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Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
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Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato Scott
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott
Andersen Andersen Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
London Descartes Wells Voltaire Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
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A Critical Examination of Socialism

W. H. (William Hurrell) Mallock

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PREFACE

The Civic Federation of New York, an influential body which aims, in various ways, at harmonising apparently divergent industrial interests in America, having decided on supplementing its other activities by a campaign of political and economic education, invited me, at the beginning of the year 1907, to initiate a scientific discussion of socialism in a series of lectures or speeches, to be delivered under the auspices of certain of the great Universities in the United States. This invitation I accepted, but, the project being a new one, some difficulty arose as to the manner in which it might best be carried out—whether the speeches or lectures should in each case be new, dealing with some fresh aspect of the subject, or whether they should be arranged in a single series to be repeated without substantial alteration in each of the cities visited by me. The latter plan was ultimately adopted, as tending to render the discussion of the subject more generally comprehensible to each local audience. A series of five lectures, substantially the same, was accordingly delivered by me in New York, Cambridge, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. But whilst this plan secured continuity of treatment, it secured it at the expense of comprehensiveness. Certain important points had to be passed over. In the present volume the substance of the original lectures has been entirely rearranged and rewritten, and more than half the matter is new. Even in the present volume, however, it has been impossible to treat the subject otherwise than in a general way. At almost every point a really complete discussion would necessitate a much fuller analysis of facts than it has been practicable to give here. Arguments here necessarily confined to a few pages or to a chapter, would each, for their complete elucidation, require a separate monograph. Most readers, however, will be able to supply much of what is missing, by the light of their own common sense; and general arguments, in which, as in block plans of buildings, many details are suppressed, have for practical purposes the great advantage of being generally and easily intelligible, whereas, if stated in fuller and more complex form, they might confuse rather than enlighten a large number of readers.

The fact that the fundamental arguments of this[Pg ix] volume were disseminated throughout the United States, not only at the meetings addressed, but also in all the leading newspapers, has had the valuable result, by means of the mass of criticisms which they elicited, of illustrating the manner in which socialists attempt to meet them; and has enabled me to revise, with a view to farther clearness, certain passages which were intentionally or unintentionally misunderstood, and also to emphasise the curious confusions of thought into which various critics have been driven in their efforts to controvert or get round them. I may specially mention a small volume by Mr. G. Wilshire of New York—a leading publisher and disseminator of socialistic literature—which was devoted to examining my own arguments seriatim. To the principal criticisms of this writer allusions will be found in the following pages. Most of my socialistic opponents (though to this rule there were amusing exceptions) wrote, according to their varying degrees of intelligence and education, with remarkable candour, and also with great courtesy. Mr. Wilshire, in particular, whilst seeking to refute my arguments as a whole, admitted the force of many of them; and did his best, in his elaborate *résumé* of them, to state them all fairly.

The contentions, and even the phraseology of[Pg x] socialists are in all countries (with the possible exception of Russia) identical. All are vitiated by the same distinctive errors, and it is indifferent whether, for purposes of detail criticism, we go to speakers and writers in this country or America. Except for the correction of a few verbal errors which have escaped my notice in the American edition, and which obscure the meaning of perhaps four or five sentences, for the introduction of a few additional notes, and for the translation of dollars and cents into pounds and shillings, the English and the American editions are the same.

W. H. M.

January, 1908.

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virtually accept the argument set forth in them with regard to capital.

Mr. Sidney Webb, for example, recognises it as an implement of direction, the only alternative to which is a system of legal coercion.

Other socialists advocate the continued use of wage-capital as the implement of direction, but they imagine that the situation would be radically changed by making the "state" the sole capitalist.

But the "state," as some of them are beginning to realise, would be merely the private men of ability—the existing employers—turned into state officials, and deprived of most of their present inducements to exert themselves.

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By capturing natural forces, one man of genius may add more to the wealth of the world in a year than an ordinary man could add to it in a hundred lifetimes.

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This book, though consisting of negative criticism and analysis of facts, and not trenching on the domain of practical policy and constructive suggestion, aims at facilitating a rational social policy by placing in their true perspective the main statical facts and dynamic forces of the modern economic world, which socialism merely confuses.

In pointing out the limitations of labour as a productive agency, and the dependence of the labourers on a class other than their own, it does not seek to represent the aspirations of the former to participate in the benefits of progress as illusory, but rather to place such aspirations on a scientific basis, and so to remove what is at present the principal obstacle that stands in the way of a rational and scientific social policy.

