

35
No. 12

INDIVIDUALISM

only VERSUS

SOCIALISM

An Address

By Henry Clews, LL.D.

Delivered on Sunday afternoon, May 12,
1907, at the Columbia Theatre,
Brooklyn.

INDIVIDUALISM

VERSUS

THE FUTURE OF
SOCIALISM

An Address

By Henry Gleason, F.R.S.

Delivered on Sunday afternoon, May 12,

1907, at the Columbia Theatre,

Brooklyn.

INDIVIDUALISM versus SOCIALISM

AN ADDRESS

By Henry Clews, LL.D.

Delivered on Sunday Afternoon, May 12, 1907, at the
Columbia Theatre, Brooklyn

In order that I may present a clear understanding of my view of the subject, it is only fair, in the first place, to state that the system of Individualism which I shall endeavor to uphold is worthy and commendable. I hold it to be superior in every sense to any of the various plans of Socialism offered by its advocates. By this I do not mean Individualism in the extreme sense of the term, for, as we all know, in no civilized country and under no form of government whatsoever, does, or can, extreme Individualism exist.

In the world of economics and politics Individualism has a distinct meaning, as a name given to the theory of government which favors the non-interference of the State in the affairs of individuals. It has also been well defined, as the private ownership of the means of production and distribution, where competition is possible; leaving to public ownership those means of production and distribution in which competition is practically impossible.

It will, then, be at once apparent that, in the consideration of the forces helpful and necessary to society, the individualist believes that competition which encourages merit and develops skill should remain paramount. And right here the issue is made, between Individualism and Socialism, the Socialist denying that competition is beneficial to society, but contending rather that it is a deleterious and harmful force.

Upon this issue, so joined, I stand firmly in favor of the principle of competition, and that system of Individualism which guards, protects and encourages competition. It is that system of government under which we live to-day,—a government of the people, by the people and for the people,—the United States of America—a free system of government, in the best and broadest sense of the term.

Under this free system of government, whereby individuals are free to get a liv-

ing or to pursue wealth as each chooses, the usual result is competition. Obviously, then, competition really means industrial freedom. Thus, any one may choose his own trade or profession, or, if he does not like it, he may change. He is free to work hard or not; he may make his own bargains and set his price upon his labor or his products. He is free to acquire property to any extent, or to part with it. By dint of greater effort or superior skill, or by intelligence, if he can make better wages, he is free to live better, just as his neighbor is free to follow his example and to learn to excel him in turn. If any one has a genius for making and managing money, he is free to exercise his genius, just as another is free to handle his tools.

In this primary outline of the free system of Individualism, it is well also to consider the good side of freedom or Individualism. It is an axiom, well established, that the freer men are to choose their work and to use and enjoy its results, the more work they are willing to do. Their energy and enterprise are called out, their wits sharpened, their hopes stirred. If any one wins unusual success, others are encouraged to try better methods. If an individual enjoys his money, gained by energy and successful effort, his neighbors are urged to work the harder, that they and their children may have the same enjoyment.

Thus, every one accomplishes more in a condition of freedom or Individualism, and the whole nation is richer, than if custom or a Socialistic community fettered and restricted men, and compelled them to work according to rule. With matured individuals, this is on the same principle that children enjoy their sports better, when left to themselves, than if a parent or teacher were to meddle and make rules for them.

I believe that it can be stated, as an established fact, that whenever men are, as individuals, free to work, to earn and to save and use their earnings as they deem fit, the capable, the industrious, the temperate and the intelligent everywhere tend to rise to prosperity. The skilful are always in demand and at good wages. And remember, that a day's wages never purchased so much in supplies as it does in the United States, where we use the individual or competitive system of work, because high as prices are, wages are still higher.

As a further part of this summary of Individualism and competition, let us also add the moral side, for it is a considerable and important item. When men labor, earn or save with perfect freedom, they develop many moral qualities, such as patience, self-reliance, self-sacrifice, venturesomeness, integrity, generosity and respect for others' rights.

If a Socialistic committee of the wisest men could manage and make rules for the rest, and provide for everyone's necessities, men would not acquire or exhibit these sterling qualities of manhood, as well as they would by being thrown upon their own resources.

We know this, also, from the fact that the strongest characters have been worked out in brave and patient competition and conflict, often under difficult circumstances; whereas the men who have never been thrown upon their own resources rarely amount to anything.

After this preliminary description of the worth and salient influence of Indi-

vidualism, under which our country has grown to be the greatest nation of the world, let us now turn to Socialism—a system which, if adopted, would call a halt to our progress, tear down our established institutions, and turn our great prosperity into ruin and decay.

It is difficult to tell just what is meant by Socialism in the more modern sense of the term.

It has appeared in the United States under five different and almost totally disconnected forms. It has appeared as a movement towards the establishment of Socialistic communities or communisms; it has appeared as Fourierism, as German or International Socialism, as Nihilism and Christian Socialism.

Prof. Mallock, the eminent English writer, in his lectures in New York, made a careful analysis of Socialism, and exposed its plausible sophistries, some of which, Socialists boast, are grounded on our defined principles of political economy, which the learned writer asserts are rather incomplete. It may be admitted that this is so, and that fuller and clearer distinctions could well be added to our text books on the subject. But, joining the issue in a clean-cut way, between Individualism and Socialism, obviates all necessity at this time of further considering such distinctions, and clarifies our respective positions in this debate.

It was noticeable that, during the delivery of these lectures, hints and remonstrances were freely thrown out that the structure that Dr. Mallock was attacking was not Socialism at all, in the modern acceptation of the term, but something else that had long ago been abandoned.

Now, while I have no unfriendliness whatever with the honest Socialist (mistaken, deluded and sadly out of place in this grand Republic, as he may be), I do say, that this position is but too often the wily subterfuge, sought to be taken advantage of by the insincere agitator or pretended reformer, when he sees that he is beaten. His invariable answer to an irrefutable argument is: "Oh, that which you talked about is not modern Socialism!"

For the purpose of this discussion, however, we can agree that, as contradistinguished from Individualism, Socialism opposes and denounces competition as an injurious and unnecessary force in society, and advocates the collective ownership, through the State, of all the means of production and distribution.

Socialists would, in other words, fence up the great field of free opportunity, deaden all incentive or inspiration for great achievement and not only curtail, but wholly remove, the right to compete and excel, and make it impossible to write "success" as the result of individual effort.

Just think of it! Why the very thing that the Socialists attack, as untenable and wrong in government—individual competition—has done more than anything else to make us what we are as a nation, to-day; has kept alive the precious fires of liberty and freedom and has preserved the institutions of our country. Take away the spirit of Individualism from the people, and you at once eliminate the American Spirit,—the love of freedom,—of free industry,—free and unfettered opportunity,—you take away freedom itself!

And right here, I take the position and shall ever contend, that the United States (of all countries in the world) is no place for Socialism. Let us never forget

hat it was founded by the wisdom and patriotism of the Fathers of the Revolution, and that it is blessed with a Constitution, framed by men who loved individual freedom and national liberty, and who risked their lives and sacrificed their property in the struggle to overthrow injustice and oppression and achieve independence and individual equality. Let us not forget its past one hundred and thirty years of eventful history, replete as they are with many chapters of severe trial, over all of which it has ever risen superior. This splendid history has placed our system of government beyond the line of experiment, and raised it to such an elevation of recognition and respect, that it now ranks as the highest among all the nations of the earth.

Born of the spirit of resistance to oppression, with the broadest and freest constitution that the world has ever known—a land of freedom and equality in the best and most liberal sense of the term—it would seem that the sincere lover of liberty and equality could ask no better home than this democracy of ours—whose glorious flag, floats over eighty-four millions of prosperous and enlightened people.

To further add the term "contented people" might, perhaps, not be a strictly true assertion, and neither would it, in my opinion, be a desirable one to use; for to the spirit of discontent and ambition, so predominant in the American character, are due largely the grand achievements and the remarkable progress and advancement of our nation, in all things that make for greatness, strength and public welfare. However, we must be careful to draw a plain line of contradistinction, between that discontent which is really the mainspring of human activity; and which, appreciating the solidity and soundness of our foundation, aspires to build thereon to the highest ideals of perfection and success,—and that misguided or malicious discontent of Socialism, which arrays itself as an enemy of all civilized forms of government and seeks their utter destruction.

We can well understand and appreciate, how, in a country ruled by a despot, whose heel of oppression and tyranny is ever on the necks of the down-trodden people, the feeling of the masses, who, desiring some measure of free action and equality, would revolt against such conditions, and seek a reorganization of society. They would, naturally, look as far away as they could from such a government of despotism—the only one they had ever known—to the other extreme—a country where the State should own all the land and capital, employ all the people and divide everything, share and share alike, among the community.

But the spirit of revolt which, in that case may be patriotism becomes ridiculous, and open to the charge of insincerity, when the tenets of its doctrine are transplanted and cultivated upon American soil by our foreign population.

With further reason, also, must we question the sincerity of the Socialist, who, leaving oppression behind, emigrates to this country, where tyranny and despotism are unknown, and, yet, who continues to echo that war cry of destruction, wrung from his heart by the cruelty of his old-time oppressors.

He comes here from a land of want and thralldom, to a land of plenty and freedom. He may come without name, fame or property, and he is received with open arms. After a brief residence, he is entitled to full citizenship and is then a part of the government; enjoying all the rights and privileges of the native born.

Besides the active or public equality—the equality possessed by all, the right to share in the government, such as the electoral franchise and eligibility to public office,—he has the rights of private equality. He is possessed of legal equality—the equal possession of private civil rights, enjoyed by all citizens. Then there is the equality of material conditions—that is, the right to acquire wealth and all that wealth implies.

Every opportunity to achieve success and happiness abounds on every hand, and every incentive to industry and accomplishment awaits him, and, if he is energetic and skilful, there is nothing to hinder him from becoming prosperous, or, in other words, successful in whatever vocation in life he may pursue. With qualities that commend themselves to his fellow men, there is no limit to the possibilities of his achievements, and very soon (as has been very often the case) he may become a leader of men. If, therefore, he is sincere, surely he must agree with me that, in view of these conditions, this is no place for the Socialist. And does it not sound like a paradox to hear this cry of Socialism still rending the air—while every avenue of fortune lies open to everyone?

Socialism is self-contradictory and opposed to deep rooted and ineradicable human instincts. Its origin is, of course, purely selfish; but there are two kinds of selfishness—the enlightened and unenlightened. Unfortunately, Socialism belongs chiefly to the latter. It is often overlooked that the identical love of gain which seeks to equalize the distribution of wealth will not be satisfied with equality. A desire for gain will still remain and seek to acquire. The most commendable object in Socialism is the uplifting of the downtrodden and poor. Yet that great commoner and tribune of the people, William Jennings Bryan, tells us that under Individualism we have seen a constant increase in altruism. That the fact that the individual can select the object of his benevolence and devote his means to the causes that appeal to him has given an additional stimulus to his endeavors. And Mr. Bryan pointedly asks the question: "Would this stimulus be as great under Socialism?" Let it not be forgotten that by means of present tendencies and existing economic laws the poor are constantly growing richer. They were never so prosperous as to-day. Labor has made great strides, and the uplift in the lower walks of life in all Christendom during the past twenty years has been beyond precedent. Give us wise and just legislation and complaints about the inequitable distribution of wealth will quickly disappear.

The state of society that the Socialists seek to establish may be beneficial to a class, which, under any conditions, lacks frugality, thrift and self-reliance; but just where the general mass of humanity is to be bettered or elevated, socially, morally or politically, is a point not satisfactorily explained. A society in which all human beings do right; for the simple reason that it is right, cannot exist, unless human nature is recast and reconstructed. Human nature must be treated as it is found in the general makeup of man, and, therefore, a society in which all special desires, all ambition and all self-esteem have been eliminated, precludes development and progress. It reduces everything to utter shiftlessness and stagnation. In such a society there can be no incentive to great achievements in art, literature, mechanics and invention. If all are to be placed on an equal footing, the ignorant with the

educated, the dullard with the genius, and the profligate with the provident, what encouragement is there for special effort?

If you render accessible to each and every member of the human family the achievements and benefits of civilization, holding "property in common," why should a man rack his brain or strain his muscles in producing something which he expects to prove remunerative to himself in some way, but which, under the Socialistic state, would go to the equal financial benefit of all?

Just for a moment stop to think of the effect of bringing all men as near to a dead level as possible, for I recognize that not even socialism would secure the equality which it seeks. If one physician is more skilful than another, who could insist that he receive no better reward than the less skilful, when many would be willing to offer it? Or how else could he avoid having all the patients in the community upon his hands except by charging more for his services than an inferior physician? If one lawyer shows greater ability than another, is he not entitled to a larger fee for his talent? And how else is he to protect himself from taking all the business from the lawyer of less ability? Again, if the skill of the cabinet maker is higher and rarer and worth more than that of the carpenter, how can the latter expect the same compensation as the former? To put both on the same plane would be unjust and would lead to one being compelled to work beyond his strength, while the less skilful would probably be insufficiently occupied. Socialism, you thus see, would often place a premium upon laziness and inefficiency.

Socialism would benefit the shiftless and lazy at the expense of the thrifty and industrious. Is that a good system to advocate and follow? Which of you would be willing to share your hard-won provision for your own family with another family, the head of which you knew to be lazy, incapable and dissipated? What incentive to struggle would remain if the results of that struggle were to be taken away from you and given to others who sat idly by? What would be the effect upon the United States of throttling the ambition to achieve? Take the necessity of struggle out of life, and we should quickly weaken human nature. Civilization would decline and national decay quickly follow. True, the competitive system works harshly upon the weak and incompetent. This, however, opens a channel for development of benevolence, kindness and patience, without which human nature would be exceedingly one-sided and forbidding. The indigent, unfortunate and weak will always be a charge upon the stronger, whether in the family, the municipality or the state. It is folly to think that life can be lived without struggle; and that is one of the chief delusions of Socialism which would quickly impair our national manhood and endurance. Trouble and pain have their part in the plan of nature.

The Socialist is usually an unfortunate or misled individual. He has probably suffered from reverses or unfortunate environment. He has perhaps been roughly or cruelly handled. Perhaps he cannot get on satisfactorily, or his ambitions have been disappointed. He is then in a condition of discontent ready to swallow Socialistic—or any other—sophistries which hold out the delusive promise of relief.

Socialism attaches too little importance to the fact that men are made with

an infinite variety of tastes, abilities and capacities. No two are precisely alike, and it is utter folly for poor, weak man to undertake to equalize these differences. All progress in history has been made through struggle and sacrifice; and Socialism, no matter how beneficent its intentions, cannot change the inscrutable laws of nature or humanity. All natural laws have their reverse side. Gravitation, which keeps us firm on our feet so long as we are on solid ground, knocks us to pieces if we attempt to walk off a housetop or over the opening of a pit. It is not the natural law, but the attempt to ignore it, that gives us trouble.

I most emphatically assert that we cannot get rid of competition, any more than we can get rid of the law of gravitation.

The American inventor, mechanic, farmer, merchant and financier, and the worker in every profession, are, every one of them—proud, respectively, of their skill, knowledge and ability. Their ambition is to excel—to produce the most and best. Experience, enterprise and courage create opportune conditions most favorable to the State and Nation and to themselves. Each vies with his fellow man in producing the best results and is always willing to tackle any obstacle—no matter how formidable—that stands in the way of success. In his whole compendium and entire makeup, there is no such word as fail. He aids, by his untiring and individual energy and effort, in making his country the greatest in the whole agricultural, industrial and financial world. He reaps the reward of industry and accomplishment and his home is blessed with bounty; and he knows that his children have equal opportunity with himself to learn and to achieve.

Shall he be asked to tolerate, or consider the sacrifice of all these things, so dear to him, for Socialism?

Shall he be led to believe in a foreign plan or system of government that degrades skill, eliminates acquisition and thrift, and ignores genius? I cannot think so!

These are the very qualities and attributes that he prizes so highly, as essential to the prosperity of the home and nation. He knows (or should know) that to do so would be to deaden and relinquish those God-given qualities of heart and brain that have helped to make him and his country what they are to-day.

He knows (what the nations of the world concede) that the American people are the most prosperous of all on the face of the globe,—and that this high and commanding position has been attained under existing conditions, and through the operation of our admirable system of government.

Whatever, therefore, may be the pretexts used to make him dissatisfied with his lot, his own experience tells him every day that the Constitution under which he lives is a glorious one; and so implanted in the hearts of the American people as to be impregnable against the assaults of Socialism.

At the same time, he is appreciative of the fact that it is not in the nature of things to expect in this world blessings pure and unmixed, but he is thankful for the superior good that he enjoys under our beneficent democratic form of government.

A state of Socialism in the United States would tend to drive all our men of superior ability, skill and power out of the country. The strong would quickly seek

ether fields where the qualities which they possess would have a free chance and an open field. They would promptly desert a country that offered nothing better than a dismal dead level, with no means of achievement in sight, and the nation would quickly fall into a state of miserable inertia or decay. Our forefathers came to this country to establish religious freedom; they next fought for political freedom; afterwards they sacrificed a million lives for race freedom, and now we, their successors, with such glorious traditions behind us, must stand for industrial and social freedom. For, in the final analysis, Socialism can stop at nothing short of industrial slavery and political bondage. Great achievements would be impossible under it.

Having shown the force and importance of individual initiative and independence and the necessity for the spur of competition to bring about the best results in human welfare and achievement, I now turn to the rather concrete branch of the subject, known as Municipal Ownership.

Naturally, a proposition involving the placing of the ownership and operation of our railroads, telegraph lines, plants for supplying light and surface transportation, and conducting manufactories and business, is one of such vital concern to all of us, as to arouse our keenest interest.

It is a part and parcel of the Socialistic plan of government, and, to a very great extent, the arguments and illustrations presented in my treatment of Socialism, generally, are of direct application to Municipal Ownership.

I would term it the entering wedge of Socialism, adroitly resorted to by its advocates. These Socialists well know the temper of the American people toward their propaganda and wild project, and at the same time they recognize the peculiar trait of character disclosed by Americans in their curiosity and liking for anything new. Hence, they grossly exaggerate the shortcomings and ills that exist in our body politic as constituted; and, at the same time, extol, in an extravagant manner, the superior conditions that would follow the taking of a small portion of the Socialist's infallible cure.

Municipal Ownership, as far as I have been able to observe, is also a pure and simple political move to secure votes for aspirants for office, and it is used for this purpose, regardless of any other question. It is one of those planks that we often see inserted by parties in their platform, to stand upon, to attract and gather in the votes. So Socialism has its uses—for them.

I will admit that there are many economists who have presented a friendly side to the Socialistic theories involved; and have prepared able and extended articles in their endeavor to support or uphold such theories (either in whole or in part); and it would be unjust to include them in the same category with politicians and Socialists. However, if that statesman was only half right, who, in speaking of the tariff, said that the question was a business one, and that a condition and not a theory confronted us, then I feel that I am right in saying, that "Public Ownership" is a practical business question entirely,—and not a theoretical one.

There are so many logical and unanswerable reasons against this Socialistic proposition, that I feel it incumbent upon me to enlarge only upon the practical ones, that I know more about, than of the theoretical group.

The experience of years has demonstrated that at the present time all business enterprises require rare ability and experience, if not genius, to ensure success.

Great financiers and successful men have devoted their lives to the study and practice of their trade and business.

How is it possible, then, for municipalities to expect such qualifications from officers, whose term of office is for one or two years, or during the tenure in office of a political party.

In the economy of commerce and its daily conduct and operation, there are numerous divisions or departments, each one of which can only be understood, appreciated and conducted by men of special training and fitness—who have given years of application thereto—and it is only by their watchful care and expert management of each of these divisions that a possible success in business is made to pay.

The smallest neglect, the merest indifference to details, or the inattention that always accompanies abstraction by something else—taking one's mind off his business—upsets the whole system, and means waste instead of saving economy, loss in place of profit, and inevitable failure as the result. That this is true there is not the slightest doubt, and would be readily confirmed by the leaders of every industry.

Animated by a desire to make the best possible showing, for use at the next election, a false economy would be exercised under Municipal Ownership, and no attention would be paid to obtaining useful new inventions; and needed improvements and extensions would, likewise, be ignored.

On the other hand, under private ownership, the best professional talent is employed, at salaries unheard of in public office; and all the latest inventions and improvements are at once utilized, giving the public up-to-date service.

The active, modern business man, keenly alive to the requirements necessary to ensure profit and success, perceives, at a glance, the evils and mischievous results that would infect everything carried on under this Socialistic plan. And as John Stuart Mill well says: "The mischief begins when, instead of calling forth the activity of individuals, the municipality substitutes its own activity for theirs."

No serious attempt has ever been made to show the possibility of securing and retaining, under some rule of municipal civil service, or otherwise, the best men to assume the burden of management and responsibility. As already explained, it would be practically impossible to secure the best men; and no system of civil service has yet been formulated, intended and able to provide for their retention.

In this connection, a fitting illustration is the case of Col. Waring, who instituted and maintained the best street cleaning system we have ever seen. His work was simply marvelous, and he made New York City a model of cleanliness.

No one ever questioned his ability or integrity; yet, while at the very zenith of his success, he was asked to resign, and obliged to leave the city employment to make room for the choice of a new city administration.

The defects and fallacies of Municipal Ownership which I have described permeate all government ownership. Official reports and statistics furnish convincing proofs and conclusive evidence of the failure of this system as conducted abroad,

and more signal loss and damage—in an incalculable degree—would surely follow its adoption here. Just in proportion as our interests and enterprises are the greatest and most successful, as compared with other nations, would be the imminence of our depreciation and collapse.

The United States is so different from other nations in its political system that this fact alone precludes serious consideration of our adoption of this imported Socialistic hobby and political heresy. It is, also, a country, whose every chapter of growth, progress and prosperity is a continuous narrative of individual effort of its citizens. They, naturally, prize individuality as they do independence itself; and have every reason to believe that the present system of government is the best for them; and that this land of Individualism is no place for Socialism.

Imagine New York under Municipal Ownership of our public utilities! We should then have fastened upon us a more colossal and more corrupt Tammany than even existed in Tweed's times. Graft would thrive beyond all dreams of avarice. Let us take a lesson from England in this respect, where public ownership has been tried on a larger scale and under more favorable conditions than elsewhere. In a few instances the running of street railways or city lighting plants has been successful, but exceptions do not always prove the rule, and the conditions under which these enterprises have been operated there must be taken into consideration. English cities are comparatively free of political corruption; and are, moreover, often served by men of high character, wealth and ability,—men having a strong sense of civic duty, who deem it an honor to give their community efficient service. Unfortunately, we have not yet developed a class of this sort in the United States; perhaps in due time we shall; but, until then, the experiment of Municipal Ownership had better be indefinitely postponed. A weak point of Municipal Ownership has usually been the financial end of the business concerning which the public has been poorly informed. Many of these enterprises in English cities have proved unprofitable. The accounts have been juggled, and expenses that should be charged against the plant were often transferred to city accounts. Not a few of the English cities have so run into debt as to injure their credit and impair the sale of their securities. Already, the British taxpayer is beginning to complain about the costliness of these Municipal Ownership schemes, and a decided reaction against them is setting in. The London County Council has launched heavily into these ventures, many of which have proved losing ventures, and some prominent experts have gone so far as to predict that London will be bankrupt before long, unless present tendencies are reversed. If Municipal Ownership has failed under the highly favorable conditions which exist in England, how can it succeed here? Again, the English telegraph system operated by the British Government does not compare with the private systems of the United States, either in efficiency or cheapness, and England with its public telephones is very far behind the United States in efficiency and cost. London does not begin to have the number of telephones per capita that New York can claim. American railroads under private ownership perform the best and cheapest service in the world.

If any further argument were needed to convince you that the United States

is no place for Socialism, its root or branches, it may be found in the radical and quite amusing change of front shown by Major Dalrymple, of Glasgow, upon the occasion of his visit to this country. He came here at the request of Mayor Dunne, of Chicago, and the Municipal Ownership League of New York, to aid the forces of Socialism in their efforts in behalf of Municipal Ownership. He was the great Apostle of that doctrine in Glasgow, and the very man, in their opinion, to convert our people to that system.

Upon his arrival here, he was greeted with great eclat by the League of this city and gave out an interview in which he spoke as follows:

"I see no reason why any city in this country should not be able to own its street railways, and to run them with as much success as we have achieved at Glasgow. I admit that the proposition is a much larger one than the one we had to tackle, but at the bottom it is the same."

This was before he knew our country and its institutions. After an extended stay here, he prepared for his homeward journey, but before sailing, he was again interviewed, and to the surprise and discomfiture of the Socialists, he retracted all that he had said before in favor of Municipal Ownership, in the following language:

"To put street railways, gasworks, telephone companies, etc., under Municipal Ownership would be to create a political machine in every large city that would be simply impregnable. These political machines are already strong enough, with their control of policemen, firemen and other office holders.

"If, in addition to this, they could control the thousands of men employed in the great public utility corporations, the political machines would have a power that could not be overthrown. I came to this country a believer in public ownership. What I have seen here, and I have studied the situation carefully, makes me realize that private ownership, under proper conditions, is far better for the citizens of American cities."

The New York papers aptly called this, "The conversion of the Scot;" and this blunt and honest admission coming from their own authority, that Municipal Ownership in this country was wholly impracticable, stunned and paralyzed its agitators, and caused many of its adherents to leave the ranks of Socialism.

Mr. James Bryce, the worthy newly appointed English Ambassador to this country, pointed out some twenty years ago, in his "American Commonwealth" how the then future of the United States sometimes presented itself to the mind as a struggle between two forces,—the one beneficent, the other malign; the one striving to speed the nation to a port of safety before the storm arrives; the other to retard its progress, so that the tempest may be upon it before the port is reached. He, further, expressed concern as to whether the progress then discernible toward a wiser public opinion and a higher standard of public life would succeed in bringing the mass of the people up to a high level, or whether the masses would yield to the temptation to abuse their power and seek violent and vain and useless remedies—like Socialism—for the evils which would affect us.

This able statesman predicted that the question would be decided early in the

present century, and would be evidenced by the condition of progress and prosperity brought about by the people in the meantime.

When the Ambassador was recently welcomed to our shores, the answer to this question concerning us, asked by him so long ago, was found awaiting him.

It was spoken clearly and loudly by our teeming products of agriculture and mining, and echoed in thunder tones by our mammoth shops and factories of industry, and it was seen shining in the happy faces of our busy and prosperous people.

Upon the golden page of to-day in our splendid history will stand out the assuring fact that this surpassingly successful state of things has not blossomed and come forth under the blighting shade of the deadly Upas tree of Socialism; but that it has all been developed by and through Individualism.

In conclusion, let me impress upon you that Individualism in the United States has stood all tests—especially the crucial tests of time and experience—and it points with pride and satisfaction to the great developments secured for the American people under the bright and beneficent rays of our admirable Constitution and Republican form of government.

And if the aim of all government is to ensure prosperity to the country, and happiness to the people it controls, the unrivalled excellence of Individualism may fairly be judged by its magnificent results.



