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THE SCHOOL FOR HYPOCRITES

THESE are the false accusations; the accusation of classicism, the accusation of cruelty, and the accusation of an exclusiveness based on perfection of pedigree. English public school boys are not pedants, they are not torturers; and they are not, in the vast majority of cases, people fiercely proud of their ancestry, or even people with any ancestry to be proud of. They are taught to be courteous, to be good tempered, to be brave in a bodily sense, to be clean in a bodily sense; they are generally kind to animals, generally civil to servants, and to anyone in any sense their equal, the jolliest companions on earth. Is there then anything wrong in the public school ideal? I think we all feel there is something very wrong in it, but a blinding network of newspaper phraseology obscures and entangles us; so that it is hard to track to its beginning, beyond all words and phrases, the faults in this great English achievement.

(Surely, when all is said, the ultimate objection to the English public school is its utterly blatant

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and indecent disregard of the duty of telling the truth. I know there does still linger among maiden ladies in remote country houses a notion that English schoolboys are taught to tell the truth, but it cannot be maintained seriously for a moment. Very occasionally, very vaguely, English schoolboys are told not to tell lies, which is a totally different thing. I may silently support all the obscene fictions and forgeries in the universe, without once telling a lie. I may wear another man's coat, steal another man's wit, apostatise to another man's creed, or poison another man's coffee, all without ever telling a lie. But no English schoolboy is ever taught to tell the truth, for the very simple reason that he is never taught to desire the truth. From the very first he is taught to be totally careless about whether a fact is a fact; he is taught to care only whether the fact can be used on his "side" when he is engaged in "playing the game." He takes sides in his Union debating society to settle whether Charles I. ought to have been killed, with the same solemn and pompous frivolity with which he takes sides in the cricket field to decide whether Rugby or Westminster shall win. He is never allowed to admit the abstract notion of the truth, that the match is a matter of what may happen, but that Charles I. is a matter of what did happen—or did not. He

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is Liberal or Tory at the general election exactly as he is Oxford or Cambridge at the boat-race. He knows that sport deals with the unknown ; he has not even a notion that politics should deal with the known. If anyone really doubts this self-evident proposition, that the public schools definitely discourage the love of truth, there is one fact which I should think would settle him. England is the country of the Party System, and it has always been chiefly run by public school men. Is there anyone out of Hanwell who will maintain that the Party System, whatever its conveniences or inconveniences, could have been created by people particularly fond of truth ?

The very English happiness on this point is itself a hypocrisy. When a man really tells the truth the first truth he tells is that he himself is a liar. David said in his haste, that is, in his honesty, that all men are liars. It was afterwards, in some leisurely official explanation, that he said that Kings of Israel at least told the truth. When Lord Curzon was Viceroy he delivered a moral lecture to the Indians on their reputed indifference to veracity, to actuality and intellectual honour. A great many people indignantly discussed whether Orientals deserved to receive this rebuke ; whether Indians were indeed in a position to receive such severe admonition. No one

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seemed to ask, as I should venture to ask, whether Lord Curzon was in a position to give it. He is an ordinary party politician; a party politician means a politician who might have belonged to either party. Being such a person he must again and again at every twist and turn of party strategy, either have deceived others or grossly deceived himself. I do not know the East; nor do I like what I know. I am quite ready to believe that when Lord Curzon went out he found a very false atmosphere. I only say it must have been something startlingly and chokingly false if it was falser than that English atmosphere from which he came. The English Parliament actually cares for everything except veracity. The public school man is kind, courageous, polite, clean, companionable; but, in the most awful sense of the words, the truth is not in him.

This weakness of untruthfulness in the English public schools, in the English political system, and to some extent in the English character, is a weakness which necessarily produces a curious crop of superstitions, of lying legends, of evident delusions clung to through low spiritual self-indulgence. There are so many of these public school superstitions that I have here only space for one of them, which may be called the superstition of soap. It appears to have been shared by the

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ablutionary Pharisees, who resembled the English public school aristocrats in so many respects: in their care about club rules and traditions, in their offensive optimism at the expense of other people, and above all in their unimaginative plodding patriotism in the worst interests of their country. Now the old human common sense about washing is that it is a great pleasure. Water (applied externally) is a splendid thing, like wine. Sybarites bathe in wine, and Nonconformists drink water; but we are not concerned with these frantic exceptions. Washing being a pleasure, it stands to reason that rich people can afford it more than poor people, and as long as this was recognised all was well; and it was very right that rich people should offer baths to poor people, as they might offer any other agreeable thing—a drink or a donkey ride. But one dreadful day, somewhere about the middle of the nineteenth century, somebody discovered (somebody pretty well off) the two great modern truths, that washing is a virtue in the rich and therefore a duty in the poor. For a duty is a virtue that one can't do. And a virtue is generally a duty that one can do quite easily; like the bodily cleanliness of the upper classes. But in the public school tradition of public life, soap has become creditable simply because it is pleasant. Baths are represented as a part of the decay of the Roman

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Empire; but the same baths are represented as part of the energy and rejuvenation of the British Empire. There are distinguished public schoolmen, bishops, dons, headmasters, and high politicians, who, in the course of the eulogies which from time to time they pass upon themselves, have actually identified physical cleanliness with moral purity. They say (if I remember right) that a public school man is clean inside and out. As if everyone did not know that while saints can afford to be dirty, seducers have to be clean. As if everyone did not know that the harlot must be clean, because it is her business to captivate, while the good wife may be dirty, because it is her business to clean. As if we did not all know that whenever God's thunder cracks above us, it is very likely indeed to find the simplest man in a muck cart and the most complex blackguard in a bath.

There are other instances, of course, of this oily trick of turning the pleasures of a gentleman into the virtues of an Anglo-Saxon. Sport, like soap, is an admirable thing, but like soap, it is an agreeable thing. And it does not sum up all mortal merits to be a sportsman playing the game in a world where it is so often necessary to be a workman doing the work. By all means let a gentleman congratulate himself that he has not lost his natural love of pleasure, as against the

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blasé and unchildlike. But when one has the childlike joy it is best to have also the childlike unconsciousness; and I do not think we should have special affection for the little boy who everlastingly explained that it was his duty to play Hide and Seek and one of his family virtues to be prominent in Puss in the Corner.

Another such irritating hypocrisy is the oligarchic attitude towards mendicity as against organised charity. Here again, as in the case of cleanliness and of athletics, the attitude would be perfectly human and intelligible if it were not maintained as a merit. Just as the obvious thing about soap is that it is a convenience, so the obvious thing about beggars is that they are an inconvenience. The rich would deserve very little blame if they simply said that they never dealt directly with beggars, because in modern urban civilisation it is impossible to deal directly with beggars; or if not impossible at least very difficult. But these people do not refuse money to beggars on the ground that such charity is difficult. They refuse it on the grossly hypocritical ground that such charity is easy. They say, with the most grotesque gravity, "Anyone can put his hand in his pocket and give a poor man a penny; but we, we philanthropists, go home and brood and travail over the poor man's troubles until we have discovered exactly what jail,

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reformatory, workhouse, or lunatic asylum it will really be best for him to go to." This is all sheer lying. They do not brood about the man when they get home, and if they did it would not alter the original fact that their motive for discouraging beggars is the perfectly rational one that beggars are a bother. A man may easily be forgiven for not doing this or that incidental act of charity, especially when the question is as genuinely difficult and dubious as is the case of mendicancy. But there is something quite pestilently Pecksniffian about shrinking from a hard task on the plea that it is not hard enough. If any man will really try talking to the ten beggars who come to his door he will soon find out whether it is really so much easier than the labour of writing a cheque for a hospital.

THE STALENESS OF THE NEW SCHOOLS

FOR this deep and disabling reason therefore, its cynical and abandoned indifference to the truth, the English public school does not provide us with the ideal that we require. We can only ask its modern critics to remember that right or wrong the thing can be done; the factory is working, the wheels are going round, the gentlemen are being produced, with their soap, cricket and organised charity all complete. And in this, as we have said before, the public school really has an advantage over all the other educational schemes of our time. You can pick out a public school man in any of the many companies into which they stray, from a Chinese opium den to a German Jewish dinner-party. But I doubt if you could tell which little match girl had been brought up by Undenominational Religion and which by Secular Education. The great English aristocracy which has ruled us since the Reformation is really, in this sense, a model to the moderns. It did have an ideal, and therefore it has produced a reality.

The Staleness of the New Schools

We may repeat here that these pages propose mainly to show one thing: that progress ought to be based on principle, while our modern progress is mostly based on precedent. We go, not by what may be affirmed in theory, but by what has been already admitted in practice. That is why the Jacobites are the last Tories in history with whom a high-spirited person can have much sympathy. They wanted a specific thing; they were ready to go forward for it, and so they were also ready to go back for it. But modern Tories have only the dullness of defending situations that they had not the excitement of creating. Revolutionists make a reform, Conservatives only conserve the reform. They never reform the reform, which is often very much wanted. Just as the rivalry of armaments is only a sort of sulky plagiarism, so the rivalry of parties is only a sort of sulky inheritance. Men have votes, so women must soon have votes; poor children are taught by force, so they must soon be fed by force; the police shut public houses by twelve o'clock, so soon they must shut them by eleven o'clock; children stop at school till they are fourteen, so soon they will stop till they are forty. No gleam of reason, no momentary return to first principles, no abstract asking of any obvious question, can interrupt this mad and monotonous gallop of mere progress by precedent. It is a good way to

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prevent real revolution. By this logic of events, the Radical gets as much into a rut as the Conservative. We meet one hoary old lunatic who says his grandfather told him to stand by one stile. We meet another hoary old lunatic who says his grandfather told him only to walk along one lane.

I say we may repeat here this primary part of the argument, because we have just now come to the place where it is most startlingly and strongly shown. The final proof that our elementary schools have no definite ideal of their own is the fact that they so openly imitate the ideals of the public schools. In the elementary schools we have all the ethical prejudices and exaggerations of Eton and Harrow carefully copied for people to whom they do not even roughly apply. We have the same wildly disproportionate doctrine of the effect of physical cleanliness on moral character. Educators and educational politicians declare, amid warm cheers, that cleanliness is far more important than all the squabbles about moral and religious training. It would really seem that so long as a little boy washes his hands it does not matter whether he is washing off his mother's jam or his brother's gore. We have the same grossly insincere pretence that sport always encourages a sense of honour, when we know that it often ruins it. Above all, we have

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the same great upper-class assumption that things are done best by large institutions handling large sums of money and ordering everybody about; and that trivial and impulsive charity is in some way contemptible. As Mr. Blatchford says, "The world does not want piety, but soap—and Socialism." Piety is one of the popular virtues, whereas soap and Socialism are two hobbies of the upper middle class.

These "healthy" ideals, as they are called, which our politicians and schoolmasters have borrowed from the aristocratic schools and applied to the democratic, are by no means particularly appropriate to an impoverished democracy. A vague admiration for organised government and a vague distrust of individual aid cannot be made to fit in at all into the lives of people among whom kindness means lending a saucepan and honour means keeping out of the workhouse. It resolves itself either into discouraging that system of prompt and patchwork generosity which is a daily glory of the poor, or else into hazy advice to people who have no money not to give it recklessly away. Nor is the exaggerated glory of athletics, defensible enough in dealing with the rich who, if they did not romp and race, would eat and drink unwholesomely, by any means so much to the point when applied to people, most of whom will take a great deal of exercise any-

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how, with spade or hammer, pickaxe or saw. And for the third case, of washing, it is obvious that the same sort of rhetoric about corporeal daintiness which is proper to an ornamental class cannot, merely as it stands, be applicable to a dustman. A gentleman is expected to be substantially spotless all the time. But it is no more discreditable for a scavenger to be dirty than for a deep-sea diver to be wet. A sweep is no more disgraced when he is covered with soot than Michael Angelo when he is covered with clay, or Bayard when he is covered with blood. Nor have these extenders of the public school tradition done or suggested anything by way of a substitute for the present snobbish system which makes cleanliness almost impossible to the poor; I mean the general ritual of linen and the wearing of the cast clothes of the rich. One man moves into another man's clothes as he moves into another man's house. No wonder that our educationists are not horrified at a man picking up the aristocrat's second-hand trousers, when they themselves have only taken up the aristocrat's second-hand ideas.

THE OUTLAWED PARENT

THERE is one thing at least of which there is never so much as a whisper inside the popular schools ; and that is the opinion of the people. The only persons who seem to have nothing to do with the education of the children are the parents. Yet the English poor have very definite traditions in many ways. They are hidden under embarrassment and irony ; and those psychologists who have disentangled them talk of them as very strange, barbaric and secretive things. But, as a matter of fact, the traditions of the poor are mostly simply the traditions of humanity, a thing which many of us have not seen for some time. For instance, working men have a tradition that if one is talking about a vile thing it is better to talk of it in coarse language ; one is the less likely to be seduced into excusing it. But mankind had this tradition also, until the Puritans and their children, the Ibsenites, started the opposite idea, that it does not matter what you say so long as you say it with long words and a long face. Or again, the educated classes have

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tabooed most jesting about personal appearance ; but in doing this they taboo not only the humour of the slums but more than half the healthy literature of the world ; they put polite nose-bags on the noses of Punch and Bardolph, Stiggins and Cyrano de Bergerac. Again, the educated classes have adopted a hideous and heathen custom of considering death as too dreadful to talk about, and letting it remain a secret for each person, like some private malformation. The poor, on the contrary, make a great gossip and display about bereavement ; and they are right. They have hold of a truth of psychology which is at the back of all the funeral customs of the children of men. The way to lessen sorrow is to make a lot of it. The way to endure a painful crisis is to insist very much that it is a crisis ; to permit people who must feel sad at least to feel important. In this the poor are simply the priests of the universal civilisation ; and in their stuffy feasts and solemn chattering there is the smell of the baked meats of Hamlet and the dust and echo of the funeral games of Patroclus.

The things philanthropists barely excuse (or do not excuse) in the life of the labouring classes are simply the things we have to excuse in all the greatest monuments of man. It may be that the labourer is as gross as Shakespeare or as garrulous as Homer ; that if he is religious

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he talks nearly as much about hell as Dante; that if he is worldly he talks nearly as much about drink as Dickens. Nor is the poor man without historic support if he thinks less of that ceremonial washing which Christ dismissed, and rather more of that ceremonial drinking which Christ specially sanctified. The only difference between the poor man of to-day and the saints and heroes of history is that which in all classes separates the common man who can feel things from the great man who can express them. What he feels is merely the heritage of man. Now nobody expects of course that the cabmen and coal-heavers can be complete instructors of their children any more than the squires and colonels and tea merchants are complete instructors of their children. There must be an educational specialist *in loco parentis*. But the master at Harrow is *in loco parentis*; the master in Hoxton is rather *contra parentem*. The vague politics of the squire, the vaguer virtues of the colonel, the soul and spiritual yearnings of a tea merchant are, in veritable practice, conveyed to the children of these people at the English public schools. But I wish here to ask a very plain and emphatic question. Can anyone alive even pretend to point out any way in which these special virtues and traditions of the poor are reproduced in the education of the

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(poor? I do not wish the coster's irony to appear as coarsely in the school as it does in the tap-room; but does it appear at all? Is the child taught to sympathise at all with his father's admirable cheerfulness and slang? I do not expect the pathetic, eager *pietas* of the mother, with her funeral clothes and funeral baked meats, to be exactly imitated in the educational system; but has it any influence at all on the educational system? Does any elementary schoolmaster accord it even an instant's consideration or respect? I do not expect the schoolmaster to hate hospitals and C.O.S. centres so much as the schoolboy's father; but does he hate them at all? Does he sympathise in the least with the poor man's point of honour against official institutions? Is it not quite certain that the ordinary elementary schoolmaster will think it not merely natural but simply conscientious to eradicate all these rugged legends of a laborious people, and on principle to preach soap and Socialism against beer and liberty? In the lower classes the schoolmaster does not work for the parent but against the parent. Modern education means handing down the customs of the minority, and rooting out the customs of the majority. Instead of their Christlike charity their Shakespearean laughter and their high Homeric reverence for the dead, the poor have imposed on them mere pedantic copies of

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the prejudices of the remote rich. They must think a bathroom a necessity, because to the lucky it is a luxury ; they must swing Swedish clubs, because their masters are afraid of English cudgels ; and they must get over their prejudice against being fed by the parish, because aristocrats feel no shame about being fed by the nation.

FOLLY AND FEMALE EDUCATION

It is the same in the case of girls. I am often solemnly asked what I think of the new ideas about female education. But there are no new ideas about female education. There is not, there never has been, even the vestige of a new idea. All the educational reformers did was to ask what was being done to boys and then go and do it to girls; just as they asked what was being taught to young squires and then taught it to young chimney-sweeps. What they call new ideas are very old ideas in the wrong place. Boys play football, why shouldn't girls play football; boys have school-colours, why shouldn't girls have school-colours; boys go in hundreds to day-schools, why shouldn't girls go in hundreds to day-schools; boys go to Oxford, why shouldn't girls go to Oxford—in short, boys grow moustaches, why shouldn't girls grow moustaches—that is about their notion of a new idea. There is no brain-work in the thing at all; no root query of what sex is, of whether it alters this or that, and why, any more than there is any imaginative grip

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of the humour and heart of the populace in the popular education. There is nothing but plodding, elaborate, elephantine imitation. And just as in the case of elementary teaching, the cases are of a cold and reckless inappropriateness. Even a savage could see that bodily things, at least, which are good for a man are very likely to be bad for a woman. Yet there is no boy's game, however brutal, which these mild lunatics have not promoted among girls. To take a stronger case, they give girls very heavy home-work; never reflecting that all girls have home-work already in their homes. It is all a part of the same silly subjugation; there must be a hard stick-up collar round the neck of a woman, because it is already a nuisance round the neck of a man. Though a Saxon serf, if he wore that collar of cardboard, would ask for his collar of brass.

It will then be answered, not without a sneer, "And what would you prefer? Would you go back to the elegant early Victorian female, with ringlets and smelling-bottle, doing a little in water-colours, dabbling a little in Italian, playing a little on the harp, writing in vulgar albums and painting on senseless screens? Do you prefer that?" To which I answer, "Emphatically, yes." I solidly prefer it to the new female education, for this reason, that I can see in it an intellectual design, while there is none in the other. I am by

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no means sure that even in point of practical fact that elegant female would not have been more than a match for most of the inelegant females. I fancy Jane Austen was stronger, sharper and shrewder than Charlotte Brontë; I am quite certain she was stronger, sharper and shrewder than George Eliot. She could do one thing neither of them could do, she could coolly and sensibly describe a man. I am not sure that the old great lady who could only smatter Italian was not more vigorous than the new great lady who can only stammer American; nor am I certain that the bygone duchesses who were scarcely successful when they painted Melrose Abbey, were so much more weak-minded than the modern duchesses who paint only their own faces, and are bad at that. But that is not the point. What was the theory, what was the idea, in their old, weak water-colours and their shaky Italian? The idea was the same which in a ruder rank expressed itself in home-made wines and hereditary recipes; and which, still, in a thousand unexpected ways, can be found clinging to the women of the poor. It was the idea I urged in the second part of this book: that the world must keep one great amateur, lest we all become artists and perish. Somebody must renounce all specialist conquests, that she may conquer all the conquerors. That she may be a queen of life, she must not be a private soldier in it. I

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do not think the elegant female with her bad Italian was a perfect product, any more than I think the slum woman talking gin and funerals is a perfect product ; alas, there are few perfect products. But they come from a comprehensible idea ; and the new woman comes from nothing and nowhere. It is right to have an ideal, it is right to have the right ideal, and these two have the right ideal. The slum mother with her funerals is the degenerate daughter of Antigone, the obstinate priestess of the household gods. The lady talking bad Italian was the decayed tenth cousin of Portia, the great and golden Italian lady, the Renaissance amateur of life, who could be a barrister because she could be anything. Sunken and neglected in the sea of modern monotony and imitation, the types hold tightly to their original truths. Antigone, ugly, dirty and often drunken, will still bury her father. The elegant female, vapid and fading away to nothing, still feels faintly the fundamental difference between herself and her husband ; that he must be Something in the City, that she may be everything in the country.

There was a time when you and I and all of us were all very close to God ; so that even now the colour of a pebble (or a paint), the smell of a flower (or a firework) comes to our hearts with a kind of authority and certainty ; as if they were fragments of a muddled message, or features of a

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forgotten face. To pour that fiery simplicity upon the whole of life is the only real aim of education; and closest to the child comes the woman—she understands. To say what she understands is beyond me; save only this, that it is not a solemnity. Rather it is a towering levity, an uproarious amateurishness of the universe, such as we felt when we were little, and would as soon sing as garden, as soon paint as run. To smatter the tongues of men and angels, to dabble in the dreadful sciences, to juggle with pillars and pyramids and toss up the planets like balls, this is that inner audacity and indifference which the human soul, like a conjurer catching oranges, must keep up for ever. This is that insanely frivolous thing we call sanity. And the elegant female, drooping her ringlets over her water-colours, knew it and acted on it. She was juggling with frantic and flaming suns. She was maintaining the bold equilibrium of inferiorities which is the most mysterious of superiorities and perhaps the most unattainable. She was maintaining the prime truth of woman, the universal mother: that if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly.

PART V
THE HOME OF MAN

THE EMPIRE OF THE INSECT

A CULTIVATED Conservative friend of mine once exhibited great distress because in a gay moment I had called Edmund Burke an atheist. I need scarcely say that the remark lacked something of biographical precision; it was meant to. Burke was certainly not an atheist in his conscious cosmic theory, though he had not a special and flaming faith in God, like Robespierre. Nevertheless the remark had reference to a truth which it is here relevant to repeat. I mean that in the quarrel over the French Revolution Burke did stand for the atheistic attitude and mode of argument, as Robespierre stood for the theistic. The Revolution appealed to the idea of an abstract and eternal justice, beyond all local custom or convenience. If there are commands of God, then there must be rights of man. Here Burke made his brilliant diversion; he did not attack the Robespierre doctrine with the old mediæval doctrine of *jus divinum* (which, like the Robespierre doctrine, was theistic), he attacked it with the modern argument of scientific

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relativity ; in short, the argument of evolution. He suggested that humanity was everywhere moulded by or fitted to its environment and institutions ; in fact, that each people practically got, not only the tyrant it deserved, but the tyrant that it ought to have. "I know nothing of the rights of men," he said, "but I know something of the rights of Englishmen." There you have the essential atheist. His argument is that we have got some protection by natural accident and growth ; and why should we profess to think beyond it, for all the world as if we were the images of God ! We are born under a House of Lords, as birds under a house of leaves ; we live under a monarchy, as niggers live under a tropic sun ; it is not their fault if they are slaves, and it is not ours if we are snobs. Thus, long before Darwin struck his great blow at democracy, the essential of the Darwinian argument had been already urged against the French Revolution. Man, said Burke in effect, must adapt himself to everything, like an animal ; he must not try to alter everything, like an angel. The last weak cry of the pious, pretty, half-artificial optimism and deism of the eighteenth century came in the voice of Sterne, saying, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." And Burke, the iron evolutionist, essentially answered, "No ; God tempers the shorn lamb to the wind."

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It is the lamb that has to adapt himself. That is, he either dies or becomes a particular kind of lamb who likes standing in a draught.

The sub-conscious popular instinct against Darwinism was not a mere offence at the grotesque notion of visiting one's grandfather in a cage in the Regent's Park. Men go in for drink, practical jokes and many other grotesque things; they do not much mind making beasts of themselves, and would not much mind having beasts made of their forefathers. The real instinct was much deeper and much more valuable. It was this: that when once one begins to think of man as a shifting and alterable thing, it is always easy for the strong and crafty to twist him into new shapes for all kinds of unnatural purposes. The popular instinct sees in such developments the possibility of backs bowed and hunch-backed for their burden, or limbs twisted for their task. It has a very well-grounded guess that whatever is done swiftly and systematically will mostly be done by a successful class and almost solely in their interests. It has therefore a vision of inhuman hybrids and half-human experiments much in the style of Mr. Wells's "Island of Dr. Moreau." The rich man may come to breeding a tribe of dwarfs to be his jockeys, and a tribe of giants to be his hall-porters. Grooms might be born

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bow-legged and tailors born cross-legged; perfumers might have long, large noses and a crouching attitude, like hounds of scent; and professional wine-tasters might have the horrible expression of one tasting wine stamped upon their faces as infants. Whatever wild image one employs it cannot keep pace with the panic of the human fancy, when once it supposes that the fixed type called man could be changed. If some millionaire wanted arms, some porter must grow ten arms like an octopus; if he wants legs, some messenger-boy must go with a hundred trotting legs like a centipede. In the distorted mirror of hypothesis, that is, of the unknown, men can dimly see such monstrous and evil shapes; men run all to eye, or all to fingers, with nothing left but one nostril or one ear. That is the nightmare with which the mere notion of adaptation threatens us. That is the nightmare that is not so very far from the reality.

It will be said that not the wildest evolutionist really asks that we should become in any way unhuman or copy any other animal. Pardon me, that is exactly what not merely the wildest evolutionists urge, but some of the tamest evolutionists too. There has risen high in recent history an important *cultus* which bids fair to be the religion of the future--which means the religion of those few weak-minded people who live in the future.

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It is typical of our time that it has to look for its god through a microscope; and our time has marked a definite adoration of the insect. Like most things we call new, of course, it is not at all new as an idea; it is only new as an idolatry. Virgil takes bees seriously, but I doubt if he would have kept bees as carefully as he wrote about them. The wise king told the sluggard to watch the ant, a charming occupation—for a sluggard. But in our own time has appeared a very different tone, and more than one great man as well as numberless intelligent men have seriously suggested that we should study the insect because we are his inferiors. The old moralists merely took the virtues of man and distributed them quite decoratively and arbitrarily among the animals. The ant was an almost heraldic symbol of industry, as the lion was of courage or, for the matter of that, the pelican of charity. But if the mediævals had been convinced that a lion was not courageous, they would have dropped the lion and kept the courage; if the pelican is not charitable, they would say, so much the worse for the pelican. The old moralists, I say, permitted the ant to enforce and typify man's morality; they never allowed the ant to upset it. They used the ant for industry as the lark for punctuality; they looked up at the flapping birds and down at the crawling

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insects for a homely lesson. But we have lived to see a sect that does not look down at the insects, but looks up at the insects; that asks us essentially to bow down and worship beetles, like the ancient Egyptians.

Maurice Maeterlinck is a man of unmistakable genius, and genius always carries a magnifying glass. In the terrible crystal of his lens we have seen the bees not as a little yellow swarm, but rather in golden armies and hierarchies of warriors and queens. Imagination perpetually peers and creeps further down the avenues and vistas in the tubes of science, and one fancies every frantic reversal of proportions; the earwig striding across the echoing plain like an elephant, or the grasshopper coming roaring above our roofs like a vast aeroplane, as he leaps from Hertfordshire to Surrey. One seems to enter in a dream a temple of enormous entomology, whose architecture is based on something wilder than arms or backbones; in which the ribbed columns have the half-crawling look of dim and monstrous caterpillars; or the dome is a starry spider hung horribly in the void. There is one of the modern works of engineering that gives one something of this nameless fear of the exaggerations of an underworld; and that is the curious curved architecture of the underground railway, commonly called the Twopenny Tube.

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Those squat archways, without any upright line or pillar, look as if they had been tunnelled by huge worms who have never learned to lift their heads. It is the very underground Palace of the Serpent, the spirit of changing shape and colour, that is the enemy of man.

But it is not merely by such strange æsthetic suggestions that writers like Maeterlinck have influenced us in the matter; there is also an ethical side to the business. The upshot of M. Maeterlinck's book on bees is an admiration, one might also say an envy, of their collective spirituality; of the fact that they live only for something which is called the Soul of the Hive. And this admiration for the communal morality of insects is expressed in many other modern writers in various quarters and shapes; in Mr. Benjamin Kidd's theory of living only for the evolutionary future of our race, and in the great interest of some Socialists in ants, which they generally prefer to bees, I suppose, because they are not so brightly coloured. Not least among the hundred evidences of this vague insectolatry are the floods of flattery poured by modern people on that energetic nation of the Far East of which it has been said that "Patriotism is its only religion"; or in other words, that it lives only for the Soul of the Hive. When at long intervals of the centuries Christendom grows weak, morbid

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or sceptical, and mysterious Asia begins to move against us her dim populations and to pour them westward like a dark movement of matter, in such cases it has been very common to compare the invasion to a plague of lice or incessant armies of locusts. The Eastern armies were indeed like insects; in their blind, busy destructiveness, in their black nihilism of personal outlook, in their hateful indifference to individual life and love, in their base belief in mere numbers, in their pessimistic courage and their atheistic patriotism, the riders and raiders of the East are indeed like all the creeping things of the earth. But never before, I think, have Christians called a Turk a locust and meant it as a compliment. Now for the first time we worship as well as fear; and trace with adoration that enormous form advancing vast and vague out of Asia, faintly discernible amid the mystic clouds of winged creatures hung over the wasted lands, thronging the skies like thunder and discolouring the skies like rain: Beelzebub, the Lord of Flies

In resisting this horrible theory of the Soul of the Hive, we of Christendom stand not for ourselves, but for all humanity; for the essential and distinctive human idea, that one good and happy man is an end in himself, that a soul is worth saving. Nay, for those who like such biological fancies it might well be said that

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we stand as chiefs and champions of a whole section of nature, princes of the house whose cognisance is the backbone, standing for the milk of the individual mother and the courage of the wandering cub, representing the pathetic chivalry of the dog, the humour and perversity of cats, the affection of the tranquil horse, the loneliness of the lion. It is more to the point, however, to urge that this mere glorification of society as it is in the social insects, is a transformation and a dissolution in one of the outlines which have been specially the symbols of man. In the cloud and confusion of the flies and bees is growing fainter and fainter, as if finally disappearing, the idea of the human family. The hive has become larger than the house, the bees are destroying their captors; what the locust hath left the caterpillar hath eaten; and the little house and garden of our friend Jones is in a bad way.

THE FALLACY OF THE UMBRELLA STAND

WHEN Lord Morley said that the House of Lords must be either mended or ended, he used a phrase which has caused some confusion; because it might seem to suggest that mending and ending are somewhat similar things. I wish specially to insist on the fact that mending and ending are opposite things. You mend a thing because you like it; you end a thing because you don't. To mend is to strengthen. I, for instance, disbelieve in oligarchy; so I would no more mend the House of Lords than I would mend a thumb-screw. On the other hand, I do believe in the family; therefore I would mend the family as I would mend a chair; and I will never deny for a moment that the modern family is a chair that wants mending. But here comes in the essential point about the mass of modern advanced sociologists. Here are two institutions that have always been fundamental with mankind, the family and the state. Anarchists, I believe, disbelieve in both. It is quite unfair to say that

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Socialists believe in the state, but do not believe in the family; thousands of Socialists believe more in the family than any Tory. But it is true to say that while Anarchists would end both, Socialists are specially engaged in mending (that is, strengthening and renewing) the state; and they are not specially engaged in strengthening and renewing the family. They are not doing anything to define the functions of father, mother, and child, as such; they are not tightening the machine up again; they are not blackening in again the fading lines of the old drawing. With the state they are doing this: they are sharpening its machinery, they are blacking in its black dogmatic lines, they are making mere government in every way stronger and in some ways harsher than before. While they leave the home in ruins, they restore the hive, especially the stings. Indeed, some schemes of Labour and Poor Law reform recently advanced by distinguished Socialists, amount to little more than putting the largest number of people in the despotic power of Mr. Bumble. Apparently progress means being moved on—by the police.

The point it is my purpose to urge might perhaps be suggested thus: that Socialists and most social reformers of their colour are vividly conscious of the line between the kind of things that belong to the state and the kind of things

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that belong to mere chaos or uncoercible nature ; they may force children to go to school before the sun rises, but they will not try to force the sun to rise ; they will not, like Canute, banish the sea, but only the sea-bathers. But inside the outline of the state their lines are confused, and entities melt into each other. They have no firm instinctive sense of one thing being in its nature private and another public, of one thing being necessarily bond and another free. That is why piece by piece and quite silently, personal liberty is being stolen from Englishmen, as personal land has been silently stolen ever since the sixteenth century.

I can only put it sufficiently curtly in a careless simile. A Socialist means a man who thinks a walking-stick like an umbrella because they both go into the umbrella-stand. Yet they are as different as a battle-axe and a boot-jack. The essential idea of an umbrella is breadth and protection. The essential idea of a stick is slenderness and, partly, attack. The stick is the sword, the umbrella is the shield, but it is a shield against another and more nameless enemy—the hostile but anonymous universe. More properly, therefore, the umbrella is the roof ; it is a kind of collapsible house. But the vital difference goes far deeper than this ; it branches off into two kingdoms of man's mind, with a chasm between.

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For the point is this, that the umbrella is a shield against an enemy so actual as to be a mere nuisance; whereas the stick is a sword against enemies so entirely imaginary as to be a pure pleasure. The stick is not merely a sword, but a court sword; it is a thing of purely ceremonial swagger. One cannot express the emotion in any way except by saying that a man feels more like a man with a stick in his hand, just as he feels more like a man with a sword at his side. But nobody ever had any swelling sentiments about an umbrella; it is a convenience, like a door-scraper. An umbrella is a necessary evil. A walking-stick is a quite unnecessary good. This, I fancy, is the real explanation of the perpetual losing of umbrellas; one does not hear of people losing walking-sticks. For a walking-stick is a pleasure, a piece of real personal property; it is missed even when it is not needed. When my right hand forgets its stick may it forget its cunning. But anybody may forget an umbrella, as anybody might forget a shed that he had stood up in out of the rain. Anybody can forget a necessary thing.

If I might pursue the figure of speech, I might briefly say that the whole Collectivist error consists in saying that because two men can share an umbrella therefore two men can share a walking-stick. Umbrellas might possibly be

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replaced by some kind of common awnings covering certain streets from particular showers. But there is nothing but nonsense in the notion of swinging a communal stick; it is as if one spoke of twirling a communal moustache. It will be said that this is a frank fantasia and that no sociologists suggest such follies. Pardon me, they do. I will give a precise parallel to the case of the confusion of sticks and umbrellas, a parallel from a perpetually reiterated suggestion of reform. At least sixty Socialists out of a hundred, when they have spoken of common laundries, will go on at once to speak of common kitchens. This is just as mechanical and unintelligent as the fanciful case I have quoted. Sticks and umbrellas are both stiff rods that go into holes in a stand in the hall. Kitchens and washhouses are both large rooms full of heat and damp and steam. But the soul and function of the two things is utterly opposite. There is only one way of washing a shirt; that is, there is only one right way. There is no taste and fancy in tattered shirts. Nobody says, "Tomkins likes five holes in his shirt, but I must say, give me the good old four holes." Nobody says, "This washerwoman rips up the left leg of my pyjamas; now if there is one thing I insist on it is the *right* leg ripped up." The ideal washing is simply to send a thing

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back washed. But it is by no means true that the ideal cooking is simply to send a thing back cooked. Cooking is an art; it has in it personality and even perversity, for the definition of an art is that which must be personal and may be perverse. I know a man, not otherwise dainty, who cannot touch common sausages unless they are almost burnt to a coal. He wants his sausages fried to rags, yet he does not insist on his shirts being boiled to rags. I do not say that such points of culinary delicacy are of high importance. I do not say that the communal ideal must give way to them. What I say is that the communal ideal is not conscious of their existence, and therefore goes wrong from the very start, mixing a wholly public thing with a highly individual one. Perhaps we ought to accept communal kitchens in the social crisis, just as we should accept communal catsmeat in a siege. But the cultured Socialist, quite at his ease, by no means in a siege, talks about communal kitchens as if they were the same kind of thing as communal laundries. This shows at the start that he misunderstands human nature. They are as different as three men singing the same chorus from three men playing three tunes on the same piano.

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THE DREADFUL DUTY OF GUDGE

IN the quarrel earlier alluded to between the energetic Progressive and the obstinate Conservative (or, to talk a tenderer language, between Hudge and Gudge) the state of cross-purposes is at the present moment acute. The Tory says he wants to preserve family life in Cindertown; the Socialist very reasonably points out to him that in Cindertown at present there isn't any family life to preserve. But Hudge, the Socialist, in his turn is highly vague and mysterious about whether he would preserve the family life if there were any; or whether he will try to restore it where it has disappeared. It is all very confusing. The Tory sometimes talks as if he wanted to tighten the domestic bonds that do not exist; the Socialist as if he wanted to loosen the bonds that do not bind anybody. The question we all want to ask of both of them is the original ideal question, "Do you want to keep the family at all?" If Hudge, the Socialist, does want the family he must be prepared for the natural restraints, distinctions and divisions of labour in the family. He must

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brace himself up to bear the idea of the woman having a preference for the private house and a man for the public house. He must manage to endure somehow the idea of a woman being womanly, which does not mean soft and yielding, but handy, thrifty, rather hard, and very humorous. He must confront without a quiver the notion of a child who shall be childish, that is, full of energy, but without an idea of independence; fundamentally as eager for authority as for information and butter-scotch. If a man, a woman and a child live together any more in free and sovereign households, these ancient relations will recur; and Hudge must put up with it. He can only avoid it by destroying the family, driving both sexes into sexless hives and hordes, and bringing up all children as the children of the State—like *Oliver Twist*. But if these stern words must be addressed to Hudge, neither shall Gudge escape a somewhat severe admonition. For the plain truth to be told pretty sharply to the Tory is this, that if *he* wants the family to remain, if he wants it to be strong enough to resist the rending forces of our essentially savage commerce, he must make some very big sacrifices and try to equalise property. The overwhelming mass of the English people at this particular instant are simply too poor to be domestic. They are as domestic as they can manage, they are much

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more domestic than the governing class; but they cannot get what good there was originally meant to be in this institution, simply because they have not got enough money. The man ought to stand for a certain magnanimity, quite lawfully expressed in throwing money away; but if under given circumstances he can only do it by throwing the week's food away, then he is not magnanimous but mean. The woman ought to stand for a certain wisdom which is well expressed in valuing things rightly and guarding money sensibly; but how is she to guard money if there is no money to guard? The child ought to look on his mother as a fountain of natural fun and poetry; but how can he unless the fountain, like other fountains, is allowed to play? What chance have any of these ancient arts and functions in a house so hideously topsy-turvy; a house where the woman is out working and the man isn't; and the child is forced by law to think his schoolmaster's requirements more important than his mother's? No, Gudge and his friends in the House of Lords and the Carlton Club must make up their minds on this matter and that very quickly. If they are content to have England turned into a beehive and an ant-hill, decorated here and there with a few faded butterflies playing at an old game called domesticity in the intervals of the divorce court, then let them have their empire of insects; they

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will find plenty of Socialists who will give it to them. But if they want a domestic England, they must "shell out," as the phrase goes, to a vastly greater extent than any Radical politician has yet dared to suggest; they must endure burdens much heavier than the Budget and strokes much deadlier than the death duties; for the thing to be done is nothing more nor less than the distribution of the great fortunes and the great estates. We can now only avoid Socialism by a change as vast as Socialism. If we are to save property we must distribute property, almost as sternly and sweepingly as did the French Revolution. If we are to preserve the family we must revolutionise the nation.

A DOUBT

AND now, as this book is drawing to a close, I will whisper in the reader's ear a horrible suspicion that has sometimes haunted me: the suspicion that Hudge and Gudge are secretly in partnership; that the quarrel they keep up in public is very much of a put-up job; and that the way in which they perpetually play into each other's hands is not an everlasting coincidence. Gudge, the plutocrat, wants an anarchic industrialism; Hudge, the idealist, provides him with lyric praises of anarchy. Gudge wants women-workers because they are cheaper; Hudge calls the woman's work "freedom to live her own life." Gudge wants steady and obedient workmen; Hudge preaches teetotalism—to workmen, not to Gudge. Gudge wants a tame and timid population who will never take arms against tyranny; Hudge proves from Tolstoy that nobody must take arms against anything. Gudge is naturally a healthy and well-washed gentleman; Hudge earnestly preaches the perfection of Gudge's washing to people who can't practise it. Above all, Gudge

A Doubt

rules by a coarse and cruel system of sacking and sweating and bi-sexual toil which is totally inconsistent with the free family and which is bound to destroy it; therefore Hudge, stretching out his arms to the universe with a prophetic smile, tells us that the family is something that we shall soon gloriously outgrow.

I do not know whether the partnership of Hudge and Gudge is conscious or unconscious. I only know that between them they still keep the common man homeless. I only know I still meet Jones walking the streets in the grey twilight, looking sadly at the poles and barriers and low red goblin lanterns which still guard the house which is none the less his because he has never been in it.

CONCLUSION

HERE, it may be said, my book ends just where it ought to begin. I have said that the strong centres of modern English property must swiftly or slowly be broken up, if even the idea of property is to remain among Englishmen. There are two ways in which it could be done, a cold administration by quite detached officials, which is called Collectivism, or a personal distribution, so as to produce what is called Peasant Proprietorship. I think the latter solution the finer and more fully human, because it makes each man (as somebody blamed somebody for saying of the Pope) a sort of small god. A man on his own turf tastes eternity or, in other words, will give ten minutes more work than is required. But I believe I am justified in shutting the door on this vista of argument, instead of opening it. For this book is not designed to prove the case for Peasant Proprietorship, but to prove the case against modern sages who turn reform to a routine. The whole of this book has been a rambling and elaborate urging of one purely

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ethical fact. And if by any chance it should happen that there are still some who do not quite see what that point is, I will end with one plain parable, which is none the worse for being also a fact.

A little while ago certain doctors and other persons permitted by modern law to dictate to their shabbier fellow-citizens, sent out an order that all little girls should have their hair cut short. I mean, of course, all little girls whose parents were poor. Many very unhealthy habits are common among rich little girls, but it will be long before any doctors interfere forcibly with them. Now, the case for this particular interference was this, that the poor are pressed down from above into such stinking and suffocating underworlds of squalor, that poor people must not be allowed to have hair, because in their case it must mean lice in the hair. Therefore, the doctors propose to abolish the hair. It never seems to have occurred to them to abolish the lice. Yet it could be done. As is common in most modern discussions the unmentionable thing is the pivot of the whole discussion. It is obvious to any Christian man (that is, to any man with a free soul) that any coercion applied to a cabman's daughter ought, if possible, to be applied to a Cabinet Minister's daughter. I will not ask why the doctors do not, as a matter of fact, apply their rule to a Cabinet

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Minister's daughter. I will not ask, because I know. They do not because they dare not. But what is the excuse they would urge, what is the plausible argument they would use, for thus cutting and clipping poor children and not rich? Their argument would be that the disease is more likely to be in the hair of poor people than of rich, and why? Because the poor children are forced (against all the instincts of the highly domestic working classes) to crowd together in close rooms under a wildly inefficient system of public instruction; and because in one out of the forty children there may be offence, and why? Because the poor man is so ground down by the great rents of the great ground landlords that his wife often has to work as well as he. Therefore she has no time to look after the children; therefore one in forty of them is dirty. Because the working man has these two persons on top of him, the landlord sitting (literally) on his stomach, and the schoolmaster sitting (literally) on his head, the working man must allow his little girl's hair, first to be neglected from poverty, next to be poisoned by promiscuity, and lastly to be abolished by hygiene. He, perhaps, was proud of his little girl's hair. But he does not count.

Upon this simple principle (or rather precedent) the sociological doctor drives gaily ahead. When a crapulous tyranny crushes men down into

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the dirt, so that their very hair is dirty, the scientific course is clear. It would be long and laborious to cut off the heads of the tyrants; it is easier to cut off the hair of the slaves. In the same way, if it should ever happen that poor children, screaming with tooth-ache, disturbed any schoolmaster or artistic gentleman, it would be easy to pull out all the teeth of the poor; if their nails were disgustingly dirty, their nails could be plucked out; if their noses were indecently blown, their noses could be cut off. The appearance of our humbler fellow-citizen could be quite strikingly simplified before we had done with him. But all this is not a bit wilder than the brute fact that a doctor can walk into the house of a free man, whose daughter's hair may be as clean as spring flowers, and order him to cut it off. It never seems to strike these people that the lesson of lice in the slums is the wrongness of slums, not the wrongness of hair. Hair is, to say the least of it, a rooted thing. Its enemy (like the other insects and Oriental armies of whom we have spoken) sweeps upon us but seldom. In truth it is only by eternal institutions like hair that we can test passing institutions like empires. If a door is so built as to knock a man's head off when he enters it, it is built wrong.

The mob can never rebel unless it is conservative, at least enough to have conserved some

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reasons for rebelling. It is the most awful thought in all our anarchy, that most of the ancient blows struck for freedom would not be struck at all to-day, because of the obscuration of the clean, popular customs from which they came. The insult that brought down the hammer of Wat Tyler might now be called a medical examination. That which Virginius loathed and avenged as foul slavery might now be praised as free love. The cruel taunt of Foulon, "Let them eat grass," might now be represented as the dying cry of an idealistic vegetarian. Those great scissors of science that would snip off the curls of the poor little school children are ceaselessly snapping closer and closer to cut off all the corners and fringes of the arts and honours of the poor. Soon they will be twisting necks to suit clean collars, and hacking feet to fit new boots. It never seems to strike them that the body is more than raiment; that the Sabbath was made for man; that all institutions shall be judged and damned by whether they have fitted the normal flesh and spirit. It is the test of political sanity to keep your head. It is the test of artistic sanity to keep your hair on.

Now the whole parable and purpose of these last pages, and indeed of all these pages, is this: to assert that we must instantly begin all over again, and begin at the other end.

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I begin with a little girl's hair. That I know is a good thing at any rate. Whatever else is evil, the pride of a good mother in the beauty of her daughter is good. It is one of those adamantine tendernesses which are the touchstones of every age and race. If other things are against it, other things must go down. If landlords and laws and sciences are against it, landlords and laws and sciences must go down. With the red hair of one she-urchin in the gutter I will set fire to all modern civilisation. Because a girl should have long hair, she should have clean hair; because she should have clean hair, she should not have an unclean home; because she should not have an unclean home, she should have a free and leisured mother; because she should have a free mother, she should not have an usurious landlord; because there should not be an usurious landlord, there should be a redistribution of property; because there should be a redistribution of property, there shall be a revolution. That little urchin with the gold-red hair (whom I have just watched toddling past my house), she shall not be lopped and lamed and altered; her hair shall not be cut short like a convict's. No, all the kingdoms of the earth shall be hacked about and mutilated to suit her. The winds of the world shall be tempered to that lamb unshorn. All crowns that cannot fit her head shall

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be broken; all raiment and building that does not harmonise with her glory shall waste away. Her mother may bid her bind her hair, for that is a natural authority; but the Emperor of the Planet shall not bid her to cut it off. She is the human and sacred image; all around her the social fabric shall sway and split and fall; the pillars of society shall be shaken, and the roofs of ages come rushing down; and not one hair of her head shall be harmed.

ON FEMALE SUFFRAGE

NOT wishing to overload this long essay with too many parentheses, apart from its thesis of progress and precedent, I append here three notes on points of detail that may possibly be misunderstood.

The first refers to the female controversy. It may seem to many that I dismiss too curtly the contention that all women should have votes, even if most women do not desire them. It is constantly said in this connection that males have received the vote (the agricultural labourers for instance) when only a minority of them were in favour of it. Mr. Galsworthy, one of the few fine fighting intellects of our time, has talked this language in the *Nation*. Now, broadly, I have only to answer here, as everywhere in this book, that history is not a toboggan slide, but a road to be reconsidered and even retraced. If we really forced General Elections upon free labourers who definitely disliked General Elections, then it was a thoroughly undemocratic thing to do; if we are democrats we ought to undo it.

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We want the will of the people, not the votes of the people; and to give a man a vote against his will is to make voting more valuable than the democracy it declares.

But this analogy is false, for a plain and particular reason. Many voteless women regard a vote as unwomanly. Nobody says that most voteless men regarded a vote as unmanly. Nobody says that any voteless men regarded it as unmanly. Not in the stillest hamlet or the most stagnant fen could you find a yokel or a tramp who thought he lost his sexual dignity by being part of a political mob. If he did not care about a vote it was solely because he did not know about a vote; he did not understand the word any better than Bimetallism. His opposition, if it existed, was merely negative. His indifference to a vote was really indifference.

But the female sentiment against the franchise, whatever its size, is positive. It is not negative; it is by no means indifferent. Such women as are opposed to the change regard it (rightly or wrongly) as unfeminine. That is, as insulting certain affirmative traditions to which they are attached. You may think such a view prejudiced; but I violently deny that any democrat has a right to override such prejudices, if they are popular and positive. Thus he would not have a right to make millions of Moslems vote with a cross if

On Female Suffrage

they had a prejudice in favour of voting with a crescent. Unless this is admitted, democracy is a farce we need scarcely keep up. If it is admitted, the Suffragists have not merely to awaken an indifferent, but to convert a hostile majority.

ON CLEANLINESS IN EDUCATION

ON re-reading my protest, which I honestly think much needed, against our heathen idolatry of mere ablution, I see that it may possibly be mis-read. I hasten to say that I think washing a most important thing to be taught both to rich and poor. I do not attack the positive but the relative position of soap. Let it be insisted on even as much as now; but let other things be insisted on much more. I am even ready to admit that cleanliness is next to godliness; but the moderns will not even admit godliness to be next to cleanliness. In their talk about Thomas Becket and such saints and heroes they make soap more important than soul; they reject godliness whenever it is not cleanliness. If we resent this about remote saints and heroes, we should resent it more about the many saints and heroes of the slums, whose unclean hands cleanse the world. Dirt is evil chiefly as evidence of sloth; but the fact remains that the classes that wash most are those that work least. Concerning these, the practical course is simple; soap should

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be urged on them and advertised as what it is—a luxury. With regard to the poor also the practical course is not hard to harmonise with our thesis. If we want to give poor people soap we must set out deliberately to give them luxuries. If we will not make them rich enough to be clean, then emphatically we must do what we did with the saints. We must reverence them for being dirty.

ON PEASANT PROPRIETORSHIP

I HAVE not dealt with any details touching distributed ownership, or its possibility in England, for the reason stated in the text. This book deals with what is wrong, wrong in our root of argument and effort. This wrong is, I say, that we will go forward because we dare not go back. Thus the Socialist says that property is already concentrated in Trusts and Stores: the only hope is to concentrate it further in the State. I say the only hope is to unconcentrate it; that is, to repent and return; the only step forward is the step backward.

But in connection with this distribution I have laid myself open to another potential mistake. In speaking of a sweeping redistribution, I speak of decision in the aim, not necessarily of abruptness in the means. It is not at all too late to restore an approximately rational state of English possessions without any mere confiscation. A policy of buying out landlordism, steadily adopted in England as it has already been adopted in Ireland (notably in Mr. Wyndham's wise and

On Peasant Proprietorship

fruitful Act), would in a very short time release the lower end of the see-saw and make the whole plank swing more level. The objection to this course is not at all that it would not do, only that it will not be done. If we leave things as they are, there will almost certainly be a crash of confiscation. If we hesitate, we shall soon have to hurry. But if we start doing it quickly we have still time to do it slowly.

This point, however, is not essential to my book. All I have to urge between these two boards is that I dislike the big Whiteley shop, and that I dislike Socialism because it will (according to Socialists) be so like that shop. It is its fulfilment, not its reversal. I do not object to Socialism because it will revolutionise our commerce, but because it will leave it so horribly the same.

