C O M P E T I T I O N .

The great stumbling-block which so many of the middle-headed fossils of the human race have been impelled to surmount in their bid for material competition and the blessings which are supposed to flow from it; and to conceive a state of society in which progress is without such competition is beyond their feeble comprehensions.

"To reply for progress," say its opponents, and we reply, "Agreed—under the present system." Indeed, our opponents continually cite instances of the wretched way in which railways and other big public concerns are administered in some countries. We, in reply, simply point out that all business at the present day is conducted in the interest of shareholders and employers of labour, whose one object in conducting these vast enterprises is to increase our comfort and to obtain enterprises as much as possible of the wealth produced by the workers. Is it astonishing that under such a system there is no tendency to progress, except what is due to competition between the gamblers? And in majority cases does the competition produce the improvements anticipated? The majority of cases it results in lowering wages, in the replacement of human labour by machinery, or in the production of cheap and nasty goods.

Competition is of two kinds—viz, (1) that which prevails amongst the robers for the chance of being able to rob their workmen, and (2) that which prevails amongst the workers for the privilege of being robbed. The first of these is the cause of the second. The competition between the robbers causes them to employ as few human machines as possible and to replace them as far as possible by iron machines, because it is the most profitable. But, as the workmen acquire clothes, or are taught to use the machines, they are then encumbered with wives and families, and above all things they are not given to striking. Then as a number of human machines can't get work, there comes in that great and divine blessing to the human race, competition, and progress! And if great as the existing benefits of the present system our opponents are pious believers in the six days' creation, Adam and Eve, etc., and look upon scientific men as a desperately wicked and horrid people, seeking to undermine and destroy the schemes to which we have adhered as soon as they are confronted by Socialists.

Yes, the struggle for existence may have resulted in the "survival of the fittest" amongst our ancestors who were hairy quadrupeds and the like; but it absolutely fails to see how it does so in the present condition of the human race, when we are no longer the servants of Nature, but Nature herself is fast being brought into subjection to the human intellect.

Moral principles and intellectual faculties are the characteristics which should now distinguish the human race from the rest of creation, and the fittest to survive are those that possess these in the highest degree. For no matter what struggle for existence may have been a survival of the fittest! Absolutely nothing of the kind! It tends to develop all the basest tendencies of man—deceit, injustice, selfishness, the desire to rob one's fellow men and succeed at their expense; and those who possess these in the highest degree succeed in surviving. A nice prospect for the human race! A return to the condition of wild beasts?

Griny towns, filthy homes, dirt, squalor, starvation, such are the results of this devilish dishonesty; the human race, the masterpiece of Nature, diverted from its true destiny; and many of the inhabitants of this island are under circumstances in which the condition of the least advanced races of mankind were infinitely preferable.

There is one bright feature about competition, and that is that it is the chief support of the great gambling-system called Capitalism. We see this in the case of gambling of a similar kind on a small scale. Consider, for instance, the word-competitions which are now all the rage. When one person found he could make a good thing out of the general idiosy of the middle-classes, plenty of others followed his example, and as more and more do so, profits will grow smaller owing to competition, until either the duper will find it not worth while carrying on, or the duped will find they lose more than they gain and cease to patronise the sport. It is just so with the business of the world: either the gamblers will find it does not pay well enough and will drop the game, or the human dice they play with will see through it all and put an end to it. Under circumstances of which the fortunes of the least advanced races of mankind were infinitely preferable.

Because Capitalism is the chief supporter of the sports of life than their ancestors of 100 years ago, many amongst the working-classes are contented. They are like a man who has a right to an estate and is contented to take one square yard of it, and let the rest fall into the hands of a landlord. Because they find it is better than the slave who has no right to it, but consent to be the slave of those who have stolen his property.

It must be remembered that all the greatest inventions and improvements have not been due to competition amongst the capitalists. They have come from the brains of men. Other men have thought they are the only people possessed of that commodity. They have come in great measure from the hands and heads of working-men, and the men who are capitalists have taken advantage of these inventions characterised by injustice and dishonesty.

When we consider on the one hand all the beautiful things which man has produced; the cathedrals, the idea of which was developed by a few men; the work of the great masters, the thoughts and the literature of past ages, and even the most beautiful productions of the present age, our parks, public gardens, and boule-

yards, we find that in no case do we owe them to the competition between robbers and slaves, but to the freely-developed genius of man, encourage by the demands of the world and the exigencies of the case. In a word, when we contemplate the wretchedness, the filthy living, the starvation, the paucity of great thinkers in proportion to the population, we find a striking example of that advanced position to which some of the human races have attained, when we find also an almost total absence of any classical production in art, we perceive that all these evils are due to the competitive warfare of the present time and the hurr'y which is everywhere left in the generation of the present age which is fast conquering Nature itself and itself to the sorvold and delasing thirst for gold.

Under an honest system of property, progress, due to the power man possesses over Nature, will take place far faster than now. Public opinion will see that necessary improvements are carried out, and there will be all the free scope for moral and intellectual development which is almost impossible in the present age of selfishness and ignominy.

A. TARN.

S O C I A L I S M FROM THE ROOT UP

Chapter XIV.

THE TRANSITION FROM THE UTOPISTS TO MODERN SOCIALISM.

(Continued from Vol. III., page 248.)

Or the Socialist thinkers who serve as a kind of link between the Utopists and the school of the Socialist of historical evolution, or who may be called the Socialists of the "classical period" was Proudhon who was born at Besancon in 1809. By birth he belonged to the working-class, his father being a brewer's cooper, and he himself as a boy was a linen draper.

In 1835, however, he published an essay on general grammar, and in 1839 he gained a scholarship to be held for three years, a gift of one Madame Suard to his native town. The result of this advantage was that he was situated in a room which was published the same year, as the essay which the Madame Suard's scholars were bound to write: it bore the title of 'What is Property?' his answer being, Property is Robbery.

By 1847 he was a successful lawyer, and in 1846 he published his 'Philosophie de la Misere' ('Philosophy of Poverty), which received an elaborate reply and refutation from Karl Marx. In the Revolution of 1848 he showed himself a vigorous controversialist, and was elected Deputy for the Seine; he wrote numerous articles in several journals, mostly criticisms of the progress of the revolution; in the Chamber he proposed a tax of one-third to be levied on all interest and rent, which, as a matter of course, rejected. He also put forward a scheme for a mutual credit bank, by which he hoped to simplify exchange and reduce interest to a two per cent point: this was also rejected.

After the failure of the revolution of '48, Proudhon was imprisoned for three years, during which time he married a young woman of the working-class.

In 1856 he developed his system of 'Mutualism' fully in his last work, entitled 'Justice in the Revolution and the Church.' In consequence of the publication of this book he had to retire to Brussels, where he was assassinated in 1869, came back to France, and died at Puys in 1865.

Proudhon's opinions and works may be broadly divided into two periods. The one is 'What is Property?' his position is that of a Communist pure and simple; but after this one clear development of a definite thesis we meet in his works, and we must add, in his political actions also, with so much paradox that it is next to impossible to formulate in brief any definite Proudhonian doctrine. At one time a Communist, at another the vehement opponent of Communism; at one time professing Anarchy, at another lending himself to schemes of the cruelest Socialism; at another time an advocate of the divine rights of property, in an Antipode, at another time opposing the passage of his works giving his eager adhesion to Auguste Comte's worship of women, in another a decided contempt of the female sex,—it is with a sense of confession that one rises from the perusal of him.

His connection with the Revolution of '48 seems to have been the turning point in his history; in his address to the deputies of the Seine, in which he put forward the scheme for a credit bank backed by a number of decrees of a State-Socialistic nature, and at the same time the passage of his works giving his eager adhesion to Auguste Comte's worship of women, in another a decided contempt of the female sex,—it is with a sense of confession that one rises from the perusal of him.

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THE LITTLE VAGABOND.

(William Blake: born 1757, died 1828.)

[William Blake was almost the first, if not the first, of those poets who drew English poetry from the slough of conventional twaddle in which the 18th centu-
ry was dankly soaked; and it-shined him to raise the body of his art—thus to write words men understand; whereas it was an understood condition of the so-called "poetry" of the 19th century that they should mean nothing.—W. M.]

Dear mother, dear mother, the Church is cold, But the Ale-house is warm and warm. Besides I can tell where I am used well, Such usage in heaven will never do well. But if at the church they would give us some ale, And a pleasant song or two, We'd sing and we'd pray all the livelong day, Nor ever once wish from the church to stray. Then the parson might preach and drink and sing, And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring, And modern Paris church, Would not have busy children nor fasting nor birch. And God like a Father rejoicing to see, His children as pleasant and happy as He. Would have no more quarrel with the Devil or the barrel, But kiss him and give him both drink and apparel.

THE JUBILEE OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS.

"It is not to die, or even to die of hunger, that many men are dying; all men are dying, both rich and poor, in looking for work, and yet gaining nothing; to be heartworn, weary, yet isolated, un-
known,—CARLILLE.

On Wednesday Jan. 26 the Northumberland miners resolved to strike against a reduction of 12½ per cent. The miners were asked to say "Yes" or "No" to the following: Provided 12½ per cent. be con-
celled off the present wages of hard collieries and 7½ per soft collieries at Delaval, for which the other parties are to return work to save and yet gain nothing; to be heartworn, weary, yet isolated, un-
known, still sticking to the work which makes of capital and labour a united happy family by smooth talk and practical measures. His efforts are vain. We tell you that these antagonisms will never sleep. Ever between strong and right, between demagogues and capitalists, must warfare continue. The people of this country are unwilling to see the present condition of things—the abolition of the individual ownership of capital. Determined warfare, then, is the only course open. In this conflict, the people of this country can be with the miners, for the cause of the miners is the cause of the whole. The scenes of Charlieori may yet be repeated in England; but the lessons will be given by an organisa-
tion not quite so isolated, and the effect will be far greater. Public opin-
ion is a strong force, and the sympathy of the workers will be with their more oppressed fellow workers.

The present is a fitting occasion for the celebration of the Jubilee by the workers. Subscriptions should be filled, and the peasants ensure the first great victory of the miners.