REVIEW

OF THE WORK OF

MESSRS. RUBICHON AND MOUNIER,

(De l'Action de la Noblesse et des Classes Superieures dans les Societés Moderns,)

AND OF THE MEMOIR OF

M. BENOITON DE CHATEAUNEUF,

"Sur l'Extinction des Familles nobles en France."

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RUBICHON.—*De l'action de la Noblesse et des Classes Superieures dans les Sociétés Modernes.*

BENOITON DE CHATEAUNEUF *on the Extinction of Noble Families in France. Memoires de l'Institut.*

M. RUBICHON has been long known to the public, though less, perhaps, than he ought in this country, as a keen and attentive observer of some of its chief social phases and economic tendencies. Whatever may be his own political predilections and prejudices, a comparison from his pen of some of the principal characteristics of the industrial legislation, whether mercantile or territorial, of France and England, however brief in substance, or exaggerated in colour, is worthy of a share of our attention.

In some respects, foreigners, though less able, from their necessarily imperfect knowledge of us, to describe exactly what they find among us, are at times more competent to reason correctly on the anomalies which, in our chequered framework of polity, and in our multiform distribution of offices and duties, present themselves more strongly to the observation of a stranger than they do to our own long-accustomed eye.

Used as we are to all the incongruities in our own institutions—some descended to us from aboriginal times, others imposed by feudality and conquest, others engrafted by modern civilization and enterprise—we can scarcely judge of the discrepancies with which we are invested, or the apparently inconsistent character of our attire, until we are sketched to the life by the hand of a visitor, rather than that

Some of these latter have changed but little until a very recent period. Others have altered their institutions or usages in compliance with the strong will of one man, prince or minister, enforcing obedience to his view of what was expedient, and decreeing that all which was not in harmony with it should succumb to the regulation which his ruling authority thought fit to substitute.

With us, since the time of the Tudor sovereigns, the expression of the governing power—if, indeed, we can be said to have had such—has never been one and uniform. The national wants and interests have been provided for by sections and portions of its inhabitants, all of whom have been allowed a voice in its management—all of whom have dictated in turn, additions to, or alterations in, various parts of our state policy. Each generation, and calling, and rank has thus placed upon the statute-book, which registers our collective wisdom, some record of its opinion, its inclination, or its power—careless as to whether it tallied with the complexion and structure of our previous general organization, it was solicitous only that its own particular aspiration of the moment should be conceded, and content when its desire was enacted into law.

Nevertheless, in all this, which at first sight indicates no tenacity of purpose or uniformity of system, there is an indirect homage to it. We appear inconsistent, often even absurd, from its being a part of our mental temperament, as much as it is of our political constitution, to effect fundamental changes only when and where requisite; to be constantly modifying every institution we possess, but never to destroy one of them until it has proved itself effete or pernicious, and we have a better one to substitute in its stead. Our neighbours across the channel have been incessantly occupied for the last sixty years in remodelling the government of their country; unfortunately, they are seldom patient enough to give the latest order of things opportunity of proving what amount of strength and merit it may possess; still less do they ever wear out the machinery to which they resort. The drawer or the endorser of a constitution to-day has no confidence that he will be living under it the year after next. Those who temporarily ride on the crest of the billow of popular impulse overthow everything against which its triumphant and unbroken volume rolls, overwhelmed themselves the minute after by the surges amid which they swim; if there be a lull or an ebb it seems but the prelude to another

spring-tide of fresh revolutions, whose successive waves sweep off the remnant of dry land on which political society had hitherto been left standing.

Although M. Rubichon is a partizan of the ancient order of things, he is not on that account inclined to disapprove of bold and skilful acts of legislation, calculated to meet particular emergencies with decision and vigour. In this spirit he admires the great reform effected in our administration of the Poor Law by the Act of 1834. Though sometimes inaccurate in his details of its operation, sanguine in his expectations of its future effect, or deceived in his inferences from its present operation, he has, nevertheless, viewed the previous state of things which called for it with a comprehensive and sagacious eye. If he is occasionally mistaken in his calculations of political economy, he may not have done amiss in warning us, that all outward apparent increase of riches is not necessarily an addition to our well-being as a nation, any more than the military glory, so largely shared by Frenchmen of the last generation, has added to the present actual strength and efficiency of his own country.

In the few sentences in which he sums up the history of our Poor Enactments since the Reformation, M. Rubichon tells us, though not quite correctly, that in every one of the 10,800 parishes maintaining their own poor, the gratuitous administration of the rates excited the ambition of hosts of jobbing candidates; and while the landowners and men belonging to the liberal professions declined to take a share in parochial management, the petty officers who did so were guilty of extensive peculation and waste. "Their excesses were so intolerable, that Parliament, after an existence of 265 years, destroyed them in order to create a new board, entrusted to the landed proprietors." It is not, as the reader knows, so limited; as landowners, unless resident within the confines of the union, cannot take any share in the proceedings of the board, although, as owners, they have votes according to their property in the election of guardians. But, as these guardians must themselves possess certain qualifications, the choice of the owner, even supposing him to exercise it, is very limited: it by no means enables him to elect a member who will give exclusive attention to the interest of one of his particular supporters, although that supporter may own a quarter of the parish; still less does it suffice to throw the whole management of the poor into the hands of the

"The mischief had begun," says M. Rubichon, "so far back as when the administration of the poor passed out of the hands of the purest and most elevated class of society, the priesthood and magistracy, into that of its most rapacious, that of the tradesmen. It was, without Queen Elizabeth's being aware of it, a master-stroke of policy in favour of Protestantism. For this array of parish officers became at once an army at her orders. These churchwardens and overseers signalised themselves by the destruction of all internal splendour in the country churches, to prove their new-born zeal in favour of the Queen's fashionable religion."

The first French Revolution of 1789, which, according to M. Rubichon, has accumulated so many calamities upon all Europe, has rendered more divergent than ever, in his opinion, the social career of France and England. "The one has been cut up into morsels, the other consolidated; in the one the forests have been recklessly hewn down, in the other immense tracts have been as sedulously planted. In France every office is held by men receiving pay; in England the highest functions in the metropolis, the most honorable in the counties, mayoralties, lieutenancies, &c., are filled with men whose gentility is undoubted,—whose position in public estimation is wholly independent of the government of the day, of which in France they are of necessity the venal servants."

The vigour preserved to us by our habit of self-government, and the practical good sense which its exercise confers, enabled us to grapple with the abuses of the old poor law in 1834. Favorably as M. Rubichon views our legislation on that question, he indicates with much shrewdness considerable sources of anxiety for the future welfare of England—not so much from the sudden increase of population in the towns as from the continual fluctuation of their numbers. "Manchester increases annually at the rate of 6000 souls; but some years 30,000 workmen leave it by one avenue, whilst an equal number enter it by another. No one can foresee where this legislation, so novel in its character, is destined to stop; for the demand for their goods experiences the same vicissitudes as does the prosperity of the different nations of the world who purchase them: while the poets of cotton and silk, like Alexander of old, know nothing short of the world's possession which can limit the conquests of the spinning-jenny."

But withal, the bane of the operative class is the uncertainty of work. The progress of agriculture has been tardy, measured, but certain and enduring; that of manufactures

try, brilliant and insecure. In France, from the general sales of landed property, it might have been expected that an improved agriculture would have manifestly resulted from it; such, at least, is the general course of events in England. An estate is sold because the owner has not the means or the inclination to invest money in improvements, or because it is mortgaged, or at a distance from his residence; it is purchased by a capitalist, to whom, from some cause or other, it is an object, and outlay and improvement at once commence. It has passed, perhaps, from the hands of an impoverished to those of a wealthy owner, capable, by his expenditure upon it, of calling out the latent riches of the soil. But in France, by an odd fatality, the reverse has taken place; the whole country has been sold by the rich to the poor, the new owners of the land are more and more impoverished by their possession, and are in a less favoured condition than the labourers who work for hire. In spite of so large a portion of the French population being agricultural, *i. e.*, belonging to that calling in life which most develops muscular strength and activity;* in spite of that proportion being on the increase as compared with the rest of the inhabitants, it is proved that the number of recruits rejected as unfit for the military service, from deficient stature, health, and strength, is slowly, surely, and constantly on the increase: 40 per cent. are turned back from this cause, and yet the required height is now less than 5ft. 2in. The standard has been lowered three times since 1789, and yet there is as large a proportion of conscripts below it as ever.

The conscription, with itsdiminished stature, is not, however, the only test by which the actual condition of the individuals composing the French nation is to be measured against their former one. "During the thirty years that our boasters at Paris have been proclaiming the increase of prosperity, have we not seen towns and villages obliged to organize themselves into boards of relief? Cannot we count up, year by year, the successive encroachments of famine? Twenty-five years ago we were acquainted with places, where, out of 2000 families, there might be 100 whom it was necessary to assist with soup and meat; twenty years ago these had become 200; fifteen years ago they had increased to 300; we then abandoned broth, and dropped simply to bread; at last, to make the matter short, in 1846 there were 530 families, out of the

2000, on the list of paupers, that is more than one-fourth. These are the consequences of that liberty obtained in 1789, of the glories of the restoration, and of the three days of July."

A sufficiently sweeping—certainly impartial, condemnation. "Can a hungry man," inquires the author, "participate in divine intelligence? Will that intelligence be equally well seconded by ill-developed, paralytic organs? A few years further perseverance in these doctrines and practices of the Code Napoleon, will reduce that France, formerly so fruitful in genius and wit, to a group of apes."

M. Rubichon pays a well-merited compliment to the comprehensiveness of the sanitory inquiries instituted in England, with a view to the prevention of the diseases that ravage the manufacturing districts. Their violence, he insists, is owing to our abjuration of the ecclesiastical element of government in parish matters, (an asseveration hardly consistent with the statutory provision which makes the incumbent of every parish, *ipso facto*, the chairman of its vestry). Religious influence of a high order might have contributed to instil better feelings of decency, and to promote, as an indirect consequence, greater attention to purity, cleanliness, and health; but it is not strictly true to assert, either that the church was excluded from taking cognizance of the temporal affairs of the flock in its fold, or that the whole economy of parishes has now passed from out of the hands of rapacious industry, into the disinterested ones of the country gentlemen. The apprehension of danger in 1830 and 1831, the threatened disorganization to which parts of the country were exposed, induced many of the higher classes to come forward and join the council boards, still mainly composed of that middle class which had hitherto usually administered the poor. The former, by so doing, no doubt exercised some influence on the mode of giving relief and preventing destitution; but they cannot be said to have usurped and turned out, as M. Rubichon contends they have, the class from which the former administrators sprung; that class continued to supply guardians, relieving officers, clerks, and masters, as before; perhaps more substantially, certainly more honourably, remunerated now, than they were by the underhand profits and percentages, to which they were proved, in too many cases, to have resorted. With the exception of the influence, more or less deserved, and certainly civilizing, which the presence of the wealthy and educated *ex-officio* members inspired, there was no reserve of

power for them, nor any curtailment of authority in others beyond the mere rendering responsible those who heretofore had been practically exempt from accountability for their acts.

The supineness of our municipalities, in all that relates to the health and lodgings of the lower orders within their jurisdiction, is severely blamed by M. Rubichon. Though these functionaries cannot be charged with the peculation which distinguished the extinct race of parish officers in the country, yet all their precepts and principles, according to him, centred in money alone. "The *laissez faire* system has been the ruin of those towns where unlimited facilities for building existed. The most murderous civil war could never have been half so deadly as the unfettered free trade in buildings. Every man with a drop of blood in his veins ought to rejoice in an act of parliament which shall deprive this vile industry of its municipal powers, and transfer them to the heads of a superior class of men."*

The life of the lower ranks of the urban population in every country is much shorter than that of the others. And much shorter too than it might be rendered with more attention to drainage, &c., even supposing the habits of the people underwent no improvement. Bad as Paris now is, defective in its sewerage and width of its streets as compared with their extraordinary height, it seems to have been far worse formerly. Dr. Villermé quotes from a document of the thirteenth century, to the effect, that the mortality of the upper classes in the towns was then 1 in 20 or 22, while now-a-days that of the worst is but 1 in 24. A passage in an ordinance of Charles VI., in 1388, complains that "from the bad state of the pavement neither a vehicle nor a horse could pass without the greatest danger. •Every body having heaped up at his door the filth of his house, the streets become so infected, that it is to this shameful condition that we must attribute the great diseases and frightful mortality which strike the city."

"To be well fed, lodged, and warmed, and clothed," observes

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* The author is here incorrect and unjust. The functions of town councils confer upon them no authority to do or to leave undone the things which provoke his censure. Special acts must have been sought for to enable them to interfere: it may be said that they should have applied for the requisite powers to the legislature, in order to control the deleterious operations of speculative builders. The latter are prone enough to do battle in defence of their schemes,

M. Rubichon, "appears to men a natural and necessary part of our being. . . . . Dreadful illusion—this fancied abundance is about to be reduced to the most frugal allowance, as far as a large portion of human society is concerned; and even that portion will only obtain its humble pittance by fatiguing labour, and by a subordination more irksome still! Such is the sad history of the poor! When by violent revolutions society has tried to change his condition for the better, it has only aggravated his sufferings."

He then remarks, that in spite of our enormous general wealth, we relieve nearly one-tenth part of our fellow-subjects; on some parts of the continent, at Paris for instance, the proportion of pauperism is, at times, as much as ten per cent.

If one were to inquire, has every man a right to existence in the land that gave him birth? one should probably be told undoubtingly, yes. One might inquire a little further, what sort of existence?—potatoes, barley, wheat or meat—and there might be a little more delay in the reply; and, eventually, a little hesitation in defining the degree of comfort which it was incumbent on the provident to provide for the spendthrift. Where, in fact, is the limit? Suppose we share our own meal with our indigent fellow-parishioners; granted—our casual poor from the next township; this is unavoidable too—but when Irishmen come upon us by the million this is still harder. If the broad principle be admitted, that man without exertions of his own is to claim his share of the fruit of anothers toil, if we maintain the Irishman in his indolence, can we refuse to share our superfluities with the more meritorious Frenchman or Pole! It would justify the aggression of any band of needy malefactors of any nation, too proud to labour, too ignorant to produce, too poor to suffice for its own wants, on the property, existence, and liberties of any more thrifty and provident neighbour. It would be the apology for all the barbarian incursions against civilization from the times of the Roman Republic down to the cattle-stealing Hottentots of the present time.

The right of man to subsistence, then, at the hands of the workers around him, if admitted, should be subject to certain conditions, such as will—

Firstly. Effectually secure that his example shall not be recklessly followed, and—

Secondly. That such labour should be exacted from him as may reimburse, as far as practicable, the cost of his maintenance, and the trouble of his superintendence.

has become a regular profession; we do not mean the independent trampers and fortune-tellers, "*quorum plaustra vagas ritè trahunt domos*," these may beg, but they do not enforce alms, lodging, food and clothing, as does the idle riff-raff, no small proportion of the living adults of the country, who fill the workhouses from November to April. This systematic pauperism claims as its right, not a bare subsistence, but comforts, luxuries, attendance unknown to its independent brother out of doors. It is not to eat rye-bread—that would be too coarse; it is not to crush bones, that would be too repulsive—at last we inquire, in despair, what manner or substance they can be employed in or on, without offence to some prejudice, busy-body, or principle, in order to redeem some portion of the food they eat, and the expence they occasion? The greatest of our nobles could not command with certainty, two centuries ago, in February and March, such comforts and conveniences as any union workhouse of the present day would afford to its vegetating inmates. To these last exertion is almost unknown; while millions of the self-relying labouring poor take but scanty rest, and thousands of the upper classes hardly know what mental repose is, even when they may be exempt from bodily toil. It is the reversal of the picture of ancient times, when the best and bravest, who contended most successfully against matter and force, were masters of society; here it is the very abject and depraved in heart that victoriously impose on the rest of the nation the ignoble task of nourishing their animal instincts and existence.

It is sometimes said "how hard to deter the poor from marriage." We meet these expressions in the mouths of men of education, who, without hesitation, forbid the marriages of their own children with parties in every respect suitable, merely because a proper provision is not forthcoming. Indeed, a large part of the duties of every careful mamma and experienced chaperon in polite life is to prevent the possibility of hasty matches upon inadequate means, without such conduct being reprobated as cruel and unnatural. It may be objected, that the feeling of honour, and the fear of losing caste, may deter the issue of gentry or nobility from imprudent matrimony: but the same conviction is as strong in the shopkeeper, and the tradesman, and the young man of their family, who hurries into an unwise match, incurs as general a censure in his own humble circle as does the self-same exhibition of folly when it happens in a more elevated

position. Those in the lowest, then, have no claim to be exempted from the considerations of prudence, which their betters never neglect with impunity.

" It is in vain that men try to escape from the necessity of subordination: they must obey or perish. Independence for an individual becomes insulation: in this position he is the victim of all the misfortunes without being a sharer in the public prosperity. What is the condition of the 500,000 families of operatives inhabiting the towns purposely built for them in England? ..... There are fifty towns in Great Britain, with a population of more than 30,000 souls each, but which contain within themselves neither clergy, nor gentry, nor annuitants, nor men of science. All their ideas, language, and speculations, turn upon the power of producing a particular manufacture." M. Rubichon's extreme aversion to this class have extravagantly coloured his expressions and his convictions respecting them, as well as his encomiums on what is supposed to be their contrast and their foil. " Is it not natural that men brought up from infancy to the elegancies of life; that men always at ease, able to give away or to spend; men experiencing neither cares, nor sorrows, nor troubles; that men, such as these, should be forbearing and charitable towards poverty and infirmity, old age and infancy, in famines, fevers, and floods. At all events, this noble will always be more compassionate than the young manufacturing candidate, who, employed from a lad in a factory or counting-house, is certainly all the more irritated with the frauds of the workmen whom he employs, as he himself, in consequence of the competition which oppresses him, tries to defraud these very workmen."

The French revolution (No. 1) effectually destroyed the landed aristocracy in France, without substituting, for whatever order and stability that class had preserved, any other sufficient element. " *Guerre aux châteaux* was the first cry raised; it indicated, however, merely a precedence of destruction of certain objects. Did any one hope that the nobles only would be thus distinguished, while other owners of houses and lands were left in peace? Quite the reverse; the confiscation did not stop with the gentry, nor was the guillotine confined to those of large possessions or gentle blood."

The promoters of the cry of confiscation and destruction were unable to enrich those whom they thrust into the place of the former seigneur. The buyers, indeed, of the forfeited properties did not purchase with the view of becoming resi-

dent country gentlemen, and quietly seating themselves in the midst of a dependent tenantry; they were far too bustling and active for that: nor, perhaps, could that deference, so readily paid in times gone by to the nobles whom they had evicted, have been expected by themselves with the least hope of being gratified. Their object was different; they bought only to sell at an enhanced cost—to cut up into fractionary morsels the estates which they themselves, in the fiscal emergencies of the state, and in the absence of all adequate capital and credit elsewhere, had become possessed of for next to nothing. They talked, no doubt, loudly and patriotically of the advantage to the community, of thus bringing the surface of the republic into the market, and that market unhappily became crowded. The untoward mania for owning land, impelled numbers to buy with borrowed money; to mortgage their own and their children's exertions, without the least hope of ultimate redemption from the slavery which such a tenure imposes. The purchasers—rustics, without knowledge or command of means to improve their respective lots when they took possession—contracted engagements which have weighed down father and son, steeping whole families in irremediable poverty. Indeed, the code Napoleon was not the only cause of this, for "at the restoration, as if it was too long to wait for death to divide the owner's inheritance, he often hastened to do it in his lifetime. The return of peace substituting among an uneasy and excitable people, accustomed to enterprises of all sorts, a lottery and speculation of a different description." Instead of the military adventure, there was the commercial operation, undertaken by the *bandes noires*—black bands, deserving no better reputation than those who closed the middle ages with the ruin of Italy. People dissected themselves while yet alive. They were readily persuaded to sell their land at the high price which the insecurity of other investment—the inability of obtaining any other livelihood, prompted their ignorant peasant neighbours to offer.

Now follows a curious statistical miniature, drawn by M. Rubichon. He gives it as an epitome of what the great France is: a mere brick out of the wall of which she is built. She has thirty-six departments, each divided into four or five arrondissements; every one of the latter contains, on an average, 348,000 English acres, and 95,000 souls; that is seventeen or eighteen thousand families. About 44,460 acres may be common, or otherwise unsusceptible of cultivation. The rest belongs to 13,000 families, of whom nearly 12,000

(11,900) own, on an average, eleven and a half acres. Here, then, are two-thirds of the soil so parcelled out as to have lost their chief value; for the possessions of these plot-owners do not lie together. Every one of them has his parcels intersected by strips belonging to some one else.

The arrondissement, however, contains 11,000 owners, possessing each from 60 to 247 acres, or even more. Fortunately, these latter can obtain some little credit for their properties, although they are sadly scattered. They have, indeed, found a fatal facility, as the arrondissement is burdened with its share of the debt due to usury (more, on the average, than 32,000,000 francs, £1,280,000), being the proportion of the £480,000,000 for which the real property of that country stands mortgaged (independent of its public debt). The average rate of interest is said to be not less than 8 per cent., so that the annual charge on each arrondissement, *i. e.*, on its 300,000 acres of available soil, is £102,400.

The great departmental machinery under the royal government comprised eighty-six préfects, three hundred and sixty-three sous-préfects, or general secretaries, as fly-wheels, movers, &c., in the service of the state; while of old, there were but thirty-two intendants, whose birth and position afforded some security, though they were not popular, against malversation. "Amidst all the praises which have been showered on army, church, law, &c., one never has heard of an intendant's having excited any enthusiasm, still less any préfect! What humble, what debasing functions! Watching over taxes on salt, or the sale of the residuary estate of a deceased parent; or scraping the land tax from a field which has yielded nothing; assessing a tumble-down cottage, or a bankrupt trader; to be the commander of an army of excisemen, apparitors, bum-bailiffs and gendarmes; bleeding the tax-payer till he faints; selling up an unfortunate debtor to his ruin—all necessary functions, the dirty work of the community, but never very popular or elevating in their effect on him who discharges them. Their business is to take charge of all the ignoble manœuvres requisite in electioneering on the ministerial side, giving vigour to the gendarmerie, and keeping up a sort of constant excoriation against both clergy and noblesse."

Such of the latter as had no inclination to serve under Louis Philippe's government, passing a reasonable portion of the season in the country on their estates, whenever they had been fortunate enough to recover or preserve them, took refuge

in the large towns in the winter, Paris, Dijon, Toulouse, Cäen, and Rennes. In the smaller provincial capitals a residence was distasteful to them, from the comparatively large proportion which the administrators of government functions bore to the easy classes who constituted polite society in them. The lawyers and tax-collectors reigned paramount in the boroughs of 10,000 population; the man who,

> Not being propped by ancestry, whose grace
> Chalks successors on their way, nor called upon
> For high feats done to the crown, neither allied
> To eminent assistants; but, spider-like,
> Out of his self-drawing web he gives us note.
> The force of his own merit makes his way.

M. Rubichon maintains that the middle class in France is just merging into that of the functionaries, if not already absorbed by them: "There is not a trace of that vigorous representation of it in the rural districts, of those yeomen of £400 a year, who, thanks to the law of primogeniture, preserved themselves entire* from generation to generation, on condition of driving the plough. Those, once of the middle class, not so employed, become peasants. Out of between six and seven millions of families, four and a-half are peasants. In 1789, out of every hundred families there were, says M. Rubichon, fifty noble, gentle, in short, what our census classes as "professional and other educated men." In 1848, these hardly amounted to twenty-five. And the same rate of progress for another generation, would leave but twelve or fifteen above the lowest level.. The majority of the nation, or rather its complexion, will consist of mere rustics, happy perhaps, innocent possibly, but certainly so ignorant as to threaten a relapse into barbarism.

This is the reverse of what takes place in England. Our decennial census shews a constantly decreasing ratio of those employed in agriculture as compared with other branches of industry. The variety of other callings is more crowded than before. There are more doctors, and lawyers, and retail dealers. The proportion of civilized and educated persons becomes larger, side by side with those who are not so, or who are so only in a rude degree. A high standard of comfort is thus maintained, though without being as equably diffused as might be wished by philanthropists. In France, if there is

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* Like the Cumberland *statesmen* who have inherited their possessions, in some instances, from the time of the conquest.

more parity of condition, it seems to be one of want and ignorance, from which only a few emerge. Those who had imbibed a notion that the ostentatious superfluities of the rich in this country indicated them to the lower orders as objects peculiarly of hatred and plunder, may gather not less from M. Rubichon's remarks than from the notoriety of the events which have disfigured the current year, that their smaller proportion, their more modest appearance in France, wherever they do exist, is no defence against the covetousness and ill will of the people, so malcontent with its inevitable and intolerable poverty. They believe in all the strictures with which the envy of their publicists, Leon Faucher, Louis Blanc, and others, lead them to visit our institutions. And one is at first bewildered by the vehemence of the accusations, into thinking that, after all, possibly, they may not be undeserved. This idea is only momentary; for a slight examination of the distribution of our wealth and employment, shows that to the successors of the Watts and the Arkwrights belong almost exclusively the honour of the progress, the credit of the riches, and the blame, too, of the materialist tendency which so eminently distingushes the philosophy of a large school of economists. "*Chacun pour soi*," "*Laissez-nous faire*," "*Hideuse et lâche maxime!*" exclaimed the author of the *Organization du Travail*. It has been, no doubt, the motto virtually adopted by every ancient tyrant, every robber-chief of the middle ages, every conqueror who has devastated the world, and carried away his neighbours into captivity, from the earliest traditions of history. Wealth, wealth, and the enjoyment of it, is the war-cry of the factory chief: is it surprising, then, that the total insensibility to ought else than this engrossing pursuit should have actuated the rank and file of the armies serving under such leaders.

M. Rubichon is an enemy of our Reformation. As a good Catholic he believes that the interests of the poor are but confided to the superintendence of a secular clergy, whose celibacy and vows exempting them from the care of a family, enable them to dispose of their whole time and energies in humanizing, consoling, and instructing the classes beneath them, for which the rapidity of our increase in population and luxury has inadequately provided. Huge multitudes of men and houses start up in the midst of the land, which have nothing of the city, or the community, in them; no organization in common binds these men to each other, or to the soil which sustains the weight of their bodies and their dwellings—*home* and *fatherland*

and *native place*, it is *not to them*;—a water-power, a coal-mine, or some other accident, invites the establishment of a factory; capitalists encamp there, attract a population of workers, and produce in quantities. As long as favourable circumstances last, all goes on well, good weekly wages are earned by the men, high profits by the master, great activity of buying and selling, vast increase of stamps and taxes; in short, what we vulgarly term prosperity—trade thrives; that is all which the parties to the trade trouble themselves about.

What is done to humanize and refine the feelings is not the point with which, in the race they are engaged in running, either manufacturers or operatives have leisure to concern themselves. A brisk demand for their produce is what they jointly aim at; supplying at the smallest cost, the master with the least outlay, the operative with the lightest amount of exertion. The latter sees the former retire after a dozen years' business, with a fortune of £100,000 or two, made or created absolutely out of nothing; so small have been the beginnings of these modern Crœsi. Is the man, then, so unreasonable in his wish (whatever he may be in his reasoning), when he argues, "my employer, who, 25 years ago, was no richer or better than I am myself; that business which enabled him to realize a fortune and to sit in parliament for a county full of his fellow-manufacturers; that enterprize which can afford such enormous prizes to some, surely ought to yield me something better than a blank; if not more wages, let me have less toil, give me a ten, an eight-hour bill, and as our masters have combined against unjust corn-laws, let us now see what can be done against oppressive work-laws. Such is the reasoning, shallow and plausible, but not more so than many of the arguments of many of their patrons. This ferment is a sort of mutiny at the unjust division of the proceeds between the crew and the officers. The chief remedy for the complaint cannot be looked for in acts of parliament,—laws may forbid certain actions, but they cannot directly imbue the mass of a population with habits of temperance, frugality, and forethought.

The successful mill-owner or merchant is sure, at last, to acknowledge the influence of civilization, the prestige of fashion, the charms of that aristocracy which, in the provinces as in the capital, still continues to give the tone and regulate the intercourse in private life, and to diffuse its ease over all the relations of social intercourse. No matter what his origin

and manners were, he is, with few exceptions, unwilling to be left out, uneasy till he obtains a footing within its circle. In this there is both good and bad. His admission within the pale of its indefinable and insensible influence, by degrees tends to refine and soften down his natural asperities of feeling and demeanour, the younger branches of his family, more plastic, successfully conform to the standard of behaviour of their new associates. But this very emergence from one caste into a superior one, has often a mischievous effect on the character and position of the master in his relation with his industrial clients and dependents. There are more Dombeys than the one whom Dickens has immortalized. The more he aggregates himself to the class above him, who do not live by the urgency of manufacturing toil, the more distinct does he try to manifest himself from those who have been the instruments of his fortune and the steps in the ladder whereon he has mounted. So that as to influence over them of an elevating character, supposing his taste inclined him, and his mind sufficiently enlarged to exact it, the opportunity is lost—they despise him for deserting the station he had theretofore occupied, and he perhaps unconsciously draws back from beside the witnesses of his former and humbler existence—singular final divergence of men till just before connected by their relative positions in a kindred undertaking. Some foreign observers contend that feudality is the natural bias of the Anglo-Saxon race; in the factory they discern a feudal castle, in its homely owner a *haut-baron de l'industrie*, in his tall chimney the pole from whence floats his murky pennon. Certainly when these gigantic earnings are invested in land, the new possessor has been no loss ready to act up to the exclusiveness of the squirearchy than the most old-fashioned successor of a long line of landed ancestry. Nor after their first accession are they at all to be distinguished, for the enlightened management of their estates, above the owners of ancient inheritances. The general result in England seems to be, that lands change possession often enough for their advantageous cultivation, for the benefit of inviting fresh influx of capital, for calling out its productive powers so as to meet the increasing population. How far it will continue to do so, cannot be now determined. A country which relies on foreign trade, opens a large field of contingencies, in which success will depend not only on its own exertions, but on those of other countries; that is on causes over which it can exercise no active or immediate control. To England, if she is to draw food (or indeed any commodities from which she herself is to

derive a livelihood) from foreign lands, it is of deep importance that the economical institutions of those countries should be regulated by sound and durable principles; otherwise she may become herself a partner in their distress and a sharer in their penury. "Famine," says M. Rubichon, "has, within the last 60 years, used up, expended, and destroyed, at Paris, ten sovereigns, three hundred ministers, three thousand diplomatists, peers, deputies, councillors, either deceased, or ruined, or overwhelmed with shame. We do not speak of those men who have no shame, of those judges, prefects, sub-prefects, and functionaries, perambulating the provinces, who, like the grasshoppers in Egypt, fall on the crops, devour them, and are gone." A truly didactic description of a class much in favour with some of our philosophical reformers, who think no service worth having which is not paid for; no functions so cheap as those which are salaried. The contest among a poor people for these offices, the scramble amongst them of those who had them not, against those who had, cost Louis Philippe his throne. The assault on place was so violent, according to M. Rubichon, that the administration was constantly obliged to create fresh ones for the candidates, whose exercise of power had added to their appetite. The middle classes governed France, but the middle classes are not rich, and could not afford to govern gratuitously. The pretenders to office were innumerable, and from their numbers, insatiable. The universal tendency to an utopian mediocrity, very little above poverty, though recommended by enthusiastic dreamers as the best preparation for happiness and preservation of virtue, by no means appears (as yet) to have engendered contentment. No country has presented a more prominent example of every one trying to rise up from his own station and pull down some one else, as that in which, for the last sixty years, the law has endeavoured, with all its might to render all lots alike and equal. That equality begat no gratitude, no disposition on the part of the mass, for whose benefit it was enacted, to remain stationary or satisfied with the lot in which their country's regulation had placed them. The French peers were often in trade, the deputies frequently jobbers; yet, in a country where fortunes were so very moderate, luxury so attractive, and pretensions so high, one hardly sees how those called on to assume these ostentatious functions should have escaped the temptations to which their holders were of necessity exposed. "Go into the provinces you find the truth of all this, the distress which prevails there is masked from the eyes of

strangers by the brilliancy of the capital. Paris is a cloak which covers and hides the rags of the rest of France from the visitor."

The extreme disparity of condition and career between France and England (for previous to 1789, that of the great mass of the population in the two countries was not so dissimilar) dates from the original revolution, which was to have turned entirely to the benefit of the lower classes, at the expence, and by the sacrifice of the others. Now, the lower orders might have increased too rapidly for the modicum of good fortune and inheritance which the state had engaged to divide among the postulants, in that case, the fault would have been not within the truth or falsehood of revolution principles, but in the imprudence of those who expected them to carry double. In France it can scarcely be asserted that a too rapid increase of population has occurred, so that the board spread for one generation has been insufficient for the increased numbers in the second. In few countries in Europe has the increase been more moderate.* But with unwise regulations, affecting to secure an artificial equality of condition, pauperism has advanced wholly independent of population. In the patriarchal times, which were swept away with the elder Bourbons at the close of the last century, there was more superciliousness than oppression in the relations between the superior and the inferior; the very distance between them was tempered with occasional protection and kindness; in the remote provinces more especially. There is now less distinction of caste than formerly, but the loss of deference and respect on the part of the dependent follows, of course, the indifference of the successor of his former patron. With the emancipation of the inferior classes in France, as well as in all other countries, ancient and modern, the quondam serf has contracted certain liabilities from which, in his abject condition, he was exempt. It will be so with our West Indian blacks, though from the rich soil and sunny climate they inhabit, the pressure of necessity may not come upon them for a generation or two.

Before the Christian era the number of mere proletaries, (day labourers independent of masters), was very limited; for even the slaves, whom their owners emancipated, the *liberti*

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* It is only about ½ per cent. per annum, or 5 per cent. in 10 years; ours is nearly 15 per cent. in the same period.

of old Rome, became, in some sort, the clients and followed the fortune of the patron whom they had served. But when the doctrines of religion promoted the movement towards freedom, we become aware, for the first time, of the existence of mendicancy, as an avowed condition of life, in the latter Roman Empire. Establishments for its relief, hospitals for the sick, and sometimes for the aged, date from the first Christian emperors: the pagan times knew not these institutions, the master fed his slave—the freeman struggled successfully or perished. But the condition of the hewers of wood and drawer of waters began to change.

"Homer and Plato had addressed them, 'Forwards, but ye shall never arrive in this world!' St. Paul had said, '*Forwards, ye shall arrive in the next.*' Onwards it trudges, the subject race which, one while a slave, another a husbandman, labourer, operative, or whatever else it be called, is none the handsomer for having produced Aspasia; none the more illustrious for having given birth to Phædon; none the braver for having yielded a Spartacus."* Onward it plods its weary way, fulfilling that behest imposed on our *first parents, of earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, in sorrow eating it all the days of their life, until they return to that ground which was cursed for their sake.*

As the lower orders acquired rights throughout Europe, their proportional liabilities were more or less augmented: in England, perhaps, our enormous poor-law system prevented the full consequences of parental folly from rapidly overtaking the destitute son—both bred and propagated their species at the expense of society at large. In Scotland greater frugality on the part of the heritors prevented indiscriminate relief. In Ireland, the misery of a population reckless about consequences, or forming to themselves only some dreamy future wherein to escape their present wretchedness, made them indifferent about comforts which were only to be secured by an exaction more hateful to them than the distress they bore with such sluggish insensibility.

All these countries have reached critical periods of their respective histories, particularly France and England. The same causes acting through parallel, though distinct, directions, embrace each a field peculiar to itself. In the one, the undisputed freedom of industry from all previous shackles, imposed upon it in the shape of guilds, apprenticeships, and

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* Granier de Cassagnac—'Classes ouvrières et bourgeoises.'

monopolies, has thrown upon manufacturing speculation the employment of an enormous portion of the population which thus periodically fluctuates between want and plenty. In the other, the unreserved sale of all the land—a sort of practical free-trade in the soil of the country—during half a century, has planted it with a race fast declining into squalor and pauperism. For though all land may be sold, all owners are not free; the only persons who cannot quit it, are those who, in an unlucky hour, inheriting or purchasing a circumscribed patch of their native country, have become addicted to its glebe, quite as effectually as were the villeins of old, or the serfs of any part of Russia at the present time. They may sell, but versatile as the Frenchmen's habits and temper may be, when they have become, by their agricultural occupation purely rustic, their ideas are bent down like the body by their daily toil, and scarcely any other career remains open to them. In fact, this ownership—this existence, grovelling as it seems in our eyes from its resembling that of the Irish cottier, is with the Frenchman the reward of long service—the retirement to which he looks forward after the term of his military engagement has expired: that which the whole family of the Milesian peasant fancy themselves entitled to as a birthright, is with the other division of the Celtic race, the object and result of thrifty saving and accumulation.

Thus each nation has its social problems to resolve; different in aspect, resulting in both from the relaxation of restrictions, which, whatever were their demerits, ought to receive, at least, the credit due on account of the advantages they conferred, or the evils they neutralized. In both the liberty of the subject has been professedly extended; in both the right of the citizen to dispose of his exertions and his property has been vindicated. But the possession of these privileges entails them liabilities beyond what their promoters foresaw, and deeper than has been admitted by those who enjoy them. No man can exempt himself from tutelage, and then call upon his repudiated guardian for that defence and maintenance which only became the dependent condition of the one, and the protecting position of the other. Where the voice of the adviser of prudence remains unheeded, the stern lessons of experience alone can instil wisdom and caution; and they must be learnt at the expense of those who have thus embarked without rudder or ballast on the voyage of discovery.

M. Rubichon summarily disposes of the matter. Watching our alternation of commercial crises in England and in the United States, he observes, that every five or six years there is a catastrophe; the trading fortunes which had got a-head of the landed ones—the elements of instability and fluctuation, just on the point of swamping the stable *terra firma*, are overtaken by some bankruptcy which re-establishes a wholesome intermediate level: a sort of balance between the two interests (p. 303). That a few hungry contractors, or overgrown *Dives*, should be surprised by failure, is not the circumstance that principally concerns the state: that a man born far away from the confines of politeness, should all of a sudden lose the command over the luxuries and delicacies which a few short years of successful lucre had rendered customary though not familiar to him, is not, perhaps, an enormous evil. Our solicitude is for the mass of the dependents, who are affected by his reverses without having shared in his success; who are merely the conduit pipes just moistened as long as the current of his riches flows along them, but are vivified by no source of prosperity proper to themselves. It has been urged at home, that the laws and policy of this country have been regulated by landlords, regardless of the claims of industry, and in a sort of stupid hostility against freedom of interchange. If we listen to what is charged against English Machiavelism by foreign writers, we might believe, on the contrary, that from the time of the Tudors all our legislation had been devised to favour the manufacturing spirit of this country by the depression of every other. We had a mark set upon us, as a nation of shopkeepers. And we have been told by one, qualified to speak for the latter, this, "*the towns are to govern the country.*" An ominous announcement, that we are to look in future to the sites inhabited by two irreconcileable sections of beings, the stipendiary multitude and its capitalist master, as the source and mainspring of that intellect and refinement which ought to administer public affairs: not in this country only, but, as a matter of obvious inference from the first supposition, to lead the opinion and the civilisation of the whole world. The old established depositaries of traditional authority, handed down from old times, are to be superseded by more bustling active spirits, all paid or payable for the services they perform. Producing and selling, or rather underselling, will then be all we are taught to care for. We have the highest opinion of the benefits of free-trade. In countries that have never

been artificially stimulated to produce by restricting foreign importations, every step in the protecting direction is a grave mistake—as it is to stimulate the human constitution with an excess of wine—but after many years of such a course, it is always hazardous suddenly and violently to deprive either the medical patient, or the protected industry of the cordial or the assistance they had respectively relied on. That freedom of intercourse, great as may be its merit, is not, in our humble opinion, hastily to be adopted as a substitute for every other requirement under heaven. Among the ancients, Plutus was a subordinate deity; at Manchester, one would think that they had renounced all other gods but him. Neither is it clear to our apprehension, that it is an unmixed benefit to society, or to the world at large, that manufactured commodities are to become so unreasonably cheap as to be valueless in everybody's eyes. We arrive, at last, at a condition in which the consumers of the fruit of our own severe toil become possessed of the merchandize we send them, without giving us in return a fair equivalent: for the produce of our ten hours' toil, we shall be forced to be content with the result of seven or eight of theirs; and when even an extraordinarily low price will not tempt a purchaser to accept what he does not want and cannot use.

But let us hear M. Rubichon. "The economists have much exulted, and with good cause, over these new inventions, which in England have multiplied the produce of work. But those machines which so immeasurably increase the objects of consumption, do they increase the consumers too? The world has but 700,000,000 of inhabitants; three-fourths of whom have none of our wants, and the remaining one-fourth thinks itself capable of manufacturing for itself, notwithstanding all that England has, for the last fifty years, persevered in supplying them. Do not let any one expect that these losses will stop her in her career."

M. Ruchibon views these inevitable vicissitudes with a philosophical resignation; because he assumes, not very logically, that "but for them the Government of England would lapse into the hands of coarse assemblies of jobbers, lawyers, and traders, such as only chartists and secret societies* can furnish." But here is a mistake; the traders themselves,

* Does he mean the ballot by this expression?

whatever their origin, do not, as a general rule, by any means identify themselves with ultra or even moderate liberalism—the successful *parvenu*, in England, is generally rather a favourer of privilege and distinctions of rank. The most oppressive game-preserver is a *nouveau riche*, a cockney out of bounds, not originally connected with the soil he overruns. The most haughty dispensers of justice from the magisterial bench in the provinces are among its recent additions, whose awkward imitation of a stateliness of manner natural to the hereditary aristocracy, becomes, in the newer sort of gentleman, arrogance instead of condescension. He is not, however, anxious to pull down, as M. Rubichon fancies he is, at least in England; his desire rather is that a door may be opened for his especial admission, which he would willingly close after his entrance against those who follow. But those who press from without are numerous; the success of one increases the aspirations of a hundred, and thus the secret exclusiveness of the riser is counteracted by the inevitable import of the condition by which he rises.

With this notice of M. Rubichon's views, it may not be uninteresting to couple a few remarks on M. Benoiton de Chateauneuf's curious paper on the causes that has influenced the decline of the French territorial aristocracy, so much regreted by M. Rubichon. Four different reasons have been assigned for this tendency to extinction.

First, Primogeniture and the consequent celibacy of the cadets. This could only be valid if it were shown that the senior branches were unable to propagate.

Secondly, Physical debility arising from constant breeding in and in.

Thirdly, War.

Fourthly, Excessive luxury. The elder Mirabeau thought the degeneracy of the race was evident in his time. "Si la cour a la ville sont témoins d'un tel spectacle c'est que l'education et la vie des hommes de ce temps-ci est tout autre qu'ne l'était celle des hommes d'alors." Buffon remarked civilized man knew not his force, and how much he ' effeminacy, and how much he might acquire ' strong bodily exercise. Both of these wr' when the highest classes who surrounde' were most demoralized by the f' and Louis XV.

It is questionable whe' share are superior ' joyed by the

State, and show, and costly magnificence, do not necessarily constitute ease or comfort. Let any one collect from the memoirs of persons about the courts of those days, the hardships and exposure habitually and cheerfully undergone by princesses and courtiers in a journey through the provinces, and contrast them with the ease with which a thrifty tradesman transfers himself and family in a second-class railway carriage, protected from the weather, from London to Brighton, and the admirable reception which awaits him on his arrival there. The campaigns also in summer gave as active employment to the well-born youth of France, as does a hunting gallop over Leicestershire or Buckinghamshire to the sporting gentry in England. So that, on the whole, this allegation either disappears altogether, or, if well founded, would lead us to prognosticate a corresponding extinction of our comfortable urban middle ranks in England, who lead a life equally soft, and more unknowing of either bodily exertion or exposure to seasons. There certainly seems to have been no deficiency of reproductive power. In the annals of 370 noble families, M. B. de Chateaueuf found that 3330 chefs-de-famille had had in all 13,179 children, that is 3·95* each, while out of these 7946 were males.

As to the second cause (physical debility), there was clearly no degeneracy in the mailed knights, who handled the swords and maces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; yet those were the periods when they were most particular and exclusive in their alliances, most careful to avoid the admission of any blood less ancient and pure than what they reputed their own to be. It was much later that the nobles permitted themselves alliances with the rich bourgeoisie. It was only when waste and prodigality had impaired the patrimony that a commercial match became admissible; and the fortune that it brought excused the condescension of contracting it. Boulainvilliers could not tolerate these unions. On the other hand, the sagacious Fra Paolo advises the [illegible]tian oligarchy to favour such intermarriages between [illegible]s and plebians, "For that thereby the people is [illegible]d of its riches, and several generations of the [illegible]e to repair a great house among the for[illegible]onk was not less shrewd than the [illegible]roud.

[illegible]et from their mode of life

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averaged 3·56 during