

(c.) At the rate of 150 words a minute. Takes 5 minutes.

The obliteration of classes is the war-cry of the social reformer. For a century or two past men of opposing sentiments and principles, who yet professed to hold dear the betterment of the human race, have been projecting and shaping various schemes which shall accomplish the utmost benefit for mankind, and which shall do away with prevailing evils. Bitterly opposed as they are in all else, this warfare against class distinctions is the one link of connection between the modern socialist and anarchist, and both seem to hold to a glad illusion that if these could be obliterated the social millennium would be here. To the very existence of classes seems to be attributed all the oppression and all the injustice and all the suffering that exist in the world. Poverty is supposed to exist by reason of the centralisation of riches into the hands of a class; ignorance and crime because the poor and helpless are crushed down by the weight of their social superiors; cruelty and dishonesty thrive because the class in power can defy the law. Such are the arguments advanced by those who make unavailing protest against existing conditions, and who have much of reason on their side, lacking only the balance-wheel of discerning judgment.

Closer students of the world's affairs perceive that there is to-day an extraordinary change taking place in social organization, and one which is advancing with marvellous rapidity. Wealth is buying out aristocracy the world over, with love sometimes appearing as a timid second factor in the bargain. Even royalty is succumbing to the Midas-like touch. Old names and old titles must be supported, and old wealth has a troublesome propensity for vanishing into thin air. Even thrones require the support of gold to prop their tottering foundations. This may be regarded as the war of a class upon a class, for the claims to social preferment which formerly rested upon the audacious deed of some barbarian ancestor or upon the bar sinister in lineage are being exchanged for the more substantial if less picturesque advantages of acquired wealth. And, as wealth is a prize open to every competitor in life's race, and one quite as likely to be won by the hod-carrier or the green-grocer's son, it follows that brickmasons and soapmakers and traders generally are ascending to the highest rank in the social scale.

Now, while individual exertion and individual ambition are on the one hand tending to the centralisation of wealth in the hands of a few, enlightened public opinion, on the other, is advancing toward an equalisation of opportunities in all civilised States. In time it is probable that all freeborn children in a progressive land will be given equal educational opportunities, and that society or the Government will see to it that all are properly clothed and fed, and have every advantage for a normal physical development. This once accomplished, whatever the form of government or the system of the distribution of products, each generation will stand so nearly equal in the race for material benefits that it is rational to assume extreme distinctions of a material kind will disappear, and that all men and women will be sufficiently independent and relieved from the most crushing necessities of existence to be enabled to follow in some degree their individual tastes and to develop their best capacities. Should this happy day arrive, instead of the obliteration of class lines it is safe to predict a re-creation of such distinctions upon more enduring principles than have ever before been recognised. The man who loves a picture or who can paint one is not going to choose for his associate the man who builds an engine and whose heart is attuned to the throb of machinery, and the fact that their financial status is essentially the same will only serve to accentuate the difference between them. The woman who can write a poem or express her sentiments in seven languages is not going to admit her dressmaker, whose heart and soul are absorbed in patterns and fabrics, to a social or intellectual equality. The people who love to listen to Beethoven's sonatas will not affiliate with the multitude whose ears no amount of ease or prosperity or affluence can educate above the strains of a music hall.

As to the relative superiority of classes in that far-distant day, it is unlikely that society will trouble herself about them any more than she does to-day.

Shorthand.—For Junior Civil Service. Time allowed: 3 hours.

INSTRUCTIONS TO SUPERVISORS.

1. Inform candidates before the time for taking up this subject that they may use pen or pencil as they please for taking notes, which should be written on ruled paper, but that they must transcribe those notes into longhand with pen and ink.

2. Inform candidates that when once you have begun to dictate you cannot stop until the passage is finished.

3. Dictate the passages at the following rates of speed:—

(a.) 50 words a minute.

(b.) 80 " "

(c.) 100 " "

N.B.—It will be well to practise reading these aloud sometime beforehand, looking at a watch or clock, so as to accustom yourself to reading at the exact rate indicated. The matter to be read is marked off into sections, each of which is to occupy a minute. The Supervisor will perhaps find it advisable to mark it off into smaller sections, each containing the number of words to be read in fifteen seconds, and to read one section in every quarter of a minute. As the candidates hear the passage read only once, the reader's articulation ought to be very clear, and the candidates ought to be so placed as to be able to hear well.