

CHAPTER VIII

THE BLESSING OF COMPETITION

WHAT is work? Why do we do it? Do we work because we like it or because we have to? Are we working for ourselves or for others? Is our real interest in our work or in the work of others who work for us? When the Government offers us a policy to promote employment, is it because we really want employment or because we want to qualify for a share in the product of the work of others?

We have as a people developed a political mind which is about as far removed as anything can be from what is practical and feasible in the everyday work of life. Thus, when a workman has a wife and five children, we argue about the cost of living. We never mention his work; we never ask if it is good work. We are not interested to know whether it could be better done or what is the opinion of the consumer for whom it is done. We do not even consider whether the work is worth doing at all. We merely repeat the cost-of-living figure, and think of the five children. We as a people approach the industrial problem in the attitude of mind which would be appropriate to a Board of Guardians, but which is simply destructive when applied to the problem of industry as a whole.

It would seem to be necessary to retrace our steps and to get back to the study of simple economics. I have already stated the old-fashioned object, as defined by Adam Smith, of "providing a plentiful subsistence for the people," and we must think

