

The cry for reform has always been the characteristic refrain of the lower classes of society. All people seem to have sufficient self-approbation to think that if things were as they should be their position would in consequence fall in with the highest class of their community; and it can hardly be denied that this is a more prominent feature of the beliefs of the ignorant than of the educated. This is probably the main reason why we find that the greater part of the socialists belong to the lower element of society. Though of course it would naturally be the discontented ones that would want a revolution. These being willing to risk the loss of their present benefits for the chance of having their condition bettered.

It must be admitted that the present position of the common laborer in the world is not an enviable one. Yet it is impossible for all to be rich, and practically impossi-

ble for all to be talented; and it is well for man that it should be so in order that he may satisfy his needs in his present state of development. Humanity is too heterogeneous a mass of matter to be put into the same mold and be expected to develop equally and harmoniously. Some must rise faster than others, and that they may do so, some must act as their stays and supports. It is not the miscellaneous material deposited at the terminus of a glacier that forms the productive soil, but the assorted sediment deposited by water as seen in the rich soil of our river valleys. The coarse material is deposited first and forms drainage and a permanent foundation for the finer and richer surface deposit.

As sedimentation is the best natural method of fertile soil formation so does it seem that competition is the best natural method for the process of adjustment in humanity; and the more this is interfered with the less likely are men to fill the positions

best suited to them in society. This principle of competition that is the main objection of socialism to the present condition of things. It is true that capital has much more effective means for frustrating the effects of competition than labor has; and this is perhaps one of the reasons why the rich generally belong to the higher class of society. This seems to be a wrong allotment of advantages as it tends to favor the rich and oppose the poor so that the rich have a constant tendency to become richer and the poor poorer. Yet it is possible and frequently the case for the poor to overcome this disadvantage by increased diligence on their part; and this exchange of places is usually facilitated on the part of the rich by a want of diligence as it has become almost an axiom that the inheritance of wealth is balanced by a corresponding lack of common sense so that the wealth is seldom willed to the great-grandchildren.

This advantage of the rich is considered by the socialists as well as by others to be

Detrimental to progress. Then how much worse would it be to adopt the socialists plan and completely annihilate the effects of competition. It is a common saying that the world owes every man a living but he has to "rustle" to collect the debt, but if we adopt the socialists ideal scheme it will be unnecessary for him to "rustle" until the majority coming to the same conclusion will do likewise when necessity will compel action. Competition has a tendency to cause man to anticipate necessity and seek employment at all times and not wait to be compelled to work in order to continue his existence.

The two principal and necessary forces in social life are self-love and benevolence. The former has perhaps more prominence than it is entitled to but there is sufficient of the latter to prevent destitution. These two forces of human nature are constantly in conflict and when they harmonize in human conduct, and not till then, both national and social welfare will be secured. Man is not an animal to be driven, and

neither law nor force can compel him to be benevolent. Of these two coordinate forces self-interest has perhaps been the chief agent in developing the present conditions and is at present the most active incentive. Socialism would reverse this order by having a revolution that would make benevolence the active principle. From one extreme they would go to the other; and instead of combining the two, making private interests cooperative with public interest, they would have public welfare the only aim.

They would have overseers for conducting labor but instead of there being the benefitted parties by an economical use of this labor it would be distributed among 50,000,000 of people. If they occasion losses it is apportioned among the same number. Thus responsibility would be reduced to a minimum, and as a consequence luxury, then anarchy and finally despotism would be the inevitable result.

It would not be advantageous to

separate the poor and ignorant from the rich and intelligent. It is only by the commingling of classes that the lower can be elevated to the higher, but the principles of the socialists would stop the progress or cause a retrogression of the leading classes till the remainder became equal to them. They would paralyze the efforts and consequently the desire of talent. Let not the employer be reduced to the employee but let the employed become co-partners with the employer that while the laborers are progressing the manager may do likewise. Yet this is only another scheme but perhaps less revolutionary for the equalization of humanity, the accomplishment of which is an impossibility. The socialist requires desire requires that man shall fulfill too high an ideal for him to accomplish in his present status of evolution.

Man may have been created with equal rights but he certainly has not at present equal ability. He is unrestrained in the use of his rights

and in the natural process of adjustment it is more than probable that he will succeed in finding the proper place for the exercise of his abilities and that he may properly use his ability it would be injustice to restrain him by any artificial means. We are compelled to believe in the law of the "survival of the fittest" and anything that interferes with this law must be detrimental to society. The road to wealth and fame is too narrow for all to march on it in single rank formation. Some must fall behind to act as the reserve; and in the sifting process of society the deserving usually take the lead.

A. K. Midgley.