



PROBLEMS OF RECENT BRITISH ESSAYISTS.

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## PREFACE.

This paper concerns itself with the essay. The essay deals with the abstract, while most of the other literary forms deal with the concrete. Thought is the essay's "sine qua non". Thought is to it what form is to the black-and-white artist. While the author of the modern novel must stay behind the scenes, the more personal an essay becomes the more it delights and holds attention. The novelist cannot teach directly, but the essayist can and does. The nearer the novel approaches the form of the essay the truer one's deductions as to the author's intentions become. Therefore one goes to the essay to ascertain the ideas which an author intends to communicate. The surest way, then, to study thought, is to examine this form of literature. Doubtless an edifying treatise could be prepared on essay structure, but this paper is not a study of form but of substance. It is a digest of, and a comment on the most obvious contributions which five of the best known British essayists of the first part of the Twentieth century have made to public opinion. This is a general discussion of the thought of these essayists and an attempt is made to point out the relations

of these writers to each other, and to the modern movements in political and social life.

Not all of their work was attainable; first, because these men are constantly writing; and secondly, because some of their essays were first published in English magazines and weeklies which are inaccessible. However their best work is immediately published in book form, and most of these were attainable.

I have not discriminated between the didactic-expositional essay and the essay with a purely literary appeal. I have, however, avoided the scientific treatise, for it does not come under the classification (loose as it is) of the true essay. Essayists like Chesterton and Belloc, because of their philosophic attitude write purely literary essays, while Wells and Ellis, with definite scientific theories to communicate, tend toward the other type. The prefaces to Bernard Shaw's plays are essays, and constitute his most important work in this field.

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J.R. Foster.

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INTRODUCTION.

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The problems of the essayists of the twentieth century are not new problems, but modern developments have brought about new possibilities and new conditions patent to our civilization which have illuminated the old questions and have placed them in a new light. In this century, when established institutions and accepted ideas totter on their foundations, on all sides, in public and private life, in the domain of action or of speculation, revolutionary movements are rife. English society which has resisted the influence of change for a long time, is now advancing in leaps and bounds toward a more rational and democratic civilization. The traditional and orthodox English have been solidly attached to the aristocracy, to the established church, to their domains and to their capital, to political empiricism and to the practice of "laissez faire". Moralists like Carlyle and

Thackeray have broken the veil of decorum which hid the pride and shame of high society and launched their sarcasms against the overbearing pomp of the aristocracy. Pious humanitarians like Kingsley and Ruskin have created compassion for the humble. Philosophical romancers like George Eliot and Meredith have habituated people to consider right conscience and prudent conduct as independent of the belief in religious dogma. Agnostic thought, derived from Darwinism, broke the Bible fetichism. Since 1870 it has been possible for people to deny the God of dogmas without being penalized. The importance of instruction, the necessity of a wide-spread culture and science was taught by the propaganda of Matthew Arnold. At the same time the practice of the neighboring countries and the contemporaneous intellectual enthusiasts of England made this idea familiar. In the better educated England, on the way to emancipation, spread the idea of Socialism. The House of Lords was no longer considered the sole prop of the constitution. The idea of a thorough going democracy made way. The collectionist idea entered into political programs. The English spirit was still fundamentally religious, but it no longer took the exact form of Christianity. Tradition, attacked by radicalism and free thought recoiled before the application of science to its moral

and social ideas. The development of biology determined the form that the advance should take. Bain, by his studies on the relation of the intelligence and the brain, Galton, by his researches upon the physical base of heredity, forced philosophers to consider no more man as a pure soul, but to recognize the importance of physical nature. Efforts were made to establish relationships between psychological discoveries and social reforms. From this effort sprang the eugenic movement.

These systematic efforts of constructive criticism are certain signs of bad conditions. The consciousness of unhealthy conditions has brought forth in England to-day an abundant literature of moral and social criticism. The five essayists whose writings are treated in this paper are, in a way, the most important writers of these criticisms. Belloc, Chesterton, Wells, Ellis and Shaw, each has a different argument and a different solution, but they are all united in the opinion that present conditions are unbearable. Chesterton and Belloc write humoristic essays and philosophical tales. Wells writes social essays and novels. Shaw writes great propagandist dramas, critical and satirical. Shaw is an absolute radical. Belloc finds fault with parliamentarism, and is a reactionary with Chesterton, who wants to restore medieval society and a religion of love and consolation. Wells applies his great scientific knowledge on means to utilize rationally the

social forces and capacities wasted to-day by ignorance and lack of organization. Shaw attacks all the works of man. In his dramatic works he balances pessimism and optimism, but in the prefaces to his plays, he is frankly gloomy. As Socrates was the "Gadfly of the Athenians", Shaw is the "Gadfly of the British". He attacks sham, snobbery and cant. There is probably a very marked line between his theory and its application. Havelock Ellis (Henry Havelock) is a follower of Galton and believes that salvation of the race depends on scientific breeding.

The hope of the vindication of modern civilization lies in the control of nature through an increased knowledge and application of science. This is the form which the hope of progress takes in our day even more modern in conception than we are aware. The ancient and medieval world had different ideas. Its dogmatic idea was that of national or racial aggrandisement by conquest and the usurpation of political control. The critical idea, contributed by the Greeks, was the humanistic idea of the intensive cultivation and refinement of human nature. Christian supernaturalism superceeded these ancient ideas, and referred man's hope for the ideal to the future world which was to be gained by the repudiation of this. The modern idea, although influenced by all of these, and constantly tending to recur to them, is fundamentally

different. It bespeaks of a solidarity of mankind in the enterprise of life, and in this shows its Christianity; it derives from Paganism a respect for human possibilities and a confidence in man's power to win the good for himself. Ideal conditions are to be won by the race and for the race, and can only come from a prolonged and collective endeavor: the power to achieve it lies in progressive knowledge and the control of nature. This is the Baconian idea. The utopian fictions of Wells, Ellis and Shaw are inspired by, and to some extent drawn from the "New Atlantis", More's "Utopia" and Plato's "Republic". These essayists know that the established beliefs resist change, and that they must be attacked and demolished before a new system can be founded.

The great scientific development of the last three centuries has not resulted in ideal conditions. The soul of man is hardly better off than before. Men who dreamed great dreams of the possibilities of scientific advancement have become bankrupt optimists, which is to say pessimists. There is a great sorrow in modernity. It takes men with great faith and large hearts to begin over in the task of bettering mankind. Such men are Belloc, Wells, Chesterton, Shaw and Ellis, and they are all optimists.

This thesis is divided into four chapters, (I) British Discontent, (II) Socialism, (III) The Family

and the State, and (IV) Reactionary Tendencies. The first chapter may be considered as destructive criticism, while the remaining three are in the main constructive.

## PROBLEMS OF RECENT BRITISH ESSAYISTS.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### The British Discontent.

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Probably there is no movement more common to the thought of to-day than that of anti-militarism. Havelock Ellis explains this spread of anti-military doctrine by saying that the natural exhaustion of the warlike spirit is a result of the decrease of pugnacity as a race characteristic caused by the constant extermination of the most hardy fighters on the battle fields. But war is an institution as old as man. Then why should this spirit suddenly manifest itself at this time? There have been no great devastating wars of late. Ellis adds that the feeling of international brotherhood between laborers is becoming stronger than the national spirit. The brother-laborer is closer than the capitalist of his own country. The woman's

movement is also anti-military, for as Ellis says, "They pay the first cost of human life"<sup>1</sup>. Propositions of all kinds are made to overthrow militarism. Bernard Shaw, to escape suspicion of being a namby-pamby sentimentalist, takes utilitarian methods of attack. "Like Tolstoy, he tells men, with coarse innocence, that romantic war is only butchery and that romantic love is only lust"<sup>2</sup>. Shaw maintains that government which depends on military force cannot exist for any length of time. This assertion, if true, makes an army of conquest an absurdity. For him, not only is the cause for an army an ignorant superstition, but military service itself causes moral imbecility, ferocity and cowardice. The soldier is politically and socially a child, he is forbidden to marry, has no real work to do to keep him sane, and is ruled tyrannically. The officers live in perpetual terror of their men, and will only attempt to rule them when they are stripped of all their rights by a "barbarous slave code". The officer learns to punish--not to rule. The officers cannot see the immorality of their methods however sane they may be about

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1. The Task of Social Hygiene; War against War.
2. G.K. Chesterton: Bernard Shaw.

other matters. Only the riff-raff of industrial life and moral imbeciles are satisfied with the life of a private. The ideal soldier is a man who will obey loudly-shouted orders, and who <sup>would</sup> rather charge their enemy than retreat and face an irate officer.

To illustrate the barbarous methods of English army rule, Shaw cites the Denshawai affair in Egypt. Four English officers of the army which was doing police duty in Egypt, went gunning, and coming to a village, shot some of the pigeons which are raised there for the same purpose as poultry in America. The villagers attacked the officers with sticks and fists, and one of the British ran so hard to get away that he died of sunstroke. The House of Commons was made to believe that this was the beginning of a great Mohammedan uprising against Christendom, and allowed the officers to hang four of the ring leaders of the mob, whip many before their families, and imprison some for life; all without a fair trial. William Morris has said that no man is good enough to be another man's master, but Shaw says, "No nation is good enough to be another nation's master"<sup>1</sup>.

Hilaire Belloc does not see the problem as the utilitarians do. "Now, if a man desired to answer

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1. Preface to Politicians.

once for all those pedants who refuse to understand the nature of military training (both those who make a silly theatre show of it and those who make it hideous and diabolical) there could be no better way than to let him hear the songs of soldiers."<sup>1</sup> For Belloc, the songs of the barrack-room, with its coarseness, its hatred of the hard conditions of discipline, its vague longings, express all of "the splendid unconsciousness of the soldiers, the inability of him to see himself from without, or the pose as civilians always think and say he poses."<sup>2</sup> However, Belloc is here describing the conscripts of France, and not the English regular. This may account for his difference in opinion from Shaw, who regards the singing as simply part of the gilt of romanticism that clings to military life that must be brushed away, while Belloc regards it as the voicing of the desires and dreams of the tired and lonely soldiers.

The agitators and believers in conscription exasperate H. G. Wells. He thinks that it would take ten years to get a conscript army like France's or Germany's, and even if England could, it would be of

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1. Hilaire Belloc: Hills and the Sea; Guns.
2. Preface to Politicians.

no possible use to her, because conscript armies have gone out of date. It would be impossible to train an army, because a civilian cannot be made a soldier by being clothed in a uniform, and because England has not enough keen, expert, modern-minded officers to train them. Body, mind and imagination must be trained. Finally, England does not want a conscript army because the military power of the future lies in the hands of the country which dares to experiment most, and which keeps the actual fighting force fit, small and flexible. Wells thinks that a small army could win out eventually, for a large army would be such a tremendous financial drain, consuming everything and producing nothing, that it would break the financial resources of its country.

Wells prophesies that destroyers, submarines and hydroplanes will make the dreadnought useless. Money spent on dreadnoughts, which will be old iron in less than twenty years, should be spent in military research work. The present armament competition between Germany, France and England disgusts Wells. England is spending her money for useless things. "For some years there seems to have been a complete arrest of British imagination in naval and military matters."<sup>1</sup> He sig-

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1. H.G.Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

nals the need of advancement of scientific knowledge concerning military affairs in England. This idea is symptomatic of the spirit of the scientific age: everything is to be conquered by the advancement of learning and control over nature.

Havelock Ellis' great antipathy to war is caused by the fear that it will impede the development of social hygiene. He sees how war could possibly have benefited men of the middle ages, but thinks that civilization renders the ultimate disappearance of war inevitable. 'International tribunals have been ineffective because they have lacked the necessary power to enforce their decisions. Backed by an international army, the court of arbitration could enforce peace on any rebellious nation. This force would be the only solution to the present armament situation.' The control which the moderns have over their birthrate, says Ellis, removes the old excuse for war--the excuse of the pressure of population. 'International financial developments, the decreasing pressure of population, the spread of anti-military doctrines, the overgrowth of armaments, the dominance of social reform, combine to make war incompatible with the advanced civilization.'

On investigating, Ellis found no signs of a moral uplift in the army. War may be a stern school

of virtue, he says, but barrack life is not. Army life is neither a school for vice nor virtue, but it does not exercise an elevating influence upon even the lowest of soldiers. 'A regiment is no worse than a big factory; big factories are bad enough, but compulsory military service is really worse because it extends its evils to agricultural laborers and to men who would otherwise escape its lowering influences. Honor, duty and patriotism is instilled at school only to deteriorate during the term of compulsory service. War is bad, not because it inflicts death and pain, but because it does so on the wrong persons.' For Ellis, there could be no ideal conception of life, if we shut out death and pain. "It is essential to the human dignity of a truly civilized society, that it should hold in its hands not only the key to birth, but the key to death."<sup>1</sup>

The English have always admired the strength of their army and navy, and have worshipped their aristocracy. I have shown some of the current misgivings on militarism, and will now give some criticism of the nobility. Chesterton writes, "I am quite convinced that the English aristocracy is the curse of England."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ellis: Impressions and Comments.
2. Alarms and Discursions; Dukes.

He laments the fact that the aristocracy of the medieval ages has deteriorated into "commercially minded egotists," who are linked, heart and soul, with Goldstem and Co., and who have the one intention, the exploitation of the people. "People would kill that kind of men in France."<sup>1</sup> If aristocracy stands for anything, it stands for art and culture, and the holding back of commercialism. "For hundreds of years, titles in England have been essentially unmeaning."<sup>2</sup> "Hardly anywhere do we find a modern man whose name and rank represent in any way his type, his locality, or mode of life."<sup>3</sup> Titles, for Chesterton, should stand for something as they did in the medieval ages; otherwise they are but a matter of social comedy. "If England is an aristocracy, England is dying. If this system is the country, as some say, the country is stiffening into more than the pomp and paralysis of China."<sup>3</sup>

The inability of the lower classes to see through the trumpery of political manipulation has always caused regret to the thinkers who wish better

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1. Ellis: Impressions and Comments.
2. Chesterton: Alarms and Discursions; Dukes.
3. Chesterton: A Miscellany of Men; The Nameless Man.

conditions. Chesterton cites a case in point. A poor photographer who had been separated from his bride by a domineering English lord, without valid reasons, still clung to the propaganda of the Imperialist organs. The photographer applauded such sentiments as this: "We are sure that the English people, with their sturdy common sense, will prefer to be in the hands of English gentlemen, rather than in the miry claws of Socialist Buccaneers." 'This illustrates the insane separation between the poor man's experience with lords, and this ready-made imperial theory.' Chesterton says that this is the type of man which is spread over a quarter of England, a country which is not as healthy as populous ("for the freeman is growing smaller and smaller in the English country-side") as the imperialist organ would have the British believe. To those who fear that women are taking over the executive power of the world, Ellis consoles by saying that women are not interested in the great questions which men ignore, but in the main read penny magazines which contain not a word of the suffrage movement, but which drivel about clothes, cookery and court-ship. The mental inertia of the masses is the great obstacle to be overcome, and the great barrier that stands in the way of the trial of the theories of Wells, Ellis and Shaw.

There is today a growing conviction that democracy as it is in England is a very imperfect representative government. "We have not got real democracy when the decision depends upon the people,"<sup>1</sup> says Chesterton. "We shall have real democracy when the problem depends upon the people." Wells and Chesterton believe in democracy in an ideal state, Chesterton without reserve, and Wells as a provisional means, for he is a socialist. Chesterton sees plainly that the manipulating of issues by the politician makes it impossible for the people to put through their exact wish. For instance, the politicians who say that we must choose between socialism and individualism are wrong because the people may prefer and choose a hundred other things. The essayist, himself, would prefer socialism, or even anarchism to the present state of things. Why not might the people have peasant proprietorship, he asks. "The democracy (as it is) has a right to answer questions, but it has no right to ask them."<sup>2</sup> Under this regime, Wells sees how the powerful class choose two courses of action, both safe to itself, and then permits the democracy to decide for either one or the other. Hilaire Belloc says

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1. A Miscellany of Men: The Voter and the Two Voices.
2. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

that the rulers themselves are controlled by a committee of the rich, while they should be controlled by the name of the country and a wholesome terror of the people.

There is a fair resumé of the problem in Wells' "Social Forces in England and America". Wells fears that there is a growing discord between governments and the governed in England. The voters scorn and hate their elected delegates, and this in Great Britian. manifests itself in unprecedented lawlessness in political matters and in contempt for the law. Union selected men do not speak for their electors. "The Syndicalist movement, sabotage in France and Larkinism in England are sinister demonstrations of the rising anger of representative government which doesn't represent."<sup>1</sup> Elected bodies are in no sense representative of the thought or purpose of the nation. The typical office holder is a caviling lawyer because our method of voting makes a true representative government impossible. Elections, which are supposed by the simple minded to give every voter participation in government only give him a fragment of a choice between the agents of two party organizations, over neither of which he has any control.

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

Wells believes that the use of the single transferable vote would break up the "two-party" system, put an end to party organizations and all the chicanerie and dirty tricks behind the scenes that go with it. The man of real force and distinction, who has impressed the public imagination would be elected; men who were famous in science and leaders in thought, and politically untrained men. We shall see why Wells prefers the politically untrained man in our following chapter on Socialism. He is not a believer in the Platonic idea of every man to his own task.

Shaw is a republican. The democracy will never be able to solve great political problems, he thinks, because it cannot rise above the human material of which its voters are made, and because the rulers in a democracy are experts at dodging popular enthusiasms and at deepening popular ignorance. "Common voters will not vote for a man in advance of their time."<sup>1</sup> For Shaw, democracies' only hope lies in an electorate of supermen.

With the constant lengthening of the code, the people are beginning to resent the tyranny of officialdom, and to recognize the futility and impossibility of enforcing all of the laws. Ellis draws a fine

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1. Shaw: The Revolutionist's Handbook.

distinction here, between criminology and immorality. He regards immorality as a spiritual force which can only be constrained by a spiritual force, such as would result from the creating of a social tradition by proper and thorough education of the classes. On the other hand crime has been, and can still be constrained by exterior physical law. "When we try to regulate the morals of men on the same uniform pattern, we have to remember that we are touching the most subtle, intimate, and incalculable springs of action. It is useless to apply crude methods of suppression and annihilation to these complex and indestructable forces."<sup>1</sup> Given the fact that there are national differences in laying down the boundaries between criminal and immoral acts, he easily proves this by citing conditions in France, which trusts to social feeling to punish immorality; and those of America and Germany, both of which trust to a complex and minute code. No country has ever been able to suppress prostitution, but in America the law dignifies the foe it means to attack. The "Raines' Law" in New York simply made the notorious "Raines Hotels" and forced slightly harder conditions on prostitutes, and while simply trying to stop the sale of intoxicants

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene, Immorality and the Law.

on Sunday, furnished a convenient harbor for crime. One reason that laws against immorality are not rigidly enforced, says Ellis, is because one part of society is always on the side of the defendant in belief. Another cause is corrupt officialdom. Pointing to the binding force of custom among savages, Ellis tries to convince us that only by creating a pure social tradition can we be able to combat alcoholism and immorality.

Chesterton is of the opinion that the love of liberty was never lower than it has been in England in the last two decades. 'Never has it been easier to slip pernicious bills through Parliament, to silence awkward questions and protect high placed officials. Two hundred years ago we turned out the Stuarts rather than to endanger the Habeas Corpus act; while recently we abolished the same act rather than turn out the Home Secretary.' Chesterton scents tyranny in the tendency to let criminals' punishment be fixed by governors and jailors, rather than by judge and jury; and in the fact that a newspaper was siezed by the police in Trafalgar Square without accusation or explanation. The English have not the political liberty that consists in the power of criticizing the machinery of the state, and Chesterton rightly assumes that pure representative

government without this power is at best a poor imitation of the ideal. A doctor recently sent a wife to jail because her house was in such a state that the doctor said it would have been bad for the children, should they become sick. But the children were healthy, and strong and not likely to become ill at all. Chesterton says that the state is going insane when a wild thing like this is done and is taken calmly. He is sure that we give the police too much power and laments the fact that we do not compel them to give account of their stewardship.

There is no doubt but that the church is losing ground in England, especially among the lower classes. "At present," says Shaw, "there is not a single credible established religion in the world."<sup>1</sup> Creeds must become intellectually honest "Christianity, by making a merit of submission has marked only that depth in the abyss at which the very source of shame is lost."<sup>1</sup> Shaw admires the Salvation Army because its members do not believe in submission and because they reject the belief of the atonement. For him, the latter is pure superstition. He does not like the Salvationist's longing for immortality, because it seems that they really

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1. First Aid to Critics.

refuse to die, as they hope to live after death. We must pursue life for its own sake and not for the hope of a life after death. Disagreeing with all churches, Shaw says, "Forgiveness, absolution, atonement are figments."<sup>1</sup> We are never to get a high morality from people who think that their deeds are revocable.

This is enough to prove that Shaw is not orthodox. He is a naturalistic mystic. He identifies God with the "life-force", which is the powerful biological instinct asserting its will to create. "Your temples are consecrated to a God which I do not believe, and if I did believe, your worship would seem superstitious and hypocritical."<sup>1</sup> Shaw strikes the church at its most vital point. It must have money to subsist, and money, because of the intricacy of modern finance is all tainted and polluted by sin, so the church is living on the product of drunkenness, prostitution, and all manner of sin. Knowledge of <sup>it</sup> has come to the laboring class, and they no more believe in a God which is worshipped in such a church. Here, says Shaw, it is the duty of the church to evoke all of its powers of destruction against the existing order. But they cannot, he says, because they are suffered to exist only so long as they teach

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1. First Aid to Critics.

submission. The God of the modern orthodox church is the "deus ex machina", the Jehovah of the Old Testament, whose sign on earth has come to be the gibbet. Theologians are not authoritative because their God stands outside man and in authority over him. Man himself is a self-sufficient epitome.

Ellis and Shaw both take exceptions to the part of the Lord's Prayer which reads, "Lead us not into temptation". Shaw insists on the salutary virtue of experience. "You never know what is enough until you know what is too much." When we throw off virtue we are attracted to it all the more. Ellis says practically the same thing. We must be led into temptation, for without it no human spirit can ever be tempered and fortified.

Ellis is positive that the desertion of the young from the church on reaching maturity is the result of early religious instruction. Ellis has made a minute psychological study of the child with this in view. He concludes that it is impossible to teach a child even the elements of adult religion or philosophy until puberty, the real age for religious education. By attempting the impossible we do irreparable wrong and dull the religious susceptibilities. The children should have fairy tales, nature study, a special Bible and moral training, but until puberty nothing beyond these. Then the adolescents

should be initiated into religion as into a mystery, as is done among the savages.

Chesterton is orthodox, but when Dr. Inge, an English clergyman lauds the Hindus because they are submissive and work cheaper than English workmen, he can be silent no longer. Dr. Inge really means, says Chesterton, that the poor must be as meek as Buddhists while the rich may be as ruthless as Mohammedans. Dr. Inge thus supports orientalism and detests the revolutionary results of Christianity. The essayist says we will find the levelling of creeds quite close to the lowering of wages. He makes it very clear that clergymen, trying to gain favor with their rich parishioners, have outraged their Christianity and loyalty to England. In this way Chesterton "defends orthodoxy and pursues heretics."

The Archbishop of Canterbury in 1912 publically expressed approval of the application of the lash to those who are engaged in the so-called "white-slave" traffic. The futility of deterrence or reform by the lash, says Ellis, has long been a common place of historical criminology. "The history of flagellation is that of moral bankruptcy".<sup>1</sup> This Archbishop's statement is important, says Ellis, because it registers the level of public op-

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1. Ellis, Impressions and Comments.

inion of the respectable classes, 'Never has the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed any opinion on non-eclesiastical affairs which was not that of the great majority of respectable people; when the habit of drinking is dying out, he blesses the temperance movement, but in the eighteenth century he had nothing to say about it.'

The great missionary movement of the last century has caused a great interest to be taken in religions other than Christianity, and of the racial influence on the theology of Christianity itself. Efforts were made to determine just how much of Christian dogma is the result of racial idiosyncrasies. Belloc says that there is something hurtful to Europeans in the Semetic conception of God. The eyes of the men of the desert, he says, shine too brightly to be the eyes of happy men. 'They have neither the bravery nor the repose of the Westerners. They are afraid, their God is jealous and vengeful, their theology negative: they are ascetics and not lovers of the natural functions of man. They are afraid of wine because it means death to one who drinks it in the desert. They are in a panic when they see statues. They have no hold on nationality or chivalry, the great accomplishments of European civilization. Belloc does not like their Pythagorean attachment to numbers: their seventh day must have something awful and impressive

about it. Chesterton too, dislikes this latter influence which he says forces a wicked silence on England every seventh day. Belloc thinks that the truth is most true to the normal and healthy Europeans. 'The world must look to Europe for its headship in religious affairs, for it alone has suffered change without decay. Instead of the dogmatic and rigorous codes of an inspired religion, we must have what is vital to Christianity tempered with European tradition.'

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Not only the dogma of the church, but the brutality of the regime of modern industry is criticized. The abnormal child of industrialism, the capitalist, finds no friends among the essayists. Ellis says that industrialism plucks the natural man like a root from his former environmental support. Chesterton is convinced that the system maintains the inequality of serfdom and has destroyed its security. The rich man, according to Chesterton, by entering into the absolute ownership of the land, has locked out the English people. 'They cannot subsist by hunting or fishing because of the game laws, they cannot be vagabonds, for then they would be arrested for having no visible means of support', and worst of all for Chesterton, they cannot ask for help even in the name of God. 'Thus the poor are forced to serve the rich

on their own terms. The strike is the working man's only retreat. We are now in the grip of the money-mad man who is even worse than the old miser, for the latter had something of the artist in him, while the former is satisfied with nothing'. None of them are really generous, concludes Chesterton, but they are egotistic, secretive and as dry as old bones. For Chesterton these men are fools to desire money more than anything else in life, they have entirely missed his ideal of living. An expensive social affair like the millionaires' "North Pole Dinner" strikes him as being inane, not because it makes fools of the aristocracy, but because there are colossal resources behind it and no idea. 'Amateur theatricals are interesting because there is a good idea and limited resources. "Such foolish feasts (as the "North Pole Dinner") prove that our society must learn or perish."<sup>1</sup> They prove that wealth in society as now constituted gets into the hands of wastrels and imbeciles. "And it proves that the wealthy class of to-day is quite as ignorant about how to enjoy itself as about how to rule other people. It cannot make its education educate, its government govern or its pleasures please."<sup>1</sup>

In regard to money, which Chesterton considers

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1. Chesterton: Alarms and Discursions; The Flat Freak.

the cause of the deterioration of modern civilization, Shaw holds a peculiar view. The multi-millionaire Undershaft, the principal character in "Major Barbara" is made to appear a reasonable creature compared with Christians who preach submission. For Shaw, poverty is the worst of evils and the greatest of crimes. "Security, the chief pretense of civilization, cannot exist when the worst of evils, the danger of poverty hangs over everyone's head; 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."<sup>1</sup> 'We regard poverty as a stimulus to endeavor and make everybody poor but the commercial.' Shaw hates poverty because it makes for weakness, ignorance, diseased, ugly, dirty and bad offspring, makes men sell themselves to do another's work, causes slums and an unhealthy, immoral, infectious lower class. It has destroyed every civilization, he says, and it is destroying ours. We should give a man enough money to live well on, and then see that he earns it, but our industry now is founded on a reserve army of the unemployed. Undershaft chooses between poverty and a "lucrative trade in death and destruction" and in deciding on

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1. Shaw; First Aid to Critics.

the latter according to Shaw chooses rightly. Our political imbecility and our personal cowardice, write Shaw, are fruits of poverty. 'Some rich men know that they are rich only because others are poor, and do not enjoy themselves, so call for the poor to revolt. But the poor do not want to revolt--they don't want rest, a simple, aesthetic life--but they do want to wallow in all the costly vulgarities which the rich know add but care and anxiety to life. They want more money--that is all. The regard for money is the one healthy spot in our social conscience, representing as it does all of the good and healthy things.'

Wells sums up the labor unrest of today, very comprehensively, as we shall see. He says that the late social labor troubles are pretentious and are not the mere give and take of economic adjustment. "The outlook of the working man has passed beyond the 'works', and his beer and dog." This change is the <sup>s</sup>result of board schools and the cheap press. The new laborer is like Shaw's Straker (in "Man and Superman"). We hold to the old Platonic idea that the laborers must work because they are unable to do anything else, but the new laborer can do other things and knows enough to see the weak places in 'the modern church, in politics, and in industry. He ceases to believe in law and God, and

the Parliament, and finally falls back on the criminal strike as his only weapon of defense or offense. This new critical, intelligent, sensible and irritable common people must be restored to confidence or England will be lost in a class revolution.' Wells sees in the Titanic disaster a penetrating comment on the entire social situation; beneath the seeming efficiency was--"slap-dash". The rich men saved themselves and let the children and middle-class men perish heroically.

Wells believes with Shaw and Chesterton that the ruling class has not the good faith or the ability to rule. Wells urges the ruling class to wake up to their responsibility. England is awake, but we must wake up the gentlemen! 'The legislature is busy over trivialities when the whole social order is in danger, an "antiquarian legislature" is compiling a museum rather than governing, and the political lawyers are, as always, absolutely impervious to influences from the leaders of the patient lower class.'

With the change of modern civilization, Wells recognizes a new set of influences which may prove stimuli to drive the classes to a great revolt. The growing proportion of time and energy devoted by the governing classes to pleasure and excitement, and the subdivided processes which have made factory work so boring, have

made the laborer more discontented. Man will toil for some just cause, but he gets his idea of the rich man from the theatres, the cinema, and the cheap newspaper, and very naturally concludes that the rulers are not doing their part of the work. Luxury, the parade of clothes, and pomp are an irritant to the laborer: he feels that he is being made a fool. Finally, the working man will want to crush the whole social fabric rather than continue at work. The supply of good-tempered, cheap labor has given out, and the spread of information is the cause. This must cause the owner-class to adjust itself to the new conditions; class lines must disappear, extravagance must be curtailed, or Socialists will take things in hand.

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Educational institutions get their full share of criticism. Many people take their fling at the board schools of England, but Wells maintains that they are very good considering that they have been established less than two generations. He knows that every good institution is a result of a slow process of growth, and that nothing worth while can be brought about in a day. Some complain that the product of the public school regime has a "dead imagination and apathy toward life at

large," that the graduates are not interested in the mysteries of material fact or the dramatic movement of history; that they love games, clothes and politeness more than beauty. Wells thinks that there is truth in the indictment and explains the probably causes of such effects. 'Young men who will become leaders and should by all means have initiative, have their minds atrophied by dull studies and deadening suggestions. It is not a matter of curriculum, but it is because they have been under the constant influence of "good hearted, sedulously respectable, conforming, well behaved men," who never (publically, at least) think strange thoughts, do imaginative or romantic things, pay tribute to beauty, "laugh carelessly or countenance any irregularity in the world". "The grey, intolerant mediocrity of the upperclass schoolmaster is the true cause of the grave result."<sup>1</sup> There is a great lack of vigorous and inspiring minds in the schools which themselves are out of touch with the trend of modern thought. The professors only talk and write platitudes. This dullness is forced on them by the conditions under which they live; we do not insist on a man of intellectual distinction, but we do insist on a moral character which

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

really means an absence of morals.

Hilaire Belloc attacks from another angle. He found a road in England which he had good reason to believe was a Roman road. He writes "Learned men, laborious and heavily endowed denied even the existence of this Roman road. Here is a piece of pedantry and skepticism.....which fed in my own spirit a fountain of pure joy, as I considered carefully what kind of man it is who denies these things. Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, Durham....you terrors of Europe, that road is older than you: and meanwhile I drink your continued health, but let us have a little room.....air, there, give us air, good people. I stifle when I think of you."<sup>1</sup>

Chesterton writes of "skeptical professors, whose skulls are as low as frying pans," who explain mythology by saying that "Apollo killing the Python means that the summer drives out the winter", or "the king dying in a western battle is a symbol of the sun setting in the west." It is just the other way, says the essayist. "The God was never the symbol of hieroglyph representing the sun. The sun was the hieroglyph representing the God."

Many modern evils have been traced to the old policy of silence in regard to sexual instruction. Ellis

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1. Belloc: Hills and the Sea; The Roman Road.

believes that under ideal conditions sexual instruction would do a great good, but to gain these conditions doctors must be scientifically equipped, the teacher and parents must be trained, and above all, there should be an accompanying reform in the community, for without this the child would only be trained to see the absurdity of opinions and customs around him. "By introducing sexual hygiene we are breaking with the tradition of the past which professes to leave the process by which the race is carried on, to nature and to God, especially to the devil."<sup>1</sup> A reform in the class-room, the home, the church, the courts and the legislature might alter the course of civilization, says Ellis.

A new vigorous movement in the arts is claiming in England the right to depict the whole of life, and refuses to be confirmed by any of the narrow laws of Puritanic tradition. In France and other European countries, art has had for some time this right, but in England today art will either gain its needs or perish. Shaw, Chesterton and Ellis combine in attacking and satirizing the English lack of artistic perception, their fear of facing the whole of life, their prudery, and their ignorant vulgarity. Here neo-paganism wrestles with Christian dogmatism and tradition.

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1. Ellis: The Task Of Social Hygiene; Problem Sex Hygiene.

Gaby Deslys' performance was with great care adapted to English needs and respectability, notes Ellis. She had to go to bed fully clothed. "There is something unpleasant, painful and degrading in this ingenious mingling of prurience and prudery."<sup>1</sup> People's emotions are played upon and they are insulted as if they were idiots. Absolute nakedness is more purifying and ennobling than this; for the natural man it has in it a power of divine terror. The new moral reformers in purging the theatre should not cast out nakedness but clothes. "In an age when savagery has passed and civilization has not arrived, it is only by stealth and at rare moments that the human form may emerge from the prison house of its garments---among pseudo-Christian barbarians, as Heine describes us, the Olympian deities still wander homelessly, scarce emerging from beneath obscure disguises and half ashamed of their own divinity."<sup>1</sup> 'The mere freedom to be naked becomes a strong moralizing force because clothes, then, cannot be put before us as a substitute for a person: it opens up the way for the appearance of a real human race.' "In our blind folly we have hidden the body, we have denied its purity, we have ignored its vital significance."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ellis: Impressions and Comments.

On the other hand, Chesterton says "It is only careful faddists and feeble German philosophers who want to wear no clothes and be 'natural' in Dionysian revels."<sup>1</sup> In saying this he reveals himself as a Christian and not a Hellenist.

Ellis is very earnest in his belief, as we shall see. 'If writers today deal frivolously with the King, they are sent to prison, if they deal seriously with a chamber-maid's physical secrets, off they go to prison again.' "It ought to be a satisfaction to us to feel that we could not well sink lower. There is nothing left for us but to rise."<sup>2</sup> 'When Queen Victoria came to the throne, the finishing stroke seems to have been dealt to the vigorous literary art of the preceding centuries. Every writer became prudish. But Queen Elizabeth was different, she was not afraid of any word in the English language. Such a monarch stimulates art and writing. "There is no connection between coarseness and art. Indeed we may say that it is precisely the consciousness of coarseness which leads to a cowardly flight from the brave expression of life."<sup>2</sup> For Ellis it is no excuse that books are to be read by young ladies,

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1. A Miscellany of Men; The Mummings.
2. Ellis: Impressions and Comments.

for he points out that these prudish books do not grapple with the real life problems of a girl, but simply tag sex facts as unmentionable and unessential. This prudery, says Ellis, is eating away the vitality of literature. He satirizes Justice Darling who said to his jury that he "could not read a chapter of Rabelais without being bored to death", because of its obscenity. 'It seems that when an English reader encounters the side of life behind the scenes, it at once covers his whole field of vision.' "The reaction of like or dislike absorbs his whole psychic activity." No matter if it is a great philosopher's work, that obscene word draws all attention from the thought. Even Shakspeare used to be considered an obscene writer and the Bible scurrilous. Emile Zolas' "Fecondite" is assumed to be too abominable to be translated, writes Shaw. Shaw believes that the journalists do not express the real public opinion when they assume that sex thought should only be looked at from a voluptuary and "romantic" point of view. 'We are not taught to talk decently on these subjects. People feel decently on this subject, and it is the very depth and seriousness that makes the desecration by vile journalistic language intolerable. This popular prudery is

only a mere incident of popular squalor of the slums called cities, and the subjects it taboos remain the most interesting and earnest of all subjects in spite of it.'

Shaw cannot stand the substitution of sensuous ecstasy for intellectual activity in dramatics. He owns that three years as a London theatrical critic nearly killed him. He thinks that when the theatre becomes a mere place for amusement rather than a "real" playhouse for the edification of the people, it is but a resort for the sensualist. But these kind of people do not go to the theatre, he says, because it is too slow and uncomfortable for the debauchee. The sturdy English sportsman's stubborn soul refuses to be purged by an avowed make-believe, so he prefers politics, church-going, or real vice to its simulation. Romantic women, fed on sentimentalism, make up the greater part of the attendance. The producers tried to please, and regarding sex instinct as the basis of the greatest universal appeal, made voluptuous plays, but many failed because this kind of play drew only a certain class of patrons. They were trying to compete with other more lively amusements. This stage sensuousness bored Shaw, not because he was squeemish or prudish, but because his moral sense

revolted at the conventionalized virtues. The musical farces never had the courage of their vices. He found the theatre in a "passion of false gentility". He holds that love, which is considered the only universal theme, cannot be presented by the gentile drawing room drama. 'Even the English romancer's field is pitifully narrowed by the convention of polite society.' He deploras the fact that we still "impose celibacy on our art." Again he says that contemporary English drama is forced to deal almost exclusively with cases of sexual attraction and yet is forbidden to exhibit the incidents of attraction or even to discuss its nature. "Let realism have its demonstration, comedy its criticism, or even bawdry its horse-laugh at the expense of sexual infatuation, if it must; but to ask us to subject our souls to its ruinous glamor, to worship it, deify it, and imply that it alone makes life worth living, is nothing but folly gone mad erotically."<sup>1</sup> Here we see evidences of the strict Puritanic dualism of Shaw. Romanticism, sentimentalism and tradition are clouds which prevent the sun of pure reason entering into and guiding the lives of men. God and matter are eternally separated: we must not deify men by romanticism, or put up false gods of traditional morality, to

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1. Shaw: Preface to Three Plays for Puritans.

worship that instead of the true God. Shaw's "theatre d'idees" is didactic. He would not write a word for art's sake. He intends to take from man all his disguises of false morality, false ethics, and romanticism, and to bare his soul. Shaw is a rationalist, and says that a new drama without a new philosophy is an impossibility. "Idealism, which is only a flattering name for romance, in politics and morals, is as obnoxious to me as romance in ethics and religion."<sup>1</sup> "I can no longer be satisfied with fictitious morals and fictitious conduct, shedding fictitious glory on overcrowding, disease, crime, drink, war, cruelty, infant mortality and all other commonplaces of civilization, to drive men to the theatre to make foolish pretenses that these things are progress, morals, religion and patriotism."<sup>2</sup>

Shaw recognizes the increasing educational influence of the theatre and wants the dramas which are produced to be good. He had a plan to have a state committee recommend plays to be tried, and if successful to be produced in something like a state theatre. This plan has been carried through by the British Government. In this way the commercial limits of the didactic drama

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1. Shaw: Preface to Three Plays for Puritans.
2. Shaw: Preface to Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant.

is overcome and the public can keep in touch with the highest achievements of dramatic art. Shaw's purpose is to make people respect reality, and to counteract the influence of romanticists, who he claims, think that the world can be held together by force of "unanimous, strenuous, eloquent, and trumpet-tongued lying". "To me, the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences, sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous, of our persistent attempts to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imaginations by our half-satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific natural history."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Shaw: Preface to Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant.

## CHAPTER II

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### SOCIALISM .

Belloc, Chesterton, Shaw, Ellis and Wells are all familiar with the socialistic thought of the time, which received its great impetus from the writings of Carl Marx, and plunged thinkers into hot controversies in the years following 1880. Belloc and Chesterton are individualists and are opposed to socialistic doctrines: they want the freest and fullest development of the individual, but prefer socialsim or even anarchism to modern conditions. They hate to "see men blown up by windy wealth and irresponsible power:"<sup>1</sup> they detest the complex causes which dwarf and cripple lives and debase the masses of mankind, but they believe that there are incurable traits in the mind of the common man which are flatly hostile to socialism. Shaw was, for a time, the leader and pamphleteer of the Fabians, an English socialistic society, but he has outgrown the movement

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

and now only believes in socialism as a provisional expedient. He joins with Ellis in the belief that the salvation of man lies in the breeding of a supreme race.

It is superfluous to state that the socialistic movement sprang from the consciousness of the dire needs of the lower classes. Men began to believe that they should no longer submit to evil conditions and the tyranny of power in this world in the hope of ideal conditions in the next. Christianity lost its hold on the masses, and intellectual men formed new creeds of their own. The exigencies of industrialism and the rise of capitalism robbed the laborer of most of his ancient independence, freedom and right to live a calm undisturbed life. Corrupt electoral methods robbed him of his democracy. He was in the hand of men with money. These things combined to make his life almost unbearable. He had to work on the terms of his employer, he was crowded together in unhealthy tenements, the machinery with which he worked was dangerous or the conditions of the factory were unsanitary, and his hours were too long. He saw that he was making the money that supported the pleasure-loving higher classes, and that while they were too wealthy, he was too poor.

Continued and increasing specialization of work made man more dependent on each other. Men came to

the realization that they were being constantly served by other men all over the world. They saw that they were in many regards already under a socialistic regime. The comradeship of the labor union gave men confidence in one another and the idea of socialism spread. But there was one man, the farmer, isolated from the association of unions, owning a few acres of land, who could never be convinced that he should work for any one but himself; an extreme individualist who loved his land more than his government or his people.

Socialistic ideals exert a powerful attraction on minds because they proceed ultimately from a primitive need for mutual help, says Ellis. According to Chesterton, Socialism is a proposal that all property should be nationally owned; and the theory exists because human calamities call for immediate human aid, and because such aid must always be collectively organized. In practice, the individual is helpless. Man when left alone is helpless, his parents must care for him when he is a baby, and when he becomes a man, a million people get his food, make his clothes and fill his many other wants. With the advances of civilization he becomes more and more dependent. Modern scientists love to compare him to a single cell in a complex plant.

Ellis<sup>1</sup> states that the family is the socialistic unit, and that socialists cannot make a closer division. Each individual in the family is subordinated to the whole which is socially and economically a unit. The family cannot be regarded as an individual, "un egoisme a trois" because nations are really a family related by blood: we could not regard tribes or classes as socialistic units because they are bound by blood ties.

State regulation cannot be logically supported: there must be ownership because every tax in a democratic state is a socialistic measure and involves a collective ownership of the proceeds. Every regulation of industry assumes the rights of society over individualistic production and is therefore socialistic.

On the other hand the individualists say that after all society is composed of individuals and its whole worth must depend on the quality of the individuals. They believe that adversity is the only school of worth, and fear that social effort will degrade the individual to the "position of a parasite". They fear that socialism will make conditions too healthy and all men uniform and mediocre. They say we must bear with adverse conditions and that individuals must be tempered by high responsibility

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1. The Task of Social Hygiene; Socialism and Individualism.

and perpetual struggles. The supreme great men have always stood apart from society but have conquered in the end: the strongest man always stands alone.

Ellis sums up his exposition of the two positions and tries to conciliate the two views as we shall see. The socialist says that poverty, disease and prostitution are results of bad social and bad economic conditions and think that things could be best remedied by creating ideal environments. Individualists say that we are influenced by our heredity, and that if we insure the production of sound individuals, our environment will take care of itself. They are both right and not opposed to each other, their "affirmations are right but their denials unsound". The extremes of both are insane. Shaw states that socialism is simply individualism rationalized, and "clothed in its right mind". Ellis says "No one needs individualism in his water supply and no one needs socialism in his religion". Only pure individuals can make socialism a possibility, and only a pure social structure makes a great individual possible. "The best individuals are not the toughest"<sup>1</sup> but rather the reverse, so we must breed man first and then attend to his environment.

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1. Ellis: "The Task of Social Hygiene": Socialism and Individualism.

Wells' theory of socialism is not complete, he does not set forth a finished program. With the eye of a novelist he picks out the most striking and Utopian characteristics that he thinks would exist if people were under a socialistic regime. Like the Wesleyan ideas of heaven and hell, they are purely imaginative, but two worlds are better than one, they serve as comparisons, and Wells' socialistic state is made for comparison with the modern unbearable conditions. His theory is founded upon three postulates. Only one half of the people are laborers, and they are out of a job a good part of the time, yet the world has enough food to live upon. The idea that one man is fitted for just one kind of work is absurd. Humans can never achieve perfect adaption to the normal social life.

Wells defines the normal social life as "the type of human association and employment of extreme prevalence and antiquity which appears to have been, the lot of the enormous majority of human beings as far back as history and our tradition or our conceptions of the neolithic period carry us."<sup>1</sup> It is the life of the localized community, the next-to-the-soil family life. It is essentially illiterate, traditional and mute. It is the

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

foundation of civilization and the majority of the people prior to the modern era had always lived thus. It does not account for art, for literature or for nationality-- it simply breeds and lives. Thus history deals with the surplus forces, the forces that have emerged from the grasp of the normal social life. Kings and courts and artists and systems of thought had nothing to do with the normal social life. History has dealt with the transcendent forces divorced from and yet supported by this foundation. This life is self-sufficient and antagonistic to novelty. It lives by tradition and reacts against the non-traditional movements, Liberalism backed by the new science (Individualism) and Socialism.

Chesterton is an original and vigorous reactionary thinker, says Wells, and "his mind turns to the normal social life as being the most desirable state of mankind."<sup>1</sup> Chesterton and Belloc give the best and clearest expression to this system of ideals, and support it with some good arguments, but for Wells the inevitable prosperity of this state would lead to over-population, and this to scarcity and famine, war and pestilence. But, says Wells, Chesterton has the courage to say that these

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1. Social Forces in England and America.

are part of the inevitable "rhythms of the human lot under the sun". These two reactionaries think that the normal social life is the only desirable and proper life for the great masses. Naturally they are antagonistic to the innovations of modern thought, unfriendly toward the organization of scientific research and scornful of the pretensions of science. Machinery is undesirable because it disturbs the equilibrium of the state. Machinery has created industrialism and it in turn has created a new and constantly increasing third class. Socialism in a way is method of attempt to vindicate, proclaim and protect the life of this class, a class which Chesterton considers unnecessary and positively harmful to a well balanced state. "Criticisms of the methods of logic and scepticism of the more widely diffused of human beliefs, they would classify as insanity," says Wells. "They present a conception of vicious, loudly singing, earthy, toiling, custom ruled, wholesome and unsanitary men: they are pagan in the sense that their hearts are with the villagers and not with the townsmen, Christian in the spirit of the parish priest."<sup>1</sup>

Human beings have never achieved a perfect adaption to this normal social life, according to Wells.

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

Curiosity, the wanderlust, distaste for labor have always tended to break up this agricultural life. The modern outbreak of physical science and mechanism threatens to overturn it, and to replace it with a more elaborate civilization. The political and social discussion of the last century has been an attempt to apprehend the defensive struggle against new discoveries and its resultant political changes.

Wells' second postulate is that the idea of one man for one kind of work is unsound. We can trace the origin of the idea that one man should do the work which God had best fitted him for, back to Plato's "Republic". Plato's ideal state was founded on the supposition that, as each man had powers which could only be developed in apparent degrees of perfection, each man should give to the state the work of the talents which were nearest perfection in him. This conception germinated the idea of the division of labor, and the division of labor cannot be supported without this postulate. In Plato's state the wisest men were to rule, the bravest were to be soldiers, and the rest were to be temperate and do the remainder of the work of the republic. But Wells spurns this idea. He thinks that the spread of education has made all men nearly alike and that one man can rule as well as another. He considers that making men officials for life is the

worst possible method of getting things done. His rulers must not be specialists or pedagogues, but men "taught by life". Almost any modern man could be a Caesar or a Rich-lieu. His "Great State" will value the "freshness and the happiness of doing well of the amateur rather than the trite omniscience of the state official."<sup>1</sup> This, in its last analysis is a revolt against modern caste, for modern caste is determined by the occupation of its members. If every man had to do the same work then there would be no cast. From the vantage ground Wells attacks Syndicalism, the attempt to make each industrial class a state within itself.

Wells writes that the syndicalists believe "that the millenium can be reached by making every great industry a democratic republic".<sup>1</sup> He thinks that the inevitable result would be a community of conflicting interwoven governments of workers, who would be incapable of transmutation of function or progressive change. It considers its workers as hands, not as souls or heads: a man is a railway porter first and a private man afterwards. The movement is an outgrowth of trade unionism, which in itself is a necessary evil, and only a provisional expedient. The wider trend of modern civilization

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

pursues Wells, is against class organization and class feeling. It is a "solemn imbecility that we are an age of specialization". "Change of function, arrest of specialization by innovations in method and appliance, progress by the infringement of professional boundaries and the defiance of rule".<sup>1</sup> The world leaves the specialized man behind. Adaptability is the urgent need, and the unimaginative and uninventive man is a retardation. As to specialization in industry, Wells thinks that piece-work is mere monotonous labor and is to be avoided by mechanical devices and a distribution so that no one class will do it all.

From this conclusion it is a logical move to the assumption that it is unnecessary for farmers to live on their farms all the time. Wells would have them come to the city in winter to enjoy and to educate themselves.

The last postulate is that one-half of the working people laboring one-half of the time support the world. Wells wishes to relieve the desperate conditions under which these people bend, and further, to force the rest of society to do their proportion of the hard work. Chesterton also wishes to relieve the conditions, but he cannot conceive of the idea of doctors, and members of

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

Parliament working in the mines or digging sewers. He scores modern industrial methods, which, he says, exist on the condition that a mass of unemployed are always at the beck and call of the employers. "Capitalism has resulted in, and exists on unemployment. The effects of having landlords is not to have tenants."<sup>1</sup> Modern machinery has made possible the production of much more material than is needed. Some men, then, must not work. Wells asks then why should the same people have to work all their lives and get only a pitiful living for it, while those who do not work at all have so much money that they become wasters? For the poor, the lack of money, and for the rich superfluous wealth has its disastrous results. Wells wishes to even things up a bit.

As to the Fabian Socialism, it is a "bureaucratic scheme for establishing the regular life long subordination of a laboring class, enlivened though it may be by frequent inspection and disciplinary treatment during seasons of unemployment, compulsory temperance, free medical attendance and a cheap and shallow elemental education."<sup>2</sup> It will fail to satisfy the cravings of the heart of man. This "servile" state, thinks Wells,

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1. Chesterton: Miscellany of Men; The Man on Top.
2. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

must inevitably drift toward class revolt, "paralyzing sabotage", and a general strike. From its debris man would revert to the normal social life just as the society of many other bankrupt governments has done and will do.

Wells undertakes to solve the root problem of socialism. Who is to do the dull, hard, routine work in the ideal socialistic state? He thinks, in the first place, that machinery will take most of the arduous toil from man. There is not to be a superior class. The economic problem can be solved without condemning any section of human society to life-long labor. People now in general militate against modern labor conditions. Every one sees that it is unnecessary to force one part of society to do the hard work. All men have nearly the same qualities and capacities, and nearly the same education. "Of all impossible social dreams, that belief in a tranquillized and submissive and virtuous Labor, is the wildest of all. No sort of modern man will stand for it."<sup>1</sup> The illiterate peasant will only endure life-long toil under the stimulus of private ownership and with the consolations of religion. The typical laborer has neither. There must be no specific labor class. The

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

amount of work with the aid of skilled and unskilled labor required to produce everything for everybody may under ideal conditions, and with the help of scientific economy and machinery be reduced to a small number of working hours. Hard work can be done by perscription-- each man to take his share, one or two years of it.

Wells is aware that he cannot fall back on any science, or any scientific statistics as a support for these statements. He finds fault with the sciences which do not meet the need. Contemporary economics for him, is a pseudo-science, pretentious and bombastic, because it throws no light upon the fundamental facts needed to support his argument. It should know how many hours of work it would take to supply England with coal, how much money it would take to support a family under ideal conditions and how much the state could afford to give to the laborer. But economics furnishes no such data.

There is a real disposition to work in human beings and productive operations could be made sufficiently attractive to make them desirable occupations. William James, says Wells, was profoundly convinced of the educational and disciplinary value of universal military service. They why could not men look at coal-mining, and atch

ditch-digging as valuable disciplinary measures? Men could work in the mines and on the railways, while women could be employed in hospitals, and in hotels, and at teaching.

Wells attacks the problem of governmental control. Who is to direct? The Fabians say a bureaucracy. Wells thinks that the government machinery should be so elaborately and carefully constructed that no one class could get hold of the control to make a permanent monopoly of it. There is to be no collective mind organized as a branch of the civil service to place artists and preachers and scientists in a "phrensy of wire pulling"<sup>1</sup> as is the case now. "The whole spirit of the 'Great State' is to be against any avoidable subjugation; but the whole spirit of that science that will animate its structure will forbid us to ignore woman's functional and temperamental differences."<sup>1</sup> The greater proportion of occupations and activities will be private and free. The socialistic state will be neither the only employer or the only educator. The citizen will be a shareholder in the state. His earnings will be his surplus to be spent in amusements and all sorts of "free collective concerns". The state will not control writers, theatres, restaurant

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

cooks or tailors. It will only undertake the supervision of the standardisable industries where most of the toil is found. It is to be an "ideal of a social system no longer localized, no longer immediately tied to and conditioned by the cultivation of land, world wide in its interests and outlook, and catholic in its tolerance and sympathy, a system of great individual freedom and universal understanding among its citizens, of collective thought and purpose."<sup>1</sup>

Wells does not explain how all of this is to be brought about. There must however, he says, be a new type of family, subjugation, parasitism, and servitude must be done away with. But how is the peculiar intermingling of freedom and rigid control to be managed? The state will control, create and regulate family life. Not only this, but the state is to have two or three years of the writer's life, that part of it in which he has to do his turn at manual labor. Suppose that the new economics finds that he will have to serve twelve years, instead of two, to do his "jot"? How will the philosopher become a philosopher? When will the artist learn to paint? Wells disregards the fact that success in art and letters is a result of long years of education, and that this must be

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

carried on in the very years when men are best able to do manual labor, and just at the time his socialistic state would probably call on them for their "disciplinary education". Wells' state would be as must as he thinks Chesterton's would be. The validity of Wells' proposal depends entirely on the time length of the period of compulsory service. Two years of this service would not ruin the career of a writer, but twelve would. It will take economic and sociological statistics to prove or disprove this. These statistics are not as yet compiled.

The people of Wells' state are to be fishers, miners, farmers or nurses for a few years and then they are to rest or take up some interesting work the rest of their lives. Wells says that if he had so much coal to shovel, he would work at it hard and fast and put in as long hours as he could until the task was done. He takes it for granted that the working man feels the same way about work. Chesterton would take exception to this statement. John Burroughs says, "Take away the occupation of all men, and what a wretched world it would be! Half of it would commit suicide in less than ten days. Few persons realize how much of their happiness, such as it is, is dependent upon their work, upon the fact that they are kept busy and not left to feed upon themselves.

Wells fails to make allowance for the different mental attitudes of men. I am sure that some men, at least, after they had finished their period of manual labor would be in the conditions which John Burroughs describes.

The citizen of Wells' ideal state would be aristocratic in the sense that he would feel that the state belongs to him and he to the state. He would be a public servant working for a salary, typically professional, but not in the modern sense--buying for as little and selling for as much as you can. He would be good to his wife and children, but not a partisan to them against the common welfare, freeing himself from blind instinct to see the necessity of the welfare of every child. He would treat his wife as an equal; he will not be "kind" to her, but fair and frank and loving, not petting or pampering her, but letting her know the whole truth of life. They would marry that they may enlarge and not limit one another. They will seek beauty in themselves, in their ways of living; and be temperate and healthy. The men would be students and philosophers and would not rush madly about to "become blatantly and ignorantly rich". He would believe in scientific breeding to better the race.

Unless every person becomes a thinker and a

lover of the public good, Wells' plan would be absolutely impossible. England, says Wells, would be the first nation ever to patch up its labor difficulties. No community has had the will power or the imagination to recast or radically alter its social methods as a whole. The interest of the higher classes and the sloth of the lower prevents advance. Selfishness and love of locality must be given up so that men will sacrifice if needs be, for the welfare of the state. Thus we see Wells' Utopian fiction. It is a conception of man working for man for the salvation of the state and the race, depending on the advancement of the sciences and the spread of information. It is a picture of man emerging from his barbaric egoism and willingness to squander the resources of his nation for selfish ends, to a love for all mankind, and especially a consciousness of the sacred function of his government and an unselfish passion for its present and future welfare.

## CHAPTER III.

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### The Family And The State .

With the development of socialistic thought there has arisen a counteracting movement. These anti-socialists think that environmental conditions, no matter how high an ideal they may attain, will prove inadequate. "The demonstrations of the socialists will never make any serious impression on property,"<sup>1</sup> says Shaw, who considers property the destroyer of our modern society. It was the fact that governments of the past distributed wealth and labor inequitably that caused them to fall. But this did not threaten the existence of the race, but only of individual happiness. "The knell of the institution of property will not sound until it clashes with a more vital principle than that (socialism)," Ellis says that externally imposed regulations

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1. Shaw: Revolutionist's Handbook.  
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fail to go to the root of matters. There must be a new social force, and with it a new science. These men ask not only perfect environments but perfect men and women to profit by these environments. That is, they see that perfect laws cannot produce perfect men. With the imperfect man ideal life is impossible. Ellis shows how the severest code of laws has been unsuccessful in eradicating the social evil. He is one with Shaw in believing that a spiritual force must be combated with a spiritual force. They ask for a heightened and a purer and all powerful social conscience. Life must not only be controlled by human laws, but man must gain knowledge of the laws of life itself, and with this knowledge will come the power to control the flow of life at the very fountain of its birth.

These ideas are neo-pagan. Christianity has held aloof from these problems. Shaw says that the deist's God of the eighteenth century was a "deus ex machina", the God who helped those who could not help themselves, the God of the lazy and the incapable. 'The nineteenth century decided that there was no such God and that man must take in hand the work that he used to shirk with an idle prayer.' Man must change himself into a Providence (which he formerly conceived as God).

'That is the only sort of a change that is real, for mere transfiguration of institutions, as from military to commercial or from realism to mysticism, are not really changes.' " If man can make a dog from a wolf, and greed and capitalism can produce men as far apart as a vagabond and a gentleman, what could he do with universal inspiration?"<sup>1</sup> For Shaw, man's brain and hand are the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Such dramatists as Strindberg and Ibsen have influenced this individualistic movement. They have shown us that modern man, hurried with selling and buying, weighed down with false traditions, has fallen short of women's ideal of a perfect mate. Hedda Gabler, Mrs. Alving and Nora, to name three of Ibsen's women characters, are women who have suffered from man's narrow conception of a woman's sphere and of her intellect. The question is raised whether man is meeting his obligations to woman. Do Englishmen regard love in the right light? Isn't the man-made world a little off center? Ibsen, Shaw and Ellis think that it is.

Social hygiene has developed from the social reform which arose out of the bad conditions of English industrialism. The conditions of industrial life tore

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1. Shaw: The Revolutionist's Handbook.

up the individual from the roots by which he had formerly received strength. Factory life imposed unbearable conditions on the workers. They were crowded together in feted masses. Things became so bad that the old English "laissez-faire" doctrine became diabolical. The reform which arose to do away with these frightful conditions was at first timid and attempted little, but with the development of the sanitary and physiological sciences became more positive and undertook an entire revision of methods which were then common. Sanitation was the first step and it soon led to factory legislation. The resultant child-labor laws led to an extension of the scope of education, and the state school. The care of the health of the working woman and the desire for a healthy future generation led to the fourth and last stage: puericulture.

From this beginning the idea of social hygiene grew until it has now become so assured of its salutary worth that it would not only influence the conditions of industrial classes, but it would dictate the direction all civilization is to take if it would progress. From the care of the woman who is to be a mother, the movement interests itself in prenatal influence, marriage and life itself. "It is the control

of the reproduction of the race which renders possible the new conception of social hygiene."<sup>1</sup> In France in the early part of the nineteenth century, says Ellis, the control of reproduction became a social habit, the birth-rate began immediately to fall and people expected terrible results, but none came. On the contrary, Ellis leads us to suspect that the children were healthier and were better reared than under common conditions. Here social hygiene presupposes the fact that a large family tends to be more unhealthy, and that large numbers prevent ideal rearing conditions. Under certain financial conditions that is true. The believers in social hygiene desire that adequate care be taken of children that are born, and that those who cannot be provided for, be left unborn. "But the control of reproduction cannot carry far the betterment of man; according to Ellis, 'because it involves no direct selection of stocks, but it does immensely improve the individuals of which the race is made up.'

Alarmists like Roosevelt and Irving Bacheller deplore the fact that the Anglo-Saxon's birth rate is falling and predict the extinction of the race and other dire things. Wells says that the supply of

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene.

the right kind of children is falling off. Wells explains this by citing some of the tendencies of modern civilization. 'The falling birth-rate is a consequence of the individualistic competition of modern life. Women are not the cause for they do not desire to shirk motherhood, but rather want it. The conditions of success and self-development in the modern world are first to defer marriage, and then to put off having children as long as possible, and finally to limit the off-spring. People in doing this solace themselves by thinking they are sacrificing quantity to quality. If having children is a public service to the state then the state must recompense the parents for giving children to it. The alternate is racial replacement and social decay.' Wells thinks that it would probably be best to pay money to the mother. At this point Wells departs from Ellis' idea of recompensing parents. For Wells it would be idiotic to increase the number of low born children. The higher the social standing of a family the higher should be its endowment given by the state.

Ellis takes a much more scientific and comprehensive view. He says that the lower stocks are more fertile than the higher, but they are not necessa-

rily the worst stocks because civilization has a tendency to grow from below upward. There is a constant upward progression. The demands of the nervous and intellectual force of the culture and refinement of the upper classes places the emphasis away from reproduction and causes a lower fertility. Arsene Dumont's Social Capillarity theory explains this by stating that man's natural tendency is to ascent the social scale and that a strong ascensional impulse and a high birth rate are mutually contradictory. Large families then, are only possible when there is no progress. The lesser fertility of the urban population is caused by demands on the brain and energy by the increased competition.

As to the idea of the endowment of motherhood, Shaw asks why bees should pamper their mothers while we pamper only our prima donnas. He says that we do everything to make birth a misfortune and a danger to the mother. This comparison of the life of man with the life of animals is characteristic of the movement. The comparison is always disadvantageous to the man, but these allusions to lower forms of life and intimations that man could well learn from them can rarely be developed into a logical support of the point to be proved. There is not enough in common between

men and bees to make any comparison worth while: Ellis does not compare civilized man with the lower forms of animal life, but with the uncivilized man who live uncontaminated by modern methods of living. In these essays, such words as "stocks" and "breeding" often occur. These are evidences which betray the naturalistic trend of this movement. These thinkers delight to think of man as one cell in a complicated organism, and as amenable to exact formative laws. They do not consider the mind of man as a force which might possible revolt from their mechanical laws. Possibly Shaw in his conception of the superman comes closer to realizing the potentiality of will in this regard.

Unreasonable people have preached vigorously against race suicide, says Ellis, just as if it were the result of laziness and love of luxury. "The problem lies far deeper than that. Race suicide may have saved the world from an economic disaster. The old rule of "increase and multiply" meant a vast amount of infant mortality, starvation, chronic disease and misery. The alarmists have only observed the crude birthrate and do not know that the natural increase is measured by the excess of births over the deaths. A low birth rate with a high death rate is a sign of decrease, while a low

birthrate and a low death rate may mean an actual increase.' Ellis says that a high birth rate and a high death rate seem to go together, as is exemplified by the famines and pestilences which periodically sweep Japan, China and India. The measure of national well being is, then, measured by the excess of births over deaths, and not by a falling birth rate alone.

The birth rate has fallen through Europe generally. "No doubt the chief cause of the reduction of the birth rate has been its voluntary restriction by preventive methods due to the growth of intelligence, knowledge and foresight."<sup>1</sup> It is not the result of peculiar economic conditions, love of luxury or vice. 'Prosperity does not increase fertility, for savages, who are always threatened by starvation, are very prolific. Prosperity fails permanently to remove restraints on fertility because it creates new restraints--aspirations for social advancement, art and education creates firethought which is applied to the question of offspring. Nations must follow the same course as the social classes: the more the mass of these social classes become civilized, the more the nation's birth-rate falls. This should not provoke pessimism, concludes Ellis, because the lowered birth rate may

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene; The Significance of the Falling Birth Rate.

bring a wider meaning as a measure of civilization. "We are here moving towards the fine quiescence involved by a delicate equipoise of life and death, and this economy sets free an energy we are seeking to expand in a juster social organization, and in the realization of ideals which until now have seemed but the imagination of idle dreamers."<sup>1</sup>

Ellis considers the falling birth rate as favorable for the advance of social hygiene. He thinks that it makes possible an almost universal education, and the education in turn is a prerequisite to the heightened social conscience without which his plan would fail. Woman, as we have seen, is of prime importance. They must rise to embrace this doctrine, for this choosing of suitable mates is after all, as Shaw suggests, a woman's affair. There are abundant indications that they are emerging from the lethargy of a passive submission.

The woman's movement began in the eighteenth century and was developed by such writers as Mary Wollstonecraft, George Sand, Robert Owen, William Thompson and John Stuart Mills. The advance of the movement took the form of the emancipation of woman in relation

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene; The Significance of the Falling Birth Rate.

to the old idea of romantic love. 'This romantic conception of love was entirely absent from classic civilization. Then marriage was considered as a dignified and austere duty to the state. The idea of romantic love began in the decadence of Rome, when the political life was dissolving and the individual was evolving. Later Christianity rejected the idea of romantic love in its natural associations, but it indirectly prepared the way for a loftier and deeper realization of love by placing it on a higher plane. Something of this clung to the age of chivalry, but the knights really thought more of war and adventure than of women. The women of France reacted against this attitude, and while their husbands were away fighting, they laid down the laws of society and established the "courts of Love" to restrain immoralities. The troubadours adored the wife of some Knight or took upon themselves the more ethereal worship of the Virgin Mary transferred to some maiden, whom they worshipped as an ideal rather than as a being of flesh and blood. The Humanism of the Renaissance swept the latter form away. The anemic woman gave way to the developed woman conscious of her powers, and women began to be treated as human beings.'

The subordination of violence, says Ellis, took away the reasons for the consecrating of weakness in woman. 'When civilization advances women need men's power less and less, and to offer services is to do something which women should do for themselves.' "Civilized society in which women are ignorant and irresponsible is an anachronism." "The cross between an angel and an idiot no longer fulfills any useful purpose."<sup>1</sup>

According to Ellis, woman's dependency on man has forced sexual selection to give way to natural selection, to the great disadvantage of the race. With economic independence the proper emphasis will be placed on sexual selection. "Wherever sexual selection has free play, unhampered by economic considerations, prostitution is impossible."<sup>2</sup> For Ellis the dominant type of marriage is like prostitution in that it is founded on an economic consideration.

'The tendency of the woman's movement is now toward social, and not intellectual or physical equality with men. At first women wanted to be like men

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene; Emancipation of Woman in Relation to Romantic Love.
2. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene; The Changing Status of Women.

in every particular, but women can only be like men when they are alike physically' Women at some periods of life are economically dependent, and at such times Ellis would use Wells' suggested "Endowment of Motherhood" plan. As industrialism has taken women's home employments away, Ellis would have some suitable work for them somewhere, so that they might be economically independent. Wells and Ellis both agree that this independence is absolutely necessary for the development of civilization.

In Ellis' actual plan of social hygiene, we shall see the important position which is given to women. At the present time man made laws impose passivity on women, and if they have an individualism of their own as Ellis and Ibsen believe they have, legal restriction tend to suppress it, or at least make any particular demonstration of it illegal. The passive medieval woman would make social hygiene impossible, because she would <sup>not</sup> make a conscious eugenic choice of a mate, but would rather have her father choose for her. The new women who are coming into existence, says Ellis, will be strong, elemental natures, devoid of the impulse to destroy or aptitude to be destroyed. As we have noted before, the Englishman's idea of love

may be in the judgment of this new woman, but a narrow artificial convention. Grete Meisel-Hess, in "Die Sexuelle Krise" says that "Love as a form of worship is reserved for the future". In the past, says Ellis, real love has been found among only a few rare souls. "In the future world, fostered by a finer selection of conscious eugenics, and a new reverence and care for motherhood, we may reasonably hope for a truly efficient humanity; the bearers and conservers of the highest human emotions."<sup>1</sup> Women will then enter into a deeper and more significant relationship with men. Men in the future may not consider love as a thing aside, and leave it, as they now do, to be cultivated only by the women.

The constant increase in the number of divorce court proceedings is an indication that there is something radically wrong in the method of modern mating, or in our conception of love. Wells does not believe that marriage should be indissoluble, or preclude a widow or a widower from remarriage. 'Absolute monogamy does, however, banish stepparents from the world, confers the dignity of tragic inevitability upon marriage, and makes love the most momentous thing in life. Besides it is in entire harmony with the view of the

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene; Emancipation of woman in Relation to Romantic Love.

passionate instincts of the natural man or woman in these matters. But it would give neither party external refuge from the misbehavior of the other, and would make an institution which should be an unlimited union, a definite contract.

"Then what should be the limits of marriage?" asks Wells. Shaw takes an extremist view, believing that marriage should be revocable at the instance of either party. Either husband or wife would need only to give public notice that their marriage was at an end. Wells says that 'only one step beyond that would make marriage legal by an oral declaration of either party and would unmake it in the same way. That for Wells, would be an encounter and not a marriage. 'Marriage is almost always a serious economic disturbance, so the withdrawal of one of the members raises questions of financial readjustment which must be tended to. Before marriage an elaborate contract should be drawn up to cover all exigencies, securing private incomes for each partner, the welfare of the children, and laying down equitable conditions in event of a divorce. If the pair after some time seem likely to remain childless, they should divorce.' Ellis says that if an epileptic woman hides her disease from a man and succeeds in marrying him, the fact of this

deception should furnish adequate grounds for divorce. Wells believes marriage is justified only by producing children; Ellis, in producing healthy children. These two men view marriage as a practical affair and unite with Shaw in dispelling the mists of romanticism that prevent it from being seen as a scientific phenomenon of great weal or woe to the state. Shaw looks at it almost brutally, saying that marriage is popular because it joins the maximum of opportunity with the minimum of deterrent exigencies.

Shaw thinks that parents are the worst enemies of the child and advises that the state rear all children. Wells says that Shaw is "ignorant and unfeeling" but demands that we cease platitudenizing about the wonders of mother and father love. He would have children taken from unworthy parents. Divorce laws now are for revenge and not for readjustment. If we take the welfare of the children as the valid worth, why should we allow a man to divorce his wife for one infidelity? Wells would have us take children away from homes where drunkenness, desertion, neglect, cruelty or extravagance threaten the welfare of the child. He would have us also stop the publication of whatever is spicy and painful in divorce court proceedings, be-

cause it falls most heavily on the innocent and prevents many desirable divorces, for timid and delicate minds shrink from the crass public exposure of private affairs.

The divorce evil, prostitution, and the increase of degeneracy have stimulated Ellis to construct a remedy to do away with these conditions. He deplores the fact that the English gather together all of the physical and moral defectives at workhouses, "to have babies, under the superintendence of Boards of Guardians". Every one knows that the children will be idiots and will perpetuate the same cycle of misery. Guardians never attempt to make clear to these hapless mothers why and how they should avoid having children. They tend to breed faster than normals, and the characteristic of imbecility is always handed down to the children who must necessarily be a burden to society and associated with criminality. Ellis thinks that one should not consider heredity as a pessimistic fatalism but the one great hope for civilization, and the one means to combat imbecility, poverty, disease and immorality.

Shaw also hopes in heredity, and by means of it would bring into existence his superman. Chesterton scorns such an idea saying that any but natural

breeding presupposes an outside force, higher than the animals bred to direct the process. Ellis meets Chesterton's objection by saying that animals are bred from the outside, but that man can only be bred upward from within, through the medium of intelligence and will, working together with a sense of his great responsibility to the state and the future. He plainly sees that the cunning of man is able to defeat any attempt to touch life at this intimate point. Mere legislation would be powerless, just as it is today in combatting immorality. There must be compulsion from within. Galton, the originator of Ellis' school, wanted this to be a religion; for he saw no other way of enforcing enthusiasm and respect for, and devotion to the cause. Ellis believes that a heightened social conscience will insure the carrying out of his plan.

Eugenics then, is not likely to be a cold blooded selection of partners by some outside scientific authority, but a growing conviction among the more intellectual members of a community, and then transmitted by imitation and fashion to the less intelligent, that children of the future race shall not be the mere result of chance or providence. They must see that the salvation or the damnation of the future generations

lie within their hands because it depends on their wise choice of a mate. "We must concern ourselves with the ideals and with an endeavor to exert our personal influence on the realization of these ideals."<sup>1</sup> The ideals must be based on scientific facts.

No matter how powerful the social conscience would become, the romantic idea that there is just one man for one woman, disregarding of his pedigree, health and all, would render it ineffectual. Ellis says that love does not laugh at science, as some novelists would have us believe, but that human nature itself is indisposed to the indiscriminate choice of mates, and that there are definite tendencies of like toward like.

'Passion when it occurs requires in normal persons, cumulative and prolonged forces to impart full momentum to it. In its first stages it is under the control of many influences, including reason. Without this there could be no sexual selection or social organization.' This would make eugenics a reasoned manifestation of natural instinct rather than an artificial product.

'It is on the side of love and against thoughtless and reckless yielding to momentary desire, and the influ-

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene: Eugenics and Love.

ences of wealth, position and worldly convenience.'

Then there must be a knowledge of the scientific facts of heredity. The families concerned could call a conference of the family doctors and together discuss the medical aspects of the proposed union. Pedigrees and exact knowledge of the physical and mental properties of ancestors as well as of the candidates themselves will be of importance. Systematic records of personal data written by the intended wife and husband may reveal characteristics which would weigh for, or against the marriage. These investigations should decide the matter. Either healthy children or no marriage must result. Wells, Shaw and Ellis believe that the child is the key to the future.

"Even a joint-stock human stud farm might well, under perfect conditions yield better results than our present reliance on promiscuous marriage,"<sup>1</sup> says Shaw. Wells writes that it has been a perpetual wonder of the philosophers from Plato downwards, that man have bred horses and dogs and left man and woman to breed promiscuously. He thinks that our system of matrimony seemingly is designed to perpetuate medioc-

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1. The Revolutionist's Handbook.

riety, but believes that some day men will be in possession of knowledge and opportunity to make each generation better than the preceding one. Such an enterprise could hardly be expected from the Stock Exchange, says Shaw, it would take a statesman of character to handle it. 'The novelty of the idea of such an experiment is simply in the scale of it: kings are bred now and even dukes are not free to marry whom they choose.'

Shaw recognizes the advent of the new woman. Man, he says, is no longer like Don Juan, a victor in the duel of sex. In "Man and Superman", the woman is the huntress and man the quarry. 'Man's business is to get money to keep up his position and the habits of a gentleman, while woman's main endeavor is to get married. This is <sup>a</sup>sensible and satisfactory foundation for society, for money means nourishment and women mean children.'

There has always been a cry for the superman, says Shaw, but admits that it has always been silenced by the question - what kind of a man must he be? The superman must have a superior mind. But this is not the result of a superior body. He must not be a dupe of conventional morality. "Better Samson and Milo

than Calvin and Robespierre."<sup>1</sup> If the superman is to come he must be born of woman by man's intentional and well considered contrivance. But a code made on this premise would do away with the institutions of property and marriage as they exist today. The really important part of man which we want in the superman is unfortunately not yet perfectly understood. We will have to trust to nature, both to breeders and to parents for that superiority in the unconscious self which will be the true characteristic of the superman. Caste will postpone the superman for eons, equality is essential to good breeding, and equality is incompatible with property. Marriage will delay the advent of the superman because there is no evidence that the best offspring is the result of congenial marriages, but two complementary persons could not live together, therefore marriage must be done away with. Conjugation and domesticity are separable.

Shaw regards the evolution of man into the superman as the only hope for the future. He is misanthropic in his hate of the degeneracy and decrepancies of modern man. 'Man as he is will never be otherwise.' "Cromwell learnt by bitter experience that God himself cannot raise a people above its own level.

Napoleon seems to have ended by regarding mankind as a troublesome pack of hounds only worth keeping for the sport of hunting with them."<sup>1</sup> Says Shaw, until every Englishman is a Cromwell the world will not be improved by its heroes. Most men desire the superman for they have worshipped him in the form of pope's and kings. Some fear that the regime of the superman will end all pleasures and all romance. "This fear, by putting on airs of offended morality, has always intimidated people who have not measured its essential weakness: but it will prevail with those degenerates only in whom the instinct of fertility has faded into a mere itching for pleasure."<sup>1</sup> These are dying out now through their own devices to prevent conception. Shaw, then, sees a good in the falling birth rate in all of the civilized countries, although it is different from the good that Ellis hopes will come from it.

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1. Shaw: The Revolutionist's Handbook.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### REACTIONARY TENDENCIES .

Without a doubt there has been a great advance in the mechanical world in the last century. Electricity and machinery, with their resultant industrialism, have given men thrice their former producing power. International finance has circled the world. Psychology, economics, sociology and critical theology have cleared away superstition and mysticism. These are triumphs of the scientific movement which began with the Elizabethan Francis Bacon. Man seemingly has advanced far in his control over nature.

Yet with all of this mechanical and scientific advance there is a conviction in the minds of some thinkers of today that man himself has not advanced.

Crime, poverty, ignorance and pain are just as common among the bulk of mankind as ever before. Some think that conditions are even more restrictive, cruel and unbearable than ever before. The new destructive theological criticism and the agnosticism which has accompanied the materialism of the scientific advance, have caused widespread disbelief and irreligion among the people, and a new hopeless sorrow characteristic of modernity. Thinkers have set to work to compare the advantages with the disadvantages, and have begun to consider seriously whether the age has really advanced or no. While all the talk of progress has been going on, has there been real progress--not mechanical progress, but the only progress worth while-- the progress of the whole of mankind?

Ellis says that there cannot be progress in all of the social groups, and that those groups which do progress pay the price. 'When we gained the use of our hands we lost our tail.' That is, while one social group is advancing another group is retrogressing: the state of the world as a whole is constant. Evolution is counterbalanced by involution. There is no gain or loss. There is no ever increasing evolution toward perfection. Only certain races can triumph, and then only

along certain special lines, for every perfection acquires an imperfection. "The conception of 'progress' is a useful conception in so far as it binds together those who are working for common ends, and stimulates that perpetual slight movement of which life consists."<sup>1</sup> But "we need never fear that we shall ever achieve the stagnant immobility of general perfection." As an artist Ellis dislikes what he calls the "incompetance and disaster of modern things." He hates the smoke nuisance, the 'aeroplanes for fools to ride upon to destruction, the motor cars for imbeciles and drunkards, the telephones and the thousand other things which are always out of order.' "And our civilization is made up of these," he sighs. He is ashamed that he crossed the Pyrennees in a motor buss instead of walking. Modern travelling sacrifices everything to speed he says. Civilized man turns all of the "beautiful and mysterious places of nature into cash; covering them with expensive hotels and cheap advertisements. "Where primitive man developed a wild and fierce but humane and beautiful culture, "civilized man arrived, armed with alcohol, syphilis, trousers and the Bible and in a few years only a sordid and ridiculous shadow was left of that uniquely

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene; Introduction.

wonderful life."<sup>1</sup>

Even such an ardent believer in the salutary value of science as Wells fears a possible collapse of civilization. He says that our system of modern finance, which is only three centuries old, may totter and cause a reversion to a simpler and sounder life. 'On the old basis of living has been piled the most risky and insecurely experimental system of lending and borrowing, a world wide extension of joint stock enterprises that involve at last the most fantastic relationships. No economist or financial expert can prove that it cannot break down. The whole system keeps getting higher and higher and giddier, and it is continually swaying and quivering.'

The reading of Plato made Shaw disbelieve in progress, because he had considered civilization a modern affair, says Chesterton. Shaw concluded that civilization has had so many ups and downs that it must be on the whole flat. He says that the verdict of history has been that the normal life of the modern is higher than the normal life of his forefathers. "This view is very acceptable to Englishmen, who always lean sincerely to virtue's side as long as it cost them

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1. Ellis: The Task of Social Hygiene; Civilization and Nature.

nothing either in money or in thought."<sup>1</sup> But Shaw can really see no reason to think that our ancestors were less capable than we. Man for man we are no better than they. Chance discoveries like gunpowder were the only helps they left to us. "Enough of this goose-cackle about progress: man, as he is, never will, nor can add a cubit to his stature by any of its quackeries, political, scientific, educational, religious or artistic. Our only hope is in evolution. We must replace man by the superman."<sup>1</sup> 'Abuses satirized by our fathers are still with us. The common people may be better dressed but that is simply a change which money makes. The moment we look for reform due to character or statesmanship we are disillusioned. There was the same maladministration in the Boer war as in the Crimean. There are still flagellomane<sup>iacs</sup>~~ies~~ in the army and in the teaching profession. The Christian doctrine of the uselessness of punishment and the wickedness of revenge has not found a single convert among the so-called Christian nations. We take ten years of a thief's life without remorse, we demand the decapitation of Chinese Boxer princes, we use torture to extort confession, our Parliament is like the one Cromwell suppressed, our

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1. Shaw: The Revolutionist's Handbook.

doctors are still quacks, we have witchcraft in the form of patent medicines. Our cities are as dirty as those of the middle ages, straight forward public lying is indulged in so much <sup>th</sup>at we cannot choose between a "pickpocket, a minister or the treasury-bunch". Cowardice is universal. Patriotism, public opinion, parental duty, discipline, religion and morality are only fine names for intimidation. Free wage labor is the worst form of human slavery. Not monsters, or criminals, but our best and most respected citizens practice these things. "We must be replaced by a higher, evolved, animal,"<sup>1</sup> says this misanthropic critic of humanity, "or the world must remain a den of dangerous animals."<sup>1</sup> We think we progress when we mend, but we mend the effects of long standing retrogressions rather than the cause. Our compromising remedies never fully recover the lost ground. Like a dog, men returned to their vomit. Shaw says no sane man would have killed a mouse to have brought about the results of the French Revolution. He considers it a failure, and says it did not help progress. Progress for him will always be an illusion until man's nature is changed. Then, and only then, will progress without a resulting regress be possible.

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Shaw: Revolutionist's Handbook.

This bitter satirist entirely ignores the good that science has accomplished. He prefers the mystic to the scientist, because he says the former at least has the decency to call his nonsense a mystery, while the latter is dogmatic because he cannot prove his assertions. Both for Shaw are imposters. Taking part in the humanitarian campaign against science generally, he writes diatribes against vivisection, vaccination, and inoculation. To put unhealthy matter (vaccine) into healthy matter is to put matter in the wrong place. Men indulge their destructive instincts of vivisection under cover of a solicitude for the common weal. Our modern education differs from Dr. Johnson's only in the substitution of Jenner and Pasteur for Plato and Euripides. Astronomy is humbug. Darwinism is a penny-in-the-slot theory of evolution, for it only accounts for progress on the hypothesis of a continuous increase in the severity of the conditions of existence: an assumption of just the reverse of what is actually taking place.

Ellis' theory of eugenics and Wells' socialism are both movements founded on the hope of an advance of science. Ellis wants control over hereditary powers and his program necessitates wide-spread sex knowledge. Wells wants government ownership and

propaganda depends on a universalized knowledge and an advance in the sociological and economic sciences. So inadequate for his needs is the modern sociology that the scientist Wells denies that, as it is now, it is a science, and goes to some very nice reasoning to prove it, using some of the relativistic arguments which originated with the Greek skeptics. Only in the subjective world, he says, do we deal with identically similar units and absolutely commensurable quantities. In the real world we deal with the labor saving device of considering things as practically similar. Chemists and physicists mostly assume that ions and atoms are similar to one another. But counting, hard and fast classification are subjective and deceitful, while the uniqueness of individuals is the objective truth. Then as the number of individuals increases, the accuracy of generalization decreases. The scientific method is the method of ignoring individuals, and its practicality is no proof of its truth. Sociology stands at the extreme end of the scale from mathematics and the molecular sciences. In the latter there is an infinitude of units, but Comte conceived the plan of a sociology which dealt with only one unit, and Spencer in order to get a classification somehow, separated human society into

distinct groups and made the false assumption that they competed with each other, died and reproduced like animals. But it is impossible to isolate complete communities of men, or to trace any but rude general resemblances between group and group. "We cannot put humanity into a museum or dry it for examination: our one single still-living specimen is all history, all anthropology, and the fluctuation world of men."<sup>1</sup> There is no satisfactory way of dividing it. Sociology is an attempt to bring complex, unique Beings into clear relations with the individual intelligence. Since each individual is different, and looks upon humanity from a personal angle, sociology can never approach the validity of the physical sciences or mathematics.

Opposed to the propagandists like Wells and Ellis whose programs depend on an advance of scientific knowledge, and the rationalist Shaw who would set up reason as a motive force above will, tear down modern civilization and begin over again with a race of supermen; are the reactionaries Bell and Chesterton. They do not believe that a forward movement of science would make conditions any

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1. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

better, because so far its advance has made things worse. All of these vast complex machines to which moderns devote their best energies, are only the insignificant and superfluous scaffolding of life and not life itself. If a negro porter uses the telephone, or can travel around the world in forty days, or be operated on for appendicitis, it doesn't mean that he is a superior being to Cromwell. Scientific advance may have bettered externals, but it has not bettered the inward man. These men do not harbor wild schemes like Shaw's for doing away with the whole of mankind, but they see germs of ideality in man, especially in the sturdy, overburdened lower classes. If this scientific movement has resulted in capitalism and misgovernment and the tyranny of money, why not go back to the ways of living of three centuries ago when men did not live for money alone? Chesterton is a self-declared medievalist. If progress has resulted in nothing good, he says, why not go back to where we began? He lampoons socialism, eugenics, and all those who would change the nature of man. As to Shaw's superman, Chesterton claims to have found one once. It was born of an aristocratic mother who took crudely painted toys away from children to

save their eyesight" and Dr. Hagg "an experimenter who had studied geology and electrical engineering." Chesterton says he killed the sickly infant by "letting in a draft". Thus he scorns the idea of the superman as a figment of silly pseudo-science combined with Zoroastrianism and eugenics.

Just as the scholasticism of the middle ages left part of man undeveloped and undiscovered and gave rise to humanism, modern science in trying to conquer the heart, soul and body of man so that it might dictate life to him, is giving rise to a reactionary movement. Scientific knowledge has made the devil an impossibility and an absurdity, and by thus removing the antithesis of God has weakened the concept of God himself. Religion to some extent has lost its former confidence and enthusiasm. Chesterton takes up the pen to declare that science cannot monopolize the whole of man any more than scholasticism could. He views life philosophically and not as a dogmatic scientist. Science has touched only the exterior of man and has tried to believe that part of man the whole. Chesterton says that the weakness of modern civilization is that it cares more for science than for truth. "It prides itself more on methods

than on its results. It is satisfied with precision discipline, good communications rather than a sense of reality. Discipline may only mean a hundred men making the same mistake at the same moment. We have reached a scientific age which wants to know whether the train is on the time table but not whether the train is in the station."<sup>1</sup> He says that Max Beer-bohms' caricatures have more of the real characteristics of a face in them than a scientific photograph has. He finds in the comparison an exact symbol of the failure of the scientific civilization. "It is as satisfied in knowing that it has a photograph of a man it never asks whether it has a likeness of him."<sup>1</sup> Chesterton declares that the exterior of man is the most insignificant part. He is a student of the inner man. This higher plane of contemplation lends itself easily to the garb of imaginative and poetic description. Hence Chesterton's liking for allegory, symbolism and paradox, springing as it does, directly from religion and the struggle of the soul trying to free itself from the trammels of sense. Chesterton is a reactionary, a romanticist, a democrat and a medievalist.

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1. Chesterton: A Miscellany of Men; The False Photographer.

From Chesterton's view point things inconsequential to scientists have become symbolic truths and important facts. As the things which they have emphasized have resulted in materialism, Chesterton would accentuate the things which he thinks have hidden but important meaning, not to the body only, but to the soul of man. To Hillaire Belloc, a fellow reactionary, impressionistic landscapes, old ruins, out of the way places and strange people of the world tell the history of man. To Chesterton gargoyles, the tinsel on old English statuary, hieroglyphs speak a language. He revels in colors, and for him they have symbolic meaning. Of red, he says, "It is the highest light, it is the place where the world of ours wears thinnest and something beyond burns through."1 From this angle life becomes a great adventure and everything has its significance. Chesterton has often recourse to symbolism. As a means of emphasizing the fact that the vitality of institutions depends on the ideal breaking through the forms at times, he says:-

"The wind awoke last night with so noble a violence that it was like the war in heaven, and I thought for a moment that the Thing had broken free. For wind never seems like empty air. Wind always sounds full and

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1. Chesterton: Alarms and Discursions; The Red Town.

and physical, like the big body of something: and I fancied that the Thing itself was walking gigantic along the great roads between the forests of beech. . . . . Let me explain. The vitality and recurrent victory of Christendom has been due to the power of the Thing to break out from time to time from its enveloping words and symbols."<sup>1</sup> In the essay "The Man who thinks Backwards" there is an example of both allegory and mysticism. The right way to reason about a poker is this, says Chesterton. 'Man being naked he depends upon others for clothing. At first his soul and body are cold, and he needs fire to warm his body and fire as a symbol of God to warm his soul. Fire embodies all that is human in his hearths and all that is divine in the world. It is the expression of his sublime externalism. But to touch it is death, so it is necessary to have an intermediary between ourselves and this dreadful deity. This is the poker. It is bent in this heroic service, but it is all the more honorable for it.' 'The man who thinks backwards is he who writes the learned articles on eugenics and social revolution, prison reform and higher criticism, and books about female emancipation

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1. Chesterton: A Miscellany of Men; The Thing.

and a reconsidering of marriage. The reasons about the poker, saying nothing about the nature of man or the mystery of fire, but seeing that the poker is crooked, he says let us abolish the fire and then we will have straight pokers. We remonstrate saying that man needs fire to warm himself. He answers that he doubts if such an animal as man is worth preserving. Men of this kind are half-baked utilitarians and materialists.'

This passage not only illustrates the use of allegory and symbols but shows the writer's belief in the church and his hatred of modern scientific movements. The poker is, of course, the church. Chesterton is attacking Shaw, Wells and Ellis, and it is they whom he calls men who think backward.

For Chesterton, the scientists analyze and classify things until their real essence and beauty and significance disappear. The glitter is the gold, and analysis misses the main point. It is like trying to demonstrate the appeal of a rose sent between lovers by a chemical equation.

In the confused mixture of beliefs and disbeliefs, movements and counter movements, the essayist sees that man sorely needs a fixed point of departure, a foundation, an axiom taken for granted, on which all

being one, they could diverge from it if they found that reason bent them that way. Moral codes are necessary to guide man out of chaos. Man's central sanctities should be Christian and simple, "Do not be an opportunist, try to be theoretic at all the opportunities: fate can be trusted to do all the opportunist part of it. Do not try to bend any more than the trees try to bend. Try to grow straight and life will bend you."<sup>1</sup> Chesterton delights in the sweep of furrows in a plowed field. He says concerning them "They sculptured hill and dale with strong curves merely because they did not mean to curve at all."<sup>1</sup> Comparing Christianity with Confucianism he writes "We are right because we are bound where men should be bound and free where men should be free. We are right because we doubt and destroy laws and customs."<sup>2</sup> "I am as fickle as the tempest because I believe."<sup>2</sup> The skeptic can say "damn it", but only the believer can say "damn it all."

This idea of a common starting point becomes a predetermined hypothesis, a theory which resembles Plato's theory of Reminiscence when Chesterton applies

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1. Chesterton: Alarms and Discursions; The Furrows.
2. Chesterton: Man Alive.

it to objective things, to men and his environments. There is just one place for one man, says Chesterton, and when the man sees it he remembers it, though he has never seen it before. "I think that God has given us the love of special places, of a hearth and a native land, for a good reason.....otherwise we might worship that (the abyss)."<sup>1</sup> "I mean that God bade me love one spot and serve it, and do all things wild in praise of it, so that this one spot might be a witness against all the infirmities and the sophistries that Paradise is somewhere and not anywhere, is something and not anything."<sup>1</sup> Directly opposed to this is Wells' belief that men should not be anchored to one place and that one environment tends to make one selfish, narrow and partial. He thinks that the human spirit achieves best under the stimulation of variety and novelty. The cheap and swift locomotion is severing the ties which bind us to place, and the tendency of all modern populations is to become fluid. "We are off the chain of locality for all and good."<sup>2</sup>

The upper classes are considered as a group corrupted by suspicious luxury and money and ill-got

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1. Chesterton: Manalive.
2. Wells: Social Forces in England and America.

power; and as such are mere unhealthy fungous growths on the soil of Great Britian. Chesterton finds in the gardeners and laborers the type which is native to and expressive and characteristic of England. With this class he would found his democracy and peasant ownership. Democracy, he says, is the only reform movement which has not died by stiffening into routine, and instead of becoming more pedanic in its old age, has become more bewildered and has had its very freedom perverted into everything destructive to itself. Convention and tradition are necessary for human beings to exist. Convention is very nearly the same word as democracy. "It is always full of accumulated and passionate experiences of many generations asserting what they could not explain. To be on the side of convention is to be surrounded by something not dead and automatic, but taunt and tingling with vitality at a hundred points."

The common people must be considered as stupid, says Chesterton. 'They coin clever phrases and name the flowers. The jingo who wants to admire himself is worse than the blackguard who wants to enjoy himself.' Chesterton lauds the draymen, who sixty years ago threshed a Hungarian tyrant. 'It was one of the many good things which happen under an honest democratic impulse. The common people really enjoy

life in the way it should be enjoyed. There is something strange, weird and suspicious and exotic about luxury. The common people are naïve and wholesome. They talk knowingly of their impressions. A girl on seeing "Hamlet" said that it was a sad play, and she was right for so many of us think of the problem that we forget that it is a tragedy. The intuitive common sense is surer than involved reasoning and dry logic.

Chesterton would found a democratic government of peasant ownership. He would restore the old drinking and singing next-to-the soil, sturdy life of the medieval ages. He deploras the decline of the old chorus singing at banquets, and the ceremonies of Yule, the Morris dancers and all of that life. 'The chorus was like the old Greek Tragic chorus, it reconciled men to the Gods. It connected man with the cosmos and the philosophy of common things. With the fall of these things money has come into too much prominence. In this state money is no more to canker the whole of life. Life which cannot be rationalized and placed in an exact category, paradoxial and intangible for science; is to be lived as an adventure. "Leave off buying and selling and open your eyes and you will wake up in a new Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> The shameful private drinking is to give

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1. Chesterton: Manalive.

way to the jolly, social cup. Men are to read less and think more.

"Plain living and long drinking are no more,  
And pure religion reading household words  
And sturdy manhood, sitting still all day  
Shrinks....."1

The moderns, in a frenzied pursuit of excitement and amusement would be unable to stand this simple hum-drum peasant life. So much the better, says Chesterton, then we would have no more neurotic, unhealthy people. "Monotony has nothing to do with a place: monotony either in its sensation or its infliction is simply the quality of persons."<sup>2</sup> When we take everything for granted, and all is assured, then life becomes monotonous. We love life only when we fear to lose it. Chesterton's hero in his philosophical novel "Manalive" brandishes a pistol in the face of pessimists to make them appreciate the sweetness of life. This hero, Innocent Smith, believes that the world is good, and that if we grow tired of it, it is because we close our eyes to the joy of existence and the beauties. He fears that he is becoming tired of his wife and home, so he goes

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1. Chesterton: A Miscellany of Men; Poet and the Cheese.
2. Chesterton: A Miscellany of Men; Romance of Marshes.

clear around the world to come back to her again. "I have found out how to turn a house into a doll's house?" he says, "Get a long way off it."<sup>1</sup> We never appreciate a thing until we miss it or are about to lose it. Innocent Smith wooed his wife over and over again to convince himself that she was something apart, something to be won and not taken for granted.

Thus Chesterton pictures a possible reaction from the dogmatism of a scientific age, a state which appears naïve, wholesome and attractive. Wagner in his "Simple Life", Tolstoy in his daily practice and Belloc, all join with him in extolling the salutary value of nature and life freed from all artificial and unhealthy stimuli.

So by examining the essays of Wells, Belloc Shaw, Chesterton and Ellis, we have touched, transitorily enough, most of the social and political thought of the day. It is very obvious that these men stand boldly contrasted to each other, each is determined to solve the problem in his own way; evidence of the individuality and originality of British genius. They have chosen the essay as a ready and puissant tool, an Archimedes'

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1. Chesterton: Manalive.

lever, with which to turn the topsy-turvy world into what they think should be a better position. The world can never follow the plans of all five of them, but it can take the best from each, and whether it adopts their politics or not, it must be inspired by the clear, sweet breath of optimism and faith in mankind which breathes from their essays.

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