

moment only to ignore. His neglect to do so cannot arise from the impossibility of its realization in practice, for the ways and means are at hand whereby access to land of every kind can be assured to all who wish to make a living on it. And if access to agricultural land alone has, as he truly says, such beneficial effects, how much more beneficial will be the throwing open of natural resources of *every kind*. There can be no lasting solution to his problem but on such lines. The widening of opportunity for all useful activity is the way not alone to mitigate but even to eradicate involuntary idleness.

The trouble is that, to-day, the gates leading to these opportunities are banged, barred and bolted by unjust laws. To provide work in unlimited quantities; to offer the chance of self-employment to all who want it and a fair return to every man's labour, these bolts and bars must be rent asunder. We may then for the first time indulge the hope that the call for unemployment insurance, so insistent to-day, will no longer be heard. What Mr. Rowntree shows us in the above quotation is that unemployment exists only where men have no alternative other than to work for wages. We wish he would draw the true moral and insist that an alternative to wage-labour shall be open to them. He might then even venture so far as to show us how that may be done and thus attain something practical.

He tells us that "Unemployment is a direct cause of industrialization, and the further industrialization proceeds the greater are the risks of unemployment, and the graver are its consequences." What is the alchemy this thing "industrialism" or "large industry" can possess to give it a power so malignant? We suggest that Mr. Rowntree has himself again given the answer. It is that "industrialization" is invariably preceded and accompanied by the divorce of the people from the soil, thus depriving them of the chance of self-employment and making work for the common man impossible unless he chance to find an employer who will "give" it to him. So long as the separation of the man from his natural means of existence persists (for this is the essence of "industrialism") so long will unemployment be with us.

In this helplessness of the landless man lies the wrong. Apart from it "big industry" has no compelling power at all. To this helplessness of the landless man driven to sell his labour in fierce competition with his equally helpless neighbour must be traced the facts which Mr. Rowntree so deplors. Hear him again and ask what unemployment insurance can do in such a situation: "In almost every country where large scale industry has been developed it has initially been characterized by the ruthless exploitation of the workers. Men, women and children of tender years have been driven to unhealthy factories, forced to work for incredibly long hours and often subjected to cruel, brutal discipline till their constitutions are ruined."

It is no accident that civilization suffers now as it does. As we know it to-day, it could not be more soulless or cruel. The fact that a landless people brings every evil in its train is evidence that we cannot ignore natural law with impunity, and it is nature's law that all men shall have access to her bounties. A community which denies that law inevitably suffers the consequences.

"It is clear that a reserve of workers is necessary for the successful functioning of industry; not, of course, so large a reserve as at present; a very much smaller one would suffice. But some reserve is necessary. If there were never a single worker unemployed, industry could only function with the greatest difficulty. Any industry which was developing would be apt to secure additional labour by robbing some other enterprise." This sentiment goes far to explain Mr. Rowntree's attitude to the whole question. His thought is: "Unemployment being necessary and in some degree even beneficial, it would be foolish

to try to abolish it. Let us, therefore, at most, try to mitigate the suffering it brings. Some men *must* go idle in order that others *may* be industrious." Though very generally held, this theory of industry is the child of conditions so unnatural and of a terminology so misleading as utterly to distort our thought. It postulates that man is created for the service of industry instead of industry for the service of man; that industry is an end in itself, instead of only a means to an end—the support of life and the attainment of happiness.

If it is true that "industry" as now organized does mean forced idleness for many, then no greater indictment of the existing industrial machine could be framed. Its designers are simply charged with having botched their job. Their could be no more damning evidence of something very wrong indeed with the structure, and though Mr. Rowntree declares he is "not dealing with ultimate issues, but only with such practical steps as can now be taken," he would do better service were he to take his courage in his hands and set to work to discover what really has gone wrong. Without that, his "practical steps" will be most impractical because with all the goodwill in the world they will and can lead nowhere. We have endeavoured to show that what is wrong with the present day "industrialization" is that embedded in it and vital to it is a landless people. The only really "practical step" to its reform is the reunion of land to people, which means the end of the unemployed man and the dawn of a new era based on natural law in which the opportunities to work will be so plentiful and self-employment so easy that, in the wider view of life which will then open out, the very thought of idleness as essential to "industry" now so plausible will enter the head of no sane man.

W. R. L.

ARTHUR O'CONNOR

In the death of His Honour Arthur O'Connor, K.C., the English League has lost a very old friend. He was an Irish Nationalist Member of the House of Commons when, so long ago as August, 1885, he was appointed a member of the Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry. When the Commission reported in December, 1886, he found himself unable to sign its Report because, he said, "an undue importance is attributed to causes of a minor, transient, or doubtful character; while causes general, direct, and obvious, are passed over altogether or referred to as of secondary importance." He found "a cause at work, general, permanent and far-reaching, affecting every branch of industry, in mine and farm and factory": "that cause is the fact that under the existing land system the owners of the soil are able to obtain, and do exact, so large a proportion of the proceeds of the industry of the United Kingdom that the remainder is insufficient to secure adequate remuneration to the industrial classes. . . ." This very outspoken Minority Report was promptly reprinted by the League as a four-page leaflet, under the title of "Landlordism the Cause of Trade Depression." Ten years later, Mr. O'Connor, now a County Court Judge, was a member of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, appointed by Lord Salisbury's Government. In 1901 he again prepared and signed a Minority Report, which was again reprinted by the League as a valuable propagandist pamphlet, under the title of "Land Values and Local Taxation." The conclusion to which he came at the end of a long and closely-reasoned argument, was that "land and land only should be rated for local public services" . . . "all which I humbly submit to Your Majesty's gracious consideration."

That the man who wrote these Reports was a man of fearless courage will be obvious to those of us who are old enough to remember the '80's. It was the same man who, when the heads of the Irish Land League had been successively sent to gaol—Parnell, Dillon and Sexton to Kilmainham, and Davitt back to penal servitude—had stepped into the vacant place, and acted as chief till the League was suppressed by proclamation. Younger men will perhaps only remember O'Connor as Deputy Chairman of Committees in the House of Commons, an authority on Parliamentary Procedure, as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, and of many other similar bodies, or as a wise and witty County Court Judge in Durham and Dorset. He passed away at his Bournemouth home on Good Friday, at the age of 78. The English League may well be proud to have numbered this gifted Irishman among its members. *Requiescat in pace.*

F. V.