed. Either machinery must be applied where machinery hardly seems applicable at all, or the men who bring the requisite intelligence to bear under very hard conditions, together with the mere mechanical energy whose market value is that of a few pounds of the coal they handle, will obtain a remuneration indefinitely greater than that of the general class or workmen to which they belong, or with which they have hitherto been classed.

Whether this view of the matter can be maintained as absolutely correct or not, it certainly has enough truth in it to show that the current assertions about the hapless position of the man who "has only his labor to sell" rest upon very superficial and hasty knowledge of the case.

On the one hand, then, it is true that that man is unfortunate who, in the world of steam and machinery, can do nothing which steam and machinery cannot do; but, on the other hand, it is true also that steam and machinery are a grand emancipation for the man who will raise himself above them and learn to use them by his intelligence.

If I apprehend this matter aright, then it is only another case of a general principle which I have already tried to expound: that every new power is a new chance,

but that every chance brings with it a twofold possibility. If we seize it and use it rightly, we go up by means of it; if we fail to understand it, or miss it, or abuse it, we fall just so much lower on account of it. If we live in a world of machinery and steam, and cannot learn to command machinery and steam, we shall count for no more than a handful of coal; if we rise to the occasion, and by work and study make steam and machinery our servants, we can be emancipated from drudgery and from the wear of the nerves and the muscles. The true hardship of our time is that this alternative is forced upon us over and over again with pitiless repetition.

In a wider and more philosophical view of the matter, every new application of science and every improvement in art, is a case of advancing organization. It always comes with two faces — one, its effect on what is and what has been; the other, its effect on what may be. Its effect on what is and has been is destructive; hence the doctrine that “the better is the greatest foe of the good.” Its effect on what may be is creative; results before impossible are now brought within reach. The cost is the sacrifice of the old and the strain to rise to the command of the new.

The effect on our social life of a misapprehension of the relations between modern arts and wages or any other feature of the economic organization is trifling as compared with the effects of misapprehension of the moral and educating effects of the same arts. It is asserted that there is a moral loss in the sacrifice of skill, and “all-round” efficiency, and dexterity of manipulation. The moral and educating effect on the race of a constant demand to hold the powers alert and on strain to understand and keep up with the “march of progress,” transcends immeasurably any similar moral or educating

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effect to which men have before been subjected. He who will may see the proofs of it on every side, and on all classes; where are the dull boors, the stupid peasantry, the rollicking journeymen (in the original sense of the word) of former times? There never was a time when a man had so much reason to be a man, or so much to make him a man as he has now.

Those then who ascribe liberty to the wise resolutions of political conventions, and set it in opposition to the industrial conditions of modern life, make a woeful mistake. If we have any liberty, it is power over nature which has put it within our reach, and our power over nature is due to science and art. It is they which have emancipated us, but they have not done it without exacting a price, nor without opening to us new vistas of effort and desire; and liberty is still at the end of the vista, where it always has been and always will be.

### **The Disappointment of Liberty**

As we probe the idea of liberty on one side and another, distinctions are brought to light. First we have revolutionary or anarchistic liberty, the notion of which is that a free man is emancipated from the struggle for existence, and assured everything he needs (wants), by virtue of his liberty, on terms which he shall not regard as onerous. Secondly, we have personal liberty, which is the chance to fight the struggle for existence for one's self, to the best of one's will and ability, within the bounds of one's personal circumstances, for which other men are not responsible, without any risk of being compelled to fight the struggle for anybody else, and without any claim to the assistance of anybody else in one's own. Third, we have civil liberty, which is a status

produced by laws and civil institutions, in which the personal liberty of individuals is secured; it is a status in which all rights and duties are in equilibrium.

Objection has been made to the second and third definitions that a man might steal, by way of liberty to pursue the struggle for existence on his own behalf. The objection only illustrates the difficulty of this order of discussion. It is conceivable that laws and institutions might tolerate stealing, for they have done it; but as there can be no robber without a robbed, and as the definition must apply equally to all individuals in the society, the definition absolutely excluded stealing or other invasion of personal rights. The objection is therefore futile, and does not call for any modification of the definition.

As we go on with the discussion, we also see that in one view of the case all human strength seems to lie in liberty, while in another view it all seems to lie in discipline. At this point a pitfall lies on either side. Anarchists and Nihilists, accepting the notion that in liberty is all strength, elevate revolution to the highest function as a redeeming and reforming force; to destroy and tear down becomes a policy of wisdom and growth; everything which is in the way; everything which has grown as an institution is an obstacle to that ideal of primitive purity and simplicity, combined with liberty, to which we would be eager to return. Hence liberty of the first species is sought, in practise, by universal negation and reckless destruction. But society cannot sustain itself without stringent organization — organization which coerces its members. Liberty, on this view, is therefore social suicide, for it is war of the society against the most essential conditions of its own existence.

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On the other side, the notion that discipline is the secret of all strength is easily convertible into the notion that subordination, submission, obedience to one's fellow-men, is the secret of all strength. That is the fallacy of authoritative absolutism in all its forms. A man without discipline is a boor and a barbarian, but a man who has submitted his will to another mortal's will has broken the spring of moral power. The effect of sound discipline is that it never breaks the spring, but strengthens it, because the individual character reacts with new energy on account of new moral forces which are brought into play, *viz.*, critical reflection and independent conviction. The question which arises at every new crisis in which a man is freed from control is this: if others let go of you will you take hold of yourself? A spoiled boy or man is one in whom a succession of these crises has been decided the wrong way.

At this point the moral problem comes in. It consists in the combination of the two elements of liberty and discipline; and they must be combined according to circumstances. The problem is not, therefore, capable of definite or final solution; it defies analysis and rule. Like other moral problems, it is only a fragment of the great problem of living.

The more widely and thoroughly we explore the field of social fact and relations in which liberty falls, the more are we convinced that liberty in the sense of the first of the above definitions is the grandest of human delusions. That notion of liberty is a part of the great dream that our situation on earth is, to a great extent, a matter of our own choice and decision, or, as the current fashion expresses it, that social questions are ethical. With the growth of social science the old wrangle about free will has been transferred to this domain, and the ques-

tion whether we make our social phenomena or our social phenomena make us, whether the man is a function of the state or the state is a function of the man, is the question whether social science can throw off the thralldom of metaphysics or not. At present we have to note that our studies of liberty, in all its phases and applications, have forced us again and again to observe that there is no real liberty but that which is an affair of history, law, and institutions. It is therefore positive, and so is capable of historical study and scientific analysis.

The dream of liberty has taken possession of men's minds within the last century to the exclusion of other dreams except that of equality — and with good reason, for if the dream of emancipation from the heavy weight of the struggle for existence were realizable it would supersede all other dreams. Then, again, there has been an unprecedented opening of new chances to mankind, which chances have permitted the human race at the same time to increase in numbers and to advance in comfort of living. Political institutions have advanced at the same time and have been assumed to be the cause of the advance in average comfort. This claim has been almost universally admitted, and has produced the natural inference that political devices can do all for us that we can possibly desire. This is the latest Utopianism, and it surpasses all previous phases of Utopianism in pure silliness. Then, again, any period of advancing comfort is sure to be one of advancing sentimentalism; men who are struggling each for himself, under the pressure of dire necessity, will spare little sympathy on each other — it is when they are at ease that they have sympathy to spare. Distress dissolves the social bond; comfort strengthens

it. All these things, then, have concurred within a century to raise and intensify the dream of liberty.

It is not strange that this movement has issued and is issuing in disappointment, neither is it strange that the disappointment should be vented on constitutional liberty, the only true liberty, and never should reach the delusive and fallacious liberty at all. Human history is full of just such errors as that. The last thing in the world to which we attribute our misfortunes is our pet delusions; they stand firm through all.

I say that it is not strange that the dream of liberty should issue in disappointment and revolt, because this liberty has been promised as a cause and guarantee of bliss on earth, and it has failed to give what it promised. Civil and personal liberty help on the evolution of society; they produce growth of individuals and societies. They are not revolutionary, but are hostile to revolution; they stand related to the revolutionary liberty as the truth to the caricature. It stands, therefore, as one of the tasks before our social science to distinguish these two notions of liberty from each other as sharply as possible, and while manifesting the strength and value of the one to show the error and falsity of the other.

Everything, however, which is evolutionary aims to produce the utmost possible, in the next stage, out of the antecedents which lie in the last stage. Evolutionary methods, therefore, have nothing to do with ideals; they aim always at the best possible under the circumstances. Under such methods, therefore, there can be no dreams of universal bliss at all; neither can there be hope in brutal destruction, or unintelligent negation, for any sober reform.

It is most natural that this reduction of all the enthusiastic dreams of the last century to the test of positive

truth should be regarded as "cold" and unsympathetic; that a wider and wider gulf should open between "ethical aspirations" and the products of scientific method applied to social phenomena; and that the point at which the cleft opens should be the doctrine of liberty. Any student of social science who accepts the anarchistic notion of liberty will find himself lost in the new forms of the mist of free-will. No such notion of liberty can be tolerated in a scientific discussion, but only that notion which, being a product of social growth, is within the field of the science itself. On every ground and at every point the domain of social science must be defended against the alleged authority of ethical dicta, which cannot be subjected to any verification whatever.