

Once, nature was everywhere; It Surrounded man wherever he went, and it was with him in whatever he did. But, as the many millennia rapidly passed on, we began to wonder if it would indeed always be with us. Some people already live most of their lives where the only green to see is that painted on the walls of the buildings around them. We haven't all thought so deeply about it though, or likely it would not be a problem; there are always others whom, for whatever reason they have, choose to consume this, our host, with all the ferocity they can produce.

Once, people had what they needed, they would live and strive and they were content; That kind of world passed very quickly though, and that might be the reason why most never think of it much. Indeed, there are people all around us that are subjected to live in terribly dire physical, mental, and social situations in great need and lack of assistance. And again, sadly, there are the others who still do not see it this way, and who have chosen to burn the hearts of their neighbours and to crush and squeeze what they can out from the lives of the same.

Here, amid these two viewpoints, is where this thought begins.

There is a major movement and a multimillion-dollar campaign in the world of environmentalists. This group of people and organisations has its differences within, but overall it can be generalised as having a single goal, that of environmental improvement. We all must agree that there is to change in our world's behaviour; this is why we fight, this is why we push, in order to advance where we judge it to be necessary. But, when it really comes down to *what is* the change that we need, are the beasts and plants really what is most important?

How can we attempt to save the world by keeping its air clean, while at the same time allowing such atrocities to happen to our very brothers?

Think back. What is it that caused one of the greatest related calamities in the environment recorded –that of the intense pollution among rapidly industrialised states around the nineteenth century–? Was it because people were passionately destroying that nature which they could find? No. rather, it was an unbalance in positive thought. A reader might argue, "Yes, and if these had been environmentally minded then none of that would have happened." Perhaps. But one must remember the reasons for this unbalance: humanity was striving to advance in the fastest way possible, and this meant that they did not look at the disastrous results that their actions would bring. Now, if the thought had been one of equality in place of competition, one of helping instead of taking, would it not have saved the pain? Indeed, not only would it have saved us from the whole situation, but from a thousand other problems in Europe and abroad. I do not here state that the advancements achieved of this sort are inherently wrong, there were other problems before them and there were other problems when they were gone; but with a healthy conscience these problems can be dealt with much quicker and with much more inspiration, thus, not allowing such culminations of immorality to occur.

Take another happening as example: the past and continual destruction of historic

forestland. Immediately it seems as only a problem along the lines of environmental ethics, but that is merely a surface sampling of the problem. In truth these and other crises have a much deeper cause, one that extends far beyond the simple deforestation of these lands. There is an ideology set in the minds of many people, one that looks merely to itself, and in its attempts for improvement it repeatedly steps upon anything in its way to where it desires to go, whether that be the people or the nature.

One merely needs to look a little ways to see the eminent need for social reestablishment and moral restoration. Take a short glance at Palestine: children are being heartlessly mutilated and families ruthlessly expelled or executed. Sierra Leone, the DRC, and Rwanda: scores of thousands of abducted children are vehemently being taught to slaughter and wreck. Myanmar: thousands of rural peasants are starved and drowned and not even buried. Or look even within your very midst, the UK: depression and related diseases are reaching younger victims every year. The USA: adolescent violence surges as educational and moralistic standards plummet. Japan: suicide rates skyrocket and show no sign of stopping with adults or teenagers. Or on a world level: imperialistic nations continually struggle for foreign power, both obvious and subversive: international disagreement is growing and impeding communications, including the few peace talks that do happen, and thus building the rivalry between the increasingly polarised nations. All these happenings could not be just a continuation of what immorality has always been present. There is a distinct stockpile of abusive corruption that is growing exponentially and now threatens an avalanche on the world as a whole. We indeed live in a society, as put by Gustave de Molinari, "in which millions of men and women in the most 'civilised' communities, lead an existence which makes them wish they had never been born."¹

It can clearly be seen that a drastic change in the ethical principles that govern our lives is eminent. The question left to ponder, then, is *how*.

Although knowledgeable study of actual social drawbacks and fallacies does assist the development in these areas, we must not let the numbers and details of it all blind us from what really should be happening. Count Lyof N. Tolstoi wrote once that "Strange as this may seem, when put into words, I understood clearly for the first time, that the business which I had undertaken could not consist alone in feeding and clothing thousands of people, as one would feed and drive under cover a thousand sheep, but that it must consist in doing good to them."² That simple concept could straighten out one of the most common mistakes in the area of social improvement, not only today, but throughout history. Kind-hearted people have tried to mend the wound in the side of humanity but while they busy themselves with the healing and treating, the original cause of the wound is overlooked: the predominate reason why such a wound exists is simply passed on by. This is not to say that the work done in humanitarian aid programs is of no use, but that such simply does not have the ability to transform the situation as it stands. A deep change within the people of this world is what needs to happen: only through changing ourselves can such calamities be avoided.

It is hard to believe such happenings exist within our very reach: happenings that should cause our hearts to cry out for reform: happenings that, sadly, have become commonplace. But, a curtain has been drawn over our eyes, partly by us who do not want to feel compelled by the sight, and partly by those who know that the change of mind needed upon seeing it would be a detriment to their stratum of society. Let us learn then "to recover, if one may say so, our patrimony from chaos, and not to add to his empire."³

Take one last situation to thought. There is a mass build-up of weapons with terrible destructive power, unimaginable to most; this should likely be the hardest pressing fear upon the naturalists and the socialists, for it is the one factor where a slight loss of control could immediately exterminate much of what we know as life. Surely many have asked the question of why such a thing exists, and once again the reason is not so that destruction of the planet could be possible, but it is that same enmity and distrust which has been for so long a time and which hangs about us with such ferocity that is the cause. Clearly the future of life has been thrown violently into our hands, so *what will we do with it?* The selfsame minds that have been making past decisions now have the choice to allow life, or to end it, and it does not seem that an environmentally conscious mindset would be enough to prevent global destruction. It was a hate and fear of people that lead such nuclear endeavours, and it is only by changing that fear and hatred that such unnatural power can be controlled.

Life has been and life will be, but it is our decision to be made on *how* life will be. Will we live on knowing that our children shall inherit a world on the brink of chaos? Or one that has come to see the realities of love and life: one relatively void of destructive hate. The way we now live will determine that world: the manor in which we treat our brothers will determine that world: the valiance with which we follow our cause *will determine* that world.

Footnotes:

¹ Gustave de Molinari, *The Society of To -morrow*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1904. Trans. P. H. Lee Warner. Library of Economics and Liberty. Retrieved 2008. .

² Lyof N. Tolstoi, *What To Do?* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. 1887, Trans. Isabel F. Hapgood. Retrieved 2008

³ James Dunbar. *Essays on the History of Mankind in Rude and Cultivated Ages; Essay X. Of Man, As the Arbitrer of his Own Fortune*. Lausanne: Printed for W. Strahan. 1780.

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