THE Catholicity of Socialism

(A SEQUEL TO THE 2ND LEAFLET.)

"In the present honest and patriotic Work great results are being achieved. Hidden, working, waiting, and desiring, results, appear very slow, expenses will be on their way. In many places, and especially in those that can exercise the power of masses, now at last, will hear the voice of Truth. The clouds are going and going, as more and more is come enough."—Catholic.

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A SEQUEL TO THE 2ND LEAFLET.

Many of my readers will not have read the preceding leaflet, of which this is the sequel, and on that account, perhaps, I may be pardoned the repetition of its opening sentences, which give, entirely, the aim and scope of the complete essay, and will furnish such readers with the key necessary to enable them to form a just estimate of the arguments advanced in the following pages.

"Objections to socialism are invariably founded upon misconceptions of it, of almost endless varieties, yet with this one family feature, that they all agree in regarding it as a cruel, confined, confused, and exclusive. Socialists who have cut and dried schemes for the reconstruction of society are naively to blame for this; indeed, they share in the error, not knowing the full glory of the goal whither their feet are treading. For far from being confined, confused, and exclusive, the gospel of Socialism is its catholicity, that is to say its universality, its massiveness, and its comprehensive. It is universal, because rooted only by humanity; one, because its basic principle is unity; comprehensive, because it receives all religions and non-religious, all nationalities and policies (admitting fullest scope to the mental activities), embraces all and excludes none. To give Socialism an organic structure, and assign its functions with microscopic detail, as did the old Ephialtes, is a serious error. For it is, as yet, no definite form; it is a divine idea or spirit, inspiring men to higher things, and gradually assuming shape as more required to the inspiration. Wise Socialists will give it no vague peremptory definition thus. Thus, its political ecstasy is 'All for all,' its religion is 'Equality,' and its science 'Lawfulness.' And the way in which with the Socialist inspiration, not to form the future Socialist State, to cultivate the spirit of fraternity within ourselves; to be missionaries of the truth in all places and at all seasons; and to aim, by our voices and influents, at gradually substituting the community for the individual in the production and distribution of wealth.

With these notions of Socialism in presence it is little wonder that many people oppose it, imagining its principles to conflict with some of their most cherished beliefs and theories. Accordingly, there are religious objections to it, scientific objections to it, political and social objections to it; each of these broad forms of protest, quite, being divided and refined into many varied modes of dissent. My purpose in this essay is to remove the objections by demonstrating Socialism to be in complete harmony with what is true in these different great domains of thought. Truth is essential to life, no religion or philosophy can
losg retain vitality without it; therefore I am going to briefly examine some of the most important beliefs of to-day, discover the seeds of truth within them, and show how Socialism, like a congenial soil, would nourish and fructify these. These beliefs, or modes of thought, I have selected are—Christianity in religion; Darwinism and Spencerianism in science; Socialism, Labor Nationalism, Anarchism, and Capitalism, in politics and sociology.

I then proceeded with the task in hand, but had only disposed of the three first-named beliefs when the limit of my space was reached, and a consideration of the others had to be postponed to the present occasion. Without further preface then, space being still valuable, I will set about the completion of my undertaking.

Malthusianism.—Probably no doctrine ever promulgated has done more to retard the true solution of social problems than that to which the rev. ed Dr. Malthus has given his name. Formulated at a time when, in the midst of newly-acquired industrial greatness, a wide-spread poverty and misery presented strange phenomena to the British mind, and angry eyes were being turned upon the new power of Capitalism as the cause—a time peculiarly opportune for the clear discernment of social evils, and the effective application of remedies—formulated at such a time, its effect upon the cause of reform was most disastrous, as a brief glance at the history of that period will show.

In the third quarter of the eighteenth century Capitalism as we know it was just beginning to emerge. The recent inventions of steam and the spinning jenny, and of labour-saving appliances in the great iron industries, had placed a tremendous power in the hands of the wealthy traders who could avail themselves of the new discoveries, and the master journeyman and the small employer, who had previously formed the backbone of England's prosperity and independence, speedily found themselves compelled to seek work in the mills and factories as mere wage-earners. Under the uncontrolled operation of that divine "competition" which Adams Smith was then preaching, a new revelation wages quickly sank to starvation level; the labourer could not support his family through he toiled serenely and eighty hours in the week; his wife and children too, for their scanty subsistence, twelve and fifteen hours a day in the hot, impure air of the mills or half-naked in the fouler atmosphere of the coal mines. Colossal fortunes were made, the aristocracy of wealth was founded, but the dawn of the nineteenth century, saw the labouring classes plunged in ignorance, vice, and misery, and—growing beneath a tyranny more elaborate and cruel than any ever before imposed upon a people. Abroad, the pulse of Liberty beat high. Oppression there had done its work; the people had risen in their might, and victory had blessed the banners of Liberty. The American colonists had won freedom valiantly at the sword's point, and their Declaration of Independence rang gloriously through the world; while in France the asundering multitudes had torn down the infamous Bastille, and overthrown with terrible accompaniments the old monarchy, and had called a national convention amidst the fire and carnage of their victorious vengeance. In England the inspiring influence of these successful revolts against class privilege and domination were soon manifested, and loud demands were made for social and political reform. William Cobbett, the noblest of the "An Inquiry concerning Political Justice," sounded the battle cry of "Human Equality," and keen brains and generous hearts hurried to do service in the great Cause. Cobbeff, "James," and Wilkes stood forth, brilliant champions of the people. Everything seemed propitious for reform. The monied and property classes trembled with apprehension, the lurid scenes of the French Revolution fresh in their memories. The old, old policy of repressive force was reversed to; public sentences were suppressed or dispersed; the liberty of the press was ruthlessly trampled upon; onctors, writers, editors, and even newspaper printers were flung into prison as traitors, or criminals, or ruined by heavy fines. All this, too, made for reform. Coercive measures have generally strengthened the cause against which they were directed, and from a study of the situation at the present time, it does not appear that these frantic efforts to crush a popular movement would have formed any exception to the rule. But at this juncture Philosophy hastened to the assistance of Oppression, and the shaky alliance succeeded. It is scarcely too much to say that a mighty movement towards political and industrial liberty was decisively checked, confused, and broken up by a book. That book was the famous "Essay on Population," and its author was the rev. ed T. R. Malthus. In this work it was pointed out, with seemingly irresistible force, that there is a natural tendency and a constant effort in population to increase beyond the means of subsistence, and that this fact was to be attributed not merely to poverty, misery, and the like, but to the inherent law of nature, and the terrible impoverishment of the masses; and of all the evils which poverty brings in its train, was over-population. Ever increasing population must, if un regulates, press closer and closer against the limit of subsistence, and the procurement of food for the human family becoming continually more difficult, that degree of poverty must result necessary to keep the population within the limit of subsistence. This fact was supported by statistics and arithmetical calculations, the fallacy of which has since been demonstrated, but which at that time had a very powerful effect. Such supports, however, were scarcely needed to convince the people for whom the book was mainly written of the truth it taught. To the workingman, slave at starvation wages, or struggling among his fellows for the scanty subsistence, nothing seemed clearer than that the labour market was overcrowded, while in his squalid home there were obviously too many mouths for the food supplied.

The effect of this doctrine was like a fusillade of thunderbolts upon the many of discontent, striking panic even into the stout hearts of its leaders. In vain did the stoutest among them attempt to organize a rally. The rank and file were utterly disconcerted. It seemed so clear now, that after all they were their own oppressors, or rather,
that Nature's was the fault, cruel mother, who multiplied their numbers too rapidly in her raged world. Not Capitalism, not the greed of wealth, not the tyranny of law, not any of the high powers they had assumed; avarice, while there is practically no limit to the wealth which the soil will afford them. Malthusian principles are popular among the young married people. Large families are proportionately few—although, for that matter, it is obvious that in a young and fruitful country large families should be the most prosperous—and the percentage of unmarried adults is higher than elsewhere in the world. Yet even here, enjoying all these advantages, we have poverty and misery in a degree unparalleled in the points which are brought up in conflict with Socialistic ideas. In the beginning the whole theory conflicted, and was meant to conflict, with Socialism as to the causes of social ills, but since that school of willing workers seek modified, and many Malthusians now are Socialists, too. But many still believe that if only the increase of population were restrained, most of the blessings for which social reformers are striving would spontaneously flow therefrom. Even so sensible a Malthusian as Annie Besant seemed to think that if only the principles of the Malthusian League were universally adopted, nothing else would be needed to transform hell on earth into a veritable paradise. She writes—

"If this system . . . were generally adopted, how happy would be the result both to the home and to the State! The rest of poverty would be dug up, and penury would decline and at last vanish. Where now overcrowded hovels stand would then be comfortable homes; where now the huge family staves in rags, the small family would then live on sufficient food, clad in decent raiment; ambition would rise in its true spirit, and self-sacrifice would be more acceptable than it now is; and the workhouse now tears is, the bony school would then smile, and care and forethought for the then valuable lives would diminish the danger of factory and workshops. A full possibility of life would open before each infant born into our nation, and there would be room, and love, and cleansing enough for each new comer!"

Men Besant has, however, recently denounced Malthusianism as being opposed to the true principles of Socialism. He argues that we are to suppose human happiness itself contrary to Theological principles, it is evident that she no longer believes a diminished population would result in the same degree of comfort as so eloquently enumerated above. Socialists emphatically deny that society would have any such desirable results. They deny that excessive population is responsible for poverty and its attendant evils, and they say that the causes are to be found elsewhere. They affirm that the country would be adjusted in consonance with the strictest Malthusian notions, and distributed in the most advantageous manner, there would be no betterment of individual life, so decrease in the proportion of comfort and happiness; the purchasing power of wages would not rise, food would not be more plentiful, employment to increase of obtaining, and more butts, as still before our civilization, the dangers of factory and workhouse would continue to grow. They appeal to experience for support. There is no necessity for abstract reasoning. The question is one of simple fact. It is ad

nitted, of course, that the Malthusian ideal community has never yet been realised, but there have been, and are now, close approximations to it. Take, for instance, our own fair Australia to-day. Here, surely, population is almost squared, while there is practically no limit to the wealth which the soil will afford them. Malthusian principles are popular among the young married people. Large families are proportionately few—although, for that matter, it is obvious that in a young and fruitful country large families should be the most prosperous—and the percentage of unmarried adults is higher than elsewhere in the world. Yet even here, enjoying all these advantages, we have poverty and misery in a degree unparalleled in the points which are brought up in conflict with Socialistic ideas. If this system . . . were generally adopted, how happy would be the result both to the home and to the State! The rest of poverty would be dug up, and penury would decline and at last vanish. Where now overcrowded hovels stand would then be comfortable homes; where now the huge family staves in rags, the small family would then live on sufficient food, clad in decent raiment; ambition would rise in its true spirit, and self-sacrifice would be more acceptable than it now is; and the workhouse now tears is, the bony school would then smile, and care and forethought for the then valuable lives would diminish the danger of factory and workshops. A full possibility of life would open before each infant born into our nation, and there would be room, and love, and cleansing enough for each new comer!"
be abundant negative disproof in the ever-increasing wealth of densely-populated countries.

This is the first and chief matter of dispute between the Socialist and the Malthusian, as to the cause of poverty—a dispute which, of course, necessarily extends itself to the question of remedies. And now, having argued that the Malthusians are as to the causes, and are ineffectual as to the remedy, I am free to admit that they have, nevertheless, placed their fingers upon a real social danger. They have drawn attention to the fact—at a time when the rapid reproduction of the species has been elevated to the dignity of a social virtue—that population increases at an alarming rate, and although they have greatly exaggerated the matter, and although no improvement in the standard of living is feared, there is, beyond doubt, serious reason for apprehension of the future. But Socialists contend that this high rate of increase, far from being natural, is abnormal, and that, instead of the remedy for poverty, it is the effect of poverty; and they argue that the remedy for the evil is only to be found in the reformation of an industrial system which renders poverty the inevitable concomitant of wealth, reduces large masses of the people to a mere animal existence, and denies to them all that is calculated to raise man above the unbridled gratification of animal instincts. The class of Malthusians with whom we are reasoning, following the lead of John Stuart Mill, maintain, on the contrary, that any elevation of the standard of comfort and intelligence would result in a lower birth-rate; but this argument is in flagrant opposition to well-known facts. Wherever there are few opportunities for intellectual life, as in new settlements, the birth-rate is notoriously high, and it is in the slums of the cities, and in the hovels of the country, that the children swarm like elephants. Poverty is a breeding—the "full quiver" and the empty purse have ever been associates in misfortune. Extirpate poverty, and the population problem would solve itself. Want, and the fear of want, being uprooted, a fuller and more varied life would open up before all. And the intellectual and spiritual side of man's nature assuming proper dominance, the law of population would assume that normal operation from which man's non-compliance with other natural laws has hitherto eluded it.

Capitalism, Land Nationalism, and Anarchism.

I have not grouped these three modes of thought into the head wordly to economic space; I discern a sequence of ideas in them in relation to Socialism. The opponents of any great reform are divisible into three broad classes: those who fight it truth and will, those who meet it half-way, and those who scorn it for its moderation. So in regard to Socialism, the adherents of Capitalism wage bitter war against it; Land Nationalists compromise with it, and Anarchists ignore it. Only upon it is its cogency to get far beyond its goal. Now, each of these three classes of opponents is animated by a great principle, and from the tenacity with which these principles have been held it is evident that they contain within them some of the life-giving germs of truth. The human mind, fortunately, cannot long tolerate anything utterly worthless. I have therefore to show, in accordance with my undertaking, that these valuable germ will not be destroyed, but would thrive best in the soil of Socialism.

The principles of Capitalism are based upon the essential selfishness of man. It is held that only by allowing full play to this important element of human nature can the business of the world be carried on and progress accomplished. Greed and self-seeking are declared to be the only sure incentives to industry and genius, and that social system to be the best which offers most inducements to the exercise of these propensities. Under Socialism, it is said, no such inducements would exist, and consequently no inducements to the exercise of these propensities. Under Socialism, it is said, no such inducements would exist, and consequently no inducements to the exercise of these propensities.
properly proportioned to the other attributes of the complex human organism, and endowed with some intelligence, so that it might pursue its own good without injuring itself. Man would still be self-seeking, but they would have learned the golden wisdom of co-operation; syndicates would still be formed, but they would be national syndicates, and the only thing exploited would be rich old Mother Earth.

Land Nationalism is based upon the principle that all men have an equal right to the use of land; but it allows private property in all things else as the natural reward of labour. Henry George says:—

"The equal right of all men to the use of land is as clear as their equal right to breathe the atmosphere in the air—is as certain in the fact of its existence. For we cannot suppose that some men have a right to be in the world, and others no right. The right of ownership springs from labour, a man is only rightfully entitled to the produce of his own labour, or the labour of one who has passed to him."

That is the Land Nationalist's creed, very happily summarized, and it is obvious that I am under no necessity here of demonstrating how it harmonizes with the faith of the Socialist. For it is more than harmonious—it is identical. The creed of the American is the creed of the Socialist too. It is only when it comes to the application of their common creed to the conduct of human affairs that a difference arises between them. To the one, then, it demands the nationalization of land only, while to the other it demands the nationalisation of labour also. The Socialist reasons that granted the right of a man to the product of his own labour, it follows that which cannot be produced without co-operation belong equally to all the co-operators. Now, in our highly-developed system of society, with its vast store of inherited wealth, and knowledge, and its infinitesimal divisions of labour, it is not possible to say that any man can set about producing anything worth the having by their own unaided, exclusive efforts. Why, is the production of the very pan with which I write, 'warriors, statesmen, poets, scientists, miners, engineers, and, in fact, all the mental and physical workers of the world from the commencement of human life here, in the last analysis, contributed. It can only be said that the sum total of production results from the sum total of human energy. Nor is it possible to assign different values to the separate contributions. All the factors of a given product are equal, because without all the product is impossible. Thus I contribute as much to the making of a book as does the printer, because it is equally necessary to the result. So to the present, civilized society, the lowest labourer contributes equally with the highest, and is equally entitled to his share in the wealth which results from the co-operated labour of all. But as an universal principle and ultimate division of all forms of wealth would be as impracticable and undesirable as the absolute division of land, Socialists therefore advocate the nationalization of labour, as able method of complying with the demands of natural justice. Thus the principles of land nationalization, carried to its logical completeness, lead straight to Socialism, and land nationalists, when experience shall have demonstrated the inadequacy of their remedy for social evils, will not be slow to recognize this, nor to follow the thread of truth, which, like Thesus' thread, they hold in their hands, until it brings them out of the dark, social labyrinth into the full light, and freshness, and glory of Socialism.

Of Anarchism little need be said. It is the highest of all social ideals—true Anarchism, that is, not the mad perversions of Ravachol, nor the frightful logic that capitalist editors conjure up in the service of "law and order." It is higher than the Socialist ideal, because it substitutes voluntary for compulsory co-operation, and makes less instead of justices the limits of human affairs. But it is now generally accepted by Anarchists that the idea is far too high for human nature as at present constituted, and that only when the purifying and perfecting process of Socialism shall have evolved other forms of humanity can its elevated plains of conduct be reached.

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My task is ended. In this and the preceding leaflet I have endeavored to demonstrate the Catholicity of Socialism; to show its complete harmony with all that is true in the leading beliefs and theories of to-day, in the different domains of thought. I am conscious of having done scant justice to a great subject—for this far-reaching comprehension of Socialism is a most remarkable note of its own pre-eminent truth—but if I have induced here and there a hostile reader to follow up for themselves the line of inquiry I have been suggesting, and not to have been in vain, for such an inquiry must assuredly result in accessions to our strength. The Christian will come to us because we have principles accord with the social principles which his Divine Master inculcated, knowing that only in obedience to them would the spiritual life of the human being possible to human weakness; the Darwinist will come to us because Socialism is simply the form which the social organism is assuming under the operation of the forces of evolution, and because the last researches in science tend to show that competition is not necessary to the development of species, as Darwin supposed, but that the progressive life from lower to higher forms is more frequently accomplished through cooperation and combination, as Spurzheim and other Individualists would come to us because they will recognize the principle that the health of society is productive of true individuality, and the social laws the Socialist—freed from soul-debasing struggles for mere subsistence, cleansed from the dissipation and servility of wages, the opulence and general power of the social organism, the co-operation of the individual, the individual will find at last the social environment essential to its proper development; the Mathematician will come to us because under Socialism the population problem will disappear, as the operating of security to the Capitalist—the Capitalist will come to us—wildly improbable though it seems—because the ineradicable operations of the system he has made, whereby capital is rapidly getting into fewer and fewer hands, will drive him to Socialism in self-preservation—less, like Zanucki, he