

THE SPIRITUAL REPUBLIC.

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For The Spiritual Republic.

Social Reconstruction.

BY J. K. INGALLS.

That our present social condition is at once chaotic and transitional, is obvious to all thinkers. That numerous theories and movements for an improvement in social life are imminent there can be no doubt. Whoever can throw light upon the working of the various elements now discordantly active in our system, should render his other testimony in order that the hurtful and pernicious may be eliminated, and the true and wise become established intelligently and permanently in our Spiritual republic.

In the growth of political ideas we have at length arrived at freedom. But for our barbaric social and commercial relations, we should immediately establish equality and brotherhood.

The education which the race needs is not so much of an intellectual as of a moral character. And this education is more readily effected by example than by precept, by life than by word. Illustration is the great secret of all successful teaching. By this means principles are comprehended by the intellectually weak or even perverse.

Now, society, through its varied institutions of learning, public press, pulpit and rostrum, teaches the importance of virtue, integrity and honesty, yet lives in the undisguised violation of all; sanctioning every form of wrong and giving the protection of the law to the most flagrant schemes for robbing and oppressing the poor and defenseless; slavery, the vilest form of all, having lost its privilege in this great nation only within the last few years; and as a consequence of its own madness, not of any purpose on the part of our chosen rulers. Giant monopolies, financial, commercial and industrial, are given unusual privileges by special and by general enactments, while absorb the products of industry, and annually impoverish the soil and its cultivators.

This is more than a theoretical issue. If we rush into association with the virus of these evils in our constitution, all the economies and advantages of original industry will only tend to develop the poison, in proportionate rapidity.

First, and as a condition precedent, the law of distribution and conservation must be applied. To ignore this law is to put everything upon the hazard, and repeat the *chance* gambling of the groping ages, when the player staked himself, his wife and children on the issue, and having lost, took up his badge of slavery and implement of toil, and yielded himself and them in hopeless bondage.

The inalienable right of every one to the soil required to cultivate for subsistence, must be engrafted on the organic law of our country; but until that is effected, the application of the law I have indicated will be insecure, in the association, all necessary protection to person and property; terms far preferable to capital and labor. By conservation of property, I mean the guarantee of its value from year to year, whether existing in perishable or enduring form. This society is able to do; and only this. One hundred dollars in gold at the end of the year has no more value than at the beginning. In most of the products the value decreases, and in many, as fruits and vegetables, wholly perishes, if not consumed within the year. All real estate is liable to destruction, by exhaustion of the soil, decay of buildings, fences, etc. This must be restored by labor of the person, and must be assumed by society: The same is true of all necessary improvements. Productions of a perishable value, must be conserved by use and by such methods as society may justly adopt, to guarantee the expenditure of labor in all serviceable production, as well as the return of all the elements again to the soil or passive agent.

This will leave no possibility for any award to capital as now understood, any dividend, as profits or interest, but will secure to each worker the whole result of his toil, and only exact what is necessary to keep good the productiveness of the soil, and the implements and appliances: which enhance the value and productiveness of labor, and the carrying out of such plans of improvement and education as the good of all may seem to demand:

It must strike all, that without this ground work, no effort at reorganization of labor can give any permanent relief. The truth is that mining, working the metals, and most kinds of manufactures, have an organization of labor, under joint stock companies and individual ownership, as complete as an association could hope to attain in one generation. Yet its result is to benefit the toiler but incidentally. In all there obtains, periodically, a stagnation, which stupid political economists attribute to over production. That is, if we accept the authorities, the labor has produced so much cloth, it must for a time lie idle and go naked — so much food that it must cease to work — and starve! built so many houses that it must be turned into the street, until a returning demand shall enable it to pay the rent of the premises itself has reared!

Even agriculture in the hands of large proprietors in this country, and especially in England, has organized its labor, at least with the approach to true principles, without materially benefitting any one but the employer, because the law of distribution has been ignored, and the good old rule of the dark ages applied that

“They shall get, who have the power
And they shall keep who can.”

It is the violation of right in distribution, not disorganized labor, which works, antagonism in existing society. It is for this we all stand as Ishmaels to-day, however we may prate of Christian obligation, or of patriotic devotion.

To suppose that any combination or organization can remedy, or even mitigate the evils which flow from unequal distribution, is to subject ourselves to a repetition of the follies and crimes of the past. Or to suppose that our present disparity in mental conditions is the producing cause of unequal distribution, is to ignore the fact that mental training gives no security against helpless poverty, and stupid ignorance of all that relates to man's highest good, presents no obstacle to the accumulation of vast wealth and marked success in the mere lottery of life which all business has become under the rule of insatiate and swinish greed.

The rule of equitable distribution would prevent the accumulation of vast fortunes by the few, and the utter want of the many, and thus leave no ground of surmise even as to what result might follow a forced division of wealth, while at the same time it obviated the necessity.

It is very true, that until the people are wise enough to apply the remedy, great fortunes will be made, especially, as during our recent struggle, when some public emergency requires the utmost sacrifice of the citizen. It is by taking advantage then, of the so called “laws of trade,” that the nation's “necessity becomes the speculator's opportunity;” and he not only embezzles our wealth, but lays our children for generations under contribution to pay the interest upon his extortionate accumulations.

Perhaps we need education to enable us to remedy these evils; perhaps organization; but it is not our intellectual education, on one hand, nor an industrial organization on the other; but an education out of brute selfishness and an organization of votes to compel such system of laws as are compatible with personal honesty and public honor.

But to attempt an associative movement with the question of distribution unsettled, would prove as disastrous as any foe of association could wish. Until enough persons are educated out of that selfish, miserly greed, from which all award to death proceeds, it will be well that no attempt be made. It will be better to leave it to chance or Providence, and to the “tendency of events,” which seems at the present time to dispose certain manufacturers, especially in England, to admit their operatives to a share in the profits of the business.

In my next I will consider some of the requirements which will be made of persons seeking to enter upon associative life, and a feasible method of procedure.

Social Reconstruction—No. 2.

BY J. K. INGALLS.

We have seen that in any comprehensive practical movement to realize association, there must be embraced such elements of equity in distribution as will render impossible the development of class prerogatives and those conditions of inequality which constitute the “glory and shame” of our civilization.

Unless, therefore, we can find persons in sufficient numbers to co-operate, without appealing to motives, such as are employed in stock Jobbing enterprises, we had better wait until they can be found, There must also be a higher motive than a desire to improve our individual conditions, for it must not be forgotten that such movements at first must be experimental, and require much outlay of toil and means, and perseverance, before any marked success can be obtained

If, however, the requisite numbers can be found with moderate means and devoted purpose, and with just conceptions of What the movement required and what it promised. There can be little doubt of a final triumph. The first pioneers must be builders, toilers in the work, and happy in the growing prospect that at length they may become *dwellers* in the social order they have inaugurated for the generations to come.

To think of spanning at a bound the gulf between civilization and the “combined order” is preposterous. Doubtless the latter may be attained without long and tedious delay in methods of transitions. But the steps have all to be taken; even though it may be possible now to proceed with the rapidity of the steam car. We are living in this age and country under remarkably favorable circumstances. Our form of government as the only one under which any true system could ever grow. If not based on the “Law of the Series,” It will be found readily to conform to it. That it is subject now to the sway of unworthy men, and to abuses and corruptions sickening to contemplate, is not the fault of the system ; but that in spite of it, we cling still to the commercial and social customs, which we received from monarchical and feudal Europe, and which we should have abjured with political caste and the “divine right” of kings.

The commerce of Republican America is controlled today by tie Aime maxime and rules as in Lie days of Queen Dido, and its permission to live under our laws, has made it king here, even as slavery, from bare toleration, ascended to the seat of power and ruled us for generations. It is assumed now that every public man, at least, has his *price*, and offices are bestowed, and lucrative franchises granted through a system of brokerage and commission as fully organized and recognized as any in stock jobbing or forestalling operations. Legislation is for caste and corporations, and wherever it will bring most money to the legislator and his friends.

Were the principles of our form of government honestly carried ont, we should have free lands by an equitable limitation, which is the only law through which human rights can be secured. We should have no banking institutions accorded the privilege of exacting one interest from government and another from the people. We should have no legalized corporations, empowered to declare among their stockholders fifty per cent of the people’s earnings; nor such monstrous perversions of “ rights of property ” as allow combinations of wealth to forestall the markets of the world, and subject the people to the opposite extremes of famine, on the one hand, and of over production on the other.

When the people shall have rescued their government from the power of commerce, as they have from that of slavery, we shall find social reconstruction a matter of easier solution than that of the recusant States now is.

Then it will be legitimate to urge on capitalists the advantage of association, where their wealth can be conserved and glorified, but until then, it is idle to think of diverting capital from its explorations by promising it greater facilities in the association, to effect the same thing, The hope of Fourier that some Prince of Europe would inaugurate the movement, is not more absurd. It is useless to wait for such possibilities and ignore the practicabilities which we possess.

We have yet cheap, fertile tracts of land; we live in an age when every kind of industry is required and comparatively well rewarded. Our great need is social intercourse, refined and elevating, and guarantee against the strokes of misfortune, and the oppressions of our unequal system of trade, To those who do not care to achieve a condition which will remove the necessity of work; but to be protected in the enjoyments of its full products, where co-operation and social harmony shall take the place of individual

struggle, and the envy, contention and personal conflict now involved in life; there is abundant inducement to enter into the new movement. All that is wanting is competent leaders, and confidence in each other.

But these two requisites can only be attained by experience. It would be better then to begin by associating in a simple way at first; by forming a neighborhood or house

hold; co-operating in sales, purchases, necessary machinery for common purposes, etc., as far and as fast as it was found practicable.

The communities of Shakers, etc., have shown that cooperation secures physical comforts and security against the ordinary adversities of life. If they have not higher cultivation, and superior social enjoyments, it is not for want of means; but because their religious bond forbids,

Their peculiar ideas of marriage evidently do not make them more or less successful in a material point of view; since by adopting children and the accession of new converts their numbers are often increased as rapidly as if they lived as other people.

The secret of their success is, devotion to an idea. They believe it to be in accordance with the divine will, and so undoubtedly it is, for them: but that there are not still higher purposes and aims for which to live, and on which we might come into accord, I cannot doubt,

To effect a change so great, so grand as the turning this contentious world into a "combined order," as harmonious as the order of the "revolving heavens," would be a work in which no man or woman would shrink from any toil or privation. But when it is considered that these are not necessary, only loving, cheerful labor, with deep love for humanity and loyal trusting hearts, I cannot feel but that bonds sufficiently strong to bind in union hearts thus moved will be found. Whether we call them religious or otherwise is of no account. There must be a cause to work for, or the work will not be done. If we start with selfish aims to secure a better position personally, or to acquire more wealth, we shall surely fall out by the way.

The only organizations succeeding till now have been "communities;" and for the reason that they have some central idea. In Shakerism it was the inspiration of Ann Lee, and the peculiar asceticism she taught. The Oneida community have succeeded beyond anticipation. Their central idea is "perfect salvation" through Christ, though their faith seems equally strong in the especial mission of J. H. Noyes, and his discovery that Christ's second coming was "about the year '70" and that since then the world has been in complete darkness till now.

It does not follow because communities only have as yet succeeded, that that form must be adopted to warrant success. It only shows that there must be a common object in view and that above the scope of individual interest or ambition. When association becomes adopted generally, there will be a combination of interests and attractions, as well as noble motives to keep the world moving in that order; but now to stem the popular current, to make the personal ambitions subservient to the common good, and individual interests harmonize with the general weal, requires a superior aim and purpose, which has heretofore taken the form of some religious idea or fanaticism. But such movements can never mold society generally. A truly world-wide philanthropy and a genuine patriotism can alone do this. If these constitute, or are embraced in religion, very well. But no religious idea narrower than the paternity of God and the brotherhood of man, will serve any but a partial and exceptional use.

I should say that to commence an organization inaugurative of these principles, no persons should be induced to enter, who could not come with a permanent purpose to serve humanity and assist in bringing to practical test the great principles of co-operative labor, distributive justice and social concord. In the experience of the various communities, there is much to profit by, if we are not too proud to learn; and with moderate anticipations as to immediate results and steady faith in ultimate success, the work will not fail of its reward, even in its first stages of progress.

Social Reconstruction—No. 3.

BY J. K. INGALLS.

In considering what is to be done, now and here, for the promotion of co-operative movements, we find our way somewhat embarrassed by the conflicting theories prevailing, especially of two systems of sociology, which, though antagonistic in many respects, are both French in origin, and similar in this respect; that they make human rights subservient to order, and though professing to accept the spirit of history, rule out this country's history for nearly a century; deny the "sovereignty of the people," and insist on a governing class, representing the material wealth of the country.

Association, as taught by Fourier, is certainly superior as an abstract conception to Comte's Sociology; but it is justly obnoxious to the criticism of the Positivist, in violating the historic order and spirit. It is also open to the charge of dealing with fancies most puerile and absurd, as to the productiveness of organized labor, and the princely fortunes to be realized in the combined order by artists, and by all singularly endowed with skill. Its hope of realizing attractive industry, is, moreover, rather based upon the employment of certain "simple devices" than upon the broad ground of the natural adaptedness of the truly enfranchised soul, to gravitate to that which is most useful and most needed by the general good : and in fixing the awards of effort in material wealth and aggrandizement, however brilliant and attractive, it fails to offer any correct or adequate motive to the pioneers and builders who must do the heavy work of transitional movements.

As to Positivism, it is unfitted as a system of social philosophy to any but a Catholic country and a monarchy — at least until it has been modified to suit the new meridian.

As an abstraction, it may apply to philosophers, working people and to women as they exist in France, but hardly to any other country — not at all to this. Indeed, the fault of each of these systems is, that they make man subservient to the system, their highest conception of order seeming to be the military; where the individual is completely swallowed up in the "grand movement."

Now, all this may be satisfactory to the controlling mind in each instance; and undoubtedly, where great and pressing issues have to be met, it is best that the strongest and most skillful hand should guide the helm. If human history or experience is of any value, however, "the right man in the right place" is as likely to arise under a democracy as under a hierarchy or monarchy. And if the bestowment of powers means anything, then all should be educated and exercised — the weak, not the strong, encouraged, and the strong not the weak, restricted. Nothing so truly educates as actual exercise. The mother who would not allow her child to walk, because it was not as strong as a man, would be no more unreasoning than the philosophy which dénies to women and workingmen a voice in the government, because they are weak and ignorant.

The franchise is te great educator of & free people, and to prove the capabilities of the Individual, he must be placed in responsible positions, where, even many times failing, he will at length succeed. And any philosophy based upon results, where freedom of action and responsibilities of position have been Lie portion of but à small and privileged class, is unworthy of serious attention by reformers in this age and country,

What has all this to do with the social movement? Just this: Any movement to succeed, at least in this country, must be based upon the democratic idea. If we are to have order, it must be through liberty. And the religious cement we need is the unswerving and enduring faith that freedom is the great conservator of order. Of what avail has been the shedding of rivers of blood in our great national struggle for existence, if it has not taught us that liberty is as truly conservative as slavery has proved itself revolutionary and destructive.

There is this distinction, we should d learn to make before going abroad for new social systems. In the old world tyranny may be conservative, at least of a certain material order, and freedom destructive; but in this country all this is reversed; liberty establishes and maintains order; tyranny seeks everywhere to undermine and destroy it

Whatever is the ultimate form then of association, we have no election in this country and in this age, but to adopt one conformable to our political system, and the stage in history we occupy: How futile, then, to look for a solution of the social problem to the systems of Fourier or Comte? Neither of them had

any conception of a republic based on universal suffrage, of a government by the people. Neither of them gave fundamental place to any system of human rights or deemed of any importance the great principle of limitation in the exercise of powers, which dates back in our Anglo-Saxon history to the time of Alfred.

But, aside from these fatal omissions, they have each failed to furnish any satisfactory method of distribution. Fourier, though elaborate, fails here. Comte attempts no solution at all, but indirectly justifies the monstrous wrongs which now exist, and deems the vast accumulation of wealth and lands in the hands of/the few as the legitimate means of conserving property for the use of future generations. Indeed, he ignores distribution altogether, and proposes, in place thereof, to bring a moral sentiment to bear upon the owner, to cause him to use humanely the accumulations he has acquired from the labor of others.

I think there was a school of philosophers here, who deemed efforts to humanize the holders of slaves far preferable to the mad measures of the abolitionists; but Providence took the question out of the hands of the South-side politicians and religionists, and will do the same with the labor question of to-day.

Fourier eschews duty, and elevates pleasure to a position of arbiter of human destiny. On the contrary, Comte insists on duty as the great law of life, and ignores, as chimerical, all discussion of human rights. But surely it might have occurred to him that every duty, of whatever kind, presupposed the enjoyment, at least, of the right to discharge it, freely and fully.

I have referred to these two teachers to show how futile it is to look to schools of philosophy for any practical solution of the social question.

Society is an organic form, and can only be given favorable conditions of growth and development. No combination of French chemists or men of science can create an organization that will be worth retaining, however skillfully they may be able to treat one; so society must grow and become developed from germs already existing. The most we can do is to prepare favorable conditions and remove obstacles to its growth.

The social problem is not, after all, so difficult of solution. Not too little, but too much, has already been done in the direction of modeling and molding a system. Not so much to do, as to undo what has been ignorantly and wickedly done, to secure prerogative and the attainment of selfish aims and class distinctions.

But we need experiment and practical effort. We might as well attempt to study geography without maps, and from the text of Herodotus and Pliny, or even from the Arabian Nights, or to acquire a knowledge of chemistry, without a laboratory, from the old alchemists, as to think of solving the social problem *a priori*, after the manner of writers on social science.

We have had too much legislation and systematization, not enough of freedom and practical experiment. The celestial spheres contrive to get on in tolerable Harmony, without the impertinent interference of meddling legislators. In animated nature we are told that "the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands." In human society we shall never know what is the "divine order."

until men and women are free to move in it, unawed by any tyranny over body or mind,

The first step, then, in the social problem, is the assertion of freedom for the individual in the enjoyment of all his rights, under limitations only of respecting the same freedom in all. The right to life is perfect, but must not peril another's. The right to liberty is equally so, but cannot encroach on another's. Protection in the possession of land and home is an indefeasible right, but which must not extend to the deprivation of another. Property, in the products of one's labor, must be secured, and can only be secured by the repeal of all laws and usages, which, under pretense of protecting property, give to wealth and the ability to lay all labor under contribution, and through various processes of rent, interest and profits, defraud and rob the laborer of the property he has in the products of his industry.

Now, if there are a few persons who have faith in the perfectibility of human nature, who practically believe in the brotherhood of mankind, and who seek no advantage of each other, but desire to co-operate on a truly mutual basis, will associate themselves, and locate on some healthy and pleasant place, where agriculture, fruit growing, and various mechanical employments promise to be ordinarily remunerative, there can be no doubt of success; and in a few years a community will be built up, which will test the order which will arise from freedom and equality.

That we can have orders built up under the domination of spiritual and temporal hierarchies, history bears-witness. Can freedom do as much? I believe infinitely more. Are any so assured of their own

assimilation to the principles of truth and justice as to be willing to become helpers and co-workers in such a movement? If so, let them open correspondence with each other and see how far their ideas and sentiments coalesce.

But there is one question which, above all which will have to be canvassed, before proceeding in any undertaking. What, at the beginning, shall be the relation of the family? To what extent exclusive? The organizations which have flourished in the world have been chiefly recluses, who abjured the world and enforced celibacy, as monks and nuns, shakers, etc. The existence of the family seems incompatible with association. Is it actually so? But we must defer the discussion of this question to another number.

For The Spiritual Republic.

Social Reconstruction—No. 4.

BY J. K. INGALLS.

Among the many obstacles to an equitable system of cooperation, and to social well-being, there have been enumerated the influences of the family, lack of education, disorganization of labor, involving poverty of production, &c. If, however, we follow each of these influences back, we shall find that they have their origin in the class prerogative which law and custom still award to selfish greed and lust of power. The family, for instance, is belligerently selfish, because only by being so can it maintain its position and secure its members against the aggressive competition caused by the unequal laws and barbarous rules of commerce, which award wealth in possession, but plunder it in production.

With education it is still the same. Men are educated with reference to using their strongest powers to secure advantages over the weak and ignorant. Wealth gives unlimited leisure and means of education; poverty denies both. To educate men out of selfishness, it is necessary to take away the stimulants to avarice on the one hand, and discouragements to labor on the other. With respect to organizing labor, the same principle applies. If we are to continue the present system of distribution, holding out to greed the promise of the highest rewards, and punishing the laborious with poverty, care and shame, then we have labor too much organized already, and we should hail the present or even worse anarchy of labor as the most hopeful indication of progress. It has been said that the production of this country averages only thirty-four cents to each person per day; and this is given as a reason why so many are poor. This is not the true reason. Even with this small sum. If the poor were provident and the rich just; or rather, if distribution were equal, and that amount were expended in a wise and careful manner, none would suffer absolute want. But when distribution is of a nature that allows one man to receive and spend the share of one thousand. It is plain, I should think, to the stupidest brain, that the thousand must experience want and poverty, no matter how meagre or how great the average production. If a lack of organization of industry was truly the cause, then in England, where the average production is nearly double that of this country, and where many industries are far better organized than here, there should be a corresponding disproportion of poverty. But what is the fact? Why, England is the very country brought forward as illustrative of the evils of our present social and commercial system. No. Unless we begin with adopting an equitable system of distribution, we shall only increase the disparity between rich and poor, the more we organize labor and increase production. And any scheme of organization which does not come out square on this prime question, will only prove "a snare and a delusion" to working men and women. This prime question settled, the rest will regulate itself. When it is known that honest effort only can in any case receive compensation, and that the laborer is secure forevermore in the product of his industry, then there will be no difficulty in forming industrial armies, and wielding the combined force of society against any obstacle to human progress and happiness. I like the quadrille better than the military squad as an illustration of what organization and system can do; the ball-room better than the battle-field. The quadrille is formed not by forced consent, but with voluntary eagerness. To the sound of music it passes through successive maneuvers and changes. There is no lack of inducement for each to do his part well; there is no crowding out of place in a well conducted ball-room, for each has equal right and opportunity. It is because of this, that there is no surfeit of pleasure, and no poverty of enjoyment brought together in painful contrast. Once in a rude village inn, I was present at what was called a ball. In it places were held by a sort of "feudal tenure," that is, the parties (or rather, the gentlemen) first in place had the right to

name their successors. As there were more dancers than places, of course some had to stand and look on and take their chance through various kinds of intrigue and chicanery of getting a place at a l; thus the quiet and well disposed parties obtained little or no opportunity for the pastime, while the rude and unprincipled had it all their own way. This, thought I, is but a picture of human society, which now offers every encouragement to the selfish and vicious, and every discouragement to the well meaning and industrious. The strong and unfeeling control the disposition of wealth, while the weak and yielding are crowded to the wall and stripped of every right.

I feel called upon to repeat these things because movements are proposed professedly in the name of humanity, and in the interest of labor, which are non-committal, except in a general way upon this vital question ; yet proposing stock dividends, profits to capital, rent or usury in a more or less disguised form. Now if it is yet doubtful whether complete conservation of capital and ownership of the product by the producer is not the true relation between capital and labor then let us discuss the question till we have found the truth. If there is any error in the position it can be pointed out with mathematical certainty. Do not then let associationists ignore it through hope of "roping in" some capitalists who would not willingly and knowingly give assistance to a genuine movement to change our barbaric system of commerce, and our industrial feudalism to a rule of right, and to fraternal co-operation.

With this point definitely settled, we shall find no difficulty in arranging the details of organization. When each individual is certain that no wrong can be done him, he will be more anxious for the general good than now for his own. The strife of individuals will cease, and co-operation everywhere result. Each one will warm with desire to realize the combined order. Family pride and exclusiveness will then be changed to zeal in the cause of humanity, and even patriotism will expand to a degree that is world-wide.

It is not, then, family, or form of education, or poverty of production, which causes the distraction of our social system; but Inherent injustice in our system of distribution corruption in officials, dishonesty in exchanges, robbery of the poor and weak. These are not the faults of human nature, or the crime of individuals or classes, but they result as a necessary consequence of our retaining the laws of trade and property which were adapted only to the rude people and most barbarous ages of the world. Potentially, our system of land tenure, interest, rent and system of wages paid labor is the same as the slavery of ancient Greece and Rome, and, indeed, of our own system of chattel slavery we think ourselves so fortunate in having abolished in the present decade.

Perhaps as much can be done to advance the real interests of mankind by agitating these questions politically as any other way. The readiness with which politicians have entertained the eight hour system, seems to give promise that whatever intelligent working-men will concentrate their efforts upon can be carried through our Legislatures. Still, I think a movement to organize and combine various industries, particularly agriculture and horticulture, would be attended with success, and productive of vast benefit to the world by showing practically how it can be done. It has been said that the order of labor organization is, 1st, production, 2d, exchange, 3rd, distribution. The truth is that the last completes the series, and the first two are anarchic, because not able to be ultimated. We have some systems of labor, and also of exchange, however poor, but none of distribution. The only approach to it, is what may be called "working on shares;" but, as this is based on the same principle of interest and rent, which I have shown to be destructive to all rights of labor and even of life to the laborer, this can scarcely be claimed even as an approximation. Now in any wisely arranged work, as in nature, "the end is before the beginning;" so, when distribution is determined on a just and scientific basis, production and exchange cannot fail to arrange themselves in harmonious order and sequence. It is thus In all human action. The motive exists, then the purpose formed, then action arises and means are employed. The farmer plants and tends his crop that he may reap and enjoy the fruits. Even the wages which the hireling is promised is held out as a motive to action to help produce for another. Distribution, then, is the main-spring of all industry; exchange is, or should be, but a method of perfecting and completing distribution. Production, though first in the material order, is last in the essential conception, and is in itself of no account or consideration, except as it results in distribution.

The indifference of mankind to useful or productive labor, the repugnance of intelligent and polished natures to its drudgery, can only be explained on the ground that production and distribution are dissevered. When by system we distribute the results of labor, there will be no lack of laborers or of system in their operations. The uniform dress and martial drill, and all the appliances and devices for raising enthusiasm, will come along in due time, If needed, but until we are ready to plant ourselves upon

some principle of natural right and enlightened justice, they will be of little avail. At least, we must determine upon some ground which does not involve an ignorance of the simplest rules of mathematics.

I consider this the prime problem of sociology. Where the general good moves to action, we can scarce go wrong, especially with free toleration and criticisms of opinion; but to attempt a movement without this basis principle determined, is to invite certain disaster and failure, and to assist, rather than check, the rapacious operations of capitalists and speculators.

Whether to have all “live under the same roof or pronounce the same shibboleth,” may ho safely left to the growing wisdom of the order, and would be no criterion by which I should determine “success.” If, however, anyone can refer me to any community, associated village or township where distribution has been reduced to an approximation — to a certainty, then I will gladly acknowledge the same. At present, I know of none except some communities of Shakers, etc., where there Is any security against the land-lord, the money-lord, or the fore-staller; where rent interest and stock dividends do not take the first and chief share, leaving to productive industry, to say the least, an uncertain quantity.

The rule that cost is to be the *limit of price* determines nothing, since to the cost will have to be added the rent, interest, or other exaction of capital, which the producer will be bound to pay from his price, while these barbaric customs and laws prevail. But in association, this might be remedied. By co-operation, debts or tenanting could be avoided as well as the paying or taking of usance.

If there is still not sufficient strength of purpose to inaugurate a movement which shall aim to establish first of all a just distribution, we had better “wait a little longer” and continue to operate upon the public conscience, than attempt speculations which are sure to fail of any social result, however they may make fortune for some.

To be successful, we must at least have the merit of starting right, and of holding to a declaration of truth as well as independence.

For The Spiritual Republic.

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

FROM FRANCIS BARRY, TO J. K. INGALLS.

I propose to take room for only a few hints as to my views of the true plan of reconstruction.

I believe the Berlin Heights movement to have been organized on the only plan that can prove successful with individualized reformers for material. Our idea, since ultimated, was, after selecting a location combining the greatest possible number of advantages together, or rather, to invite to this locality as many persons of character as chose to come, who could accept, theoretically and practically, the general principles of freedom and toleration; leaving each and all free to carry out, us best they could, their own ideas and théories in all respects consistent with the central idea. It was foreseen that, if an effort were made to combine a large number of persons of independence of character, and (necessarily) diversity of habits, tastes, opinions and tendencies, in one spécifie experiment, it would assuredly fail, and the individuals composing it would scatter to the “ends of the earth.” But, gathering a large number in the same general locality, all sympathizIng and co-operating in a general way, and to a great extent in details, each one, or each few, free to make any experiment, all the rest looking on to se and be made wiser by its success or allure, but not Insuring its failure by piling into it a host of incongruous and ill-assorted elements, the general movement being always ready to “catch the pieces” of the particular effort that might full, the particular, elements being always improved by the-experiment, it was believed that the only success possible would be achieved. The results, I think, have demonstrated this view. The movement, *such as it is*, is a success. As the the value and importance of what has as yet been attained, it depends entirely upon what you consider the great desideratum. If it is all important to sleep under the same roof, eat at the same table and pronounce the same “shibboleth,” I confess that socialism, for independent, progressive minds, is a failure and an impossibility. But If the success of freedom and human rights, and the development of independent manhood and womanhood, are more important, I

would rather have the socialism that any half dozen earnest, determined men and women can inaugurate anywhere, than the results of the efforts of all the Perfectionists or Shakers In Christendom.

New York, April L 1867.

J. K. Ingalls, "Social Reconstruction—No. 1," *The Spiritual Republic* 1 no. 5 (February 2, 1867): 75-76.

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