How I became a Socialist is a question much more easily asked than answered. And that is why I constantly evaded it, whenever I happened to put it to myself. But now that the Editor of Justice insists on having a reply for his collection, I must, _volens volens_, settle down to an attempt at going into the question and at answering it with some profit to his readers.

To begin with, then, I think I became a Socialist through the gradual development of what was born within me by the circumstances and surroundings of my life. There is no other way of becoming a Socialist; no one, who is emotionally predisposed, can, by the mere cramming into his head of "facts," become a militant Socialist, that is, one whose heart and soul is up in rebellion against the ugly disorder and cruel beastliness of our present social system. And to be logical, I should have to give a short history of my mental growth up to the time when I was being counted a conscious warrior in the cause. But for such a task the space at my disposal is far too small; and hence I can only touch, in a very sketchy way, the most salient points of my development through youth and manhood, as far as I can remember their bearing upon the question.

My father then, and still more, my mother, were the original cause—not to go farther back—of all that inclined within me towards what we are pleased to call Socialism.
My father, a Catholic art workman from the Rhinelands, who had settled in Vienna (Austria), and my mother, a Protestant Viennese of aristocratic Hungarian extraction; he, although working hard and well, losing all his married riches through looking at his life's task as one of humanity and art rather than as a merely commercial undertaking, and she, toiling cheerfully, days and nights, to help him in feeding and clothing the six of us, to send us to school and to give us an education worth the name. These were the two first examples of struggling human life which brightened with the light of their love the darkness of my early days.

From the Board School I was sent to what is equivalent to the English High School, and I am afraid, as far as my memory serves me, I was not exactly a "good boy" there—unless, indeed, it was my Socialist leanings that prompted me to care more for the pleasurable entertainment of my school-fellows than my own advancement. For I used to take most of my teachers off (from the platform and in the interval between the lessons), by mimicking their little airs and ways and peculiarities to a boisterously delighted class; and was not seldom caught in my gratuitous performance. The result was, that the headmaster advised my good mother to apprentice me to some honest artisan, an arrangement to which I offered no objection. There was a carver and gilder in our house across the yard, whose children were my playmates, and although my father wished to make an engineer of me, a carver and gilder I would be—only to discover that not everything was gold that glittered. For my apprenticeship was but little short of slavery; I was used like a beast of burden, and worse, working sometimes thirty-six
hours at a stretch, and Sunday School and evening classes were positively my only hours of recreation.

Before my apprenticeship was over my father died, and my good mother shortly followed him.

In 1867, when I was just newly married, a batch of art-workmen were sent to the Paris Exhibition by an organisation of Austrian Industrials, and I was among the chosen ones. I owed this good luck partly to the distinction I had earned at the Technical Sunday School and partly to the recommendation by one of my first employers as a modeller. Mr. B. Koelbl was in many respects a most remarkable man. The son of a shepherd in the Styrian mountains, he was employed in watching the sheep up to his sixteenth year. When taken as an apprentice by an artist in frame making in Graz, he worked his nights through with copying his masters drawings from the antique, and with teaching himself reading and writing. Gradually, by dint of his love of art and his untiring industry, he worked himself up to be one of the leading and most respected art-industrials of Vienna. Yet he was poor, because honest, simple, and generous to excess. His cunning partner on the other hand was the type of a narrow minded, ignorant, and unscrupulous commercialist, who exploited the genius of his guileless associate just as mercilessly as he did the sinews of his working men. Mr. Koelbl was at the time as much (and more) of an unconscious Socialist as myself, and, naturally, we took to each other. We used to talk politics of a sort, and it was he who called my attention to the social side of them. He often confided to me the horror he felt at the purely mercenary relationship that existed between him and his men (his "helpers," as he used to call them), how he wished he could devise some means whereby the latter
might be made to work more for the sake of their performance and of enriching the community than for that of merely killing time; how he was trying to think out a plan whereby the workers could have a share in the result of their labour, and the like; all of which led me to think vaguely on the subject of the social problem.

When in Paris (1867) I gazed for the first time at the wonders of machine-industrial production for the world’s market, and took some notes and made some sketches in my own line of industry. I was much impressed by the shabbiness with which the governmental part of my country was represented at the Universal Show. And, although not ripe enough then to form any political connections in the classical city of the Social Revolution, in the report I had to furnish home I expressed my indignation in language strong and unpatriotic enough to prevent it being printed along with the reports of my fellow delegates.

Shortly after my return home from Paris the fateful hour arrived which drew me into the vortex of the social movement and determined the purpose of my life.

In consequence of humiliating reverses which the imperial forces had suffered in the fields of battle, Austria had been granted a constitution by her emperor, whose autocratic and military prestige had emerged from the wars mortally damaged. For the first time the people of those realms had, among other constitutional rights, a right of public meeting. True, those liberties were not large in spirit, and were, moreover, subject in practice to the most brutal and idiotic police interpretation; still, the sensation of being “Citizens” (until then they were merely “Subjects”) was to the Austrian people a novel one, and they enjoyed it with much gusto and determination.

The initiators of the Labour movement were not Austrians
proper, but so called "foreigners," who had come from over the borders of Germany, where they had been sitting at the feet of Ferdinand Lassalle, and taken lessons from him not only in regard to principle, but also with regard to tactics and organisation. They began by forming a "Workman’s Educational Association," ostensibly of a non-political character, but really with the object of propagating the Lassallean proposal of "State Help to Workmen’s Productive Associations." Some of those Germans were excellent speakers, and, as set forth by them, the idea was hailed with acclamation by the majority of those thousands who thronged the first public meetings in Vienna.

As in Germany, so in Austria. The governing classes forthwith opposed the Socialist notion of State obligation towards the people with the Manchester School of administrative laissez faire and individual "self help," by the adoption of which they, at any rate, had so far prospered.

I had not attended the first public meetings, but knew of them only through the garbled reports of the Liberal papers I was then reading. There the demand for "State Help" was damned as a most mercenary one, whilst "Self Help" was extolled as the ideal notion of all those who had any self respect left and prized their "individual dignity and independence." Such trash, uttered as it was by men whom I liked merely because I knew of no better ones, imposed upon me at the time. Phrases, such as, "Everyone is but the fashioner of his own fortune," "Self is the man!" "Give every one his own and nothing remains for the Devil!" &c., I had learned to consider most noble sentiments, and consequently I was rather prejudiced against such as appealed to the State (the social nature of which I was not aware of) to mend, as it were.
their individual fortunes. As the hostile contentions waxed hotter, I became more interested in them, and at last resolved to hear the pros and cons from the mouth of their advocates and then judge for myself.

I was at the time a member of the Deutscher Turnverein, a part and parcel of the great national organisation founded in Germany by Jahn for the athletic training and patriotic schooling of the German youth. Strange enough, the members of that Vienna organisation were almost to a man followers of Schulze Delitzsch, the then fashionable German high priest of political Radicalism and social quackery. Moving in their company, and not having heard the other side, I consented to go with a number of them to a meeting, at which the two opposing principles were to be pitted against each other.

The great meeting on the morning of St. Stephen's (Boxing) Day of Christmas, 1867, found me, then, in the halls of the Sperl, in the midst of a group of men who had come on purpose to oppose the Lassalleites at any cost, and, if need be, break up the meeting. The assembly was a colossal one, the halls being packed from floor to ceiling with people of all classes, among whom, though, the workers had the majority.

The case on behalf of "Self-help" was opened by some very good speakers, and I applauded them much, wondering what on earth the Lassalleites might have to say in reply. When the first spokesman of the latter rose I believe I joined my fellow athletes in the derisive yell with which they greeted his every word. But he had not spoken long before I became gradually dumb and absorbed with attention. When he had done I remained neutral,
and refused to groan and whistle* with my nearest surroundings. The next speaker on behalf of "State help" elicited my growing assent, and his successor made me cheer him to the echo and fight those around me who persisted in booing and hissing. The scales had at last fallen from my eyes, and I was converted! From that hour I belonged to the cause. I joined the Workers' Union, devoured Lassalle's writings, studied those of Marx and Engels, and was soon forced into the forefront of the line of battle by my enthusiastic advocacy of Socialism.

When, in the summer of 1869, the Congress of German Workers was called to Eisenach I was one of the four Austrian delegates, and assisted in the constitution of the German Social-Democratic Party, formed through the amalgamation of the Internationalists with the advanced guard of the Lassalleites.

On December 13th of the same year followed the great historical demonstration of the Austrian Socialists in front of Parliament, which frightened the Liberal Government of the day into the mad attempt to exterminate an idea by persecution. A few days after the demonstration a few of the suspected leaders were arrested. On January 1, 1870, I leaped into the breach and undertook the editorship of the People's Will, a Socialist weekly, which was to take the place of the fortnightly, People's Voice, abandoned.

Shortly after, in company with three comrades, I was arrested too. After a protracted "enquiry," during which they kept us under lock and key for seven months, they proved to us at last that we were members of the German Social-Democratic Party, and as such, bound to work for the final overthrow of the present rotten order of things,

* Whistling, on the Continent, is a sign of displeasure and condemnation.
themselves included. As we admitted all those terrible facts and intentions readily enough, they found us “Guilty of High Treason” as they understand the term in Austria. As a special “mercy” they did not hang us there and then (as they might after that pronouncement), but let us off with five years imprisonment.

Amnestied on the advent of a Conservative ministry in 1871, I resumed the editorship of the party organ, which I kept until the treachery in our camp in 1873. Partly through the work implied by that office, partly through the study of French Socialists, and Professor Stein’s book on “The Evolution of Industrial Society in France,” and partly through practical organisation work, with intermittent battle, prosecution and imprisonment, I fairly completed my education as a militant Socialist before I left Austria for England in June, 1874.

And with what I have learnt in Great Britain during my twenty years’ work among the people, I may sum up the character of my Socialist conviction thus:

I am now, as I always was, a revolutionary Socialist, that is, one who can conceive the realisation of his ideal only in a complete transformation of human society through the adoption of the principle of Social co-operation in all things for the common good in place of the principle of antagonistic rivalry for individual gain at present obtaining.

I believe in, and hope for, a society organised on the moral basis of

“Taking from every one according to his capacities, and giving to every one according to his needs.”

That such a co-operative commonwealth is not only
realisable, but near at hand, I am firmly convinced, the depressing traits of inhumanity in the institutions of to-day notwithstanding. For the evolution of society cannot be kept back by force, although it may be artificially retarded. It runs its course with necessity, and to our enlightened eyes the rudimentary setting of the organic forms of its future are plainly discernible in the chaotic turmoil of its present.

I am convinced that political power in the hands of the working classes will be one great means of their liberation; another one will be the education of their senses towards the conception of a purer ideal of beauty, strength, and freedom of life, than the one by which they are at present governed, guided, and made miserable.

I do not believe that such a gigantic transformation can be achieved by means entirely peaceful; there are too big, too blindly selfish interests to be overcome for that. But I have learned to know that the greater part of this enormous work can and must be accomplished without violence in countries where the existing liberties are large enough to be made use of by the struggling workers for the bettering of their lot and the quickening of the pace of Revolution.

I believe it, therefore, to be the duty of all those among the exploited classes who have recognised the impending change, and are willing to work and fight for it, to join hands into one great Socialist party, and to use the strength of their organisation for the better training of the people in a truly Socialist sense, so as to make them fit, not only for the final overthrow in strife of the obtaining perversion
of society, but also for the working out in peace of their future destiny:

The development of the human race to perfection through mutual love, helpful knowledge, and collective freedom!

Andreas Scheu.