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THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY of GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

A thesis submitted to

The Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Minnesota

by

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

May 22, 1913

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I. PREFATORY STATEMENT.

George Bernard Shaw is, perhaps, the most unfortunately versatile man of to-day. He does many things, and suffers because he does them all well. So many are the variously interesting phases of Mr. Shaw's work, that the bewildered world, in its frantic efforts to comprehend him, has succeeded so far merely in ascribing to him a superficial whimsicality and in causing him unjustly to suffer the misinterpretation of misunderstanding. Varied as Mr. Shaw's activities have been, however, there are two aspects of his work which stand out pre-eminently, and which will undoubtedly be the basis on which the world will eventually determine his permanent reputation: Shaw, the dramatist; and Shaw, the socialist.

Shaw, the dramatist, has long been known to the critics, and much has been written about him. Archer, Chesterton, Huxley, Henderson, Mencken, and, characteristically enough, Shaw himself, have endeavored to overcome the difficulties of the Shavian drama, and to make it intelligible to the play-loving world. There is certainly no dearth of criticism here. But Shaw, the socialist, despite his greater age, has received no such attention. In fact, he has been shamefully ignored. That Shaw is a socialist, is a well known fact. What his socialism means, however, is something which but few people understand. Even Shaw himself has failed to present his Social Philosophy as a clearly defined and logically formulated unit, and no one has, as yet (1), taken the trouble to do so for him.

(1) Dec. 1912. So far as we have been able to ascertain.

Henderson, it is true, devotes a chapter to Shavian Socialism, but his treatment is more biographical than socialistic. In fact, there is, so far as we have been able to ascertain, no thorough treatment of Shaw's Social Philosophy in print. With the assurance that no previous work is available on this subject, the investigator will endeavor to present for the first time an accurate statement of Shavian Socialism, in the belief that his efforts will be a contribution, however small, to the "sum-total of human knowledge."

To those who are interested in the work of Shaw purely from a literary point of view, it may at first appear a bootless task to confine an investigation solely to a study of his economic, -and perhaps visionary, -doctrines. But to those who have been fortunate enough to become acquainted with other than the merely literary aspect of Shaw, the investigation will seem not only justifiable but praiseworthy. Shaw is one of the giant intellects of to-day; and of the various activities to which he turns his attention, his socialistic work is by far the most important. No unfounded assertion is this, but a carefully formulated opinion. So eminent a critic as Mr. G. K. Chesterton (to mention but one) corroborates (1) this statement. All who take the time to study Shaw must admit it.

But before the discussion proper may be considered, it

(1) "George Bernard Shaw" - pg. 78.

is necessary to examine a statement that is commonly made in regard to Shaw. Many intelligent people, many whose life-interest is in literature, many serious-minded professors, many, in fact, whose opinion ought to stand for something, accuse Shaw of a culpable lack of seriousness. If this be true, there is, of course, no benefit in a study of his socialistic beliefs. This being the case, it becomes necessary to delay the investigation until the charge is shown to be false. There is but one true answer to the accusation: the dramatic critic, intelligent though he be, who maintains that George Bernard Shaw is not serious in his work, forms that denunciatory opinion either because his reading of Shaw has been superficial or because his power of concentration is too weak to be effective when attention is frequently demanded by the compelling, rapid-fire wit of an unequalled, brilliant dramatist. This may be a stern reply, but it is made unflinchingly. The first cause is generally responsible for the erroneous censure of Shaw. The average man who makes the charge has read (or perhaps merely seen) "Man and Superman" (1) and "Candida". He may even have read "Mrs. Warren's Profession", - who knows? But in all probability he never heard of "The Doctor's Dilemma", "Getting Married," "The Common-sense of Municipal Trading", (2), or the "Fabian Essays in Socialism" (3). And yet it is easily conceivable that one might (if he carefully enough refrained from a critical analysis) read all of the plays of Shaw and still think him anything but serious. But not so with

(1) All references in this discussion to Shaw's Plays are to the standard Brentane (New York) edition.

(2) Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd. - 1904.

(3) Published by the Fabian Society - London - 1889

the prefaces: But, then, who cares to read a preface to a play, - especially if it be but a farcical, witty, paradoxical whim of a merry-making Irishman?

And yet, - to be absolutely unprejudiced, - this unfortunately common conviction (1) that Shaw is never in earnest has arisen not altogether because of the hasty conclusions of an uncritical reading public. No; Shaw himself must be held in part responsible. To those who, having read but three or four of Shaw's plays, do not understand his peculiar Lebensanschauung, he must certainly appear either to be indulging in highly extravagant fun or else to be wholly inexplicable. To those, however, who have withheld their opinions until Shaw's attitude toward life could be carefully gleaned from a thorough reading of his works, he is neither the one nor the other. That special doctrine in support of which all of Shaw's drama is written (and no unusual perspicacity is required to establish this fact, so obvious is it) is the belief that human progress is possible only when a life based on a true recognition of intellectually demonstrated facts is substituted for the accepted mode of existence in conformity with the outrageously hampering shams of sentimentality (2). In this respect he is a realist,

(1) Personal experiences of the author brought out the fact only too clearly that this opinion of Shaw is a very common one.

(2) This equally interesting and important attitude toward sentimentality and sham is a most absorbing study and a powerful influence in Shaw's work and life. That Shaw carries this idea too far we are inclined to believe. A discussion of this subject, however, would be outside the scope of this investigation.

and he will have the truth,-which "means the unflinching recognition of facts,and the abandonment of the conspiracy to ignore such of them as do not bolster up the ideals" (1),-no matter how great may be the resultant contumely with which he is received by an ungenerous and sentimental public. And being a realist,he maintains that "when a man abnegates the will to live and be free (a phrase which shows the influence of Schopenhauer (2)) in a world of the living and free,seeking only to conform to ideals for the sake of being,not himself,but 'a good man',then he is morally dead and rotten." (3) Shaw,accordingly,in being himself and not "a good man",provokes the condemnation of those pious souls whose one idea of goodness is passively to accept as a moral code some time-worn conventions connected frequently with two tables of stone. As a result he cannot be mentioned in the presence of children,and his name is not to be breathed in polite society. He is labeled "unclean",-a stigma which even his reputed wit can not altogether overcome,and those who are brazen enough to read his plays must be shocked,horrified,disgusted. The truth of the matter is,however,that so superior is he to the average man in his morality that he may without fear openly discuss those subjects which a lesser man can approach only with trepidation. His own statement in regard to Ibsen,who was received in much the same way as was Shaw, may be well

(1) "Quintessence of Ibsenism" - pg.81.

(2) "Cf. "The Will in Nature."

(3) "Quintessence of Ibsenism" - pg.31.

applied to himself. "The man," says Shaw (1), and we say it of Shaw, "who has risen above the danger and the fear that his acquisitiveness will lead him to theft, his temper to murder, and his affections to debauchery: this is he who is denounced as an arch-squandrel and libertine, and thus confounded with the lowest because he is the highest." Shaw is too good to fear evil. And as far as being passive on the question of morals, - that were a Shavian impossibility. He must be active; his is, in part at least, a Nietzschean philosophy. "This," he says (2), "is the true joy of life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap."

These, then, are some of the reasons why Shaw himself must receive a portion of the blame for being thought not in earnest. Because thought with Shaw means action; because he feels that his life is being used up for a mighty purpose; because his system of morality checks pious conventionalities; because he has dared in the majesty of his own purity to seek out the truth and boldly to expose it; ~~because~~ because he has undertaken to replace the conventional shams engendered of ignorance and sentimentality by the facts of life which his intellect recognizes; and because, moreover, he has misled the unwary public by his exceptional brilliancy of epigrammatic and paradoxical expression; because of all of these reasons he has himself helped to obscure

(1) "Quintessence of Ibsenism" - pg. 29.

(2) "Man and Superman" - preface - pg. XXXI.

from a superficial view that eminently serious aspect of himself which is the most dominant and most dominating characteristic of one of the foremost thinkers of the early twentieth century. No mere juggler of words is this man; no idle trickster seeking applause. "For art's sake alone I would not face the toil of writing a single sentence," (1) he writes to William Archer, and the splendid paragraph which follows is almost enough to clear any man of the charge of frivolity or unbecoming levity. He wears a comic mask, indeed, to cover up his serious aspect, - a mask which, unfortunately enough, strikes fear or confusion to the hearts of those who are timid, but which brings to those favored few who realize both the grotesqueness of the mask and the sincere kindness which it hides an exquisite double pleasure.

For those who may still be unconvinced, there is yet another evidence of Shaw's seriousness. This proof is nothing less than that portion of his work which is commonly unread by those who discredit him. Who but a serious man would write "Essays in Fabian Socialism"? Who but an earnest thinker would write on "Municipal Trading"? What frivolous spirit could produce Shaw's Fabian tracts? What light-minded dramatist would take the time to labor over more than a hundred pages of a preface on doctors? Or suspend the publication of his plays until he had completed a treatise on marriage? Or employ his valuable time in preparing a jeremiad against the politicians? Who but a man with the most serious of messages would direct

(1) "Man and Superman" - pref.-pg.XXXV.

his energies toward that most thankless of all tasks, the literary presentation of advanced ideas of social reformation for which the public is not as yet prepared? (1) Yet despite the fact that Shaw has done all this, he is not considered serious. A strange fate indeed is this for a man who is more serious than Shakespeare, who has the satirical power of a Dean Swift (2), who accepts Ibsenism and carries it a step further, whose whole life is one prodigious protest against all his superficial calumniators, and whose mightiest claim to recognition is that he has dared seriously to face and earnestly to combat (3) those all too prevalent economic evils which even now are marking the early stages in the decadence of our rotten civilization (4), and which will eventually, if not soon checked, add another empire to the dust of ages that covers Greece and Rome. To learn this, one must read, or take the word of one who has read Shaw. The few lengthy quotations (5) which the scope of this analysis will permit may serve as an index by which Shaw's earnestness may be judged; but for a true appreciation of his

(1) Some of Shaw's ideas have been actually adopted by the English Parliament, as, for instance, the state regulation of doctors (cf. Pref. on Doctors). But this occurred (in 1912) several years after Shaw's article appeared. As a general rule, Shaw is far ahead of his time.

(2) Cf. John Bull's Other Island - Pref. for Politicians - pgs. XLVI-LXII.

(3) Cf. Henderson's Life of Shaw - Chapters IV & V.

(4) This pessimistic statement has the backing of several authoritative historians and social philosophers. See, for example, Henry George: "Progress and Poverty"; also Brooks Adams: "The Law of Civilization and Decay."

(5) See pages 14-15, 94-95.

merit and a true realization of his powers as a sincere, thoughtful, scientific, serious observer and critical reformer of present economic conditions, one must have the patience (for which there is rich compensation) to get acquainted with the true Shaw as seen in his entire works. So intimate an acquaintance as would result from so thorough a study of Shaw would not only necessitate the reader's agreement with what has already been said, but would repay him over and over again with the joy that comes from contact with a man whose optimism overcomes the meanness of the social wrongs, whose faith proclaims the supremacy of good.

Having seen, then, that Shaw is a serious writer, and having stated that his most important work is his Social Philosophy, we may now proceed directly to our chosen task of presenting for the first time in print an accurate statement of those social doctrines which are being advocated by George Bernard Shaw.

II. INTRODUCTION .

Socialism is a word of unfortunate connotations. To many people it brings a vivid picture of red flags, dynamitards, revolution, and assassination. Naturally enough, such association of insurrectionary activities with socialistic propaganda (an association which, to be sure, is founded on historical evidence of a most convincing nature) has resulted very largely in the alienation of the sympathies even of those for whom theoretical socialism is the one desideratum. Such is the tenacity with which anarchistic implications have clung to the word under discussion, that even the twentieth century desire for scientific accuracy of information and the universal belief in democratic education have been unable altogether to separate the actually conflicting ideas and to present to the world an unbiased definition of constructive Socialism.

Despite the prevalent misconception, however, there is today a sane and rational form of Socialism, - a form in which there are no red flags, in which no dynamite is used, in which revolution is firmly suppressed and assassination earnestly deplored. It cannot be denied (nor is it at all necessary) that the origin of the present rational social philosophy is that older, chaotic form of bomb-throwing and exploding mines. Evolution of thought has simply manifested itself here as elsewhere. Nor can it be denied that those conditions which gave rise to early socialism are the same as those which necessitate the existence of a peaceful body of thoughtful, intelligent, scientific social philosophers to-day. Yet the spirit of the new system is so different from that of the old that, despite their common genesis, any effort to reconcile them must be ridiculed. The State and Poverty

(both of which were to be annihilated on principle under the old socialistic regime) are with us just as much as ever, and their attendant evils are, if anything, greater than before; but the impossibilities of the old methods of procedure with all the superficial evidences of enthusiasm have given place to a new modus operandi which, because of its stern suppression of sincere but emotional, antagonizing tactics, and because of its subjection of all propositions to the severe analysis of dispassionate intellect, is attracting many who could not accept the former policy and promises to be permanently effective.

To this modern Socialistic movement belongs Bernard Shaw. In fact he is one of the dominating influences in its formation and progress. Although for a short period in his youth he was, as is to be expected of any thinking boy, revolutionary, he was one of the first to recognize the advantages of calm, deliberate action. "Socialism to me," he says (1), "has always meant, not a principle, but certain definite economic measures which I wish to see taken." Such a statement might be made by a member of any political party whatever. There is nothing exceptionable in that. Nothing more reasonable could be demanded of any party. And when it is remembered that this statement was made in an address before a meeting of Socialists (2), the advance from sensationalism to judicial calm is as remarkable as it is obvious.

This poise and self-command, however, do not show a tendency

(1) Fabian Tract No. 45.

(2) Read to the Fabian Society, Oct. 16, 1891.

toward reconciliation with present economic conditions. On the contrary, they are evidences of a deeper appreciation of the situation. The old protest against the unjust distribution of wealth is by no means checked. Shaw has much to say on this subject, but for the present we can stop only to read what is perhaps as succinct a statement of the conditions as ever was made. "Do not waste your time," he writes (1), "on social questions. What is the matter with the poor is Poverty; what is the matter with the rich is Uselessness."

The State, too, is not forgotten by Shaw and his socialistic brothers because of their newly acquired dignity of procedure. As a matter of fact, the criticism of the State is more potent than ever, now that the critics are temperate and rational. Such is always the case. The State, according to Shaw, is not a thing to be done away with. In fact, despite Robert Owen, it can not be swept aside. It is too powerful. It is here to stay. But it can be modified, moulded to suit the times, changed in the interest of the people who have created it. (2) And modification is indeed necessary. This is no ideal State which we have, and Shaw is out-spoken about it. "The State," he asserts (3), "at present is simply a huge machine for robbing and slave-driving the poor by brute force (4). You may, if you are a stupid or comfortably-off person, think

(1) "Man and Superman"-Revolutionist's Handbook-pg.241.

(2) See "The Impossibilities of Anarchism" - pg 27. (3) Ib.-pg.24.

(4) This, and all other succeeding statements, are not necessarily the views of the author. The attempt is here made to present only those beliefs which Shaw entertains. Personal convictions are kept in abeyance.

that the policeman at the corner is the guardian of law and order - that the gaol, with these instruments of torture, the treadmill, plank bed, solitary cell, cat o'nine tails, and gallows, is a place to make people cease to do evil and learn to do well. But the primary function of the policeman, and that for which his other functions are only blinds, is to see that you do not lie down to sleep in this country without paying an idler for the privilege; that you do not taste bread until you have paid the idler's toll in the price of it; that you do not resist the starving blackleg who is dragging you down to his level for the idler's profit by offering to do your work for a starvation wage. Attempt any of these things, and you will be hailed off and tortured in the name of law and order, honesty, social equilibrium, safety of property and person, public duty, Christianity, morality, and what not, as a vagrant, a thief, and a rioter. Your soldier, ostensibly a heroic and patriotic defender of his country, is really an unfortunate man driven by destitution to offer himself as food for powder for the sake of regular rations, shelter and clothing; and he must, on pain of being arbitrarily imprisoned, punished with petty penances like a naughty child, pack-drilled, flogged or shot, all in the blessed name of 'discipline', do anything he is ordered to, from standing in his red coat in the hall of an opera house as a mere ornament, to flogging his comrade or committing murder. And his primary function is to come to the rescue of the policeman when the latter is overpowered. Members of Parliament whose sole qualifications for election

were 1000 pounds loose cash, an 'independent' income, and a vulgar strain of ambition; parsons quoting scriptures for the purposes of the squire; lawyers selling their services to the highest bidder at the bar, and maintaining the supremacy of the moneyed class on the bench; juries of employers masquerading as peers of proletarians in the dock; University professors elaborating the process known as the education of a gentleman; artists striving to tickle the fancy or flatter the vanity of the aristocrat or plutocrat; workmen doing their work as badly and slowly as they dare so as to make the most of their job; employers starving and overworking their hands and adulterating goods as much as they dare; these are the actual living material of these imposing abstractions known as the State, the Church, the Law, the Constitution, Education, the Fine Arts, and Industry." (1). Such is Shaw's opinion of the State, and no weakly expressed opinion is it.

An equally forceful passage concerning the social organization is given in one of Shaw's prefaces (2): "The vitality which places nourishment and children first, heaven and hell a somewhat remote second, and the health of society as an organic whole (3) nowhere, may muddle successfully through the comparatively tribal stages of gregariousness; but in XIX century nations and XX century empires the determination of every man to be rich at all costs, and of every woman

(1) See pg. 9, note 5.

(2) "Man and Superman" - Epistle Dedicatory - pg. XV.

(3) The italics are not Shaw's.

to be married at all costs (1), must, without a highly scientific social organization (2), produce a ruinous development of poverty, celibacy, prostitution, infant mortality, adult degeneracy, and everything that wise men most dread." As we have already seen, Shaw's Socialism is a desire for "certain definite economic measures" which (we may now say) will eventuate in a "highly scientific social organization" where the State shall serve the people and the curse of the proletariat shall not be poverty. These economic measures, then, which have the advocacy of Shaw may now be presented one by one, from the Shavian Socialistic point of view.

(1) See section on Marriage and Divorce.

(2) The italics are not Shaw's.

1. THE NATIONALIZATION of LAND .

"'Property', said Proudhon (1), 'is theft.' This is the only perfect truism uttered on the subject." (2) . Such is the bold statement of George Bernard Shaw; such is the opinion of the Fabian (3) Socialists. In this day of sacredly guarded property rights, and in this era of law and order whose very foundation is the recognition of individual proprietorship, and whose principal function is the maintenance of the inviolability of private possessions, in such a well ordered time as this, it requires some courage of conviction to denounce in irrevocable print the principle upon which our whole system of jurisprudence is dependent. This denunciation, however, is made only after a thorough study of economics, and the assurance of hard-earned knowledge is back of it. It is no thoughtless conception of a fanatic; no idle vision of an ideal State. The principle involved is real.

(1) It took a thick volume for Proudhon to say this. His argument, interesting and logical throughout, being beyond the limited scope of this thesis, can be merely indicated. Property, he says, is as much of a natural right as is the air. It is necessary for existence. How, then, can men appropriate it, - and by what right? The two common answers, - by right of primary occupation, and by right of the labor involved in development and improvement of the land, - he refutes by showing that the logical outcome of these rights, were they inherently true, would be equality, instead of the unjust distribution of wealth which now obtains; and also that "from the standpoint of justice" (which, of course, he is seeking) "Labor destroys Property".

Proudhon then states that Property is impossible, and demonstrates that fact at great length in ten mathematical propositions, the last of which returns to the first view and maintains that "Property is the negation of equality." No summary could be more concise & accurate than Shaw's.

(2) "Man and Superman" - Revolutionist's Handbook - pg. 233.

(3) Whenever the Fabians are hereinafter mentioned, it must be understood that their tenets are indorsed by Shaw. See Sec. V. below; also Henderson's Life.

At first glance, this view would seem to be revolutionary. If property be theft, and theft a crime, there is but one course of action open to a social organization that has a sense of justice or morality; and that course would mean injustice, perhaps tyranny, and revolution. Such, however, is not the case. But in order to appreciate this fact it is necessary to follow the various stages in the development of this idea which Proudhon, Shaw, and others have defended. By an argument too long to quote, Shaw shows (1) how the value of land increases (2) with increase of population, and explains the origin and injustice of an inevitable rent. His method is very similar to the discussion (3) of the same subject by

(1) "Fabian Essays in Socialism" - Chapt. I.

(2) Used here in the ordinary sense of the word. "Land" has been defined by such economists as J.S. Mill, Henry George, and others as the means of production or sources of wealth given to man by Nature. The line between "Land" and "Capital" is indeterminate, however, and no scientific distinction is made between them by Fabians. This point will be taken up under "Socialization of Capital."

(3) "Progress and Poverty" - Book IV, Chapt. II. Both Shaw and George assume an uninhabited prairie and bring to it a single pioneer who settles there. Then the advent of a second settler, and a third, is supposed, and a study is made of the rise in value of the first settler's land as his neighbors increase, trades spring up, and the population spreads to less fertile land than that of the first pioneer. The process goes on until the first settled land is so superior in value (inherently and also because it is in the center of population where advantages are greatest) to land at "the margin of cultivation", that new arrivals will be willing (for the opportunity of being centrally located) to pay the difference-in-value-between-central-and-marginal-land as rent to the only too willing first settler, who may retire and live on his unearned income. Thus rent arises, and may be defined as the "Excess of the product of the most fertile land over that of lands of an inferior quality". (Mill, Ricardo, George) The community grows still more, the "Margin of cultivation" moves further away from the center of population, and the renters now can sub-rent their land to the latest comers. Thus is formed a second class of idlers, a usufructuary class which neither labors nor produces. The picture is carried out in detail by both Shaw and George, each of whom recognizes the evil and tries to destroy it.

Henry George. That rent is unavoidable, he admits. That the distribution of it is wrong, is his contention. "Economic rent should enrich, not any individual, but the community at large," he maintains (1). And that is why he agrees with Proudhon that Property in its present form and with its unjust apportioning of rent, is theft. But that does not mean revolution. It is only a forceful way of saying that our system is at fault and that a change must be made in which the usufructuary will perish.

When Shaw has explained the origin and necessity of property and rent, it remains for him to point out the dangers and wrongs of the means of distribution which we employ, and to demonstrate the validity of his own reformatory position. There is nothing which he does with more clearness than this. The injustice of the property system as we now know it is so manifest that the indifference in regard to its modification is more astonishing than the vigorous sophistry with which interested land owners defend it. Naturally enough, these otiose gentlemen whose lives of luxury and idleness depend on the regularity with which the rent of their lands come in, formulate many reasons why they should enjoy their accumulating wealth while the thousands who are creating it for them suffer the privations of poverty; and when some theorist comes to their assistance with a cleverly developed hypothesis of the necessity of inequality of conditions in accordance with the divine law of Nature, he

(1) Fabian tract no. 51.

is, as a matter of course, lauded as a thinker and praised as one who justifies "the ways of God to man." Such was the case with Malthus. When he published (1) his "Essay on Population", he furnished exactly what the "landed proprietors" and capitalists were desirous of, - an authoritative treatise vindicating their economic policy, not merely from a utilitarian point of view, but from the higher aspect of a moral, ethical, universal law of Nature. He made poverty the concomitant of increasing population, when as a matter of fact, as Henry George has clearly pointed out (2), an increase in population always means an increase in wealth. The most densely populated regions are always the most wealthy, whether the natural resources be great or not. Compare, for example, the New England states with those of the middle West; or contrast the wealth of Germany with that of

(1) In 1798. The Malthusian doctrine is a marvellous example of erroneous reasoning so stated that even trained logicians follow the argument and agree with the conclusion. The gist of the theory is, that inasmuch as population increases in a geometrical ratio while the means of subsistence increases, if at all, in an arithmetical ratio, the tendency is always for population to exceed the means of subsistence. The mathematical form in which the proposition is set forth appeals very strongly to the logical and scientific mind, and, for this reason, the Malthusian demonstration seems rigidly proved throughout. The effect of the theory is to make poverty of the masses an inevitable phenomenon because of the natural difference in the reproductive capacities of man and the vegetable kingdom. In fact, it justifies poverty, war, pestilence, disease, and vice as positive checks to over-population.

The facts, however, disprove the contention. In the first place, population does not increase, as would at first seem true, in geometrical ratio. In the second place, the means of subsistence is sufficient although large portions of the earth are uncultivated. In the third place, were Malthus' statements accurate, this planet would long ago have been so over-crowded that his Essay need never have been written.

(2) "Progress and Poverty" - Book II, Chapt. IV.

Mexico,-a country rich in natural resources. To be sure,the greater the population,the greater as a rule is the number of paupers. But that is a question of distribution;not of absolute wealth.

In direct opposition to the Malthusian doctrine,and in harmony with the Fabian tenets,is the conception of Proudhon.Poverty,- that evil which all Socialists, no matter what their methods may be, are trying to eradicate,- is due,Proudhon maintains, not to any excess population, not to the innate superiority of some men to the many who are ignorant, not to any natural law of the universe and its evolution, but rather to the detestable stupidity and woeful ignorance of man, who, in his greed and stupidity, has established that most unjust and harmful institution, private ownership of land. His is simply an appeal to common-sense and justice. He objects to our system because "the proprietor reaps and does not plough;gleans and does not till; consumes and does not produce;enjoys and does not labor"(1);because "the increase (rent) paid to the proprietor by the occupant is a dead loss to the latter"(2);because "property - after ^{having} robbed the laborer by usury - murders him slowly by starvation"(3).Taking these facts into consideration,Proudhon also says the inhabitants of this world are altogether too numerous,- but not for the same reason as Malthus gives. "The great evil," he says,"----- arising from

(1) "What is Property?" Chapt.IV: pg.154.

(2) " " " " IV: pg.157.

(3) " " " - Fourth proposition - pg183.

property (1), is that while property exists, population, however reduced, (2) is, and always must be, over-abundant. Complaints have been made in all ages of the excess of population; in all ages property has been embarrassed by the presence of pauperism, not perceiving that it caused it" (3). In other words, there is no such thing as over-population; and where there is property, there will be poverty.

It is not only a question, however, of population and mendicity, with Proudhon. He, and later Henry George, makes property the cause of the periodic fluctuations in commerce from prosperity to panics. Property means business instability, - speculation, restraint of development, increased rent, excessive competition, crises, and panics. And all this means inequality, injustice, - exactly what the Law was to eliminate. The primary function of the legal code, - of any legal code, - is to establish among men the proper mutual relations in accordance with certain natural principles and inalienable moral rights. The Law, however, "in establishing property, has not been the expression of a psychological fact, the development of a natural law, the application of a moral principle. It has literally created a right outside of its own province. It has realized an abstraction, a metaphor, a fiction; and that without deigning to look at the consequences, without considering the disadvantages, without inquiring whether it was right or wrong." (4). In creating property,

(1) Meaning, always, private ownership of land.

(2) Italics, here and below, are not Proudhon's.

(3) Prop. V. Appendix. Sec. III. pg. 200.

(4) "What is Property?" Chapt. II. Sec. III. pg. 75.

the Doctors of Law made no end of trouble for themselves. They based much of their code upon the right of possession,- this legal muddle which still necessitates a cumbrous code. They founded their system upon a human conception instead of on natural right, and, as a result, they have come to awkward conclusions that show only too pitifully their erring origin. At times it is a puzzle indeed. "By law," to illustrate from Proudhon once more, (1) "property can exist without a proprietor, like a quality without a subject. It exists for the human being who as yet is not, and for the octogenarian who is no more. And yet, in spite of these wonderful prerogatives which savor of the eternal and the infinite, they have never found the origin of property; the doctors still disagree. On one point only are they in harmony: namely, that the validity of the right of property depends upon the authenticity of its origin. But this harmony is their condemnation," for the origin is yet to be found, being, as it is, but a chimera of the brain of man, a fiction of mortal formulation.

With none of the apodictic vehemence which Proudhon unfortunately employs, but with the same deeply-rooted conviction of outraged justice, Shaw and the Fabians also contend that private ownership of land is the source of much evil. This belief is made public in a calm and rational manner. No invective is used; no revolution is intimated. It is the result of scientific observation and a thorough study of history, theories, and facts. The reasons are given to the

(1) "What is Property?" Chapt. II. Sec. I. pg. 53.

world in the Fabian tracts. The thought permeates all the works of Shaw. "Practically all the spare money in the country," he asserts(1), "consists of a mass of rent and interest and profit (due to property and capital), every penny of which is bound up with crime, drink, prostitution, disease, and all the evil fruits of poverty, as inextricably as with enterprise, wealth, commercial probity, and national prosperity." Some aspect of this question appears in nearly all of Shaw's plays. In "Man and Superman"; "Mrs. Warren's Profession", "Major Barbara", and "Widowers' Houses", for example, the whole action is inseparably based on some phase of this social problem, - never, however, to the detriment of the plays. But whether it be in drama, essay, or tract makes little difference: it is always a reiteration of the fundamental principle for which both Proudhon and Henry George labored.

If, then, this principle be so desirable, why not put it into practice? Can it be put into practice? These property-holders who have had the patience to follow the argument thus far will doubtless wish to have that question answered. Perhaps at this point they might gently hint that the abolition of property, were it possible, might lead to a somewhat chaotic state of affairs in which even the imperturbable Fabians might undergo some little embarrassment. Unfortunately for these patient men, however, the Fabians see no predicament. In fact, one answer at least had been prepared for them

(1) "Major Barbara" - pg. 175.

before they came into being. Mr. Henry George had already suggested a solution, commonly known as the single tax. His plan was to do away with all forms of taxation, - except one. There was to be no tariff, no internal revenue, no income or inheritance tax, no personal property tax, no tax of any kind, - except a tax on land, a tax sufficiently great to permit the lapse of the others. Those land-owners who have kindly followed the discussion to this point may feel moved to object, - on general principles, - to such an unheard of piece of injustice. Why, - they will assuredly maintain, - in no time the land will all revert to the State. True enough, say the Fabians, and ask what harm there would be in that; also what harm would result in preventing the holding of land for speculation; and, further, what harm there would be in giving the people the benefit of all the rent that now goes to the few. But what will become of these gentlemen who seem confused at the readiness of the reply to their statement, these bewildered landlords who seem unable to comprehend the meaning of the Fabian words? Alas, good gentlemen, heartless it may seem, but you will cease to be, - at least as landlords. It is a troublesome trait in Fabians, - this protection of the many and negligence of the few.

As a matter of fact, however, the Fabians do not entirely agree with Henry George, and they have an answer of their own. The single tax, they believe, is remedial only, - not permanently effective. It would seem, theoretically, that the single tax would soon cause all the land to revert to the State. In fact, that is the intention. But

in those places where it has been tried out, such is not the case. In New Zealand, for example, and in a few municipalities (1) of this continent, land is held despite the single tax. Vacant lots are found on prosperous streets as in other cities. Perhaps, in time, the State or municipality, as the case may be, will control all the land. At any rate, the adoption of the single tax has not been, as was feared, the cause of a sudden upheaval. The change, as always in social history, was gradual. What change there has been is not enough. That is why the Fabians do not advocate the single tax as the social remedy. What they do desire will shortly be considered.

With the principles of George and Proudhon, however, they most emphatically agree. If they do not wish to employ the single tax to do away with property, how, then, do they intend to accomplish their purpose? In the first place, a distinction must be made. There is a difference between private ownership of land (property) and the individual right of occupancy (temporary possession). It is the same discrimination which the Latins made between ius in re and ius ad rem. Once this distinction is thoroughly grasped, the problem becomes very simple. No person, the Fabians and Proudhon claim, should enjoy the ius in re; any person should have the privilege, if he so desire it, of the ius ad rem, the particular meaning of rem being in this case property. That is, the State should "own" all the land, and for the privilege of occupancy the individual should pay the State. In other

(1) Everett, Wash., Vancouver, Edmonton, Victoria.

words, the \$80,000,000 annual ground rent that now goes into the pockets of a few London landlords should simply be diverted into the treasury of the State (in this case city) so that all the citizens may benefit by the use of these funds in compensation for allowing their few fellow citizens to dwell in the choice locations. There is nothing revolutionary about this plan, - except to the wealthy land owners. It is simply a scheme of transferring a vast sum of unearned income to the public treasury where it will do good. As Shaw himself says (1), "A socialist State or municipality will charge the full economic rent for the use of its land and dwellings, and apply that rent to the common purposes of the community." Nothing could be more sane. But how can such a system be brought into practice? Does it not imply violence, insurrection, revolution, perhaps dynamite and the red flag? Not at all, say the Fabians; better not have the system if such be the case. But there is a way, a peaceful way, a slow and difficult way, one that demands patience and courage, - the way of authoritative legislation. By strictly Parliamentary procedure, the Fabians hope some day to carry through their measure. In the mean time they are working hard toward their aim, and are endeavoring so to influence the thought of the people that the Government will be forced to recognize their demands and to enact a law establishing the Nationalization of Land.

(1) Fabian tract no.51. pg.19.

Too much emphasis can not be put on the effect of adopting such a law. The result of nationalizing land would never be the undesirable confusion which all superficial alarmists predict. The doubt of the outcome is the principal argument against the Fabian plans, or, at any rate, it is the last defense upon which the argument always falls back. There is, however, no doubtful outcome. That is where the anti-Fabians fail. The result is definite, positive, predetermined, assured. It is as certain as the laws of society permit anything to be; it is as sure as society itself. It is even now established. It is the present order of things, - that is why we may be dogmatic. There will be no change in our social regime, - that is the important fact. Society will continue undisturbed on its present course; conditions will be as stable as they now are; progress will be uninterrupted; business will proceed with its usual vigor. No revolution, no period of unrest, no panic, no chaos, no change! The rich man will enjoy his wonted luxury; the wealthy will occupy his marble mansion; the epicure will dine on pheasant and humor his palate with wine of old vintage; the affluent will have his yacht and motor; the opulent will indulge, as now, in all these many extravagant recreations which to the blind are signs of prosperity, but to those who have vision are omens of decay; the poor man will dwell in his cottage; the humble will live as he may. There will be no change! Fine homes will be built on fine avenues; great buildings of beauty will stand as monuments on

splendid sites; vast lawns of green and shrubbery will surround palatial dwellings; wide boulevards will make the cities beautiful; and all that now bespeaks the wealth and prosperity of a community will continue to flourish as of old as a sign to the people of good times and peace. The situation will be the same! That is the vital point. The conditions, however, will be different; and instead of degrading poverty there will be freedom to work; instead of suppliants begging for a chance to earn a pittance there will be free men with every opportunity of making an honorable living; instead of misery there will be comfort; in place of fear there will be courage; where there is despair, there shall be hope; and dependency shall be no more. Instead of the unjust flow of unearned rent into the coffers of the selfish landed proprietors there will be a new channel into which the stream of gold will be directed; the conditions will cause the treasury of the State to be so well supplied that, not only will taxation be reduced, but the people will receive the benefit which now goes to a few, through the judicious expenditure of the increased governmental funds. That is the change which anti-Fabians fear. That is the change which intelligent people of good hearts demand; and that is why the Fabian Society is working for the Nationalization of Land.

2. THE SOCIALIZATION OF CAPITAL

The Nationalization of Land, as already suggested, is but one of the important issues which the Fabians have incorporated in their policy. It is only a part of their political program. The advocates of the single-tax, it will be remembered, consider the elimination of the landed proprietor and the institution of State control of property the one necessary change in the proper re-adjustment of economic conditions. To them, the single-tax is permanently and wholly curative. To the Fabians, however, as has been hinted, it is remedial indeed, but effective only to a limited degree. Something more than Land Nationalization is needed in a social reorganization that will adequately provide for all members of the advancing community. The intimate interrelation of land and capital, which almost always function reciprocally, necessitates the extension of the single-tax doctrine to include capital also. This the Fabians realize; and, in accordance with their belief, they adopt, in addition to their "Nationalization of Land" policy, an issue which may well be designated as the "Socialization of Capital."

In support of this position, the Fabians have definitely given their reasons. "The practical aim of Socialists," they say (1), "with regard to the materials of wealth, is 'the emancipation of land and industrial capital from individual and class ownership,

(1) Fabian tract no.7 pg.1

and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit"(1). Land and capital are instruments with which man works for the production of wealth, material for the maintenance of his existence and comfort. Now it is important to notice that, though in common talk we separate the two, and though political economists have given a scientific dignity to this rough classification of the instruments of production, distinguishing as "land" that which has been provided by "Nature", and as "capital" that which has been made by human industry, the distinction is not one which can be clearly traced in dealing with the actual things which are the instruments of production, because most of these are compounded of the gifts of Nature and the results of human activity." The argument usually advanced in opposition to this, is, that while "land" is always the gift of Nature, "capital" is the creation of human labor, and as such should belong to the laborer. The Fabians, however, fail to find sufficient grounds for making this distinction a justification of the single-tax. "Supposing we assume it true," they contend (2), "that land is not the product of labor, and that capital is; it is not by any means true that the rent of land is not the product of labor, and that the interest on capital is. Nor is it true, as Land Nationalisers frequently seem to assume, that capital necessarily becomes the property of those whose labor produces it; whereas land is undeniably in many cases owned by persons who

(1) See "Basis of the Fabian Society" Sec IV below.

(2) Fabian tract no.7 pg.5.

have got it in exchange for capital, which may, according to our premises, have been produced by their own labor. Now since private ownership, whether of land or capital, simply means the right to draw and dispose of a revenue from the property, why should the landowner be forbidden to do that which is allowed to the capitalist, in a society in which land and capital are commercially equivalent? Not content with this answer alone, The Fabians go further and proceed to show the absurdity of those who hold that land and capital are essentially different. "Industrial capital," they assert (1), "is mainly created by wage workers- who get nothing for it but permission to create in addition enough subsistence to keep each other alive in a poor way. Its immediate appropriation by idle proprietors and shareholders, whose economic relation to the workers is exactly the same in principle as that of the landlords, goes on every day under our eyes. The landlord compels the worker to convert his land into a railway, his fen into a drained level, his barren sea-side waste into a fashionable watering place, his mountain into a tunnel, his manor park into a suburb full of houses let on repairing leases; and lo! he has escaped the Land Nationalisers: the land is now become capital, and is sacred."

Having indicated the incongruity of the discrimination between land and capital, the Fabians take up the positive side of the question and state what to them is the legitimate function of both, and upon which they base most of their economic policy. "The use of

(1) Fabian tract no. 7 pg. 5.

land and capital," in their opinion (1),"should be to serve as instruments for the active,the energetic,the industrious,the intelligent of mankind to produce wealth for themselves and those who are necessarily dependent on them,and to maintain the conditions of healthy existence for the society which they compose. It is the abuse of land and capital that they should be made by the laws of any people a "property" often owned by entirely idle and unprofitable persons,who may exact hire for them from those who are working for the maintenance of social existence,or may even refuse the would-be workers access to these indispensable instruments of industry." It is this abuse which Fabians decry. It is the "unprofitable" proprietor which they would eliminate. "He may or may not be doing some work of social utility, but the rent and interest are paid to him as an absolutely idle person,and it is this,THE TRIBUTE OF INDUSTRY TO IDLENESS, that Land Nationalizers denounce in its form of rent,and that Socialists, and all who have the Socialist spirit,denounce in all its forms"(2). In brief,it is the Fabian policy to tax,and eventually minimize,all unearned incomes of any nature whatsoever.(3).

This idea,is,ofcourse,not new. The evils of accumulated wealth have been recognized by men of all times.It is interesting to turn back to the old social philosophers for their views on this

(1) Fabian tract 7. pg 11.

(2) Ib. pg.12.

(3) Cf.Fabian tract no.7. pg.9.

question. A pertinent passage occurs in Plato's Republic (1) where Socrates is expounding by his distinctive question and answer method the change from timocracy to oligarchy: That private hoard of theirs, he explains, is the source of the evil; the accumulation of gold ruins timocracy: they invent some extravagance which is in open contravention of the law.-----And then one seeing another prepares to rival him, and thus the whole body of citizens acquires a similar character.-----After that they get on in trade, and the more they think of this the less they think of virtue; for when riches and virtue are placed together in the scales of the balance, the one always rises as the other falls.----- And in proportion as rich men and riches are honored in the State, virtue and the virtuous are dishonored.-----And what is honored is cultivated, and that which has no honor is neglected.----- And so at last, instead of loving contention and glory, men become lovers of trade and money, and they honor and reverence the rich man, and make a ruler of him, and dishonor the poor man. (2). The evil of wealth seems to be anything but modern.

From Plato to Karl Marx is a long jump, but it is

(1) Book VIII - 550. See also Book IV - 422, where Socrates speaks of the two evils, wealth and poverty, the one being the parent of luxury and indolence, the other of meanness and viciousness, and both of discontent.

(2) Abridged version of Jowett's translation.

necessary and worth while. Karl Marx may well be respected as the author of the present science of political economy. He was the great pioneer in a great industrial movement, and as such is deserving of the highest regard. To him we owe much of what we have learned in modern economics. But, ^{is} as the case with all pioneers, he has been out-stripped by his successors. And if, as is the case with Shaw, he is thought by some to have erred, we must not permit our loyalty to his genius to prejudice us against his critics. When, therefore, Marx's famous theory of surplus-value is attacked by Shaw, we must remember that only by improving the work of our ancestors is progress made, and only by building on the foundation laid by our fore-bears do we advance.

To comprehend fully the true meaning of Marx's der Mehrwerth, it is necessary to read a goodly portion of that ponderous work, Das Kapital. An idea, however, of what he means may be gleaned from a paragraph in which he summarizes to some extent what has preceded :- *Vergleichen wir nun Werthbildungsprozess und Verwerthungsprozess, so ist der Verwerthungsprozess nichts als ein ueber einen gewissen Punkt hinaus verlaengerter Werthbildungsprozess. Dauert der letztere nur bis zu dem Punkt, wo der vom Kapital gezahlte Werth der Arbeitskraft durch ein neues Aequivalent ersetzt ist, so ist er einfacher Werthbildungsprozess. Dauert der Werthbildungsprozess ueber diesen Punkt hinaus, so wird er Verwerthungsprozess.* (1) The application of this theory

(1) Dritter Abschnitt-Fuenftes Kapitel- S.175.

of surplus-value to the economic situation, Marx makes a few pages further on :- Die Rate des Mehrwerths ist daher der exakte Ausdruck fuer den Exploitationsgrad der Arbeitskraft durch das Kapital oder des Arbeiters durch den Kapitalisten.(1). The whole theory is based on the relation between labor and value.

Shaw, however, as has already been stated, disagrees with the Marxian doctrine. His right to a hearing, and the authority of his assertion, let it be remembered, come from his thorough study of political economy in all its phases. His criticism of Marx, is a respectful but a firm evidence of thought and progress. As if in direct answer to Marx, Shaw says(2): "The price of the commodity does not rise because more labor has been devoted to its production, but more labor is devoted to its production because the price has risen. Commodities, in fact, have a price before they are produced; we produce them expressly to obtain that price; and we cannot alter it by merely spending more or less labor on them. It is natural for the laborer to insist that labor ought to be the measure of price, and that the just wage of labor is its average product; but the first lesson he has to learn in economics is that labor is not and never can be the measure of price under a competitive system. Not until the progress of Socialism replaces competitive production and distribution, with individual greed for its incentive, by Collectivist

(1) Dritter Abschnitt - Siebentes Kapitel - S.200.

(2) Fabian tract no.45. pg.10.

production and distribution, with fair play all round for its incentive, will the prices either of labor or commodities represent their just value."

This disagreement between Shaw and Marx, it should be understood, is only in regard to the theory. On the injustice of the economic situation they are decidedly of one mind. Marx's view is not so broad, however, for just as the Single-taxers confine their attack to property holders, so does he limit his work to a consideration of the capitalist. Shaw, of course, combines the two schools. Marx's treatise is, none the less, a most remarkable and valuable work. He looks at Capital from every point of view, and finds it unjust and destructive in every aspect. Only one illustration can be given in the limited scope of this work. In his discussion of Capital and Machinery, his attack on the former is summed up as follows: Es ist eine unzweifelhafte Thatsache, dass die Maschinerie (1) an sich nicht verantwortlich ist fuer die "Freisetzung" der Arbeiter von Lebensmitteln.--Die

(1) As an example of Marx's style and method it may be well to give here a passage taken from chapt. XII, Sec. 6 : Die von der Maschinerie verdraengten Arbeiter werden aus der Werkstatt hinaus auf den Arbeitsmarkt geworfen und vermehren dort die Zahl der schon fuer kapitalistische Ausbeutung disponiblen Arbeitskraefte. Im siebenten Abschnitt wird sich zeigen, dass diese Wirkung der Maschinerie, die uns hier als eine Kompensation fuer die Arbeiterklasse dargestellt wird, den Arbeiter im Gegentheil als fuerchterbarste Geissel trifft. Hier nur dies: Die aus einem Industriezweig hinausgeworfenen Arbeiter koennen allerdings in irgend einem andern Beschaeftigung suchen. Finden sie solche, und knuepft sich damit das Band zwischen ihnen und den mit ihnen freigesetzten Lebensmitteln wieder, so geschieht dies vermittelt eines neuen, zuschuessigen Kapitals, das nach Anlage draengt, kein-

von der kapitalistischen Anwendung der Maschinerie untrennbaren Widersprüche und Antagonismen existiren nicht, weil sie nicht aus der Maschinerie selbst erwachsen, sondern aus ihrer kapitalistischen Anwendung! Da also die Maschinerie an sich betrachtet die Arbeitszeit verkürzt, während sie kapitalistisch angewandt den Arbeitstag verlängert, an sich die Arbeit erleichtert, kapitalistisch angewandt ihre Intensität steigert, an sich ein Sieg des Menschen über die Naturkraft ist, kapitalistisch angewandt den Menschen durch die Naturkraft unterjocht, an sich den Reichtum den Produzenten vermehrt, kapitalistisch angewandt ihn verpaupert. (1). As usual, Marx has more than one good reason in support of his views.

Proudhon, too, although most of his work is concerning land, has something to say in regard to capital. He has nothing of labor value or surplus value in his book. His is a discussion based mainly on abstract justice. "All accumulated capital," he

bewegt aber vermittelt des schon früher funktionirenden und jetzt in Maschinerie verwandelten Kapitals. Und selbst dann, wie geringe Aussicht haben sie! Verkrüppelt durch die Theilung der Arbeit, sind diesen armen Teufel ausserhalb ihres alten Arbeitskreises so wenig werth, dass sie nur in wenigen niedrigen und daher beständig ueberfüllten und unterbezahlten Arbeitszweigen Zugang finden. Ferner attrahirt jeder Industriezweig jährlich einen neuen Menschenstrom, der ihm sein Kontingent zum regelmässigen Ersatz und Wachsthum liefert. Sobald die Maschinerie einen Theil der bisher in einem bestimmten Industriezweig beschäftigten Arbeiter freisetzt, wird auch die Ersatzmannschaft neu vertheilt und in andern Arbeitszweigen absorbiert, während die ursprünglichen Opfer in der Uebergangszeit grossentheils verkommen und verkrüppeln.

(1) Zwölftes Kapitel- S.453.

maintains (1), "being social property, no one can be its exclusive proprietor." And again (2), "All capital being the result of collective labor, is, in consequence, collective property." These statements, of course, are supported by arguments, but they are weak when placed beside those of Marx.

In contrast, both as to the substance and the expression of thought, is the Shavian doctrine. Calm, authoritative, direct, clear in every detail, Shaw presents his views purely as a scientific, scholarly exposition of political economy. With an insight into the situation which alone is sufficient to establish his thoroughness and sincerity, he goes right to the heart of the matter and attacks the social questions at their very source. No superficial plastering of the economic sores will satisfy Shaw. His grasp of the subject is masterful; and with the master's commanding knowledge and breadth of view he would effect the solution of social problems by a large, effective, thorough method, too comprehensive for the untutored mind to compass. Nothing, however, could be more lucid or definite than the way in which he presents his ideas. "The economic problem of Socialism," he carefully explains (3), "is the just distribution of the premium (4) given

(1) "What is Property?" - pg.120.

(2) *Ib.* - pg.147.

(3) Fabian tract no.45. pg.10.

(4) The italics are not Shaw's.

to certain portions of the general product by the action of demand."(1)
 Now, then, is this just distribution of the premium to be accomplished?
 One way, we have already considered, - the Nationalization of Land; another method, and a very important one, is the Socialization of Capital.

The Socialization of Capital, - what in the realm of economics can that mean? To the capitalist, it implies much the same as the Nationalization of Land meant to the landlords. To the Fabians it means only that whenever it is advantageous and practicable the Government should assume control of those gigantic industrial monopolies which now enrich the capitalist alone. It does not mean the abolition of organized industry at all. But it does mean that the prodigious accumulation of individual wealth through trusts, syndicates, corporations, pools, amalgamations, and the like, is to benefit, not the few, but all citizens of the State, which alone is entitled to monopolize industry. To many, this will appeal as ^a righteous ideal, though an impractical one. The practical man, as usual, must be answered. He can see no way of managing the industrial combines, should the change from individual to governmental control be effected. It is an impossible scheme. The Fabians, however, are unafraid. Their answer is forthcoming. First they ask who manages capital under existing conditions,

(1) In the economic question of supply and demand, Shaw takes

much the same attitude as does Henry George ("Progress and Poverty" - Book V - Chapt. I) who maintains that there is no such thing as the fiction of over-production or over-consumption. Says Shaw ("Man and Superman" pg 202) "The actual supply is the measure of the effective demand," a statement pregnant with the wisdom of common-sense.

and then they answer (1) both their own and the practical man's question together: "The shareholding capitalist is a sleeping partner. More and more every day is the capitalist pure and simple, the mere owner of the lion for interest, becoming separated from the administrator of capital, as he has long been separated from the wage worker employed therewith. The working partner, with a sleeping partner drawing interest, is every day passing into the form of the director of a joint stock company. More and more is the management of industries falling into the hands of paid managers, and even the 'directors' emphasize the fiction that they are not mere money-bags and decorative M.P.'s by the humorous practice of taking fees for their labors at board meetings.

"The administrator of capital can be obtained at present for a salary equivalent to his competition value, whether the concern to be managed be a bank, a railway, a brewery, a mine, a farm, a factory, a theatre, or a hotel. The transfer to the community (National or local) of the ownership of the main masses of industrial capital need make no more difference in this respect than does the sale of shares on the Stock Exchange at the present moment." "Many of the trusts could even now be taken over by the State with as little dislocation as followed on the nationalization of the telegraphs(2). 'We might even add,' says Professor

(1) Fabian tract no. 7. pgs. 14-15.

(2) In Great Britain

W.J.Ashley, 'that in the case of the Standard Oil monopoly, the development has already (1) reached a point at which, on the purely economic and administrative side, there could be little objection to the Government taking over the business- if only there were a government politically capable of ~~making~~ the task'" (2). The machinery of management is already provided by the organisations themselves. It is simply a question of locating the control so that the distribution of the premium may be most just. Nor must it be thought that the Fabian policy is antagonistic to organized industry. "It is only the abuse of combination," they state (3), "which requires to be suppressed; combination itself is to be welcomed as leading to improved industrial organisation." Neither must it be imagined that the Fabians desire to do away with private industry. It is only where combination is beneficial, practicable, economically advantageous, that they would have State control. Their policy is both eminently just and economically sane.

Shaw, as is to be expected, does not confine the expression of his ideas concerning capital solely to formal tracts and Fabian lectures. In reality, though there are, strangely enough, people who dispute the fact, the Shawian social philosophy permeates all his drama. Mr. Henderson, - Shaw's biographer, and a mathematician of cool, logical,

(1) Written prior to 1905.

(2) H.W. Macrosty in "State Control of Trusts."

(3) Fabian tract no. 124.

scientific, critical disposition, - supports this view. "Mrs. Warren's Profession," he says, (1) "is not only what Brunstiere would call a work of combat: it is an act - an act of declared hostility against capitalistic society, the inertia of public opinion, the lethargy of public conscience, and the criminality of a social order which begets such appalling social conditions. Into this play Shaw has poured all his social passion for a more just and humane social order." At another place (2) he says: "It is quite evident that in Major Barbara, Shaw is endeavoring to awake public thought and arouse public sentiment in England upon the momentous problems of poverty and the unemployed. To rich and poor alike, he quite consistently and impartially preaches Socialism, finding this to be most effectively accomplished by putting into the mouths of his dramatic characters extremes of opinion expressed in the extremest of ways. Shaw advises the malefactor of great wealth to turn Socialist and, emulating the examples of Carnegie and Rhodes in education and other fields, to employ his wealth in improving conditions of life for the working classes." In many ways does Shaw bring his socialistic beliefs into his plays, - sometimes by serious dialogue, often by telling paradox or brilliant wit. In Man and Superman (3), for instance, when Tanner is waylaid by anarchists in the Sierras, occurs this startling bit of repartee:

(1) "Life and Works of George Bernard Shaw" - 303.

(2) *Ib.* pg. 381.

(3) Act III. - pg 78.

Mendoza (with dignity) Allow me to introduce myself: Mendoza, President of the League of the Sierra! (posing loftily) I am a brigand: I live by robbing the rich.

Tanner (promptly) I am a gentleman: I live by robbing the poor. Shake hands. No one can doubt the effect of such a statement. It is humorous, unexpected, penetrating, socialistic, Shavian. A more serious illustration of the social note, - though not dealing with capital, - is found in the as yet unpublished "Fanny's First Play." Margaret, the heroine, has just faced her eminently respectable father, Mr. Knox, for the first time after a fortnight's escapade. Outraged respectability is manifest in the father's every feature as he demands:

Knox: I want to know where my daughter has been for the last fortnight.

Duvallet: She has been, I assure you, in a particularly safe place.

Knox: Will you tell me what place? I can judge for myself how safe it was.

Margaret: Helloway gael! Was that safe enough?

Knox: My daughter in Helloway gael!

Margaret: All the women in Helloway are somebody's daughters.

Thus we could multiply examples. They are there for those who read. Shaw is continually expressing his socialistic views along all lines. In his "First aid to Critics" he gives so much attention to money and capital that no one who has read the book could deny his dramatic incorporation of socialistic doctrine. It is generally advisable to read a man before attempting to criticize him.

Says Shaw (1) : "The universal regard for money is the one hopeful fact in our civilization, the one sound spot in our social conscience. Money is the most important thing in the world. It represents health, strength, honor, generosity and beauty as conspicuously and undeniably as the want of it represents illness, weakness, disgrace, meanness and ugliness. Not the least of its virtues is that it destroys base people as certainly as it fortifies and dignifies noble people. It is only when it is cheapened to worthlessness for some, and made impossibly dear to others, that it becomes a curse. In short, it is a curse only in such foolish social conditions that life itself is a curse. For the two things are inseparable: money is the counter that enables life to be distributed socially: it is life as truly as sovereigns and banknotes are money. The first duty of every citizen is to insist on having money on reasonable terms; and this demand is not complied with by giving four men three shillings each for ten or twelve hours' drudgery and one man a thousand pounds for nothing. The crying need of the nation is not for better morals, cheaper bread, temperance, liberty, culture, redemption of fallen sisters and erring brothers, nor the grace, love and fellowship of the Trinity, but simply for enough money. And the evil to be attacked is not sin, suffering, greed, priestcraft, kingcraft, demagoguery, monopoly, ignorance, drink, war, pestilence, or any other of the scapegoats which reformers sacrifice, but simply poverty."

(1) "Major Barbara" pg. 171.

Returning from the literary aspect to the economic side of Shaw, we must conclude that his socialistic belief is definite, scientific, and rational. Land must be nationalized; capital must be socialized; and both changes must be made without revolution. Certainly he is just; without doubt he is practical. Through strictly parliamentary procedure alone does he desire to make progress. Thus do his fellow Fabians wish to advance, and to an alarmist world they send this proclamation of their tenets (1) : "Whether the advance be slow or rapid, this we hold indisputable, that until the workers of this and every other country collectively own and control the instruments they must work with, till then are liberty and manhood impossible for the majority; and that until we cease to pay to non-effectives the half of our annual sustenance, it will be impossible for the many to obtain that existence and education in youth, that security and leisure in old age, and those opportunities for human and appreciative life, which the resources of our country and our civilization are amply sufficient to yield them."

(1) Fabian tract no. 7. pg. 18.

III. SECONDARY PROBLEMS

The two issues which have been under discussion up to this point are basic considerations. The Nationalization of Land and the Socialization of Capital are the fundamental doctrines of the Fabian social philosophy. They are universal in their application and far-reaching in their results. They are the product of a mind whose vision, superior to ordinary finite limitation, benefits by the advantage of infinite perspective and almost limitless scope. Out of so all-inclusive issues as these, there necessarily arise secondary problems of a more modest nature, - problems, however, which are of vital importance, and which sooner or later must be faced. This the Fabians realize; and their solution of these secondary problems it is now our purpose to present. From a consideration of national issues we accordingly come to the simpler questions that relate to the smaller divisions of governmental power, and we turn our attention to the social reforms as they are to be dealt with by municipalities.

1. MUNICIPAL TRADING

The problem of municipal trading has long claimed the attention of the Fabian Society. In tract after tract they have advocated the municipalisation of such enterprises as are adaptable to public control.(1). No statement of the case, however, has been more clearly and rationally put than Shaw's in his "Common Sense of Municipal Trading." This book, it should be remembered, is no academic theory, but is the result of over six years' practical experience in municipal government, reinforced by a thorough knowledge of the principles of political economy. Shaw's statement, accordingly, is authoritative.

His support of municipal trading is based both on the validity of the principle involved and on the success of previous practice. "The question whether municipal trading is sound in principle," he says(2), "cannot be settled by the figures of this or that adventure in it, any more than the soundness of banking or insurance can be settled by the figures of this or that big dividend or disastrous liquidation. Besides, the balance sheet of a city's welfare cannot be stated in figures. Counters of a much more spiritual kind are needed, and some imagination and conscience to add them up, as well."

(1) Cf. tracts 32, 76, 86, 90, 91, 92, 94, 95, 97, 119, 121, 122, 125.

(2) "Common Sense of Municipal Trading"- pref.-pg.V.

"Take the most popular branch of commercial enterprise: the drink traffic. It yields high profits. Take the most obvious and unchallenged branch of public enterprise: the making of roads. It is not commercially profitable at all. But suppose the drink trade were debited with what it costs in disablement, inefficiency, illness and crime, with all their depressing effects on industrial productivity, and with their direct cost in doctors, policemen, prisons, &c. Suppose at the same time the municipal highway and bridges account were credited with the value of the time and wear and tear saved by them! It would at once appear that the roads and bridges pay for themselves many times over, whilst the pleasures of drunkenness are costly beyond all reason. Consequently a municipalised drink traffic which should check drinking ~~drinking~~ at the point of excess would be a much better bargain for the ratepayers than our present system, even if the profits made at present by brewers and publicans were changed to losses made up by subsidies from the rates." (1) "In the technical language of the political economists, public enterprise goes into business to gain the value in use or total utility of industrial activity, whilst commercial enterprise can count only on the value in exchange or marginal utility." (2)

However correct a principle may be, there are always practical objections offered. The ordinary man of business finds no

(1) "Common Sense & " pgs.19-20.

(2) Ib. pg.35.

difficulty in presenting financial obstacles in the way of municipal trading. From his limited point of view, the business man can see nothing but failure ahead. That, however, as Shaw clearly shows, is due to his narrow standards. No ordinary capitalist would maintain, as does Shaw, (1) that "Municipal expenditure in trading is productive expenditure: its debts are only the capital with which it operates." The common dictum of private enterprise that the annual balance sheet shall show a respectable profit in actual cash value, is so strong that any other form of profit seems to be the delusion of a perverted intellect. The one argument that can make any immediate impression is that which advantageously compares the cost of municipal and private management. "All public business," says Shaw (2), "of sufficient magnitude to keep the necessary plant working full time until it has paid for itself, can, when it is purely local, be done more cheaply by municipal than by private enterprise."

"Yet in the very cases where municipal trading is most profitable to the ratepayer" (and this is the point which the average man cannot comprehend); "its departmental expenses are and ought to be greater, and its surpluses (if any) are and ought to be less than those of a private firm doing the same work — nay, --- when the municipality undertakes at a heavy departmental loss work that has previously been carried on by commercial contractors at a tempting commercial profit,

(1) "Common Sense & " pg.3.

(2) Ib. pg.16.

the ratepayers are probably saving more by this apparently bad bargain than by the municipal gas works and tram lines which not only do not cost them a farthing out of pocket, but actually contribute hard cash to the rates as well." (1). And when it comes to auditing the business accounts of the municipality, the eminently sane suggestions of Shaw seem to the practical men of industry the height of absurdity. In municipal enterprise "the practice is to avoid profits by keeping prices down to cost. The absence of profits is, in fact, a proof of the proper conduct of the enterprise. Such absence in a commercial company would be a proof of incompetence. An auditor therefore has to apply precisely opposite tests to municipal and commercial undertakings. His view of a commercial company is that the larger the profits, the sounder the undertaking. His view of a municipal supply is that the less the profit, the healthier the finance of the borough. Above all, if he is to certify, as the Committee on Municipal Trading recommends, 'that in his opinion the accounts present a true and correct --view of the transactions and results of trading for the period under investigation' he must estimate not only the appropriated profits which would go to commercial shareholders as dividend, but the total social utility of the enterprise during the year to the ratepayers." (2).

Were this view of municipal trading merely a theoretical scheme, there might be some excuse for the practical objections with

(1) "Common Sense & " pgs.115-116.

(2) Ib. pgs.87-88.

which it is met. With some justice it might be said to be the product of a well-meaning mind whose experience had not been sufficiently involved in business dealings. But, as a matter of fact, those trades which the Fabians would have under municipal control, have already been successfully established in various localities under governmental management. Cities in all countries of the civilized world furnish water, gas, electricity, sanitation, parks, and police to their citizens. In not a few places there are municipal slaughter-houses (1) and pawnshops (2). Nottingham has its own milk trade (3); Brussels controls its own bread supply. Why not, then, municipalize the drink trade, the hospitals, the means of transportation, in short all those commercial activities which directly affect the health and prosperity of the community? There are plenty of successful precedents. In practice it is certainly possible; in principle there is nothing to be said against municipal trading.

(1) In Glasgow and Manchester they are paying propositions. See Fabian tract no. 92.

(2) Paris and Malta have each a Mont de Piété. Cf. tract no. 91.

(3) Cf. Fabian tract no. 90.

2. MUNICIPAL HOUSING

A special phase of municipal trading which has peculiar difficulties of its own is the problem of municipal housing. The inability of the municipality successfully to compete with the building industry is only too apparent. Despite this disadvantage, however, much has been done in the way of providing municipal houses for the people; London alone has expended over nineteen million dollars for this purpose (1). Glasgow has erected more than nineteen hundred municipal apartments (1). Liverpool has provided over eighteen hundred tenements. Birmingham, Leicester, Manchester, Richmond, Sheffield, Southampton, and many other smaller cities of Great Britain have helped to house their citizens.

And yet, according to Shaw, "municipal trading cannot justify itself by its results in this direction as it can in others, especially in great cities.----- the rents are too high for the wages of the occupiers. A flat let at nine shillings a week to a man earning twenty-four, married and with a family, solves the housing problem for him in a highly questionable manner. It makes parasitic labor practically compulsory for his wife and children." (2) In fact "it must be admitted that until the municipality owns all the land within

(1) See Fabian tract no. 76.

(2) "Common Sense" #2 - pg. 68.

its boundaries, and is as free to deal with it and build upon it as our ground landlords are at present, the problem of housing cannot be satisfactorily solved." (1) "If a municipality owned all the land within its jurisdiction, it would still have to make the occupiers, including its own departments, pay rent in proportion to the commercial or residential desirability of their holdings; but it could pool the total rent and establish a 'moral Minimum' of house accommodation at a 'fair rent' on a perfectly sound economic basis." (2). "At present," says Mr. Sidney Webb (3), "we allow the landlords of London to put into their own pockets sixteen millions a year of annual ground rental of the bare site. If we were to cover London with artisans' dwellings 'let at the cost of construction and maintenance only', we should simply be handing over these sixteen millions of rental value, toward which the labor of all London contributes, to the particular tenants of our new dwellings. Now, moreover, if all our buildings are to be let at equal rents, are we to equalize the advantages of a flat overlooking Hyde Park and a similar flat out at Halloway? Since we cannot all live on the best sites, those who do must contribute, for the common benefit, the equivalent of the extra advantage they are enjoying. That is to say, a socialist State or municipality will charge the full economic rent for

(1) "Common Sense & " pg. 78.

(2) Ib. pg. 71-72.

(3) Fabian tract no. 51 pg 19.

the use of its land and dwellings, and apply that rent to the common purposes of the community."

The construction of new dwellings, it should be remembered, is further complicated by the demolition of the old. The problem of re-housing those whose homes have been destroyed has so far proved too great for any municipality adequately to cope with, especially under existing conditions in which the expensive acquisition of private land is involved. The result has always been that part of the people must look elsewhere for shelter. This outcome has induced Shaw to say that "the right cure is not a local housing scheme but a locomotion and country housing scheme." (1) Until the municipality owns all the land within its boundaries it will be necessary, if housing conditions are to be improved, to establish what are often called "garden cities" and to municipalize the means of transportation in such a way that suburban travel will be reasonably inexpensive to the man who works for a daily wage. (2)

(1) "Common Sense & " pg. 73.

(2) For a good illustration of Shaw's use of economic problems as dramatic material see his "Widower's Houses", a play whose interest and action centers around the housing question.

3. STATE CONTROL OF DOCTORS

From the consideration of problems concerning the poor, it may be well to turn for a moment to questions relating to the more fortunate professional class. This will not alone prevent a one-sided discussion but will bring out opinions which are distinctly Shavian. The Fabian Society must be temporarily forgotten.

As a dramatist, Shaw makes frequent use of the various professions. He has portrayed four clergymen, one, in "Mrs. Warren's Profession", being a most improper viceroy of God, but the other three, in "The Devil's Disciple," "Candida", and "Getting Married," being thoroughly acceptable characters pictured without that satiric vein which might be expected of the iconoclastic Shaw. In "Captain Brassbound's Conversion," the Judiciary is pleasantly ridiculed, and in "Major Barbara" Shaw is kind enough to present to the academic world (for which he has no unwonted sympathy) his one college man, - a professor of Greek who is fortunate enough to become the partner of a millionaire capitalist. In the same play, a Shavian thrust is made at the politician, who, according to Plato and the Fabians, should be a professional man of the noblest type. Undershaft (1) is thus made to speak of his own son: "He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career", - a remark that

(1) "Major Barbara" pg.279.

strongly reminds one of the oft repeated *οἰομαι ὅτι εἶναι ὄντες οὐδενὸς ἀλγοῦ* of Plato's Apology. But it is the physician who becomes most interesting in Shaw's hands. His first doctor appeared in "The Philanderer," and then, with the exception of the dentist in "You Never Can Tell," he waited thirteen years before he again presented in "The Doctor's Dilemma," a whole group of them. Shaw then had something to say about them; they were incorporated in his social philosophy. And having something to say, Shaw, of course, wrote a Preface.

In this preface, - a very long one, and one which shows Shaw's seriousness and knowledge of the subject, - much space is devoted to an attack on vivisection, anti-toxins, futile disinfection, vaccination, and other things. The accusation is strongly made. The facts are plainly stated; the ethics of the profession are openly discussed; the methods employed by practitioners are deplored; and finally, with a hint of his constructive social philosophy and a culminating charge against the offending doctors, Shaw says: "Until the medical profession becomes a body of men trained and paid by the country to keep the country in health it will remain what it is at present a conspiracy to exploit popular credulity and human suffering." (1)

That the doctors do exploit popular credulity, is a well known fact. The doctors themselves frequently admit it. Everyone has heard of "bread pills." Many a patient has faithfully taken a harmless dose of sweetened water as medicine (a teaspoonful every hour if

(1) "Preface on Doctors" - pg. LXXIX.

the patient is awake. Price \$1.00). Many diseases are cured by green-
gages,- they are cheap and healthy. Many invalids are relieved by
stimulation of their phagocytes. Many ills are diagnosed as blood-
poisoning. Many are the deaths avoided by the removal of a certain
innocent sac. "The Doctor's Dilemma" at any rate claims so, and has a
doctor to support each contention. The fraternal disagreement is
delightful. But Shaw does not blame the doctors alone. In fact, he
strongly champions their cause. To him there is no nobler type of
worker and no finer specimen of unselfish manhood than a first-
class physician. No class of men is so beset by temptation, and no
class of men has so successfully resisted that temptation. The doctor
is not to be censured. His exploitation of popular credulity is, under
existing conditions, a necessary means of self-preservation. The pa-
tient, or the patient's family, demand medicine,- tangible, material,
substantial medicine, often bad tasting and malodorous medicine for
which they can pay a high price. The doctor must comply. He gives them
what they want. He must, if he is to live, do as they demand. That is
why Shaw predicts that "the strength of the doctors, as of every other
man's position when the evolution of social organization at last
reaches his profession, will be that he will always have open to him
the alternative of public employment when the private employer be-
comes too tyrannous." (1). This prediction (2) of the State control

(1) "Prof. on Doctors" pg. LXXXI.

(2) Written in 1906.

of doctors has already been partially fulfilled by the recent act of Parliament which brought more than six thousand physicians into the service of the State.

This is but one more evidence of the sanity and practicality of Shaw. Perhaps the government of Great Britain will be sensible enough to endorse his plans still further and will permit the people of the State to profit by his advice: "Take utmost care to get well born and well brought up.----- go to a school where there is---a school clinic,----- have all this done at the expense of the nation,as otherwise it will not be done at all,-----otherwise you will be--- an unsound citizen of an unsound nation." (1). That is Shaw's statement of the case. It is clear, positive, and definite. To those who, after reading his book, still fail to see the constructive side of the social philosophy of George Bernard Shaw, we can only recommend that they continue to swallow their "bread pills" in peace, until, at a not too far distant day, one, larger than the rest, prove mercifully fatal.

(1) "Preface on Doctors" pg XCII.

4. THE CRIMINAL CODE

complete without recognizing, however briefly, his attitude toward our penal law. Before the distinctly Shavian part of this discussion is left, there is one point in Shaw's philosophy that should be mentioned though it can be but briefly indicated. That point is his opinion of the Penal Code. From the socialistic point of view, criminality is largely due to poverty (1). Remove poverty, and four-fifths of the jails and penitentiaries will be superfluous as such. Aside from that consideration, however, Shaw has once or twice disclosed his views, though not at any length. In "The Doctor's Dilemma", for instance, he makes his character, Sir Patrick, say: "You may put the criminal law out of your head once for all: its only fit for fools and savages." (2) And in the elaborate stage directions for "Man and Superman" (3), he says; in speaking of the brigand, Mendosa, and his anarchistic associates: "But as society has not the courage to kill them, and, when it catches them, simply wrecks on them some superstitious expiatory rites of torture and degradation, and then lets them loose with heightened qualifications for mischief." (4) it is just as well that they are at large in the Sierra." Thus does Shaw intimate his condemnation of the criminal code. So far he has given no constructive criticism of it to the world. An exposition of his social philosophy, however, would not be

(1) See Fabian tract no. 128.

(2) Act III pg. 72.

(3) Act III pg. 73.

(4) Italics not Shaw's.

complete without recognizing, however briefly, his attitude toward our penal institutions. Perhaps, let us hope so, there is yet another play and yet another preface forthcoming.

5. THE MINIMUM WAGE

Considering Shaw's social philosophy once more from the Fabian standpoint, we come to the exceedingly weighty question of the minimum wage. To many citizens, the State has no right to interfere with their private financial operations, even if it be for the common good. To others, the right of the State to dictate any minimum whatever is absurd and inimical to individual freedom. In the mean time, however, the State calmly proceeds to enforce other minima, without for a moment arousing the fears of the unsuspecting champions of individual liberty. "All normal children, and many who are abnormal, are legally required in the interests of national mental efficiency to receive a minimum of instruction; every person is supposed to be compelled to conform to a certain sanitary minimum; and, in housing the State is gradually feeling its way to the enforcement of a minimum of health and comfort. These measures, aiming at the protection of the masses from the evil effects of anarchic industrial conditions, are, however, limited to a considerable extent in their utility by the failure of the State to secure sufficient remuneration to those industrially employed. There appears to be a superstition held by economists and politicians, even by those who have no prejudice against State regulation in itself, that the cash relation between employer and employed is so sacred that to interfere with it by law is to commit the unpardonable economic and political sin. Moreover, it was thought that the worker would become

educated through compulsory Education Acts; healthy through Public Health Acts; comfortably housed through Housing Acts; and the inevitable result of this education, health and comfort would be increased mental and physical efficiency capable of effecting a dead lift in wages all round. This expectation has not been realized, as may be easily gathered from recent well-known enquiries into social conditions. It is glaringly apparent that an alarming proportion of the mass of the people, in spite of the efforts of the State by indirect and partial means to raise the standard of life, do not receive sufficient wages to provide for a healthy physical existence. It is probable that at least twelve millions of our population (1) are living just on or below a ~~very~~ level of bare subsistence. This estimate appears to be so well founded that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman adopted it as an argument in favor of the return of the Liberal Party to power." (2)

Despite this universal condition of starvation-wage misery, there are economists, - or so capitalists would call them, - who argue against the legal minimum wage. With the same commendable reasoning that was employed in opposition to the Factory Acts, child labor regulation, fencing of dangerous machinery, trade combinations of the working people, and in fact all progressive social legislation, they maintain that those industries in which the minimum wage would be

(1) Refers to England.

(2) Fabian tract no. 128 pgs. 2-3.

enforced would necessarily fail because of the increased cost of production. If the price of the product were raised to avoid insolvency, the demand for it would soon decrease below a profitable margin. Failure would be inevitable. The unemployed would increase. Conditions would be more deplorable than ever. The whole argument, of course, assumes that these industries under consideration can flourish only by the employment of "sweated" labor,- just as a few years ago it assumed the commercial necessity of child-labor and unfenced dangerous machinery. "But the destruction of the trades which subsist only by sweating is one of the beneficent results which the minimum wage is expressly devised to accomplish. And it is far cheaper for the nation to deal with the unemployable as destitute persons by wisely adapted poor law methods than to allow them to drag down decent workers to their level by their competition in the labor market. Besides, it must be remembered that whereas under the present system there is a constant supply of unemployables produced by abject poverty and the physical and moral deterioration which it creates, a minimum wage would abolish this poverty and so cut off the supply." (1). It is not, however, at all certain that any industry would become bankrupt ^{because} of wage legislation, but "even if some occupations were unable to bear the cost of a minimum wage it would obviously be a national benefit for them to disappear rather than to continue by living upon the life capital of the nation." (2).

(1) Fabian tract no. 128 pg. 12.

(2) Ib. pg. 5.

A still greater practical objection is often urged that owing to the great difficulty of administering the minimum wage law, it would be impossible, however satisfactory an act might be put in the code, to make it efficient in practice. And further it is objected that the tendency will be for the minimum wage to become also the maximum. Unfortunately for the validity of these objections there is already a practical demonstration of successful wage law administration both in New Zealand and Australia.(1). Not only has the enforcement of the minimum wage been successful, but from reliable figures taken from various trades in Victoria, Australia, the average wage was always above the prescribed minimum(2). At all events, the Fabians have an auspicious precedent.

Having answered the usual objections, the Fabians point out the advantages of the minimum wage. One of the big industrial problems of to-day is the employment of women in factories. Their willingness to work at cheaper rates than men, has made them highly desirable machine operatives. Some industries, in fact, employ girls only, in their mechanical departments. The men, accordingly, who used to operate the machines are forced to look elsewhere for employment and are often compelled to work for starvation wages. Just why hundreds of thousands of women will accept an insufficient wage is not

(1) See "State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand" by W.P. Reeves. 2 vols. 1902 Richards.

(2) See Fabian tract no.128.

the question. The fact of the matter is that they do. And inasmuch as they cannot live on the wages they receive, and as they continue nevertheless to show ample signs of life, it is evident that they derive part of their livelihood from other sources than their own earnings. It is equally evident to any observer that many of these women, - especially young girls, - are not suffering because of their low wage. But that means trouble elsewhere. Often enough a girl goes to work simply for the sake of appearing "independent" and in order to have a little spending money of her own. "The father, having to support the girl in any case out of his earnings, is glad to have her demands for money not only stopped, but actually replaced by a contribution of a few shillings to the housekeeping. It seems an excellent arrangement to all immediately concerned; but it involves incalculable social mischief. Not only is the woman, when she has to support herself wholly, or is perhaps left a widow with several children, compelled by the competition of the girls to starve on five or six shillings a week; but the trade at which she is working is not a genuinely self-supporting one: it is parasitic on the trades in which the fathers of the girls work, and produces all the industrial and social evils which recent economic investigations have brought home to parasitic trades. If this practice were defeated by a Minimum Wage Law, the girls would not be deprived of their livelihood, but simply sent back to their families with the prospect of re-entering industrial life later on with a sufficient wage secured by

law."(1) With all this in mind, the Fabians naturally demand that the minimum wage shall be sufficiently great both to eliminate parasitic labor and to deliver woman from the possible alternative, which unfortunately cannot be overlooked, of choosing, as often must be done, between compulsory prostitution and an undesirable marriage.

If, in view of these facts, a minimum wage is adopted, it will, of course, have to be the same for all women. That is one of the Fabian tenets. The question may fairly be asked, accordingly, whether or not this would be just. Will it, for example, be fair to have the same minimum for an unmarried girl and a widow with dependent children? Obviously, no! The widow's plight, however, would be no different without the minimum wage, as at present. In fact, under existing conditions, she must support herself and family on starvation wages. "But a minimum wage alone cannot rescue her, though it alone can make her rescue possible. The only way of meeting her case is to give her, as a matter of right, sufficient assistance from public funds to enable her, with the aid of free public schools, and free meals in them, to make up her income to the standard for heads of families. There is no element of charity in this. The death of her husband has cut off the payment made through her husband for her services to society in bearing and rearing children; and the continuation of this payment through another channel is no more than her due. One of the weightiest arguments in favor of a minimum wage law is that it would make such an arrangement workable

(1) Fabian tract no.128 pg.12.

for the first time. Without such a law, the widow's allowance would be used, as soldiers' pensions now are, to cheapen her labor and drag down the wages of her competitors to the level of what starving widows could be driven to accept in addition to their allowances. (1). With the minimum wage in force, however, no great difficulty would be encountered in the public provision for widows with families.

The desirability of adopting a minimum wage, is, from the Fabian point of view, very evident. All arguments indicate both its practicability and its success. A law, however, cannot be merely an altruistic concept. It must be put in black and white on paper and must have certain limitations. This, too, the Fabians realize, as may be seen from their statement: "whilst the ~~present~~ present competitive system of employment by competing private enterprises prevails, the industrial minimum wage must conform to three conditions: (a) It must be lower for women than for men; (b) all men must have the same minimum wage, and all women the same minimum wage; (c) the man's wage must be enough to support a family, and the woman's to support a single independent adult." (2).

"The reason for paying men more highly than women is that under our marriage institutions the man is the woman's paymaster for her domestic work. This domestic work, including childbearing and the rearing of children, ^{is} onerous, dangerous, and absolutely indispensable.

(1) Fabian tract no. 128. pgs. 10-11.

(2) *Ib.* pg. 10.

to society. But the woman is not directly paid for it : she is given, instead, a legal claim on her husband's means, name, and status. Therefore it is admitted that the man, having to support another adult and their children, must receive a wage sufficient to maintain these several persons, whilst the woman is regarded industrially as a single woman, needing only enough to support herself. The objections to such an arrangement are obvious. Some men are not married, and are therefore receiving family wages for single life. What is far worse, some women are widows with children; and these women are receiving the wages of a single adult, and starving a family on it. ----- Further, if women and men were employed at the same rates, men would always be employed in preference to women wherever possible, because, fairly or unfairly, male labor is considered industrially superior to female. The demand for 'equal wages for men and women' is perfectly well known to trade-unionists as a device for keeping women out of men's trades." (1). But all these conditions are "under our marriage institutions". That phrase introduces immediately the last and most characteristically Shavian section of this investigation.

(1) Fabian tract no. 128. pgs. 9-10.

6. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Shaw's opinions on marriage, as expressed in his drama, have probably been responsible, more than anything else he has said or done, for the prejudice against him. Conventional, sentimental people are repelled by his satiric method of shocking his audience into thinking. The average man does not enjoy having his idols shattered. Two facts, should be borne in mind. First, Shaw employs, as is the playwright's privilege, a highly exaggerative style for the sake of dramatic effect and characterization; and second, Shaw attacks, not all marriage law, but the ancient code of England, and satirizes, not life everywhere, but rather metropolitan "London life --- in which the ordinary man's main business is to get means to keep up the position and habits of a gentleman, and the ordinary woman's business is to get married."(1). Behind his wit and hyperbole, however, Shaw has, for those who have eyes to see, a serious philosophy. His ideas on the subject of marriage are thoughtful, rational products of his observant and philosophic mind. They are the natural outcome, - logically deduced from moral, economic, and physiological principles, - of his socialistic disposition. To thinking people they ought to be of vital interest. So important is his application of his theory to woman, and so great the influence of the women he creates as a result of his belief, that it is impossible adequately to dispose of this

(1) "Man and Superman" pref. pg. XIV. Italics not Shaw's.

part of the subject in a few pages. Only the outlines can be given; but, we trust, they can be so presented as to show Shaw's position, and so arranged as to permit a fair discussion as to whether or not it is tenable. With the scope of the subject thus limited, we may proceed with our investigation.

In his dramatic crusade against the shams of conventionality in general and pseudo-sentimentality in particular, Shaw apparently finds conditions at their worst when woman is involved. The falsely sentimental attitude which is, as a general rule, taken toward woman, love, and marriage, is, to Shaw, the most absurd (to put it mildly) of all those manifestations of man's ignorance which he is so constantly combating. So long has sentimentality prevailed, that to the majority of people it is the one natural phenomenon of true devotion. So long has mankind been under the influence of the "conventions of romance" in the literature of the past, and so acceptable and accepted has become the dangerous doctrine of unthinking romanticism, that unless some determined and courageous writer, - namely, George Bernard Shaw, - takes the trouble to point out the wide-spread fallacy which is causing general enervation and demoralization of those whom God made in his own image, it will soon be too late for man to attain the dignity and the security of that highly desirable and impregnable position which is founded on reason and safe-guarded by intellect. Accordingly, Shaw undertakes the work of presenting to the world a wonderful series of characters, - not as they ought to be to harmonize with popular concep-

tions, or as they would be in an idealistic state of affairs: that would be romanticism; but characters as they really are in everyday life,- characters such as may be seen at any time by any one if he but have the courage to open his eyes and to admit the truth of what he sees about him. And Shaw, believing, as he openly states, in the exceptional clearness of his own vision and in the defective vision of the majority of his fellow human beings, does not hesitate to assume the role of educator-in-chief to the romantic masses and spokesman ex officio for the few who are so fortunately endowed as to be as scientifically realistic as is he.

In this capacity, he begins very early to present his lucid ideas. In fact, in the second of his plays he devotes most of his effort to the eradication of those prevalent erroneous beliefs in regard to love which are a result of poor powers of observation and a poorer capacity for intelligent thinking. This play, "The Philanderer", has no dearth of love affairs. But the situations in which they are developed are realistic and modern in the extreme. In place of the usual dainty, shy, reticent, captivating feminine creatures, all innocence and charm, we have modern, mannish, philosophic, man-hunting young women, - members of an Ibsen club, and intelligent exponents of "advanced thought." And men fall in love with these women too.-women who smoke and call each other by their last names; women who are the comrades of sensible men of the world; women who exercise all the privileges of a men's club; women who wear petticoats and who are capable of jealousy only because their

emancipation is so new that time has not permitted the complete attainment of that perfectibility of the individual intelligence which is their ~~greatest~~ ultimate goal. To the lover of the romance of the past, this play of Shaw's must be a shock indeed; and if he be an unthinking romanticist, an un^qreasonable adherent to the old conventional school, then it must breed disgust. To put so delicate a thing as love on a philosophic or even common sense basis, is to arouse the antagonism of those millions of worthy souls who have not that insight nor that keenness of vision with ^{which} Mr. Shaw is blessed. To destroy at a single blow all the traditions of the centuries; to wipe out the fundamental conceptions, - wrong though they be, - on which men have for ages been basing their activities; to annihilate that which has been the origin of much of the good and the true, and most of the beautiful in history, religion, art, and life; to ridicule romantic love; to disparage blind affection; to unsex woman; in short, to do as Mr. Shaw has done, is not alone a thankless task, is not alone a good deed to be forgotten, but is rather an act which will arouse the indignation of men, which will call forth the condemnation of the reading world, which ought to bring forth the censure of that most eminent of critics, the Queen's reader of plays.

That revolutionary idea which Shaw has presented in "The ^hPhilanderer", was not to stop with that play. In fact it was to permeate all his plays which were yet to be, and was to reach a higher form as Shaw developed. "Mrs. Warren's Profession," the next of Shaw's plays,

though having another thought as its underlying principle, still repeats the attack. In the next volume of plays we find it again in "You Never Can Tell" and "Candida." Inexplicable as Candida may be to many, it is evident to all that she is an apotheosis of Shaw's attack on pseudo-sentimentality. What a woman she is! Non-moral indeed; but intelligent withal! A strange combination of qualities; but a woman with common sense. In the same volume there is "Arms and the Man", a play in which every shred of idyllic nonsense is torn from the garment in which Truth is wont to be clothed. Common sense, a little reason,- that is Shaw's cry. What if a woman lie; what if a man be a self-admitted coward; what if anything be true; it matters not if she but have "position"; and he, money. Under the circumstances they should be married. There is nothing else to do; it is common sense. "The Devil's Disciple" continues the attack; but space permits the discussion of only one more play,- "Man and Superman."

When a man writes such a play as "Man and Superman", he must be a deep and serious thinker. When a man reads such a play, he must do some deep and serious thinking. There is something majestic, something compelling, something gripping about this masterpiece. It takes hold, and the more one grapples with it the more one is glad that he must grapple some more. There is no getting free from it. One does not desire to be free; one wants merely the pleasure of struggling with it forever. Such a book is epochal. Such a book cannot be the result of inspiration. It must be the slow product of evolution, the gradual outcome of years of

thought. And so it is; for in "Man and Superman" we have the splendid culmination of that doctrine of Shaw's which we have been considering.

In this play we have a character, John Tanner, who has reached that point where Shaw would have us all; that is, he is absolutely free from that pseudo-sentimentality which so annoys the brilliant Irish author as to prompt him to produce excellent drama. Tanner sees through all the foibles and intrigues of his environment, and even tries to save his friend, the sentimental poet, Octavius, from the horrible catastrophe of marrying a woman who is anything but honest and straightforward. This woman, Ann, is, despite her faults, a very captivating girl who rejects the suit of Octavius and tries to obtain the love of Tanner. But Tanner, with his highly desirable lack of sentimentality, will not listen to any such schemes, and departs somewhat hastily in his high-power motor-car. But Ann, too, uses an automobile, and, of course, all roads lead to Rome. Tanner uses all his reasoning powers; Ann employs all her instinctive forces; they address each other in terms of exhortation; Ann feigns, and lies, and is coquettish before a man who knows she is feigning and lying and coquetting; and John Tanner, the man of intelligence, the soul emancipated from the horrors of sentimentality and emotion, the mind that is superior to the appeals of the heart, he, Shaw's embryonic Superman, succumbs to a force that is stronger than he, and Ann accomplishes her purpose. It is here (as in the other plays) one grand battle between reason and emotion. In this way Shaw ends the play that embodies the whole of his persistently presented doctrine.

Reason and emotion clash, with the result already seen. But why reason versus emotion? Let us see how Shaw arrived at this.

In the first place, Shaw was aware (as are many others) of the shams of life and society. Nowhere were shams so prevalent as where conventionality sanctioned them, and as Shaw would have nothing to do with the false, he began attacking (as have others) conventionality. The weakest point there was in the fostering of pseudo-sentimentality, and the weakest in that was the false conception of woman. Everything was put on a false emotional basis; nothing was established on reason. In fact there was no reason. The remedy for this situation seemed to Shaw (judging by his drama) to be the substitution of reason for emotion. Let the activity of the brain once supplant the dictatings of the heart, and the situation would be greatly relieved, if not altogether cured. Such seems to be the means by which Shaw arrives at his conclusion. Such, at any rate, is the remedy he is continually applying.

But is this the true remedy? Is it even a possible remedy? Perhaps it is for Shaw; but to the majority of people, who habitually respond to their emotions and who have not yet learned to inhibit their innermost desires, it certainly is not. The average man looks at the question of woman and her relation to man from a purely personal point of view. He is an observer right in the shadow of a great stone wall, to whom the individual blocks of granite seem set in crumbling mortar. But Shaw, standing afar off, has a clearer view. To him, all the huge stone blocks are as naught, and the ragged interstices between

gards, we neglect artificial selection under cover of delicacy and morality." Shaw has not given a name to this artificial selection which we neglect; Scientists would call it Eugenics, a term which we are just learning to hear with some degree of intelligence. It is not a new idea: "The Republic" of Plato advocates it (1). But to those who forget that man is an animal, it is a shock to hear Shaw say: "The only fundamental and possible socialism is the socialization of the selective breeding of man" (2). It jars on the sensibilities of those who believe themselves to be but little lower than the angels. It is unpleasant to be told that "unless we are replaced by a more highly evolved animal- in short, by the Superman- the world must remain a den of dangerous animals among whom our few accidental superman, our Shakespeares, Goethes, Shelleys and their like, must live as precariously as lion tamers do, taking the humor of their situation, and the dignity of their superiority, as a set-off to the horror of the one, and the loneliness of the other." (3). People are unprepared for the information that "until there is an England in which every man is a Cromwell, a France in which every man is a Napoleon, a Rome in which every man is a Caesar, a Germany in which every man is a Luther plus a Goethe, the world will be no more improved by its heroes than a Brixton villa is improved by the pyramid of Cheops." (4).

(1) See "The Republic", Book V, Sec. 459 et seq.

(2) "Man and Superman" pg. 219.

(3) Ib. pg. 215.

(4) Ib. pg. 193.

Such statements are unconventional. Such thoughts are immoral. So frank, so crude a reference to the animality of man lacks that "cover of delicacy and morality" which is expected of an educated gentleman of refinement. The man who maintains that the production of a Democracy of Superman "is the only change that is now hopeful enough to nerve us to the effort that Revolution demands"(1), is certainly overstepping the bounds of propriety and is probably mentally irresponsible. The people will have nothing to do with him ~~or~~ or his ideas. Only when these principles are scientifically dignified as "Eugenics" will a few people pay attention to them. The ordinary man fears for his false gods; and being confused by Shaw's satiric attack on sham and conventionality, and misled by his fearless proposal of "selective breeding", he is afraid that Shaw would destroy the most precious of all idols, the sanctity of the home, and would violate the sacredness of marriage.

Nothing, however, is further from Shaw's intention. That he preaches a eugenic doctrine is true; but that he is opposed to marriage is only the unreasoned conclusion of those who hear the word "Eugenics" and stop their ears in horror. Not only does he affirm in his preface to "Getting Married" that under present conditions marriage is inevitable, but he also plainly says that illicit unions are to be permitted under no considerations, if for no other reason than that they are unprofitable. In addition to this he asserts that whereas woman is

(1) "Man and Superman" pg. 198.

now more or less a chattel of man, she would be, were marriage abolished, more enslaved than ever. But, what is undoubtedly true, he also declares that all kinds of conditions are winked at in order that no one may really say a word against marriage. It is this conventionally sanctioned disregard of evils for the sake of "smug respectability" that Shaw will not tolerate. It is one of the social pretences that he will not overlook. There is no question with Shaw of abolishing marriage; but there is a very pressing need of improving its conditions.

The first step necessary in this improvement is to get rid of that medieval academic figment, the indissolubility of marriage. It is absolutely absurd to imagine that a piece of legal paper filed away in the courthouse, or an institutionalized vow before a parish priest, can make irrevocable the unforeseeing promise of impassioned youth. It is wholly unreasonable, claims Shaw, to demand that two people under the influence of the most violently insane and transient passion must swear that they will continue in that excited, abnormal, and exhausting condition till death do them part." Although to some the marriage law represents "the worst of blundering abominations - an institution which society has outgrown but not modified and which 'advanced' individuals are therefore forced to evade", yet Shaw, realizing that married people often suffer more from intemperance than libertines whom they stigmatize as monsters of vice, and seeing that slavery to pleasure often induces two people to accept slavery to each other, takes a less radical position and attempts only to make more reasonable and

just the conditions under which the dissolution of marriage may take place. To those whose faith makes marriage indissoluble, this Shavian view unfortunately must seem sacrilegious. It is no religious belief, however, that Shaw opposes. He simply wishes to further the modification of such divorce laws as already exist and which every well-governed State finds absolutely necessary. His plan is not to create sudden license and confusion. It is his belief that "the practical abrogation of Property and Marriage as they exist at present will occur without being much noticed," (1) a statement which seems to be corroborated by many instances in France to-day. There, certainly, where the birth rate is alarmingly small, divorce should be easily obtainable. It would remove that sense of bondage which now accompanies marriage. People would feel more free to marry, and conditions would be bettered. We cannot have marriage without divorce. In fact, as Shaw says, (2), "marriage (which will delay the advent of the superman as effectually as Property) is --- -- compelled to buy extension of life by extension of divorce, much as if a fugitive should try to delay a pursuing wolf by throwing portions of his own heart to it." "Nothing," he predicts (3), "is more certain than that ----- the progressive modification of the marriage contract will be continued until it is no more onerous nor irrevocable than any ordinary commercial deed of partnership." The

(1) "Man and Superman" pg.187.

(3) Ib. pg.188.

(2) "Quintessence of Ibsenism" pg.37.

conditions , in the opinion of Shaw, will be properly adjusted only when the sole and sufficient reason for divorce is that the people concerned want one.

The need for this modification of our marriage laws, it must be understood, arise solely from the bad organization of society. "The economic position of women is such that, as Mrs. Warren says, "the only way for a woman to provide for herself decently is to be good to some man who can afford to be good to her." That is the sort of self-surrender which our idealism and our economic code require of woman. That is the evil which makes Shaw say that "of all the idealist abominations which make society pestiferous" he doubts "if there be any so mean as that of forcing self-sacrifice on a woman under pretence that she likes it; and, if she ventures to contradict the pretence, declaring her no true woman." (1) Unfortunately, woman is considered womanly only when she thinks of herself as for the use of man. She is neither politically nor personally free. If for no other reason than that it would help solve the marital relation, she should have the vote. That would liberate her politically. But she will never be personally free until the State recognizes with Shaw "that any society which desired to found itself on a high standard of integrity of character in its units should organize itself in such a fashion as to make it possible -- for all men and all women to maintain themselves in

(1) "Quintessence of Ibsenism" pg.33.

reasonable comfort by their industry without selling their affections and their convictions." (1)

This thought is the basis of the minimum wage. In fact, the whole problem is one of social economics. A woman cannot be expected to live properly on starvation wages. "A woman with six shillings a week could live decently on it only by getting received into a family; and this would reproduce the evils of parasitic trade exactly as if she were a daughter. Her wage must be calculated on the basis of the needs of a single adult living independently without any other resources. It will then be found that the difference between the man's wage and the woman's will be much less than at present, and will probably be scarcely more than sufficient to protect women from having to compete with men in the labor market at equal wages." (2). This protection, however, is not enough. Other safe-guards are necessary. The provision for widows has already been mentioned, and in "Getting Married" there is a hint of mothers' pensions. "I ought to have children," says Lesbia, the maiden lady of the play, "I believe it would pay the country very well to pay me very well to have children." These, however, are lesser considerations. The fundamental plans of Shaw are all we are attempting to discuss. As a Fabian he demands the economic independence of women, the great principle upon which a healthy society depends; and as a man of

(1) "Plays Pleasant" pref. pg. XXX.

(2) Fabian tract no 128 pg 13.

the highest morality, as a man who lives the life of a gentleman, as the greatest living dramatic exponent of the spirit of freedom, equality, and independence which to-day prevails, he demands in all sincerity that there be for both sexes but one true moral standard.

IV. THE METHODS OF PROCEDURE

The discussion of the chief of these economic measures which, in the opinion of Shaw, would remedy existing evils and establish a highly scientific social organization, is now complete. Socialists of nearly every type will agree, if they devote sufficient time to the elaboration of their program, with much, if not all, of the preceding ideas. Few Socialists, however, formulate their systems with the logic and the calmness of a Shaw. That is one of the principal difficulties. Disillusioned young men see through the conventionally disregarded evils and immediately clamor enthusiastically for a change. But what that change may be, they know not. Little by little they acquire some definite knowledge of conditions and learn to demand one or two impracticable desiderata which appear to them to be of a remedial nature. Naturally enough they are frequently open to merciless ridicule, and through their inability (through lack of preparation) clearly to state their reasonable demands and forcefully to support these demands when challenged, the progress of Socialism has been greatly impeded. But to those few who have carefully taught themselves the history, evolution, and tendencies of Socialism together with the theory and facts of economics, these measures of Shaw will seem, in large part at least, desirable. How, then, are these proposals to be brought into effect?

There are essentially three methods of procedure: the

anarchistic, the revolutionary, and the opportunist. The first method originates with the proletariat; the last two, with the bourgeois and occasionally with the revolted capitalist. The slave-driven proletariat, once he is sufficiently aroused to revolt, naturally demands the removal of the t which has caused his oppression. This, through the medium of a landed aristocracy, is the State. The State, accordingly, must be abolished. Where the revolted proletariat is deprived, as is usually the case, of any education which might guide him, the abolition takes the primitive form of dynamiting and assassination. Where, however, education has brought a little enlightenment, the anarchistic proletariat (occasionally the bourgeois and capitalist) would annihilate the State by the establishment of Communism. The bomb and the knife have long ago proved ineffective. The spread of Communism (a social organization in which all supplies may be had from a common store and all payment therefore consist of labor, - on the theory that to the laborer belongs his produce) is still believed in by many. Shaw, however, very clearly shows (1) the impossibilities of this system. The system may be perfect; but human nature is not. And as soon as authority is granted to deal with recalcitrant specimens of human nature (whether for failure to pay in labor or in goods) there exists a primitive State. The Communist maintains, however, that no authority will be necessary: no taxes need be collected, no punishment enforced for non-payment of communal debt. No; public opinion will be an all-suffi-

(1) "The Impossibilities of Anarchism."

cient power to control the Communists. Will it not be strong enough? Shaw thinks it a veritable Samson, as may be seen in many ways. It is a tyrant, in fact, often stronger than law. "But there is no sincere public opinion that a man should work for his daily bread if he can get it for nothing. Indeed it is just the other way: public opinion has been educated to regard the performance of daily manual labor as the lot of the despised classes. The common aspiration is to acquire property and leave off working." (1) Thus does Shaw prove the case (from a practical point of view) against the anarchists.

The second method of procedure in establishing Socialism is the revolutionary. It is the product of the bourgeois mind which asserts that in numbers there is strength. The revolutionists affirm that only by an uprising of the united proletariat (a vast army) against the oppression of the few can justice be obtained. That philosophy has been prevalent in Germany (2) for many years. That belief resulted in the French revolution. That theory led many enthusiasts to declare that (3) in England in 1889 the French revolution would be duplicated. That, as we knew, did not occur; and the futility of revolution is recorded elsewhere in history. The idea, however, that majorities have absolute power, Shaw shows to be erroneous. (4) Minorities can not be reduced to ciphers.

(1) Fabian tract no. 45 - pg. 14.

(2) Cf Kirkup's - "History of Socialism."

(3) Henderson:- "Life and Works of G.B.S." -pg. 108.

(4) Fabian tract no. 45 -

The aim of this Social-Democracy (as it is often called) is, never the-
 less, humerously commended by Shaw. Its object is to relieve those
 who are fools enough to submit to the impositions of lazy members of
 the community "by throwing on all an equal share in the inevitable
 labor imposed by the tyranny of Nature, and so securing to every indi-
 vidual no less than his equal quota of the nation's labor." (1) But
 as a practical Socialist; Shaw finds the method of Social-Democracy,
 the revolutionary method of the bourgeois, also unfit for serious con-
 sideration.

The third method of procedure, - and that which Shaw and
 the Fabian Society have adopted, - may be called Opportunism. The revolted
 bourgeois and capitalist, having observed the fertility of these spasmodic
 and emotional methods which have been responsible for the disrepute of
 Socialism, but having at heart the same genuine sympathy for the oppressed
 and the same earnest desire to reorganize society which impelled the
 activities of the Anarchists and Social-Democrats, have adopted the slow,
 but presumably the most effective, plan of obtaining economic re-adjust-
 ment through strictly constitutional proceedings of the government. They
 first determine just what they want (or, better, just what will be the
 most practical and effective under the circumstances) and then await an
 opportunity of securing it by the vote of Parliament or other legisla-
 tive authority. That which will be most effective (whether desirable in

(1) Fabian tract no 45 - pg.23.

itself or not) in advancing the cause of Socialism however slightly, is what the Fabians will vote for. If, for example, of three candidates for public office, the election of the Social-Democrat be impossible, the election of the Radical improbable by his own party alone, and the election of the Conservative certain unless his opponents unite or his party split, - then the Fabians, contrary to the other Socialists, will vote, not for their favorite candidate whose defeat is unquestionable, but for the Radical, whose policies, though not acceptable to the Socialists, will be of more benefit than those of the Conservative. (1) In other words, they do not vote blindly on principle, but try to elect that man whose work will be of most help to their cause. They make the best of the situations in which they find themselves, - in short, they are Opportunists. To the impractical idealists, to the Social-Democrat Federation, to the Communistic Anarchists, this opportunist policy is worthy only of contempt. It places Socialism on that vulgar plane which is occupied by any common political party. But to the outside world, - which, after all, is the thing to be considered, - this method has been the one means of promulgating progressive economic theories and stimulating the public demand for socialistic legislation.

The features of development of this Fabian policy have been three: permeation, education, and legislation. The permeation of the Liberal party (a process which lasted up to 1890) was a great success.

(1) See Fabian tract no. 41: - "The tactics of the S.D.F.," pg. 21 and "Fabian Tactics," pgs. 22-24.

Members of the Fabian Society joined all organizations of political power, and by judicious speeches, timely resolutions, encouraging newspaper reports, and adroit political generalship, so influenced the political sentiment that they gained in 1888 "the solid advantage of a Progressive majority, full of ideas that would never have come into their heads had not the Fabian put them there, on the first London County Council." (1) In the mean time, the second feature, education, had not been neglected. For years the Fabians had been educating themselves (2) by a thorough study of the theory and facts of economics. They were well grounded in their subject. No audacious economic tyre appeared in print or on the platform without suffering the crushing replies of an economic specialist. No one understood so well as they the necessity of accurate information; and as they were definite in their knowledge, so were they definite in their demands. "The first step to getting what we want," they said, (3), "is a very clear and precise knowledge of what it is that we want." Not only, however, did they educate themselves, but also the general public. The Fabian Tracts furnished information of every kind. Public speeches and debates were given in London at all times of the year (4), and when, in 1889, "Fabian Essays in Socialism" was published,

(1) Fabian tract no. 41 - pg 19.

(2) The Hampstead Historic Club for the study of Marx and Proudhon, and the British Economic Association for an abstract scientific study of economics, were two organizations to which Shaw belonged. C f. Fb. tr. 41.

(3) Fabian tract no. 51.

(4) See Henderson's LIFE, chapt. V. for an account of Shaw's activities.

the first edition "went off like smoke" and a second edition brought the circulation up to twenty thousand.(1) In 1904, the fortieth thousand had been reached. By this dissemination of knowledge, the Fabians are creating an atmosphere of socialization. They are forcing men to a consciousness of economic mal-adjustments in such a way that a natural legislative reform (the third feature) will inevitably result. Their method is sane, persistent, natural, and scientific. Their aim, permanently to eradicate these evils which the present social organism has created, - is sincere as it is noble. Their reward is the knowledge that because of their efforts progressive legislation has already been enacted, and because of their influence there has been called into being a social consciousness that ensures still further social development.

(1) Fabian tract no.41 - pg.19.

V. THE FABIAN SOCIETY and GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

The Fabians, however, were not always so peaceful and scientific as they now are. Their origin was chaotic; their early history revolutionary. When Shaw joined the Fabian Society, he was as enthusiastic a social reformer as are many Anarchists. There was always a certain vigor manifest at the Fabian meetings. Shaw thus recalls one of these gatherings held in Anderton's hotel: "The minutes of the meeting close with the following significant note by the secretary:

'Subsequently to the meeting, the secretary received notice from the manager of Anderton's hotel that the Society could not be accommodated there for any further meetings.'" (1)

This boisterous type of meeting, however, gradually gave way to a quieter form. The Fabian capacity for profiting by experience was great. The influence of such of its members as William Morris, Mrs. Besant, John Burns, M.P.; Hubert Bland, and Shaw was soon apparent. In 1883 the Society was "content with nothing less than the prompt reconstruction of society in accordance with the highest moral possibilities"; but so early as 1886 it had learned "the advisability of setting to work by the ordinary political methods and having done with Anarchism and vague exhortations to emancipate the workers." The progress was rapid indeed.

Shaw was among the foremost in the rationalization of

(1) Fabian tract no. 41. This tract gives an account of the development of the Fabian Society from its beginning up to 1892.

socialistic policy. The anarchistic procedure of abolishing the State was to him the greatest of mistakes. The State is with us to stay. It is a necessity. As Plato says (1), "A State ---- has its origin in the needs of men; no one is sufficient unto himself, but we all have many wants." (2). The people have created it and given it power, - a power which is greater than the will of its creator. It is the mis-use of this power (not its annihilation which is impossible) that Shaw and his fellow Fabians would have corrected. "The State," he maintains (3), "in spite of the Anarchists, will continue to be used against the people by the classes until it is used by the people against the classes with equal ability and equal resolution."

There is nothing very startling about this statement; neither can it be said to be very new. But it is sane. All students of Economics have observed the manner in which the State permits the exploitation of the masses by the few. All observers have noted the resultant poverty of the many and the instability of the commercial world.

(1) "The Republic" Book II. Sec. 369.

(2) The famous passage of which this is an abridged translation is as follows: γίνεσθαι τοῖσιν, ἣν δ' ἐπιβόητος ἰσθ' ἐπινοῦμαι, ἰσχυρῶς ὑπάρχει ἡμῶν ἕκαστος οὐκ ἀνέλπειν, ἀλλὰ πορῶν ἐνδεῆς. ἣ τίς οὐκ ἀρχὴν ἀλλήν ποῦν οὐκ ἔστιν; οὐδεμίαν, ἣ δ' οὐκ. κ. τ. λ.

(3) "Impossibilities of Anarchism", pg. 27.

Panics have occurred frequently enough to warn the champions of our present system. But still there is terrible poverty, and society can not feel secure. Says Shaw in ^hhis connection(1): "Security, the chief pretence of civilization, cannot exist where the worst of dangers, the danger of poverty, hangs over everyone's head, and where the alleged protection of our persons from violence is only an accidental result of the existence of a police force whose real business is to force the poor man to see his children starve whilst idle people overfeed pet dogs with the money that might feed and clothe them."

Poverty, however, is not only a danger in Shaw's opinion, - it is a crime, - "the worst of crimes," according to his character Underhaft (2), "all the other crimes are virtues beside it: all the other dishonors are chivalry itself by comparison. Poverty blights whole cities; spreads horrible pestilences; ~~strikes~~ strikes dead the very souls of all who come within sight, sound or smell of it. What you call crime is nothing ----- there are not fifty genuine professional criminals in London but there are millions of poor people, abject people, dirty people, ill-fed, ill-clothed people. They poison us morally and physically: they kill the happiness of society: they force us to do away with our own liberties and to organize unnatural cruelties for fear they should rise against us and drag us down into their abyss." (3). "The thoughtless

(1) "Major Barbara" -First Aid to Critics -pg.164.

(2) Ib. Act III pg.299.

(3) See note(5) page 9.

wickedness with which we scatter sentences of imprisonment----- is as nothing compared to the stupid levity with which we tolerate poverty as if it were either a wholesome tonic for lazy people or else a virtue to be embraced as St. Francis embraced it. If a man is indolent, let him be poor. If he is drunken, let him be poor. If he is not a gentleman, let him be poor. If he is addicted to the fine arts or to pure science instead of to trade and finance, let him be poor. ----- Let nothing be done for the 'undeserving': let him be poor.

"Now what does this Let Him Be Poor mean? It means let him be weak. Let him be ignorant. Let him become a nucleus of disease. Let him be a standing exhibition of ugliness and dirt. Let him have rickety children. Let him be cheap and let him drag his fellows down to his price by selling himself to do their work. Let his habitations turn our cities into poisonous congeries of slums.----- Let the undeserving become still less deserving.----- This being so, is it really wise to let him be poor? ----- Suppose we were to decide that poverty is the one thing we will not tolerate--- that every adult with less than, say, 365 pounds a year, shall be painlessly but inexorably killed, and every hungry half-naked child forcibly fattened and clothed, would not that be an enormous improvement on our existing system which has already destroyed so many civilizations, and is visibly destroying ours in the same way?

"----- The sensible course would be to give every man enough to live well on, so as to guarantee the community against the

possibility of a case of the malignant disease of poverty, and then (necessarily) to see that he earned it."(1).

The mistake must not be made, in reading such passages as those just given of thinking that Shaw and the Fabians wish entirely to eradicate inequality of material possession. In the first place, that would be a Utopian dream which is foreign to their opportunist methods. In the second place, such equality is not altogether desirable, were it possible. The best arrangement for the progress of society seems to be one of material inequality. But it is that bestial form which is seen in the slums of all large cities that they would wipe out. They would not enrich every poor man. It is not their desire hovels into palaces; it is not their wish to make mean streets into parkways; it is not their intention to elevate beggars; it is not their purpose to put brick-layers in cushioned divans, and to set before masons a banquet with wines; it is not their will to carry out that idle vision of good-hearted dreamers in which kings shall be humbled to the dust and beggars raised up to thrones, where fattened gourmands shall waste away and hungry starvings may feast in peace, where all things shall be reversed and retributive justice establish the right. That is not their aim. But what they would do is to extirpate disease, to exterminate want, to relieve misery, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked,

(1) "Major Barbara" pgs. 166-167. This last statement appears to be nothing other than Plato's old idea that "in all well-ordered States every individual had an occupation to which he must attend." See "The Republic, Book III, Sec. 406.

to shelter the homeless, to make life worth living, to give an opportunity to everyone to improve his condition, to permit every man to be free to work without first obtaining that privilege from another, to establish such a society that no man need be deprived of those inalienable rights which are his by virtue of his being. That is what they would do. And that does not mean equality of wealth. But it does mean that that extreme form of poverty (and its concomitant, extreme wealth) - which are, as Plato knew long ago, (1) great evils in the State, must be removed. There will always be rich men and poor men. But there need not always be the lowest form of poverty and the most outrageous accumulation of wealth which we know only too well at present. The conditions of suffering can be ameliorated. That is what the Fabian Society knows. And although immediate change might seem desirable, it is impossible. It is not a lack of ideals, but rather a commendable quantity of common-sense that makes them opportunists. "For the right moment you must wait," they say, "as Fabius did most patiently when warring against Hannibal, though many censured his delays; but when the time comes you must strike hard, as Fabius did, or your waiting will be in vain, and fruitless." (2).

While the Fabians are waiting, however, they are not idle, and what they are waiting for is definitely determined. Many of their

(1) See "The Republic" Book IV Sec. 422.

(2) Motto on titlepage of Fabian tract no. 7.

measures have been discussed at length in the preceding pages, but for the purpose of having a concise statement of their principal aims in mind it is thought advisable to reprint what they often publish as

The Basis of the Fabian Society.

"The Fabian Society consists of Socialists.

"It therefore aims at the re-organization of Society by the emancipation of Land and Industrial Capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit. In this way only can the natural and acquired advantages of the country be equitably shared by the whole people.

"The Society accordingly works for the extinction of private property in Land and of the consequent individual appropriation, in the form of rent, of the price paid for permission to use the earth, as well as for the advantages of superior soils and sites.

"The Society, further, works for the transfer to the community of the administration of such Industrial Capital as can conveniently be managed socially. For, owing to the monopoly of the means of production in the past, industrial inventions and the transformation of surplus income into Capital have mainly enriched the proprietary class, the worker being now dependent on that class for leave to earn a living.

"If these measures be carried out, without compensation (though not without such relief to expropriated individuals as may seem fit to the community), Rent and Interest will be added to the reward

of labor, the idle class now living on the labor of others will necessarily disappear, and practical equality of opportunity will be maintained by the spontaneous action of economic forces with much less interference with personal liberty than the present system entails.

"For the attainment of these ends the Fabian Society looks to the spread of Socialist opinions, and the social and political changes consequent thereon. It seeks to promote these by the general dissemination of knowledge as to the relation between the individual and Society in its economic, ethical, and political aspects."

The adoption of this Fabian Basis, with all the social re-organization which it implies, is strongly advocated by Shaw. As has previously been shown, there are other principles than those just given, which he, as an individual social philosopher, has formulated; but as a Fabian, and a Fabian leader, he is in sympathy with every part of the Fabian program. That is why Fabianism and Shavianism have often been used interchangeably throughout this thesis. Ever since Shaw joined the Society in 1884, he has been a conspicuous member of the Fabian meetings, where, according to his biographer (1), "It is genuinely amusing to watch him — the head and front of Fabianism." There "he is truly Sir Oracle: his opinion controls the policy of the society, as it has done for many years." So influential has he been in the evolution of the society,

(1) Henderson's Life pg.497.

from its anarchistic incipency to its present opportunist and rational state, that the Fabian policy may well be said to be, in large part at least, Shawianism. No apology, accordingly, should be necessary for incorporating the Fabian policy in the social philosophy of Shaw. Shaw became a Fabian; that was his opportunity. The Fabians became followers of Shaw; that was their good fortune.

VI. CONCLUSION

The social philosophy of Shaw has now been presented; there remains for consideration only the validity of his position and the probability of establishing his theories by practical applications. Just what he wants, is difficult to state in a few words. He has given a characteristically sweeping suggestion, however, in "The Impossibilities of Anarchism", where he says: "For my own part, I seek the establishment of a state of society in which I shall not be bothered with a ridiculous handful of coppers, nor have to waste my time in perplexing arithmetical exchanges of them with booking-clerks, bus conductors, shepmen, and other superfluous persons before I can get what I need. I aspire to live in a community which shall be at least capable of averaging the transactions between us well enough to ascertain how much work I am to do for it in return for the right to take what I want of the commoner necessaries and conveniences of life. The saving of friction by such an arrangement may be guessed from the curious fact that only specialists in sociology are conscious of the numerous instances in which we are to-day forced to adopt it by the very absurdity of the alternative. Most people will tell you that Communism is known only in this country as a visionary project advocated by a handful of amiable cranks. Then they will stroll off across the common bridge, along the common embankment, by the light of the common gas lamp shining alike on the just and the unjust, up the common street, and into the common Trafalgar Square,

where, on the smallest hint on their part that Communism is to be tolerated, for an instant in a civilized country, they will be handily bludgeoned by the common policeman, and haled off to the common goal."

Even to those who are in sympathy with Shaw, this may appear as an exaggerated ideal. To others, it will doubtless seem altogether impossible. To the more charitable, it may appear as a splendid example of hitching one's wagon to a star. Even to those who realize the truth of the statements and the desirability of the wished-for economic condition, this social aspiration of Shaw may appear impracticable. That, however, is the one thing that cannot be said of Shaw. No impractical idealist would ever assert, as does he, that he has "yet to see the man who, having any practical experience of Proletarian Democracy, has any belief in its capacity for solving great political problems." (1) It is only the dreamer that can ride down-town in an early morning street-car filled to overflowing with pathetically dull-looking, unintelligent, vacant-eyed laborers, crushed into lifeless, automatic wielders of the pick-axe and sledges, reduced by the resistless force of society to the miserable condition of wretched creatures patterned after the figure of a man, but having only the stolidity of oxen and the submissiveness of sheep, - it is only the dreamer, we repeat, that can observe these down-trodden human beings in whitened, worn-out shoes, and mud-encrusted overalls, and yet go forth to shout: "Let the people rule!" He is right

(1) "Man and Superman" pg.196.

to be disheartened by the laborer's condition; but he is wrong in wanting them to rule. They cannot think. They could not rule if given the chance. Their view is too limited. To them, legislation would mean but a raise in wages and a shortening of the working-day. Let them vote, yes! Let them think they are running the government if need be. But at the top there must be men of brains, men of ability, men of power, men of clear vision and of conscience. The people never have ruled; the people never can rule, - not, at least, as they now are. And Shaw, being above all things practical, knows this. Those who overlook the recent Parliamentary act regulating the practice of doctors, those who forget the success of the single-tax in New Zealand, those who know nothing of the minimum wage in Victoria, those who, in brief, being absorbed in idealist theories, fail to observe the facts around them, those are the people who declare Shaw impractical, and the consummation of his plans impossible. The process may be slow, the method, opportunist; but in all seriousness it may be said that the social reformation which Shaw advocates is not only possible but is one to which we may look forward as a probable solution of the economic problems which trouble thinking men to-day.

The difficulty in seeing the practical side of Shaw arises from his personal philosophy. As a social philosopher he is not very hard to comprehend. As a metaphysician, however, he is often confusing. Philosophically, he is an "individualist", a fact which on the surface seems to many people to contradict his socialistic views.

The exposition of his "Individualism" would be a subject for another thesis; it can be merely mentioned here, with the suggestion that the discrimination between his social and individual philosophy be carefully borne in mind. The two do not controvert each other in the least; but at times, when the reader is not mindful of the one to which Shaw is referring, confusion naturally occurs.

Still another disconcerting characteristic of Shaw's is his apparent lack of sentiment. He is afraid, so it would seem, to show his heart, - a trait which is the natural result of his much discussed attempt to substitute reason for emotion. But Shaw has a heart, if ever man had, - a heart throbbing with social passion, a heart full of human sympathy. "I verily believe," a distinguished author once remarked to Mr. Henderson, "that Mr. Shaw lives in mortal terror of the public for fear it will discover his great secret: the possession of a warm heart." "Bernard Shaw is a man of tremendous sentiment - social and humanitarian sentiment. Sociologic thought and social service are the ruling moral passions of his life." (1). Mr. William Archer, too, is of this opinion. "I suspect Bernard Shaw", he says, "of being constitutionally an arrant sentimentalist, whose abhorrence of sentiment is as the shrinking of the dipsomaniac from the single drop of alcohol which he knows will make his craving unmanageable." But beside these conjectures is the splendid testimony of Henderson himself (2),

(1) Henderson's Life pg. 503.

(2) Ib. pg. 498.

which no one can dispute. In fact, Shaw is so kind, and his belief in the goodness of human nature so great, that he is often mistaken in his conclusions. That is his weak point. "No great harm is done," he says (1), in discussing the revolt to freedom from the restraint of conventionality, "beyond the inevitable and temporary excesses produced by all reactions; for the would-be wicked ones find, when they come to the point, that the indispensable qualification for a wicked life is not freedom, but wickedness." On this argument, Shaw bases much of his belief concerning morality. The fallacy, however, lies in the fact that human beings are not all Bernard Shaws, nor do they even approximate to that goodness which he generally ascribes to them. Shaw's doctrine of morality is superb, - but it can be practised only in a community of Supermen.

It is often thought, in this connection, that Shaw would eliminate all systems of morality, - that everyone should be his own moral guide. That, however, is true only for Supermen. "Liberty," he says (2), "means responsibility. That is why most men dread it." And because of this, he maintains (3) that for many centuries to come there will be "a huge demand for a ready-made code of conduct for general use which will be used more or less as a matter of overwhelming convenience by all members of communities." That liberty which Shaw upholds has a

(1) "A Degenerate's View of Nordau" in "Liberty" July 27, 1895.

(2) "The Revolutionist's Handbook"

(3) "Liberty" July 27, 1895.

"string to it; while knocking off the fetters of alien authority, it forges upon one the iron band of liberty with responsibility,"(1),- a responsibility which the ordinary individual in the present state of human evolution, is unprepared to assume.

But in that evolution which is to bring us ever nearer to the Superman, what is the function of the individual? Shaw has given his opinion on this question in an unpublished manuscript from which Henderson quotes as follows: "The man who is looking after himself is useless for revolutionary purposes. The man who believes he is only a fly on the wheel of Natural Selection, of Evolution, or Progress, or Puritanism, or 'some power not ourselves, that makes for righteousness' is not only useless, but obstructive. But the man who believes there is a purpose in the universe, and identifies his own purpose with it, and makes the achievement of that purpose an act, not of self-sacrifice for himself, but of self-realisation; that is the effective and happy man, whether he calls the purpose the will of God, or Socialism, or the religion of humanity. He is the man who knows that nothing intelligent will be done until somebody does it, and who will place the doing of it above all his other interests.

"In Short we must make a religion of Socialism. We must fall back on our will to Socialism, and resort to our reason only to find out the ways and means. And this we can do only if we conceive the will

(1) Henderson's Life pg.465.

as a creative energy, as Lamarck did; and totally renounce and abjure Darwinism, Marxism, and all fatalistic, penny-in-the-slot theories of evolution whatever." (1) This is Shaw's position, and as one of those who are to fall back on the "will to Socialism", he gives as the germ of his life-philosophy: "I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

"I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' for me. It is a sort of splendid torch, which I have got hold of for the moment; and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations." A splendid torch! A glowing, leaping flame, we say, in which the mind of fancy may picture whole cavalcades of Superman, and a State perfected in Socialism.

(1) Henderson's Life pg. 480.