FAVORABLE ASPECTS OF STATE SOCIALISM.

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THE advance of democracy during recent years in all popularly-governed countries has brought what is called the social question into great prominence. The greatest happiness of the greatest number, which was formerly only the benevolent aspiration of a philosopher, has become a matter of urgent practical politics.

Under the general name of socialism, the redistribution of wealth, the relations between labor and capital, and the extension of the functions of the state in regard to the industrial and domestic life of the people, have assumed a real and pressing importance.

New theories have been developed, and their practical application is already becoming a dividing-line between political parties. Exaggerated fears have been excited, and not less exaggerated hopes. On the one hand, timorous people have conjured up a vision of a desperate proletariat combined for the purpose of extorting from wealth a compulsory division of property, with the result that capital will leave its present investments, industry will be disorganized, trade diverted to other channels, and general insecurity will prevail, to be followed in due course by national disaster and ruin. On the other hand are to be found enthusiasts who indulge the hope that the legislation of the future, banishing to Saturn all the laws of political economy, will be able, as by a magician's wand, to exorcise the evils of our political system, and to redress the inequalities which individual character and circumstances, more often than the action of the state, have created in the lives of men.

These antagonistic views are supported by very different estimates of the present position of the masses of the people. The opponents of further state intervention point with confidence to the present position of the working classes as a satisfactory result of the sturdy maintenance of individual liberty and of the absence

of grandmotherly restriction and control. They assert that by the practice of reasonable industry and self-denial the ordinary workman may live and enjoy his life. He may find opportunities for recreation and intellectual improvement, and may hope to rise in the social scale, and to leave his children with prospects better even than his own. According to these optimists, this is the best of all possible worlds, in which only the knaves and the fools fail to secure some of its numerous prizes.

The socialists, on the contrary, see in the condition of the wage-earners the evidence of the terrible struggle for life in which the weakest go to the wall and only a few exceptional natures can survive and prosper. They allege that the great modern developments in science and invention have only benefited a handful of favored individuals, while the vast majority have gained nothing, and have even suffered by comparison; their misery seeming more profound in the shadow of the enormous prosperity of the successful minority. According to this view, the rich have grown richer and the poor poorer, so that the gulf between classes is wider than it ever was before.

If either of these views is accepted as absolute and complete, the logical conclusion would appear to be the same; and the statesman would be justified in both cases, although for different reasons, in abandoning the hope of improvement by ordinary legislative means. In the first case, the argument would be to let well alone, and not to disturb arangements which had produced so thoroughly satisfactory a result. In the second case, the proof that all the legislation of the last generation, much of it socialistic in its character, had failed to make any impression on the general mass of misery and discontent would justify the refusal to proceed further along lines which had led to no beneficial result.

It will, therefore, be a matter of interest to ascertain at the outset the true facts of the case, and to see whether the information at our disposal enables us to decide with confidence whether or no the condition of the people at large has improved during the last fifty years. Such a comparison is the more necessary because the present generation is always too apt to concentrate its attention on the times in which it is living, and, while appreciating keenly its own difficulties and distress, to forget the greater evils of the past, and thus to ignore the methods of im-

provement which have been tested by experience, and which may therefore be safely continued in the future.

I took occasion, at a recent jubilee of the greatest and oldest of the friendly societies of Birmingham, to make such a contrast, drawn from the history of our town as well as from the general history of the country; and, although the picture is necessarily imperfect, it is suggestive both of the character and extent of the changes which have been already effected, and also of the legislation which has been chiefly instrumental in bringing them about.

Fifty years ago Birmingham was a town of 180,000 inhabitants, or about 40 per cent. of the present population. The ratable value was between £500,000 and £600,000, or rather less than one-third of what it is at present. There were at that time hardly any public edifices of any magnitude or importance. There were no parks, there were no free libraries, there were no baths, there was no art gallery or museum, there were no board schools, there was no school of art, and no technical institute or college. The era of street improvement had hardly begun. A large area in the centre of the town, which is now traversed by magnificent streets and occupied by some of the finest shops and warehouses, was one of the worst districts in the city, both from a social and a sanitary point of view. The streets themselves were badly paved, imperfectly lighted, and only partially drained. The foot-walks were worse than the streets. The gas and the water belonged to private monopolies. Gas, which is now sold at an average of two shillings and fourpence, cost then about five shillings per thousand cubic feet. Water was supplied by the company on three days in the week; on the other days those of the inhabitants who had no wells were obliged to purchase this necessary of life from carts which perambulated the town and supplied water from polluted sources at ten shillings the thousand gallons. It is not surprising that under these circumstances the annual mortality reached thirty in the thousand; now it is twenty in the thousand, and sometimes less. The only wonder is that it was not much greater, for there were whole streets from which typhus and scarlet fever, diphtheria, and diarrhœa in its worst forms were never absent. There were thousands of close, unventilated courts which were not paved, which were not drained, which were covered with pools of stagnant filth, and in which the ashpits and middens were in a state of indescribable

nastiness. The sewage of the town was so partial that it only extended over about one-third of the area. In fact, to sum up this description, it may truly be said that fifty years ago Birmingham, although it was no worse than any other of the great cities in the United Kingdom, was a town in which scarcely anything had been done either for the instruction, for the health, for the recreation, for the comfort, or for the convenience of the artisan population.

Now, let us measure the change which has taken place in these conditions within the memory of living men, and we shall see that nothing less than a revolution has been peacefully accomplished. It is hardly too much to say that the Birmingham of to-day is everything that old Birmingham was not. The sewerage has been completed, a system of sanitary inspection is strictly carried out, the private monopolies have been acquired by the corporation, their supply has been improved and cheapened, and the surplus profits have been carried to the credit of the rates. The town is well paved with wood in the principal streets, and with stone where there is the heaviest traffic. The footpaths have everywhere been put in order. The courts have been paved and drained. An infectious-hospital has been established, to which all contagious diseases are at once removed. In every district of the city there have been provided baths and wash-houses, parks and recreation-grounds, and free libraries which count their readers by hundreds of thousands. A magnificent art gallery and museum has been erected, the visitors to which number nearly a million in a single year. Schoolhouses, under the management of the School Board, with large playgrounds attached, have sprung up everywhere, and now accommodate 40,000 children, the rest being provided for in the voluntary schools. Technical education is offered at the Midland Institute and the Mason College, and art education at the School of Art and its branches. The great local endowed school of King Edward's foundation has been reformed and placed under representative management, and by means of scholarships offers the opportunity of higher education to the poorest of our citizens. In fact, the ordinary artisan finds now within his reach the appliances of health, the means of refinement, and the opportunities of innocent recreation which formerly were at the disposal of only the more wealthy inhabitants.

This striking improvement has been brought about by the operation of what may be called municipal socialism. It is the result of a wise coöperation by which the community as a whole, working through its representatives for the benefit of all its members, and recognizing the solidarity of interest which makes the welfare of the poorest a matter of importance to the richest, has faced its obligations and done much to lessen the sum of human misery, and to make the lives of all its citizens somewhat better, somewhat nobler, and somewhat happier.

Popular representative local government is the powerful instrument by which these reforms have been effected. Unlike the imperial legislation, it is very near to the poor, and can deal with details and with special conditions. It is subject to the criticism and direct control both of those who find the money and of those who are chiefly interested in its expenditure. In Great Britain, at any rate, it has been free from the suspicion of personal corruption, and it has always been able to secure the services of some of the ablest and most disinterested members of the community, who have been ready in this way to do the duty that lies nearest to them, and to do it with all their might.

It may, however, be supposed that this great work has been attended with enormous cost, and that property has been taxed unduly to provide for the wants and pleasures of those who contribute little or nothing to the necessary expenditure. There is no ground for such an opinion. The rates of Birmingham (if the charge due to the school rate and required to provide for a new service in the shape of elementary education be deducted) are less than they were thirty years ago, and the growth of the town and the increase in its wealth and ratable value have sufficed to meet these new developments of municipal functions. The present cost of all local work in the city, including poor-relief, education, and all the corporation expenditure, is about six shillings and sixpence in the pound on the assessed annual value of real property, which is probably 25 per cent. less than the actual value. Putting it in another way, the total charge is rather more than twenty shillings per head of the population, or about one-fifth of the charge of local administration in the city of Boston. Complaints of the burden of the rates are still heard from time to time, but they are less frequent and less forcible

than in the past. It is more and more coming to be recognized that the expenditure is in the nature of an investment, and that dividends are to be found in the improved health and comfort and the increased contentment of the people.

An interesting evidence of popular appreciation was afforded some years ago when the corporation promoted a bill consolidating their acts and in many cases extending their powers. Among other provisions was one repealing the general law which limits expenditure on art and education to a rate of one penny in the pound, and substituting unlimited powers of taxation for the purpose. The bill was opposed, and a poll of the ratepayers was demanded. The promoters boldly admitted their intention to spend more money in this direction, and made it their chief claim to support; and the ratepayers of Birmingham came in great numbers to the poll and by a large majority approved the bill, which has since been passed into law.

We must now turn from the special case of Birmingham to a more general survey of the comparative state of the whole kingdom. In reading histories which deal with the first half of the century, and especially those which refer to the period between 1830—before the first Reform Bill—and 1846, when the Corn Laws were repealed, one thing particularly strikes the observer, and that is the constant allusion to the turbulence of the times. Riots seem to have been of almost daily occurrence, and they were accompanied by long periods of exceptional distress. In the manufacturing districts there were serious disturbances, and it is significant both of the ignorance of the people and also of their destitution that these disturbances were generally attended by the destruction of machinery and the plunder of bakers' shops. In the agricultural districts the state of affairs was, if possible, still worse. There was not actual riot, but there were frequent outrages which took the form of incendiarism, so that on many occasions and during considerable periods the country districts were lighted up at night by burning ricks and flaming barns. The shopkeepers, especially the small shopkeepers who supplied the poor, were almost ruined by excessive taxation and by bad debts. The workingmen in the towns toiled for long hours and for an insufficient subsistence. In the country the agricultural laborers did not even secure the barest livelihood, but were compelled, not by way of exception, but as a matter of rule, to eke

out their wages by the assistance which they derived from the Poor Law.

In his history of the time Mr. Spencer Walpole thus speaks of the state of the laboring poor :

"For many years the condition of the laboring classes in Britain had been growing more and more intolerable. The old conditions of labor had been changed, and the laborer had suffered from the change. Before the latter half of the eighteenth century the great mass of the laboring poor had been scattered throughout the country, owing to an almost feudal allegiance to, and deriving some corresponding advantages from, the neighboring landlord. But the discoveries of the eighteenth century terminated these conditions. The manufacturing industries of the country were collected into a few great centres, and the persons employed in these manufactures necessarily accompanied them. In one sense they had their reward : the manufacturers gave them better wages than the farmer, and better wages were of no slight advantage to the laborer. In another sense their change of occupation brought them nothing but evil. Forced to dwell in a crowded alley, occupying at night-time a house constructed in neglect of every known sanitary law, employed in the daytime in an unhealthy atmosphere, and frequently on a dangerous occupation, with no education available for his children, with no reasonable recreation to cheer his leisure, with the blue sky of heaven shrouded from his view by the smoke of an adjoining factory, with the rich face of Nature hidden from him by a brick wall, neglected by an overworked clergyman, regarded as a mere machine by an avaricious employer, the factory operative naturally turned to the only places where relaxation was possible, and sought in the public-house, the prize-ring, or the cock-pit the degrading amusements which were the business of his leisure. . . .

"It so happened that, while the condition of the town operative was gradually becoming more and more wretched, the position of the country laborer was also changing for the worse. The old feudal ties which had hitherto connected the squire with his peasantry were being gradually loosened by the teachings of political economy. Improved agriculture and the introduction of machinery into farming were also altering the economy of rural districts. In the eighteenth century there were few large farms,

there were comparativedy few large fields; the corn was reaped by hand; the winters were passed in threshing it out by the flail; and the farmers had consequently work for their laborers at every season of the year. Threshing-machines altered this condition. They deprived the laborers of the demand which had previously existed for their work in the winter; and the farmers, in consequence, altered their system of hiring, and engaged the men, whom they had previously taken for a year, by the week. It so happened, too, that the vast reclamations of waste land which were made during the war pressed severely on the laboring poor. The common, on which every cottager had kept his cow, was annexed to the huge estate of the adjoining landlord, and the laborer found himself compelled to give up the beast which he had no longer the means to support. In many cases enclosures deprived the rural laborers of much more than their cow. They had been permitted, when the land was supposed to be worthless, to erect a little building on one side of the common, and to convert the patch of ground around it into a garden. In the eye of the law these men were squatters: they had no title to the cottage which they had erected or to the ground which they had reclaimed. The good of the country required the reclamation of wastes, and the little garden in the middle of the common came within the new fence-line of the rich squire. The cottage was demolished, the garden was ploughed up, and the cottager sank, at one blow, from the position of a small farmer, with a little house of his own, into that of a lodger at another cottage, whose sole source of livelihood was the wage which he received for his labor.

"The enclosures had been the indirect means of occasioning a considerable injury to the poor. But the Legislature, when it sanctioned them, had not foreseen the injury; on the contrary, it was universally imagined that the additional land which was brought into cultivation would increase the demand for labor, and so produce a permanent benefit to the laboring classes. The result, however, did not justify these expectations. The better wages which the laboring classes in a few instances received for a time were a poor compensation for the cow, the pig, and the goose which they were no longer able to keep. 'Before the enclosures,' said a laborer to Arthur Young, 'I had a good garden, kept two cows, and was getting on. Now I cannot keep so much as a goose, and am poor and wretched.' In a short time, moreover,

the miserable laborers were deprived of the solitary advantage which increased wages had given them. The prospect of additional work led to early marriages, and to a consequent multiplication of their numbers. The peace, and the lower prices which succeeded it, did away with the new work and added to the number of laborers. Arable land was thrown into pasture; paid-off soldiers and sailors returned to their parishes; and the rate of wages fell and fell continually. Dazzled by the prospect of increasing the food of the people, the Legislature had enabled the landowners to plough up the common, and to throw down the humble enclosure of the cottager. The common was again turned into pasture; but it was supporting the squire's beasts, and not the peasant's. The peasant had seen his garden seized, his cottage demolished, his cow sold, his family impoverished, but the land growing no more corn, and receiving no more culture than before. The cry which Isaiah had raised 2,000 years before came home to the miserable laborer, and was repeated by the most eloquent, though not the wisest, of his advocates in Parliament: 'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.'"

This wretched condition of things was aggravated by the state of the Poor Law. Pauperism had reached perfectly frightful dimensions. At one time in 1833 the poor rate amounted to twelve shillings per head of the whole population, and it was estimated that one in seven, counting every man, woman, and child, was in receipt of Poor-Law relief. Crime rose in the same proportion as pauperism. In spite of an atrocious criminal code, which, at the beginning of the century inflicted capital punishment for no less than 200 offences, and which was not materially changed till twenty years later, the number of criminals continued to increase. Even the ameliorations which were made in the code produced at first no diminution in the number of criminals, which reached its highest level in 1842, when there were 31,000 committals for trial in a single year. In fact, it is probable that the stringency of the law in the earlier period led to laxity in its administration, and many persons escaped altogether because the penalty prescribed was altogether disproportionate to the offence. It has been reserved for modern times to reap the full advantage both of the alteration of the laws and the improvement in the character of the popula-

tion. Last year, with a population which has nearly doubled, the total number of committals was only 13,000, while the nature of the crimes committed was certainly less serious than in former periods. In a single year—in 1834—480 human beings were sentenced to death, and the great majority were executed. Last year the capital sentence was pronounced in thirty-five cases, in twenty-one of which the full penalty was exacted.

It is no wonder that crime was rife when all the conditions were unfavorable to civilized existence. The working classes were expected to toil from early morning till late at night in buildings unprovided with the most ordinary sanitary arrangements. Wages were sometimes paid in truck, and often at the public-house, where a large part of the weekly earnings was spent before they were actually received. There was no leisure for any kind of mental improvement; there was no opportunity for innocent recreation. Brutal punishments and brutal amusements offered the chance of excitement to wearied bodies and jaded minds. Thrift was an unknown virtue, and when the wages were more than enough to keep body and soul together they were spent in coarse dissipation or cruel pastimes. There were no Factory Acts; there was no Mines Act; and there was no Truck Act. Women and children were forced to work as long as, or longer than, the men, and they were brutalized and degraded by the conditions of their labor. In the mines it was worse than it was above ground. We read of women almost without clothing laboring for sixteen hours a day, and of little children, with chains round their waists, dragging heavy weights along passages worse than the ordinary common sewer. Not only the health of the living was destroyed, but the health of future generations was seriously threatened.

I have spoken of the sanitary condition of Birmingham; but this was certainly no worse than the rest of the country. Typhus, which is the consequence of overcrowding and insufficient food, was prevalent in all the large towns and in many country places. In Liverpool alone 30,000 people were living in 8,000 underground cellars; while in Manchester one-eighth of the people were housed, if housing it can be called, in the same fashion. It was in these circumstances that an intelligent foreign observer—a German economist who visited England between forty and fifty years ago—wrote that he found by personal observation that the

state of the working classes of Great Britain was deplorable and intolerable, and he predicted an inevitable and imminent revolution. English witnesses no less impartial and intelligent were equally gloomy in their predictions of approaching evil, and they seemed to be justified by the fact that the state of the laboring poor was getting worse instead of better. Mr. McCulloch, the economist, writing in 1845, expressed the belief that the condition of the laboring classes had deteriorated in the previous twenty-five years; while Lord John Russell in 1844 said: "If we compare the condition of the working classes with what it was a century ago,—say 1740,—it is impossible not to see that, while the higher and middle classes have improved, and increased their means of obtaining comforts, of obtaining foreign articles of luxury and facilities of travelling from place to place, the laboring classes—the men who either till the soil or work in factories—have retrograded, and cannot now get for their service the quantity of the necessaries of life they could a century ago."

Happily, things were at their worst. The tide turned, and it has flowed in the direction of improvement ever since. Legislation has done much, philanthropy has done something, and the intelligent efforts of the working classes themselves have done more. All these things combined have helped to make our country a healthier and happier and a better place than it was half a century ago. The burden of national taxation has been reduced, especially the proportion paid by the poorer classes. At the present time, if a workingman does not smoke or drink, he can hardly be said to be subject to any taxation at all beyond the four pence per pound which he pays on his tea and the small contribution which he makes indirectly through the post-office. Pauperism has greatly diminished, and the poor rate is certainly less than half of what it was before the new Poor Law. Crime has diminished in quantity, and has, on the whole, been mitigated in its character. Education has been brought within the reach of every workingman's child and within the means of every parent. Protection has been afforded against excessive toil and overwork; and the observance of proper sanitary conditions for labor has been universally enforced. The laws against combinations have been repealed, trades-unions have been legalized, and the workmen are able to meet the employers on more equal terms in the settlement of the rate of

wages. The care of the public health has been recognized as a public duty and enforced both upon individuals and the local authorities. The trammels have been removed from industry; the taxes on food and on all the great necessaries of life have been repealed; facilities of travel and of inter-communication have been largely extended and developed; opportunities of self-improvement and recreation have been afforded to all at the cost of the community; and last, but not least,—since this is perhaps the indirect cause of many of the other results named,—the suffrage has been widened, until now every householder, however poor and however humble, has a voice in the government of his country and his full share of influence in the making of its laws.

It is not easy to measure the change which has taken place by statistics, but it may be illustrated by the following figures: Mr. Giffen, our most eminent living statistician, made a careful inquiry some time ago into the rate of wages at different periods, and he found that in the last fifty years they had advanced from 50 to 100 per cent. In the same time the hours of labor have been reduced on an average by 20 per cent. In very few trades do they now ever exceed ten hours, while in the majority they average nine hours, and in many they have been reduced to eight. The means for an innocent and profitable use of the leisure which has thus been afforded have been supplied by the action of the municipal and local authorities. Not only have the wages improved, but the cost of living has diminished. Bread is 20 per cent. cheaper on the average; sugar is 60 to 70 per cent. cheaper; tea, 75 per cent. cheaper; clothing, 50 per cent. cheaper. The cost of fuel, as represented by coal, has been diminished by one-half. Light, in the shape of gas or petroleum, is infinitely better and very much cheaper than in the time when tallow rushlights were the only illumination within the reach of the poor. Locomotion has become easy and is placed within the reach of all; while the postage of letters, which averaged a shilling apiece, is now reduced to a uniform penny, or, in the case of postcards, to one halfpenny for each communication. Only one article of commerce of great importance has increased in price, and that is meat in the shape of mutton and beef. Fifty years ago, however, mutton and beef did not enter into the ordinary consumption of the working classes; and if they tasted meat at all it was only in the shape of bacon. House rent has also risen, and in the course

of the time of which we are speaking it has probably doubled. But house rent is a test of prosperity; and it is just because the working classes can afford to give themselves better accommodation that we find this great increase in the rate of house rent.

On the whole, it may truly be said that not only have the working classes more to spend, but that they are able to get more for the money which they do spend. This is confirmed by the extraordinary increase which has taken place in the consumption of the chief articles of food. Thus, for instance, the consumption of sugar is four times per head as much as it was fifty years ago; tea, three and a half times as much; rice, sixteen times; eggs, six times; and tobacco, twice as much. And lastly, in consequence, perhaps, of the better food and living and of the better house accommodation, as well as on account of the improved sanitary conditions, the death-rate has diminished, the health of the country has improved, and the expectation of life at the different age-periods is now from two to four years better than it was.

In the same fifty years the habit of thrift has been considerably developed. The working classes have had more money, and they have found it possible and advantageous to reserve a portion of their income as a provision against sickness and old age. During the half-century the depositors in the savings-bank have multiplied tenfold, and the amount of funds which have been placed there for security has increased from thirteen millions sterling to considerably over a hundred millions. In addition, there are coöperative societies with a million of members and fourteen millions of capital; building societies with fifty millions of liabilities; and friendly societies almost innumerable. With regard to the last, it is difficult to obtain exact returns, but in 1880 the Registrar reported that he had received returns from 12,687 societies, with 4,800,000 members and £13,000,000 invested funds. It is probable that the total figures are at least double those shown by these imperfect returns.

An impartial consideration of the facts and figures here set forth must lead to the conclusion that there has been a very great improvement in the condition of the people during the period under review, and that this improvement has been largely due to the intervention of the state and to what is called socialistic legislation. The acts for the regulation of mines and the inspec-

tion of factories and workshops, the Truck Act (preventing the payment of wages in kind), the acts regulating merchants' shipping, the Artisans'-Dwellings Act, the Allotments Act (enabling local authorities to take land and to provide allotments for laborers), the Education Act, the Poor Law, and the Irish Land Acts are all of them measures which more or less limit or control individual action. The pedantic adherence to supposed fixed principles of political economy has been so frequently invaded by this legislation that few people would think it worth while to appeal to them as conclusive against further action, and it is recognized that each case must be decided on its merits, and cannot be determined on purely abstract grounds. The late Professor Stanley Jevons, in his essay on "The State in Relation to Labor," lays down the modern doctrine in these words: "The state is justified in passing any law, or even in doing any single act, which, without ulterior consequences, adds to the sum total of happiness. . . . The liberty of the subject is only the means towards an end. Hence when it fails to produce the desired result, it may be set aside and other means employed."

It appears, then, that experience has shown that in many instances great advantages have followed the extension of the functions of government, and that no sufficient objection exists to their further application when good cause can be shown. It must not be supposed that such cause does not still exist, or that the reforms already accomplished have exhausted the possibilities of statesmanship. Unfortunately it still remains true that in the richest country of the world the most abject misery exists side by side with luxurious profusion and extravagance. There are still nearly a million persons in the United Kingdom who are in receipt of parish relief, and as many more who are always on the verge of poverty. In our great cities there are rookeries of ignorance, intemperance, and vice, where civilized conditions of life are impossible, and morality and religion are only empty names. In certain trades unrestricted competition and the constant immigration of paupers from foreign countries have reduced wages to a starvation level, while there are other industries—as, for instance, shipping and railway traffic—where the loss of life is terrible, and the annual butcher's bill is as great as in a serious war. In the agricultural districts the divorce between the laborer and the soil he tills is still the fruitful source of distress to the poor and danger to the state.

The Corn-Law rhymer, Ebenezer Elliott, represents the laborers of his time as

> "Landless, joyless, restless, hopeless,
> Gasping still for bread and breath,
> To their graves by trouble hunted,
> Albion's Helots toil till death";

and it will not be asserted that any marked or general improvement has yet taken place in the conditions of their labor.

These are the facts with which we have yet to deal; and the hope of the future lies in the awakening of the public conscience, and in its recognition of the duty of the community to its poorest and weakest members. We may be encouraged by the success of past efforts to persevere on similar lines, and to continue a policy which has been shown to afford practical results.

There is no need to abase the rich in order to raise the poor, and it is neither possible nor expedient to drag everything down to one dead level. We cannot, if we would, equalize the conditions and the capacities of men. The idler, the drunkard, the criminal, and the fool must bear the brunt of their defects. The strong, the prudent, the temperate, and the wise will always be first in the race. But it is desirable that the government, which no longer represents a clique or a privileged class, but which is the organized expression of the wants and wishes of the whole nation, should rise to a true conception of its duties, and should use the resources, the experience, and the talent at its disposal to promote the greater happiness of the masses of the people.

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