

of my experience. Many others crowd in upon my memory, but the foregoing will serve to show how varied are the appeals for assistance, in one form and another, which come to the American diplomat.

Of the tragedies of life which one encounters, where often a few dollars would go so far to relieve distress, I have said but little. One often longs for means to dispense a more generous charity.

Our national government could hardly undertake to provide such means, and it is only a few of our diplomatic officials whose circumstances enable them adequately to meet all the calls upon them. But the relief of worthy Americans in distress abroad, through our embassies and legations, offers a wide field for private charity, which would be subject to but little if any imposition, in view of the ability of the officials to investigate.

COMPETITION

BY HENRY HOLT

THE public questions now receiving most attention in America — those of the labor trusts and the capital trusts — are at bottom questions of competition.

The topic is of peculiar importance to us, for it is universally admitted that competition, in both making money and spending it, is fiercer here than elsewhere. Our average man, and perhaps still more our average woman, wants to outdo her neighbor in clothes, housing, equipage, entertainment — everything that money can be wasted on; and the competition to make all that money is as fierce as the competition to spend it. This is largely because we are, as the *London Nation* justly calls us, "inordinately free from the conventions, restraints, distractions, and hypocrisies of the older civilizations."

For comparison we need glance at English conditions alone: those in Europe generally are enough like them.

When an Englishman gets comfortably rich, he is apt to think of a place in the country, and a local magistracy, and a seat in Parliament; but in America wealth is seldom cared for as giving an opportunity to serve the community or to gain political honors.

Rank, too, — not merely the title that

a rich man may hope to gain, but rank derived through ancestry, and embedded in history and the system of things, — is a constant reminder that wealth is not for him the highest earthly good. The aristocratic conditions also carry much tradition and habit of culture and refinement, and, it does not seem fanciful to believe, thus afford the main attraction that keeps relatively so many more Englishmen than Americans away from wealth-seeking, and in pursuit of the things of the spirit.

The English church, too, has a great influence in this direction, not only because its endowments attract men from competitive pursuits, but also because of the leisure it gives for other pursuits.

The American attaches little honor to political position, because our democracy so frequently — is it too much to say so generally? — gives such position to men with small claim to honor; we have no established church; and though we have a real aristocracy, it is only in a derived sense, for it does not rule, and the general public knows nothing about it; the public knows only our sham aristocracy of wealth.

True, our unexampled diffusion of education fits more men than elsewhere to

enter into the competition above manual labor; but high ambition is the infirmity of only noble souls; not one man in a thousand cares for the triumphs of art, or letters, or politics, or even of war. Yet every man is a snob, and there is no American country paper now without its social column — even out in California and Oregon the papers copy the so-called society news from the New York papers; and in them our American democrat sees almost entirely the names of people he has heard of as rich, seldom the name of anybody he has heard of as anything else.

In short, wealth and its results are the only good yet conspicuous on the average American horizon. Hence our utterly unexampled rage of competition for it. The American view of the subject was well illustrated by the wife of one of the great captains of industry, who lately said, "My husband hesitated between taking his present position and going to the Senate. If he had gone to the Senate, it would have wrecked his career."

Now, in this fierce competition, the sentiments regarding it are paradoxical to a degree that is hardly short of amusing. Nearly everybody is half the time crying out against competition, and the other half demanding it. Workingmen try to suppress it in labor, and to enforce it in commerce; on the other hand, the leaders of the industrial world are trying to secure it in labor, and to get rid of it in commerce; while the leaders of the regulative or political world are trying heartily to maintain it in commerce, and are comparatively indifferent to it in labor.

Yet there is a consistency pervading all these seemingly paradoxical conditions: each man tries to get rid of competition in what he sells, and secure it in what he buys. The workingman sells labor, and wants no competition in it: so he forms his labor trust, and tolerates all the other labor trusts; he buys commodities, and wants all possible competition in them: so he attacks the capitalist trusts. The captain of industry buys

labor: so he wants all possible competition in it, and therefore disapproves the labor trusts; he sells commodities, and therefore wants no competition in them: so he forms his own trust, and tolerates the other capitalist trusts. The legislator, administrator, jurist, sells neither labor nor commodities, and buys both: so he favors competition in both, but tempers his advocacy of it in labor, by a tenderness for the labor vote.

But while the statesman, so far as he is a patriot, is above competition, so far as he is a politician he knows it in perhaps its widest and intensest form, and against it makes his political trusts: the great national parties have many features in common with the trusts — especially the Republican party in relation to the tariff; and though the state and county organizations do not generally control plunder enough to justify close trust organization, the city political gangs do, and generally are trusts, Tammany being one of the best organized trusts in the world.

Even the professional classes are not without organization against competition. The musicians' trusts are as selfish, and apparently as foolish, as the hod-carriers' trusts; and even the bar associations and the medical societies, while their real object is the intellectual and ethical advance of their professions, cannot entirely escape some incidental part in the virtually universal defenses against competition — cannot escape acting in some respects as trusts.

Outside of all these classes is the large one of exchangers of commodities, who generally deal in too great a variety of articles to be tempted into trusts of their own. Yet they are all interested in transportation, and therefore naturally object to railroad trusts and teamsters' trusts. To other trusts they are comparatively indifferent, but as individuals they compete as actively as anybody.

As competition is attempted everywhere, it must have its merits; but as it is also everywhere guarded against, it

must have its evils, and so distinct are these evils that Mr. S. A. Reeve, the author of the only book on its general aspects which I know of, apparently thinks that to them are to be attributed most of the sufferings that civilized humanity endures. With Henry George and Edward Bellamy, he belongs to a school — or section outside of the schools — which I am never sure that I understand, or that it does; but if I understand him, he holds that competition does not naturally inhere in production, but is bred solely by exchange and other activities not directly productive; and as a member of the noble army of panacea-makers, he offers, as his, the abolition of merchandizing, banking, and many other activities. But just how his panacea is to be administered, he shows no more clearly than do the other inventors of schemes for the millennium.

Competition is certainly not an invention of the devil, unless the whole order of nature is the invention of the devil: all educated people know that competition was ingrained in nature long before there was merchandizing, or manufacturing, or individual tinkering, or savage hunting and fishing, or savages, or beasts, or birds, or fishes, or gastropods, or amoebas. The very plants, when probably there were no living things but plants, competed fiercely, and they compete still, for light and heat and moisture. To-day they are even competing for territory, with streams and ponds, and actually filling them up and obliterating them. They compete with men for the possession of the tropic zone, and have often beaten them; and I know a case within a dozen miles of Chicago where they competed with an ice company for the possession of a stream, and forced it to use a little steamer with a sort of mowing machine attached. They limited the area of the company's activities, and, for all I know, drove it off altogether, though now a mightier competitor than either — the steel corporation — has taken possession of the territory.

When animal life began, the very amoebas, the lucky ones and lively ones and wise ones, floated into the best places, and kept the unlucky ones and lazy ones and stupid ones out. When tadpoles and fish were evolved, there began a mighty gobbling up of the weak by the strong; later, reptiles — big lizards with wings, and birds with teeth — kept up the game, and made it livelier, perhaps, than ever before or since, even down to the days of Standard Oil. Some time along there, began the most interesting of all competitions, — the one out of which has been evolved all that men most care for, and perhaps all that is most worth their caring for, — the competition because of sex. In the struggle of brutes for mates, it was often competition in mere force; but there was also higher competition, in the glowworm's light, and the bird's song and plumage. When man was evolved, it grew higher and higher, until the competition of love became subject for art, and now does more than anything else to fill the opera houses and picture galleries, and fiction and poetry, and the very souls of the world; and not only does art find in competition its mightiest theme, but art itself is a field of competition and struggle against competition, from rival primadonnas down to the musical unions already cited.

There is nothing, from the deepest mine to the tallest church, — or even the tallest skyscraper, — from the dollars a man pays his valet to the devotion he pays his lady-love, that is not informed through and through by competition. One is often tempted to regard it as the motive power of the world. But it is not: it is only an incident of the motive powers — often an exaggerated and destructive one, often not rising above the dignity of a foolish one.

Nevertheless, with the evolution of intelligence, there has appeared a new set of factors: sympathy, mercy, justice, have begun to restrain and narrow competition, to shape popular opinion, and even to express themselves in law. This new

stage of the matter to-day absorbs a wide share of men's interests and even of their enthusiasms; and these, like all new enthusiasms, reach many extremes. Of these, later.

With competition everywhere else, the idea of wiping it out of industry must, at best, be a counsel of perfection, and at worst the idea of making industry cease. Rarely, if at all, can there be an effort which is to be paid for, that does not tend to compete with every other effort which is to be paid for. Any man who heaves coal competes with every other man who heaves coal, and moreover he tends to lower the wages in coal-heaving, — so that coal-heavers will tend to leave that profession and compete in others.

These tendencies are not always realized in practice, because the individual effort is too small to overcome inertia and friction, or even to be measured by our currency and other instruments. But when such efforts "happen" to accumulate in any one direction, the effect of the aggregate is sometimes important.

As a rule, the only way to get rid of competition is, as already intimated, to get rid of work. Does not the most beneficent of inventions inevitably compete with all connected vested interests? Can the merchant who sells the best goods at the lowest prices, continue without competing with all others and getting the biggest business? Do not the men in the most unselfish pursuits inevitably compete for the best places in them? Does not the most self-sacrificing physician compete for the best practice? Does not even the most self-sacrificing clergyman compete for the best congregation? Neither may have the end in view, but if he puts forth the best in him, is not the end inevitably forced upon him?

So unescapable is competition, that we find it cropping up in spite of the best efforts to suppress it. For instance: the very able and philanthropic chairman of the United States Steel Corporation became impressed with the idea that steady

prices would be a good thing; in this idea he was correct — as correct, for instance, as anybody who thinks that a clear complexion is a good thing. But circumstances are frequent where a clear complexion cannot be had, and where efforts to suppress eruption must end in disaster. So in the economic world, the unevenness in men's judgments — their making too much of one commodity and too little of another — renders steadiness of price impossible, even the fixing of a normal price impossible except through competition.

The only rational price (if the versed reader will be patient with a little A B C) is that where the demand will just absorb the supply; and this price will be found only by buyers competing for product when demand is good, and by sellers competing for custom when demand is slack. This of course makes high prices in good times, and low prices in bad times; the only way to get rid of high prices and low prices is to get rid of good times and bad times; the only way to get rid of good times and bad times is to get rid of crazes and panics; and the only way to get rid of crazes and panics is to get rid of intemperance in both hope and fear. But temperance is as remarkable by its absence from sundry schools of philanthropists as from the community in general; nothing is more characteristic of that virtue than the ability to wait, and nothing is more characteristic of the philanthropists than to try to go faster than natural law.

Last fall, when competition began bubbling to raise the safety-valve of prices, the benevolent Steel Corporation smilingly seated itself upon the valve, and the competition had to break out somewhere else. Among other evil consequences, the company got many more orders at the prevailing prices than it could fill. If they had raised prices, and so lowered the demand to equal the supply, the customers least in need, or least able profitably to use steel, would have dropped out, and the neediest and ablest would

have been supplied; the most important demands would have been satisfied, and nobody would have felt a right to complain. Instead of this, each order was filled in part, the most important and necessary enterprises were left unfinished along with the least important and the mistaken ones; nobody was satisfied; complaints were loud; and some of the railroad companies met to devise their own rail-factories.

But in thus suppressing the natural and salutary effects of competition, the Steel Corporation itself entered into competition — and an injurious and unnatural competition, — with the weaker companies: for, as it would not raise prices, the weaker companies could not avail themselves of the good times to strengthen themselves against bad times, and against the natural tendency of any great competitor to gobble up little competitors in bad times. That such was the deliberate intention of the Steel Corporation, however, I do not believe: for I have faith in the philanthropic intentions of its chairman.

But the story is not ended: when the bad times came later last fall, in his desire to keep prices even, he exercised his wonderful powers of persuasion to prevent the other manufacturers from going into the natural competition of lowering prices, and so the steel industries were kept idle or partly idle for many months, until they could bear the strain no longer, and the steel company itself had to lower prices, right on top of a declaration, the last of many, that it was not going to.

This is the most recent, and perhaps the most remarkable, of the great illustrations of the utter impossibility, as men are now constituted and industries now organized, of avoiding competition.

It is plainly impossible that a feature so ingrained in nature and human nature should be wholly bad. Now, wherein is it good, and wherein is it bad? Like everything else — food, wine, money, even such ethereal things as literature,

art, or love, or religion itself — it is good within bounds, and bad in excess.

Where are the bounds? As in everything else, at waste — waste of strength, character, time, or resources.

Of course the problem of what is waste and what reasonable expenditure, is a difficult one, but that does not cancel the duty of solving it.

Everybody who reads these words knows that, within bounds, competition tends (if union leaders, or "wealthy male-factors," or philanthropists, will let it) to keep prices reasonable — where, as already said, they preserve the equation of supply and demand; to keep quality good, and supply abundant and accessible; that in advertising, it spreads a good deal of useful intelligence, though mixed with a good deal that is superfluous and even false; and that in drumming, it is a great convenience and saving to dealers generally, and keeps the country hotels and railroad accommodations a great deal better than they otherwise would be.

A benefit not as obvious as those, is its elimination of the unfit from industry. There are always hanging on to the outskirts of business, a lot of incapable men who are pestering and impeding the rest of the world with poor goods, poor service, unfulfilled engagements, bankruptcies, and prices broken by forced sales. The elimination of such people, and confining business to the more capable, is a good service to the community. And it is even a good service to the eliminated men: for they are much better off under the guidance of the capable than in enduring the responsibilities, anxieties, and privations inseparable from depending on the discharge of duties beyond them. Competition, then, so far as it regulates prices, increases products and services, and eliminates inefficiency, is an unmixed good.

And here we approach the other side. The competition which drives out the incapable is a very different matter from the competition which drives out the capable. Effective competition of course

destroys competition elsewhere, and so far as that is done by increasing goods and services, the good produced exceeds the good destroyed, and the world is still the gainer. But when the destruction through competition is an end in itself — when one man, without improving product or service, sacrifices values and efforts merely to destroy another man's competition, he wastes good for the sake of destroying still more good.

These facts are obscured because such competition may bring benefit — though probably only a specious benefit — to the aggressor; but it can at best bring the benefit only at the cost of his victims and the public, and at the sacrifice, in the aggressor himself, of that for which no money can compensate: for there is sure to be a moral waste. I know very directly of a capable and prosperous man in Pennsylvania who was driven out of business by the Standard Oil Company, and touching whom one of the Oil magnates remarked, "Oh, he was easy game." And this case is said to be one of many. It is generally understood that probably the most effective literary onslaught ever made on the Standard Oil Company was by an author whose father was one of the victims.

To continue with the unfavorable side: ruinous competition in prices still exists, though hardly to the extreme of fifty or sixty years ago, when frequently opposing stage lines carried their passengers free, and steamboats sometimes not only carried them free, but even threw in meals. We do not often hear of anything like that now, though in my own trade I occasionally hear rumors of schoolbooks given away, and ruinous prices paid prominent authors; and perhaps any man in any trade may hear similar rumors in it. But whatever foundation there may be for such rumors, there seems to have developed a sense of shame regarding such proceedings that makes men slower than they were a generation or two ago to indulge in them openly.

On its unfavorable side, too, competi-

tion, instead of stopping at cheapening by simpler processes and legitimate accounts, tends to inferior materials and labor. Though in ordering large works or large supplies, the practice is universal of trying to get the benefits of reasonable competition by seeking bids, people have of late grown so afraid of excessive competition that the right to reject the lowest bids is reserved, though not always exercised. Moreover, competition tends frightfully to run to waste, and, later, paying for this waste tends to make prices high, quality inferior, and commodities scant and inaccessible.

One of the worst wastes is in advertising: everybody uses soap, and no amount of advertising can make people use materially more; and yet those who use the finer kinds probably pay more for having it dinned into them to use a certain brand, than they pay for the soap itself.

I want to use another illustration from my own trade. No apology should be needed for a writer thus illustrating from his own trade, if he happens to have one; and the more I see of the conditions, the more I incline to believe that he should have one, and that writing should not be a trade. If it ever ceases to be one, however, it will be when trades are less infested by foolish competition. But the interesting question of literature being a trade is "another story," and possibly may be the subject of another essay. But one would hardly be required to justify the writer who has a trade, in illustrating from it: for there he is surer than anywhere else of the first essential of good writing — knowing what he is writing about. The second illustration I want to make from my trade is in the fact that the country probably pays more for having its elementary schoolbooks argued and cajoled and bribed into use, than for the books themselves. Leaving the bribery out, the same is probably true of high-school books; and the increasing amount of interviewing, explanation, comparison, and argument regarding col-

lege books, is rapidly making it true of them.

But excessive expenses in competition are worse than wasteful and demoralizing: they are aggressive, and provoke retaliations equally objectionable. The competition in economized production, faithful service, reasonable prices, and reasonable and truthful publicity, is simply incidental to each man's doing his best for himself; but beyond this point it begins to mean each man's doing his worst for his neighbor. Incidental competition contains what truth there is in the aphorism that competition is the life of trade; but aggressive competition means war, waste, and death.

Perhaps the most trying paradox in competition is that it forces the wise man to play the fool when his competitors do, or suffer for his wisdom. When he is thus between Scylla and Charybdis, what ought he to do? I knew a man who, in a peculiar condition of his business, when a collateral business was making inroads on it, was often met by the proposition from those whose custom he needed, "If you won't concede so and so, I know a man who will." His answer was, "That if I don't make a fool of myself, some competitor will, is not a convincing argument. I'll wait till he does, and the fools put themselves out of the race." And wait he did, and his example prevented many other men from making fools of *themselves*, and did much to relieve his trade from a peculiarly unfair and abnormal competition.

In competition, the call to do the brave thing arises because competition is war. But in war it is often braver not to fight than to fight, and the bravest fighting has not been in aggression, but in self-defense — little Holland against gigantic Spain. And where is the bully now? Though non-resistance is ideal ethics, it should be fundamentally understood that ideal ethics apply only to an ideal world, and that often the attempt to introduce them into a practical world is not only futile, but wasteful and destructive.

As already hinted, the point at which competition becomes abnormal, forced, and aggressive, is when it is wasteful — when the cost of feeding it reduces profits below the average rate. But it is superficial to estimate profits as money alone: social considerations and the gratification of personal predilection are all profits in the broad sense. For "profits" substitute *satisfactions*, and the general proposition holds.

This seems to hark forward to an ideal — that it is for the greatest good of the greatest number that all men's fortunes, estimated in satisfactions, should be equal; and perhaps the most pronounced individualist would not object to that *as an ideal*, but his contention would be that it is only by the freest opportunity for individual development that men's fortunes *can* become equal; and individual development is competition.

The wastes of exaggerated competition of course prompt the question whether men would not be better off if, instead of competing, they were coöperating — if instead of fighting each other, even incidentally, they were helping each other. As far as human nature has yet been evolved, the change is not possible to any great extent, and the question is too complicated to admit of an answer in the present state of human intelligence. Yet there are some little bits of experience in the coöperation of small groups, and also in occasional middle conditions where purposed competition has ceased, though coöperation has hardly begun. But they are conditions of unstable equilibrium which must soon disappear.

I would illustrate this point, too, from my own trade, despite my having done so already in the *Atlantic*.¹ Such a condition prevailed in the upper walks of the publishing business from about 1865 to 1875, and contained several features that may not be altogether uninteresting.

In the first place, it was a brief realization of the ideals of philosophical

¹ November, 1905, p. 589.

anarchism — self-regulation without law. There was no international copyright to protect an American publisher's property in an English book; yet an intelligent self-interest, among a perhaps exceptional body of men, performed the functions of law. By mutual consent, when a publisher had a contract with an English author for a book, or even in the absence of a contract, when a publisher made the first announcement of an intention to print an English book, no other American publisher of standing would print it in opposition. This usage was called the courtesy of the trade, and for about ten years that courtesy was seldom violated. Moreover, the courtesy was extended to the relations of publishers with American authors. During that period, no publisher of standing would any more try to get away another's client than a lawyer of standing would try to get away another's client, or a physician another's patient. And under those conditions the trade prospered more, on the whole, than it has under contrary conditions.

If that absence of direct purposeful competition could have been maintained, the prosperity could have been maintained. But it depended, as I have intimated, upon the trade happening to be, at that time, in the hands of men of exceptional character; and the results of peaceful ways were, as has been the case in all history, tempting to the outside barbarian. If the Harpers were making money for the author and themselves out of a book by George Eliot, the Appletons or the Scribners would not print it; but soon an enterprising printer in the West awoke to the fact that there was no law to prevent *his* printing it in a cheaper edition, or to compel him to pay royalty to the author; and print he did, right and left. His example was soon followed by others, and the peaceful and profitable conditions of philosophical anarchism were once more demonstrated impossible of duration in the present state of human nature. As always when men have tried

to get along without law, law had to be resorted to, and the International Copyright Law of 1891 was the result.

It is interesting further to note that the spirit of aggressive competition which grew up after the period of philosophical anarchy filled the business with waste in advertising, over-bidding for authors, and over-concession of discounts and credits to customers; until, a few years ago, the competition reached extremes which were at last realized to be wasteful and ruinous, and are gradually being curtailed. But the curtailments have made almost as great demands on courage, and on the capacity to see future advantages in present sacrifices, as were required to make possible the decade of philosophical anarchism; and the evolution of another period of non-competitive peace, economy, and mutual courtesy will probably be as slow as the evolution of human nature.

And yet during that Arcadian period, or rather at about its falling away, there were many to claim that the established publishers were in a combine or trust (though the actual word was not then current), and that the only way a man could enter the business was the predatory way. Yet in a libel suit instituted by one of the predatory people against the *Evening Post*, for calling him a pirate, I heard a successful publisher on the witness stand declare that he had entered the business about the beginning of the period referred to, had never reprinted another publisher's book, and had never been the object of aggression by another publisher, but on the contrary had always been treated by the others with courtesy, and often had the benefit of their experienced advice.

It should be further observed that during this absence of purposeful competition, incidental competition was inevitably going on all the while. At no time under my observation was there more emulation in economy of method and quality of product. During that period was established the great advance in the

quality of bookmaking which distinguishes the American books of to-day from our crude products before the middle sixties.

So far, then, as inferences regarding the whole industrial field can be drawn from a brief and exceptional experience in a relatively insignificant portion of it, and that a portion with some strong characteristics outside of pure industrialism, it would be a fair inference to conjecture that all forms of industry will gain in peace and prosperity from such advances in human nature as will do away with purposeful and aggressive competition, and that the incidental competition of emulation in methods and product will still be great enough to develop the effort on which progress must depend.

These truths regarding the industrial world were long since realized by the superior minds in the professional world. The high-class medical practitioner does not try to get away his colleagues' patients; does not make his charges lower than those of other physicians; derives no profit from his discoveries, but throws them open to the world; does not tout for practice, and make his customers pay the expenses of the touting; never disregards the call of mercy; and tempers his fees to the shorn lamb, or rather lets the lamb go unshorn. High-class lawyers, too, have restricted their competition to rendering the best service they know how, and have refrained from direct efforts to get each others' clients, and even from advertising for clients. Now it could not have been merely what are usually termed moral considerations that long ago evolved these codes of professional ethics. These men have been intelligent enough to realize that undue competition must in the long run be no more productive than dog eating dog, and that peace and dignity are better worth having than superfluous money.

The commercial world may be slowly feeling its way toward such conditions, but even in the professional world they are as yet but conditions of unstable

equilibrium; lately our terrible American commercialism, and love of ostentation and luxury and apparent equality, have been doing much to send professional ethics to the dogs. This, however, should not be laid entirely to the mere spirit of competition; it must be laid largely to the moral breakdown that has followed the weakening of the old religious sanctions, and that will last until we get some new sanctions from our increasing knowledge of nature.

But the professional world and the publishing world have not been alone in attempts to avoid the evils of competition. For some years past, people in trade after trade have found that they were competing until they were making no money. Everywhere excessive enterprise or excessive avarice, and excessive lack of foresight and character, were defeating themselves. At last, many of the leaders of the respective trades began to meet to agree upon prices, discounts, sometimes number of drummers, and, for all I know, amount of advertising. But there was too much "enterprise," or too little character, to make the agreements last: honest men held up prices while knaves undersold them.

It was at length realized that the only effective plan was to put a whole industry under a central control. Hence the trust. This tended not only to stop waste, but to economize management and office administration; and it was urged that part of these great economies could be given to the public through reductions in prices.

This was the view of people who had things for sale. But the vast majority who had nothing for sale, and the demagogues who sought the votes of this majority, called these agreements schemes to benefit each particular trade at the expense of the community — and said that, competition being destroyed, the public would be, in the matter of price, at the mercy of the combine. And, despite the wise and economical features of such arrangements, the Sherman law

and its progeny have made them illegal. The crude new legislation has seldom attempted to attack the evils in such a way as to leave room for the possible benefits; and has been largely futile and destructive. As a sample, it is now promoting the destruction of the bookstores: I am just mourning the fall of one of the oldest and best, in my little university town in Vermont. The department stores are killing the booksellers by selling the most popular new books at cost, and less than cost, for the sake of attracting custom for other things. When the publishers got together and tried to stop this, their counsel told them that the Sherman law would not permit them to do it by limiting competition among themselves, but would permit them to try to limit it among others, by refusing to sell to dealers who cut prices. But the courts have recently decided that even this aid to the merchandizing of culture has been restricted by our sapient lawmakers to copyright books: Homer and Shakespeare are beyond the pale of their assistance.

The law of Illinois exempts day-laborers from the tutelage it imposes on the book-trade. In other words, it has exempted from its provisions the trust whose actions have been the most extreme, and have been most enforced by extreme methods — such as withholding the general supplies of food and fuel; obstructing transportation; and boycott, violence, and murder. Moreover, the demagogues are agitating for the labor trust's exemption from the United States Trust laws; and since the Supreme Court has pronounced against the boycott, the labor trusts are also agitating for legislation to make them superior to the effect of the decision, — superior to everybody else, — to permit them to restrict competition by unlimited coercion.

And for some of this legislation there is not the excuse of difficulty. The Illinois law is probably as bad a case of demagoguery and class legislation as was ever enacted.

My writing of that paragraph was interrupted by the sneezing of one of my boys who has hay fever. The growing paternalization of our government, as illustrated in some features of the pure food act, has prevented my obtaining for him the medicine which cured one of his parents and one of his grandparents.

Will people ever learn that legislation is the most difficult and dangerous of the arts, and that it is best, where not clearly impracticable, to leave the cure of social ills to the courts? There, not only is the experience of the race digested and applied by learning and training, but it is applied only to the case in hand, instead of (to give the metaphor a twist or two) being sent out crude and unbroken to run amuck.

There can be little doubt that men could make more by helping one another than by fighting one another; but, as already said, in any state of human nature that we can foresee, the application of non-competitive or coöperative policies to the commercial world cannot in strictness be a practical question. When we imagine Utopias, as always when we try to go very far beyond our experience, we land in paradoxes and contradictions; and when we try to realize Utopias in the present state of morality, we class ourselves with the ignorant or the purblind. Attempts to realize ideals that are merely imagined have probably been the most wasteful and destructive of all human efforts.

Yet often, as in mathematics, much is gained for practical questions by reasoning from impossible hypotheses, so long as we regard them as impossible. We can at least ask a more or less skeptical question or two regarding Utopia. For instance, if no time is to be wasted in competition, what are the advertisers, drummers, revenue officers excluding foreign products, and other people now performing waste labor, going to do for a living? It seems reasonable to assume

that they will simply produce two-fold — four-fold — useful things that the world is now doing without. And perhaps something even wiser than that — there may not, after all, be produced so many more things: for in Utopia competition in *consuming* useless things will have disappeared. Nobody will have useless clothes, food, wines, jewels, equipages, servants, simply because his competitors have them — each man will be content with what he reasonably needs; and in a co-operative world, he will spend his then superfluous powers in coöperating with the efforts of his less able neighbors to get needed things.

Yet more — in Utopia men will have time to devote their efforts to the industry we now most conspicuously neglect — saving our souls: there will be time for geniuses to write their best, and restore literature, instead of hurrying and overworking for superfluous and even hurtful things; and time for ordinary men to read and think; to listen to music, and make it; to look at pictures, and do a little with cameras and water-colors on our own account; to enjoy architecture,

and learn enough of it to have some intelligent say about making our own homes; time to potter over our gardens; time to travel; and even time to go fishing, at least with Isaak. A woman to whom I read this said, "And we'll have time to have time." It is needless to say that she lived in New York.

More important still, in the non-competitive Utopia, there will be time to keep well, time to die at a decent old age, and time to go decently to each other's funerals. But before that, and most important of all, there will be time to prevent our having to feel, when we do go to funerals, perhaps the bitterest regret of all: "If I only had had more of that friend while he was here!"

But all this is Utopia. Each man has his own way to Utopia, and wise men know that they will not in one lifetime get far on any way. But they also know, and know it better each day, that there *are* ways in that direction; and that, while the competition incidental to honest emulation tends to keep those ways open, the competition born of greed and envy tends to keep them closed.

THE NEW NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

BY JABEZ T. SUNDERLAND

THE Nationalist Movement in India may well interest Americans. Lovers of progress and humanity cannot become acquainted with it without discovering that it has large significance, not only to India and Great Britain, but to the world. That the movement is attracting much attention in England (as well as awakening some anxiety there, because of England's connection with India) is well known to all who read the British periodical press, or follow the debates of Parliament, or note the public utterances from time to time of Mr. John Morley (now

Lord Morley), the British Secretary of State for India.

What is this new Indian movement? What has brought it into existence? What is its justification, if it has a justification? What does it portend as to the future of India, and the future relations between India and Great Britain?

In order to find answers to these questions we must first of all get clearly in mind the fact that India is a subject land. She is a dependency of Great Britain, not a colony. Britain has both colonies and dependencies. Many persons suppose

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