

The Challenge of Facts

by William Graham Sumner
(1840–1910)

¹ SOCIALISM IS NO NEW THING. In one form or another it is to be found throughout all history. It arises from an observation of certain harsh facts in the lot of man on earth, the concrete expression of which is poverty and misery. These facts challenge us. It is folly to try to shut our eyes to them. We have first to notice what
⁵ they are, and then to face them squarely.

Man is born under the necessity of sustaining the existence he has received by an onerous struggle against nature, both to win what is essential to his life and to ward off what is prejudicial to it. He is born under a burden and a necessity. Nature holds what is essential to him, but she offers nothing gratuitously. He may
¹⁰ win for his use what she holds, if he can. Only the most meager and inadequate supply for human needs can be obtained directly from nature. There are trees which may be used for fuel and for dwellings, but labor is required to fit them for this use. There are ores in the ground, but labor is necessary to get out the metals and make tools or weapons. For any real satisfaction, labor is necessary
¹⁵ to fit the products of nature for human use. In this struggle every individual is under the pressure of the necessities for food, clothing, shelter, fuel, and every individual brings with him more or less energy for the conflict necessary to supply his needs. The relation, therefore, between each man's needs and each man's energy, or "individualism," is the first fact of human life.

²⁰ It is not without reason, however, that we speak of a "man" as the individual in question, for women (mothers) and children have special disabilities for the struggle with nature, and these disabilities grow greater and last longer as civilization advances. The perpetuation of the race in health and vigor, and its success as a whole in its struggle to expand and develop human life on earth, therefore,
²⁵ require that the head of the family shall, by his energy, be able to supply not only his own needs, but those of the organisms which are dependent upon him. . . .

The next great fact we have to notice in regard to the struggle of human life is that labor which is spent in a direct struggle with nature is severe in the extreme and is but slightly productive. To subjugate nature, man needs weapons and tools.
³⁰ These, however, cannot be won unless the food and clothing and other prime and direct necessities are supplied in such amount that they can be consumed while tools and weapons are being made, for the tools and weapons themselves satisfy no needs directly. A man who tills the ground with his fingers or with a pointed

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1 stick picked up without labor will get a small crop. To fashion even the rudest
spade or hoe will cost time, during which the laborer must still eat and drink and
wear, but the tool, when obtained, will multiply immensely the power to produce.
Such products of labor, used to assist production, have a function so peculiar in
5 the nature of things that we need to distinguish them. We call them capital. A
lever is capital, and the advantage of lifting a weight with a lever over lifting it
by direct exertion is only a feeble illustration of the power of capital in produc-
tion. The origin of capital lies in the darkness before history, and it is probably
impossible for us to imagine the slow and painful steps by which the race began
10 the formation of it. Since then it has gone on rising to higher and higher powers
by a ceaseless involution, if I may use a mathematical expression. Capital is labor
raised to a higher power by being constantly multiplied into itself. Nature has been
more and more subjugated by the human race through the power of capital, and
every human being now living shares the improved status of the race to a degree
15 which neither he nor anyone else can measure, and for which he pays nothing.

Let us understand this point, because our subject will require future reference
to it. It is the most shortsighted ignorance not to see that, in a civilized commu-
nity, all the advantage of capital except a small fraction is gratuitously enjoyed by
the community. For instance, suppose the case of a man utterly destitute of tools,
20 who is trying to till the ground with a pointed stick. He could get something out
of it. If now he should obtain a spade with which to till the ground, let us sup-
pose, for illustration, that he could get twenty times as great a product. Could,
then, the owner of a spade in a civilized state demand, as its price, from the man
who had no spade, nineteen-twentieths of the product which could be produced
25 by the use of it? Certainly not. The price of a spade is fixed by the supply and
demand of products in the community. A spade is bought for a dollar and the
gain from the use of it is an inheritance of knowledge, experience, and skill which
every man who lives in a civilized state gets for nothing. What we pay for steam
transportation is no trifle, but imagine, if you can, eastern Massachusetts cut off
30 from steam connection with the rest of the world, turnpikes and sailing vessels
remaining. The cost of food would rise so high that a quarter of the population
would starve to death and another quarter would have to emigrate. Today every
man here gets an enormous advantage from the status of a society on a level of
steam transportation, telegraph, and machinery, for which he pays nothing.

35 So far as I have yet spoken, we have before us the struggle of man with nature,
but the social problems, strictly speaking, arise at the next step. Each man carries
on the struggle to win his support for himself, but there are others by his side
engaged in the same struggle. If the stores of nature were unlimited, or if the last
unit of the supply she offers could be won as easily as the first, there would be
40 no social problem. If a square mile of land could support an indefinite number of
human beings, or if it cost only twice as much labor to get forty bushels of wheat
from an acre as to get twenty, we should have no social problem. If a square mile
of land could support millions, no one would ever emigrate and there would be

1 no trade or commerce. If it cost only twice as much labor to get forty bushels as
 twenty, there would be no advance in the arts. The fact is far otherwise. So long
 as the population is low in proportion to the amount of land, on a given stage of
 the arts, life is easy and the competition of man with man is weak. When more
 5 persons are trying to live on a square mile than it can support, on the existing
 stage of the arts, life is hard and the competition of man with man is intense. In
 the former case, industry and prudence may be on a low grade; the penalties are
 not severe, or certain, or speedy. In the latter case, each individual needs to exert
 on his own behalf every force, original or acquired, which he can command. In
 10 the former case, the average condition will be one of comfort and the population
 will be all nearly on the average. In the latter case, the average condition will not
 be one of comfort, but the population will cover wide extremes of comfort and
 misery. Each will find his place according to his ability and his effort. The former
 society will be democratic; the latter will be aristocratic.

15 The constant tendency of population to outstrip the means of subsistence
 is the force which has distributed population over the world, and produced all
 advance in civilization. To this day the two means of escape for an overpopulated
 country are emigration and an advance in the arts. The former wins more land
 for the same people; the latter makes the same land support more persons. If,
 20 however, either of these means opens a chance for an increase of population, it
 is evident that the advantage so won may be speedily exhausted if the increase
 takes place. The social difficulty has only undergone a temporary amelioration,
 and when the conditions of pressure and competition are renewed, misery and
 poverty reappear. The victims of them are those who have inherited disease and
 25 depraved appetites, or have been brought up in vice and ignorance, or have
 themselves yielded to vice, extravagance, idleness, and imprudence. In the last
 analysis, therefore, we come back to vice, in its original and hereditary forms, as
 the correlative of misery and poverty.

The condition for the complete and regular action of the force of competition
 30 is liberty. Liberty means the security given to each man that, if he employs his
 energies to sustain the struggle on behalf of himself and those he cares for, he
 shall dispose of the product exclusively as he chooses. It is impossible to know
 whence any definition or criterion of justice can be derived, if it is not deduced
 from this view of things; or if it is not the definition of justice that each shall
 35 enjoy the fruit of his own labor and self-denial, and of injustice that the idle and
 the industrious, the self-indulgent and the self-denying, shall share equally in
 the product. Aside from the a priori speculations of philosophers who have tried
 to make equality an essential element in justice, the human race has recognized,
 from the earliest times, the above conception of justice as the true one, and has
 40 founded upon it the right of property. . . .

Private property, also, which we have seen to be a feature of society organized
 in accordance with the natural conditions of the struggle for existence produces
 inequalities between men. The struggle for existence is aimed against nature. It

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1 is from her niggardly hand that we have to wrest the satisfactions for our needs,
but our fellowmen are our competitors for the meager supply. Competition,
therefore is a law of nature. Nature is entirely neutral; she submits to him who
most energetically and resolutely assails her. She grants her rewards to the fittest,
5 therefore, without regard to other considerations of any kind. If, then, there be
liberty, men get from her just in proportion to their works, and their having and
enjoying are just in proportion to their being and their doing. Such is the system
of nature. If we do not like it, and if we try to amend it, there is only one way in
which we can do it. We can take from the better and give to the worse. We can
10 deflect the penalties of those who have done ill and throw them on those who
have done better. We can take the rewards from those who have done better and
give them to those who have done worse. We shall thus lessen the inequalities. We
shall favor the survival of the unfittest, and we shall accomplish this by destroying
liberty. Let it be understood that we cannot go outside of this alternative: liberty,
15 inequality, survival of the fittest; not-liberty, equality, survival of the unfittest. The
former carries society forward and favors all its best members; the latter carries
society downwards and favors all its worst members.

For three hundred years now men have been trying to understand and realize
liberty. Liberty is not the right or chance to do what we choose; there is no such
20 liberty as that on earth. No man can do as he chooses: the autocrat of Russia or the
King of Dahomey has limits to his arbitrary will; the savage in the wilderness, whom
some people think free, is the slave of routine, tradition, and superstitious fears;
the civilized man must earn his living, or take care of his property, or concede his
own will to the rights and claims of his parents, his wife, his children, and all the
25 persons with whom he is connected by the ties and contracts of civilized life.

What we mean by liberty is civil liberty, or liberty under law; and this means
the guarantees of law that a man shall not be interfered with while using his own
powers for his own welfare. It is, therefore, a civil and political status; and that
nation has the freest institutions in which the guarantees of peace for the laborer
30 and security for the capitalist are the highest. Liberty, therefore, does not by any
means do away with the struggle for existence. We might as well try to do away
with the need of eating, for that would, in effect, be the same thing. What civil
liberty does is to turn the competition of man with man from violence and brute
force into an industrial competition under which men vie with one another for
35 the acquisition of material goods by industry, energy, skill, frugality, prudence,
temperance, and other industrial virtues. Under this changed order of things the
inequalities are not done away with. Nature still grants her rewards of having and
enjoying, according to our being and doing, but it is now the man of the high-
est training and not the man of the heaviest fist who gains the highest reward. It
40 is impossible that the man with capital and the man without capital should be
equal. To affirm that they are equal would be to say that a man who has no tool
can get as much food out of the ground as the man who has a spade or a plough;
or that the man who has no weapon can defend himself as well against hostile
beasts or hostile men as the man who has a weapon. If that were so, none of us

1 would work any more. We work and deny ourselves to get capital just because,
 other things being equal, the man who has it is superior, for attaining all the ends
 of life, to the man who has it not. Considering the eagerness with which we all
 seek capital and the estimate we put upon it, either in cherishing it if we have
 5 it, or envying others who have it while we have it not, it is very strange what
 platitudes pass current about it in our society so soon as we begin to generalize
 about it. If our young people really believed some of the teachings they hear, it
 would not be amiss to preach them a sermon once in a while to reassure them,
 setting forth that it is not wicked to be rich, nay even, that is not wicked to be
 10 richer than your neighbor.

It follows from what we have observed that it is the utmost folly to denounce
 capital. To do so is to undermine civilization, for capital is the first requisite of
 every social gain, educational, ecclesiastical, political, aesthetic, or other.

It must also be noticed that the popular antithesis between persons and capital
 15 is very fallacious. Every law or institution which protects persons at the expense of
 capital makes it easier for persons to live and to increase the number of consum-
 ers of capital while lowering all the motives to prudence and frugality by which
 capital is created. Hence every such law or institution tends to produce a large
 population, sunk in misery. All poor laws and all eleemosynary institutions and
 20 expenditures have this tendency. On the contrary, all laws and institutions which
 give security to capital against the interests of other persons than its owners,
 restrict numbers while preserving the means of subsistence. Hence every such
 law or institution tends to produce a small society on a high stage of comfort and
 well being. It follows that the antithesis commonly thought to exist between the
 25 protection of persons and the protection of property is in reality only an antithesis
 between numbers and quality. . . . The man who has capital possesses immeasur-
 able advantages for the struggle of life over him who has none. The more we break
 down privileges of class, or industry, and establish liberty, the greater will be the
 inequalities and the more exclusively will the vicious bear the penalties. Poverty
 30 and misery will exist in society just so long as vice exists in human nature.

I now go on to notice some modes of trying to deal with this problem. There is
 a modern philosophy which has never been taught systematically, but which has
 won the faith of vast masses of people in the modern civilized world. For want of a
 better name it may be called the sentimental philosophy. It has colored all modern
 35 ideas and institutions in politics, religion, education, charity, and industry, and
 is widely taught in popular literature, novels, and poetry, and in the pulpit. The
 first proposition of this sentimental philosophy is that nothing is true which is
 disagreeable. If, therefore, any facts of observation show that life is grim or hard,
 the sentimental philosophy steps over such facts with a genial platitude, a consol-
 40 ing commonplace, or a gratifying dogma. The effect is to spread an easy optimism,
 under the influence of which people spare themselves labor and trouble, reflection
 and forethought, pains and caution—all of which are hard things, and to admit
 the necessity for which would be to admit that the world is not all made smooth
 and easy, for us to pass through it surrounded by love, music, and flowers.

1 Under this philosophy, “progress” has been represented as a steadily increasing and unmixed good; as if the good steadily encroached on the evil without involving any new and other forms of evil; and as if we could plan great steps in progress in our academies and lyceums, and then realize them by resolution. To
 5 minds trained to this way of looking at things, any evil which exists is a reproach. We have only to consider it, hold some discussions about it, pass resolutions, and have done with it. Every moment of delay is, therefore, a social crime. It is monstrous to say that misery and poverty are as constant as vice and evil passions of men! People suffer so under misery and poverty! Assuming, therefore, that
 10 we can solve all these problems and eradicate all these evils by expending our ingenuity upon them, of course we cannot hasten too soon to do it.

A social philosophy, consonant with this, has also been taught for a century. It could not fail to be popular, for it teaches that ignorance is as good as knowledge, vulgarity as good as refinement, shiftlessness as good as painstaking, shirking as
 15 good as faithful striving, poverty as good as wealth, filth as good as cleanliness—in short, that quality goes for nothing in the measurement of men, but only numbers. Culture, knowledge, refinement, skill, and taste cost labor, but we have been taught that they have only individual, not social value, and that socially they are rather drawbacks than otherwise. In public life we are taught to admire rough-
 20 ness, illiteracy, and rowdyism. The ignorant, idle, and shiftless have been taught that they are “the people,” that the generalities inculcated at the same time about the dignity, wisdom, and virtue of “the people” are true of them, that they have nothing to learn to be wise, but that, as they stand, they possess a kind of infallibility, and that to their “opinion” the wise must bow. It is not cause for wonder
 25 if whole sections of these classes have begun to use the powers and wisdom attributed to them for their interests, as they construe them, and to trample on all the excellence which marks civilization as an obsolete superstition.

Another development of the same philosophy is the doctrine that men come into the world endowed with “natural rights,” or as joint inheritors of the “rights of
 30 man,” which have been “declared” times without number during the last century. The divine rights of man have succeeded to the obsolete divine right of kings. If it is true, then, that a man is born with rights, he comes into the world with claims on somebody besides his parents. Against whom does he hold such rights? There can be no rights against nature or against God. A man may curse his fate
 35 because he is born of an inferior race, or with an hereditary disease, or blind, or, as some members of the race seem to do, because they are born females; but they get no answer to their imprecations. But, now, if men have rights by birth these rights must hold against their fellowmen and must mean that somebody else is to spend his energy to sustain the existence of the persons so born. What then
 40 becomes of the natural rights of one whose energies are to be diverted from his own interests? If it be said that we should all help each other, that means simply that the race as a whole should advance and expand as much and as fast as it can in its career on earth; and the experience on which we are now acting has shown

1 that we shall do this best under liberty and under the organization which we are
 now developing, by leaving each to exert his energies for his own success. The
 notion of natural rights is destitute of sense, but it is captivating, and it is the more
 available on account of its vagueness. It lends itself to the most vicious kind of
 5 social dogmatism, for if a man has natural rights, then the reasoning is clear up
 to the finished socialistic doctrine that a man has a natural right to whatever he
 needs, and that the measure of his claims is the wishes which he wants fulfilled. If,
 then, he has a need, who is bound to satisfy it for him? Who holds the obligation
 corresponding to his right? It must be the one who possesses what will satisfy
 10 that need, or else the state which can take the possession from those who have
 earned and saved it, and give it to him who needs it and who, by the hypothesis,
 has not earned and saved it.

It is with the next step, however, that we come to the complete and ruin-
 ous absurdity of this view. If a man may demand from those who have a share
 15 of what he needs and has not, may he demand the same also for his wife and
 for his children, and for how many children? The industrious and prudent man
 who takes the course of labor and self-denial to secure capital, finds that he must
 defer marriage, both in order to save and to devote his life to the education of
 fewer children. The man who can claim a share in another's product has no such
 20 restraint. The consequence would be that the industrious and prudent would
 labor and save, without families, to support the idle and improvident who would
 increase and multiply, until universal destitution forced a return to the principles
 of liberty and property; and the man who started with the notion that the world
 owed him a living would once more find, as he does now, that the world pays
 25 him its debt in the state prison.

The most specious application of the dogma of rights is to labor. It is said
 that every man has a right to work. The world is full of work to be done. Those
 who are willing to work find that they have three days' work to do in every day
 that comes. Work is the necessity to which we are born. It is not a right, but an
 30 irksome necessity, and men escape it whenever they can get the fruits of labor
 without it. What they want is the fruits, or wages, not work. But wages are capital
 which someone has earned and saved. If he and the workman can agree on the
 terms on which he will part with his capital, there is no more to be said. If not,
 then the right must be set up in a new form. It is now not a right to work, nor
 35 even a right to wages, but a right to a certain rate of wages, and we have simply
 returned to the old doctrine of spoliation again. It is immaterial whether the
 demand for wages be addressed to an individual capitalist or to a civil body, for
 the latter can give no wages which it does not collect by taxes out of the capital
 of those who have labored and saved.

40 Another application is in the attempt to fix the hours of labor *per diem* by
 law. If a man is forbidden to labor over eight hours per day (and the law has no
 sense or utility for the purposes of those who want it until it takes this form), he
 is forbidden to exercise so much industry as he may be willing to expend in order
 to accumulate capital for the improvement of his circumstances. . . .

1 Socialists are filled with the enthusiasm of equality. Every scheme of theirs
 for securing equality has destroyed liberty. The student of political philosophy
 has the antagonism of equality and liberty constantly forced upon him. Equality
 of possession or of rights and equality before the law are diametrically opposed
 5 to each other. The object of equality before the law is to make the state entirely
 neutral. The state, under that theory, takes no cognizance of persons. It surrounds
 all, without distinctions, with the same conditions and guarantees. If it educates
 one, it educates all—black, white, red, or yellow; Jew or Gentile; native or alien.
 If it taxes one, it taxes all, by the same system and under the same conditions.
 10 If it exempts one from police regulations in home, church, and occupation, it
 exempts all. From this statement it is at once evident that pure equality before
 the law is impossible. Some occupations must be subjected to police regulation.
 Not all can be made subject to militia duty even for the same limited period. The
 exceptions and special cases furnish the chance for abuse. Equality before the law,
 15 however, is one of the cardinal principles of civil liberty, because it leaves each
 man to run the race of life for himself as best he can. The state stands neutral but
 benevolent. It does not undertake to aid some and handicap others at the outset
 in order to offset hereditary advantages and disadvantages, or to make them start
 equally. Such a notion would belong to the false and spurious theory of equality
 20 which is socialistic. If the state should attempt this it would make itself the ser-
 vant of envy. I am entitled to make the most I can of myself without hindrance
 from anybody, but I am not entitled to any guarantee that I shall make as much
 of myself as somebody else makes of himself.

 The modern thirst for equality of rights is explained by its historical origin.
 25 The mediaeval notion of rights was that rights were special privileges, exemp-
 tions, franchises, and powers given to individuals by the king; hence each man
 had just so many as he and his ancestors had been able to buy or beg by force or
 favor, and if a man had obtained no grants he had no rights. Hence no two per-
 sons were equal in rights and the mass of the population had none. The theory of
 30 natural rights and of equal rights was a revolt against the mediaeval theory. It was
 asserted that men did not have to wait for a king to grant them rights; they have
 them by nature, or in the nature of things, because they are men and members
 of civil society. If rights come from nature, it is inferred that they fall like air and
 light on all equally. It was an immense step in advance for the human race when
 35 this new doctrine was promulgated. Its own limitations and errors need not now
 be pointed out. Its significance is plain, and its limits are to some extent defined
 when we note its historical origin.

 I have already shown that where these guarantees exist and where there is
 liberty, the results cannot be equal, but with all liberty there must go responsibility.
 40 If I take my own way I must take my own consequences; if it proves that I have
 made a mistake, I cannot be allowed to throw the consequences on my neighbor.
 If my neighbor is a free man and resents interference from me he must not call on
 me to bear the consequences of his mistakes. Hence it is plain that liberty, equal-
 ity before the law, responsibility, individualism, monogamy, and private property

1 all hold together as consistent parts of the same structure of society, and that an assault on one part must sooner or later involve an assault on all the others.

To all this must be added the political element in socialism. The acquisition of some capital—the amount is of very subordinate importance—is the first and
 5 simplest proof that an individual possesses the industrial and civil virtues which make a good citizen and a useful member of society. Political power, a century ago, was associated more or less, even in the United States, with the possession of land. It has been gradually extended until the suffrage is to all intents and purposes universal in North and South America, in Australia, and in all of Europe except
 10 Russia and Turkey. On this system political control belongs to the numerical majority, limited only by institutions. It may be doubted, if the terms are taken strictly and correctly, whether the non-capitalists outnumber the capitalists in any civilized country, but in many cities where capital is most collected they certainly do. The powers of government have been abused for ages by the classes who possessed them to enable kings, courtiers, nobles, politicians, demagogues, and their
 15 friends to live in exemption from labor and self-denial, that is, from the universal lot of man. It is only a continuation of the same abuse if the new possessors of power attempt to employ it to secure for themselves the selfish advantages which all possessors of power have taken. Such a course would, however, overthrow all
 20 that we think has been won in the way of making government an organ of justice, peace, order, and security, without respect of persons; and if those gains are not to be lost they will have to be defended, before this century closes, against popular majorities, especially in cities, just as they had to be won in a struggle with kings and nobles in the centuries past.

25 The newest socialism is, in its method, political. The essential feature of its latest phases is the attempt to use the power of the state to realize its plans and to secure its objects. These objects are to do away with poverty and misery, and there are no socialistic schemes yet proposed, of any sort, which do not, upon analysis, turn out to be projects for curing poverty and misery by making those
 30 who have share with those who have not. Whether they are paper-money schemes, tariff schemes, subsidy schemes, internal improvement schemes, or usury laws, they all have this in common with the most vulgar of the communistic projects, and the errors of this sort in the past which have been committed in the interest of the capitalist class now furnish precedents, illustration, and encouragement
 35 for the new category of demands. . . .

It is a matter of course that a reactionary party should arise to declare that universal suffrage, popular education, machinery, free trade, and all the other in-
 novations of the last hundred years are all a mistake. If any one ever believed that these innovations were so many clear strides towards the millennium, that they
 40 involve no evils or abuses of their own, that they tend to emancipate mankind from the need for prudence, caution, forethought, vigilance—in short, from the eternal struggle against evil—it is not strange that he should be disappointed. If any one ever believed that some “form of government” could be found which would run itself and turn out the pure results of abstract peace, justice, and righteousness

1 without any trouble to anybody, he may well be dissatisfied. To talk of turning
 back, however, is only to enhance still further the confusion and danger of our
 position. The world cannot go back. Its destiny is to go forward and to meet the
 new problems which are continually arising. Under our so-called progress evil only
 5 alters its forms, and we must esteem it a grand advance if we can believe that, on
 the whole, and over a wide view of human affairs, good has gained a hair's breadth
 over evil in a century. Popular institutions have their own abuses and dangers just
 as much as monarchical or aristocratic institutions. We are only just finding out
 what they are. All the institutions which we have inherited were invented to guard
 10 liberty against the encroachments of a powerful monarch or aristocracy, when
 these classes possessed land and the possession of land was the greatest social
 power. Institutions must now be devised to guard civil liberty against popular
 majorities, and this necessity arises first in regard to the protection of property,
 the first and greatest function of government and element in civil liberty. There
 15 is no escape from any dangers involved in this or any other social struggle save
 in going forward and working out the development. It will cost a struggle and
 will demand the highest wisdom of this and the next generation. It is very prob-
 able that some nations—those, namely, which come up to this problem with the
 least preparation, with the least intelligent comprehension of the problem, [may
 20 experience a] check in their development and prosperity; it is very probable that
 in some nations the development may lead through revolution and bloodshed; it
 is very probable that in some nations the consequence may be a reaction towards
 arbitrary power. In every view we take of it, it is clear that the general abolition
 of slavery has only cleared the way for a new social problem of far wider scope
 25 and far greater difficulty. It seems to me, in fact, that this must always be the case.
 The conquest of one difficulty will only open the way to another; the solution
 of one problem will only bring man face to face with another. Man wins by the
 fight, not by the victory, and therefore the possibilities of growth are unlimited,
 for the fight has no end.

30 The progress which men have made in developing the possibilities of human
 existence has never been made by jumps and strides. It has never resulted from
 the schemes of philosophers and reformers. . . .

The sound student of sociology can hold out to mankind, as individuals or as
 a race, only one hope of better and happier living. That hope lies in an enhance-
 35 ment of the industrial virtues and of the moral forces which thence arise. Industry,
 self-denial, and temperance are the laws of prosperity for men and states; without
 them advance in the arts and in wealth means only corruption and decay through
 luxury and vice. With them progress in the arts and increasing wealth are the
 prime conditions of an advancing civilization which is sound enough to endure.
 40 The powers of the human race today over the conditions of prosperous and happy
 living are sufficient to banish poverty and misery, if it were not for folly and vice.
 The earth does not begin to be populated up to its power to support population
 on the present stage of the arts; if the United States were as densely populated

1 as the British Islands, we should have 1,000,000,000 people here. If, therefore,
men were willing to set to work with energy and courage to subdue the outlying
parts of the earth, all might live in plenty and prosperity. But if they insist on re-
5 remaining in the slums of great cities or on the borders of an old society, and on a
comparatively exhausted soil, there is no device of economist or statesman which
can prevent them from falling victims to poverty and misery or from succumb-
ing in the competition of life to those who have greater command of capital. The
socialist or philanthropist who nourishes them in their situation and saves them
from the distress of it is only cultivating the distress which he pretends to cure.