

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

WE set out in the first chapter to effect our escape from the current abstractions of economics and politics in which we all more or less alike have been brought up: and we returned to the concrete study, from which politics and social philosophy actually arose in the past, but have too much wandered—that of cities as we find them, or rather as we see them grow. To recognise the present-day growth of our cities, their spreading and their pressure into new and vaster groupings or conurbations, and to realise these as vividly as may be, first upon the map of our island, and then as it is also discernible abroad, was the continued endeavour of the next two chapters. Thus there emerged the conception of the intersocial struggle for existence, as dependent no longer mainly, as so many suppose, upon the issues of international war, nor even as pacifists assume, upon the maintenance of the present stage of industry at its present level, by amicable negotiations. Peace and prosperity depend above all upon our degree of civic efficiency, and upon the measure in which a higher phase of industrial civilisation may be attained in different regions and by their civic communities.

Thus we came, in Chapter IV., to the criticism of the too loosely expressed, too vaguely described "Industrial Age" of our historians and economists; and to its analysis into two main phases, rude and fine, old and new, Paleotechnic and Neotechnic; with conclusions frankly critical of our modern towns, as still predominantly paleotechnic, though not without the initiatives of the higher phase, nor the means of advancing into it more and more fully.

Yet the conditions which delay our acceptance of the neotechnic order are not to be dealt with too simply. Instead, therefore, of our deducing from these considerations some simple policy, to be debated and adopted forthwith, as is the method of politics, the need was urged of arousing observation and extending it, of knowing our regions and cities in detail, and of making ourselves more competent practically to share in the arousal and development of our own home-city, instead of merely deputing our responsibilities to others through the political or municipal voting apparatus.

There conveniently follows here a chapter (VIII.) on Housing; and this especially as culminating in the Garden Cities and Garden Suburbs, which have been the best contribution of London and of England generally to the advance of civilisation and well-being during the present century, indeed within the memory or life-time of the generation now maturing, and passing on its impulse.

Towards meeting this need of civic knowledge and

comparison, travel is far more interesting and instructive to begin with than can be any more abstract discussion. Hence the chapters (IX.-XI.) summarising notes of a recent and typical Town Planning Tour in Germany; Germany being selected not as the country of late years popularly viewed as the most alarming of business competitors, or of naval rivals, but as the region of Europe whose civic progress and development have been most instructive to her neighbours, and from which impulses to the British and American Town Planning movement have been as yet most largely derived.

In the accumulation of experience, from foreign travel or from observation at home, all may share; notes and impressions may be accumulated; pictures, plans, models, and other graphic records may be pooled together. Thus there gradually arise Town Planning Collections, and from these again Town Planning Exhibitions. These were first initiated in Germany; but are now also being held in this and other countries, witness the "Cities and Town Planning Exhibition" now upon its rounds through various cities. In its growing mass, orderly departments differentiate, and sections of these arise; so that the various contributors and organisers are fairly on the road towards thoroughness for each division of the field. In short, increase of expert knowledge, accumulation of its necessary material for comparison, reference, and illustration, are going on; and these together with a wide and growing appeal to the

public. In city after city there is being aroused a new interest in its historic and social past, a fresh criticism of the advantages and defects of its present state, and a discussion of the possibilities of its improvement and development.

At this stage City Improvement and Town Planning comprehensively appear; yet in face of so much tradition of the past, so many suggestions from the contemporary world, a new danger arises, that of imitating what we admire, too irrespective of its differences from our own place, time, or manner of life. We are satiated with the existing medley our cities show of pseudo-classical or feebly romantic buildings, supposed to revive the past, and of the mean streets or conventional villa suburbs, which represent the limitations of their builders. Yet the piercing of characterless perspectives and boulevards through this past confusion or beyond it, which would seem to satisfy too many town planners, or the endeavours of too many schemes to repeat here, there, and everywhere bits of Letchworth or Hampstead Suburb (excellent as these are in their own place and way) are but poor examples of Town Planning; in fact, they are becoming fresh delays and new obstacles to City Design.

True Rustic Development, true Town Planning, true City Design, have little in common with these too cheap adaptations or copies. On pain of economic waste, of practical failure no less than of artistic futility, and even worse, each true design, each valid



scheme should and must embody the full utilisation of its local and regional conditions, and be the expression of local and of regional personality. "Local character" is thus no mere accidental old-world quaintness, as its mimics think and say. It is attained only in course of adequate grasp and treatment of the whole environment, and in active sympathy with the essential and characteristic life of the place concerned. Each place has a true personality; and with this shows some unique elements—a personality too much asleep it may be, but which it is the task of the planner, as master-artist, to awaken. And only he can do this who is in love and at home with his subject—truly in love and fully at home—the love in which high intuition supplements knowledge, and arouses his own fullest intensity of expression, to call forth the latent but not less vital possibilities before him. Hence our plea for a full and thorough survey of country and town, village and city, as preparatory to all town planning and city design; and thus as being for the opening neotechnic order (see our initial population-map) all that the geological survey has been for paleotechnic cities; indeed far more.

Indications towards orderly methods of preliminary survey are therefore offered; for museum and library, school and college, city and its authorities, which the reader may find helpful, at least suggestive, in his own town. The essential matter for all of us is to become more and more of surveyors ourselves; it is

to vivify and rationalise our own experience, which is always so far unique; as well as to compare and co-ordinate our observations and ideas with those of others. Such growing knowledge is the true and needed preparation towards the needed uplift of Country and Town.

As this ever fresh and fascinating interest in our immediate surroundings gains upon our too common apathy, the citizen upon his daily walk and in his long familiar streets may gradually or suddenly awaken to a veritable revelation—that of the past and present interest, and the unexhausted possibilities of the everyday social scenes around him, as of their actual or latent beauty also. The business and industrial toiler, the mechanical voter and member, the administrative mandarin and routinist—who all, to do them bare justice, have been vaguely striving, however sunless and indoor their lights, to make something a little better of our paleotechnic disorder—may thus be rejuvenated, one and all, aroused, enlivened by a fresh vision, the literal “fresh eye” of art, the open eye of science also. The vital union and co-ordination of these two eyes is the characteristic of the neotechnic order, the fuller event of which only our sluggishness or hopelessness delays. The discouragement and cynicism, so common in the past and passing generation, and still affected by the rising one, are not normal attitudes of mind, but are easily explained—even cured. Why the insufficiency of nineteenth-century science? Mostly too static and analytic

to come in touch with art. Why that of artistic and other romantic movements? Too retrospective to come in touch with science. Each involved the failures of both in social and civic application, hence their too general lapse into personal preoccupations, or into mechanical and commercial ones. But now the sciences are becoming evolutionary in their views and presentments, more co-ordinated and social in their applications. The artist is escaping from the mere futile endeavour to reconstruct the shell and semblance of the vanished past: he sees that as its artistic virtues lay in its expression of the vital emotions, ideals, and ideas of its day, so it must be his task to express the best of his own age, and with its fresh resources, its new constructive methods. As scientist and artist make these advances, they begin also to understand and trust each other; a true co-operation begins. And as this incipient union of science and art becomes realised, our discouragement and our cynicism abate; before long our inhibitions and paralysis will pass away. Thus a new age, a new enthusiasm, a new enlightenment are already dawning; and with these the Civic Revivance is at hand.

Regional Survey and their applications—Rural Development, Town Planning, City Design—these are destined to become master-thoughts and practical ambitions for the opening generation, not less fully than have been Business, Politics, and War to the past, and to our passing one. In and through these

constructive activities, all the legitimate and effective elements which underlie business, politics, and even war in its best aspects, yet in which these so sadly come short, can be realised, and each increasingly. Already, for thinking geographers here and there, for artists and engineers, for town planners also, the neotechnic order is not only becoming conscious, but generalised, as comprehensively geotechnic; and its arts and sciences are coming to be valued less as intellectual pleasures, attainments, distinctions, and more in the measure in which they can be organised into the geographical service, the regional regeneration of Country and Town.

In all these ways we are learning to realise more fully the spirit of our city or town; and we thus are able to distinguish, beyond the general improvements more or less common to all cities of our day, those characteristic developments of which our opening future may be best capable, and by which the spirit we have learned to value may be yet more fully and worthily expressed.

Such regeneration is not merely nor ultimately geographic alone: it is human and social also. It is eugenic, and, educational—eupsychic, therefore, above all. Eutopia is thus every whit as realisable an ideal for the opening Neotechnic phase of the Industrial Age as has been that of “material progress,” that of “industrial development”—of the existing black and squalid Kakotopias amid which the Paleotechnic



disorder is now approaching its close. Upon its ashes the planting of future forests is already here and there beginning; among its worst slums, upon their buried filth and decay, our children are already rearing roses. As this material and intellectual reconstruction, this social and civic transition, becomes realised by the rising generation, it will proceed more and more rapidly; and this whether the cynic relax or harden, whether he come with us or bide. His own recovery from the blight of disappointments above reviewed, his revival from their prolonged chill, is not to be despaired of. Contemptuous as he may be in this day of small things, his tone will change wherever this better civic and social order can show, beyond its first weedings and sowings, some earnest of flower or fruit.

So too with the politician, and of each and every colour. For the ideals of each school, the aims of each party—each richer than its rivals admit in men of insight and good-will—could not have arisen without some foundations on the past or present life of our communities, some outlook towards their continuance. In that fuller vision and interpretation of the past and present life of cities, towards which we are searching as students—in civics, that last-born of the sciences, yet before long to be the most fruitful—and in the clearer forecasts and preparations of the possible future lying before each community, which the corresponding art of civics will also bring within reach—the prevalent discords of parties and

occupations may be increasingly resolved. Competition may be mitigated, often transformed into co-operation. Even hostilities and egoisms may be raised into rivalries towards the promotion of the common weal; and thus find their victory and success and self-realisation—through service. In civic science the task of each acquires a directness of responsibility exceeding that of politics, with a significance and a value which monetary economics missed. Though in an age of science we no longer expect that abstract level of perfection which has been dreamed and phrased by the age of politics, as it waxed and waned, we are compensated by a more concrete vision—that of opening possibilities, of social betterment and uplift—day by day, year by year, generation by generation—of folk, work, and place together.

Within these actual conditions, social harmonies may now and increasingly be composed; harmonious endeavours recalling, even exceeding, the aspirations of the past, and carried up to and beyond its historic heights of achievement.

Such are the Eutopias already dawning—here, there, everywhere. Despite the present set-back, of European war, with its more than materially destructive consequences, the generation thus coming into activity must henceforward all the more apply its best minds to re-synthetic problems, to reconstructive tasks. Hence the tangled Evolution of Cities will be more clearly unravelled and interpreted, the Revivance of Cities more effectively begun.