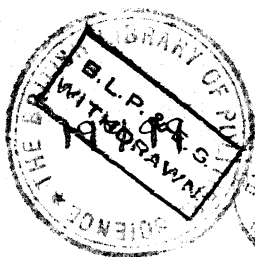


FABIANISM AND THE EMPIRE

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FABIANISM AND THE
EMPIRE: A MANIFESTO
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BERNARD SHAW

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

As the word editor is not a term of precision, it is necessary to explain that it means, in this instance, only the draughtsman employed by the eight hundred members of the Fabian Society to produce their Election Manifesto. The Society is alive to the importance of making its utterances readable; and this can only be done by leaving the manner of their expression to a literary expert, and confining its dictation to the matter to be expressed.

Further, it will be understood that the greatest common measure of the opinions of eight hundred persons is not the same thing as the opinion of every individual member, and that on certain points a wholly dissentient minority has been small enough to submit to being voted down. For example, some members regard the South African expedition as a foreseen and deliberate act on the part of the Government; and of these, some consider it a political crime, and others a justifiable

stroke of Imperial Statesmanship. Again, on the point of Army Reform, many members disapprove so strongly of war that they desire it to be understood that they endorse the pages which follow on that subject only as a Tolstoyan opponent of our criminal system might nevertheless provisionally advocate prison reform, or as a vegetarian might advocate municipal abattoirs. There are Fabian teetotalers, too, who refuse to say anything more for the municipal public house than to admit, doubtfully and reluctantly, that it is a more controllable evil than a brewer's tied house, and will not go even so far as that without an explicit affirmation that a more excellent way is not to have drinkshops of any sort. All reservations made, however, it may be taken that what is said in this Manifesto is what the great majority of the members of the Fabian Society desire to have said at the present moment.

It must not be inferred from the restriction of the Manifesto to the general lines of the reforms advocated that these have been but superficially considered. Our allusion to the Drink Question, for instance, clearly does not exhaust it, since a considerable interval of regulation of private enterprise lies between us and complete municipaliza-