

been agreed as to the desirability of the abolishment of such an ancient and tiresome custom. The present graduating class has marked more than one mile stone in the history of the institution, and what would be more fitting than that they should solve this troublesome question for once and all, and establish a precedent for future action. Let every man decline with thanks the position of commencement orator, and he will have helped to place his *alma mater* on a plane with the more advanced institutions, and will have conferred an inestimable benefit on future graduates.

THE DANGERS OF SOCIALISM.

By socialism is meant governmental co-operation in all enterprises of production and exchange. Walker says: "The term 'socialism' may properly be applied to the aggregate of many and large schemes for the extension of the power of the State, actually urged for present or early adoption." All business, then, is to be regulated by the government, the people in their official capacity. All men and women are to enjoy equal rights. Private property in land is to be abolished. The laws of bequest and inheritance must be annulled. What socialism desires is, not the division of property, but the concentration in the hands of the people of all productive enterprises. More than this, its advocates dream of the just distribution of all the products of industry by some central authority.

The dangers of socialism are many and real. Think of the multitude of public officials needed to carry on the business of this great Commonwealth. In spite of all precautions the government must fall into the hands of corrupt and unscrupulous combinations, from whose powerful sway there can be no escape. Reform from without will be impossible, and regeneration from within improbable. Such dangers to freedom can not be over estimated.

Free competition is essential to production,

and this socialism aims to control. Giant trusts and corporations seek the same end, and are therefore an important step toward socialism. Under freedom of competition capital is the most productive, and the excellence and variety of products greatest. Governmental control of these economic forces would give abundant opportunity for speculation and fraud.

Again, socialism aims at equal or just distribution of the products of industry. Its doctrine: "From each according to his abilities; to each according to his wants" is at best an Eutopian scheme, and can never be realized. Under such a system, the individual can have no incentive to urge him to do his best. Guizot says, that the "prime element in European civilization is the energy of individual life, the force of personal existence," and this applies with still greater force in the United States to-day. It is this essentially American characteristic which socialism seeks to destroy, and the danger of such a course must be evident to the most casual observer.

Socialism leads to skepticism and infidelity. A prominent socialist says: "No man else is worthy of the name of socialist save he who, himself an atheist, devotes all his energies to the spread of atheism." Thus socialism is preparing a fruitful soil for skepticism and infidelity. And this, too, is a danger which must not be overlooked.

The ranks of socialism are recruited largely from the horde of immigrants who land upon our shores. America, the home of the oppressed and down-trodden of the world, is the reservoir into which pours this vast stream of criminals, atheists and infidels. Socialism finds there a rich harvest, and seeks to encourage rather than discourage this overwhelming stream of destitute humanity.

Again, socialism aims to ameliorate the condition of the poor by enforced equality. In other words, it seeks to regenerate society without first regenerating the individual. It demands the extermination of all class distinctions, although these will survive as long as the world upon which