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POLITICAL

AND

SOCIAL ECONOMY.

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SOCIAL ECONOMY:

ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS.

BY JOHN HILL BURTON.

EDINBURGH:
WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.
1849.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY W. AND R. CHAMBERS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

It is a common complaint against political economy, in the form in which it is usually embodied, that though dealing with man, his passions and wants, and with the elements of his happiness and his misery, it is as hard and cold as if it gave expression to the laws of inanimate nature. From every truth in political economy, the acting and thinking man should be able to derive a rule of life, with reference to evils that may be practically avoided, and good that may be rationally anticipated; but he complains that even in matters like surplus population, commercial revulsions, gluts, and panics, and labour and its rewards, in which his temporal prospects, and those of the whole race, are so deeply involved, he finds only cold formulas or abstract laws, derived from what men usually do, not indicating what they might accomplish; and thus he fails to acquire from these abstractions the light and assistance which he seeks, to cheer, encourage, and fortify him in his path through life.

It may be mainly attributed to the want of living systems founded on the true principles of political economy, that of late, projects founded on a contradiction of the whole science, and resting on the most dangerous and disorganising fallacies, have been so extensively adopted as to lead to the direst calamities. The false opinions presented themselves in that living, breathing form which the true science would not condescend to adopt; and the multitude, demanding a guide that pointed to practical conduct instead of merely developing rigid formulas, followed the first that offered itself.

The following pages, containing an attempt to apply to action and progress the truths which political economy has developed, embody opinions which their author has long entertained. He has frequently indulged in the hope of being able to present them in the form of an elaborate analysis, tracing them back to their ultimate principles, according to the rigid laws of scientific inquiry. In the meantime, the enterprising Publishers of the series in which the volume appears, did him the honour to believe that a rapid sketch, in a popular form, of the general results of his inquiries, might, at a juncture like the present, serve those ends of progress and improvement to which so large a portion of their publications is directed.

EDINBURGH, *January* 1849.

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On the primeval earth, the savage finds a few of the elements of human subsistence scattered here and there around him. In all parts of the habitable globe they have awaited the coming of the first human being, as if for the purpose of giving him a fair start in the race of productive energy for which he was destined. Some articles of food might be more difficult to obtain than others: the root would be harder to find than the berry, the animal than the vegetable, and the fish than the quadruped. But until he became a productive labourer, he could have no influence on the supply of these elements of subsistence: they might be greater or less than his wants or wishes, but hunger would not increase the amount made naturally available to him, as satiety would not diminish it. When, however, he became a productive labourer, the world to him changed its character. Resources were opened which might appear inexhaustible. No direct limits lay in the way of the increase of the comforts and luxuries with which he might surround himself; and henceforth he assumed the character of the architect of his own fortunes. But as the race collectively increased in productiveness, a condition began to be attached to the individual man as forming a unit of the collective whole. His sustenance was no longer supplied to him by the free hand of nature: he required to be a productive man, work-

ing with the rest, and creating his share of the common produce, otherwise he might drop from the ranks, and be left alone upon the barren earth. The risk of the unproductive savage is, that from some accident or miscalculation he may not find roots, berries, or birds' eggs where he found them yesterday: the risk of the man of the industrial period is, that he may fail to come up to the standard of productiveness, and so may not have a sufficiency to meet the wants of life, unless he be supplied by the charity of his more energetic brethren. Even in the most prolific soils, the means of human subsistence are scattered with a hand sparing in comparison with the fruits of civilisation; while in many portions of the earth the original produce must have been sufficient only to nourish, and that very precariously, an extremely scanty population. But it was man's destiny in this world to make his bread by the sweat of his brow; and it was in the places where this destiny was suggested by the sternest necessity, that it has been most bravely and successfully pursued. Where the sun has been dim and the earth sterile, men's energies have been most fertile and prolific; in so far that, using these bounties of Providence to supply the others of which they have been denied, they have learned so early and trusted so long to the extent of their own resources, that they have formed themselves into productive energetic races, quite distinct in character from those indolent tribes for whom nature has apparently spread her richest table, and destined in the balance of nations to stand towards them as the rich do to the poor and the strong to the weak. We thus see before us that, widely as nature scatters her gifts over the world, the greatest and the least easily exhaustible gift, is that prolific mind and that untiring energy with which she has endowed man; and that the great distinctions in the human race are doomed to arise, not from the relative fruitfulness of the soil, but from the relative productiveness of the men who live on it.

But to this onward progress of productive energy there is, as we have already said, a condition attached. He who would securely enjoy its advantages must keep up with it, or he will be left behind in desolation and misery. Where nothing is produced, and men live on what they find on the earth, the most indolent may secure something; but when the slothful man appears in active industrial life, he finds everything appropriated —all things have been created by the productive powers of man, and all are retained by the producers, or those whom the complex social institutions of society invest with some peculiar claim to their enjoyment. The farther the community has made industrial progress from the original unproductive habits of the savage, the more does it tax the energies of each individual member, and the less will any one, who is afflicted with the original indolence of the barbarian, be able to cope with its demands, or find him-

self a place within its privileged arena. A Hindoo must practise more productive industry than a New Hollander; a Chinese must practise more than a Hindoo; a Parisian must practise more than a Chinese; and, generally speaking, the inhabitant of London exercises more skill and untiring industry, and requires to exercise it, in gaining his daily bread, than the inhabitant of any other spot throughout the world.

When once the human race begin to labour and produce, they must not cease under penalty of the direst calamities. There is no resting-time—no folding of the arms of nations—they cannot look back upon what they have done and be content—their destiny is still onwards, heaping above the labours of bygone ages other labours, whose greater compass obliterates or dwarfs them. Their citizens must say with the poet—

> 'Men my brothers—men the workers—always reaping something new,
> That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.
> * * * *
> Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward—forward let us range;
> Let the people spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.
> Through the shadow of the world we sweep into the younger day;
> Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.'

It is literally true that, taking a civilised industrious nation such as our own at any one point of time, the existing generation must do more than the past, and the next must do more than the existing. Nor does this merely mean, that as a greater number of people, though working at the same rate, will produce more than a smaller number, it will suffice that the greater population likely to succeed to the present, accomplish more in proportion to its greater extent—the *individuals* of the increased population must do more than those of the smaller number from which it has increased: the citizens of the town that is to have three hundred thousand inhabitants must individually develop greater productive power than they respectively exercised when its numbers were two hundred thousand. The diagrams of the economists, who show that with the progress of population the means of subsistence must either become proportionally less to each individual, or must be raised by greater productive power, unite with our practical observation of the intense competitive industry necessary to secure competence, or even existence, in large towns, to place this characteristic of progress beyond a doubt.

This phenomenon has alarmed many thinking men. They consider that it prognosticates the progress of our industrial population to a point at which it cannot be supplied with food, and where a portion of the people, while using their utmost efforts in productive industry, will die of starvation in the midst of their toil. The picture of the world, like a blockaded city with insufficient provisions, and no possibility of increasing the

supply to correspond with the demand—all competing through superior labour and productiveness in their respective departments to secure a share—some dying from the impossibility of securing this share—others sinking exhausted from the exertions which they have undergone to obtain it—holds out a fearful prospect, and presents a lamentable conclusion to the boasted energy and enterprise of man, to the scientific discoveries and inexhaustible labours of civilisation. The idea unfolds a mysterious future, like that which hovered before the sailors of Columbus, and suggested to them that the toil, the courage, and the skill, which were bearing them across the great ocean, would only in the end carry them to some chaos unlimited and sunless, lifeless and void, without the produce either of the earth or seas, without human inhabitants, and almost without a God.

It will be material to consider whether there are just grounds for such mysterious dreads; for this is a fair description of the prospect held out to the human race by those who talk of population outrunning subsistence, and production only helping forward and encouraging an increase of population which must in the end lead to such an excess. When distinctly set forth in all its horrors, it does not seem consistent with the general beneficence of the scheme of the universe, that the Deity should have planted in man the instincts of exertion and progress, appearing to open up before him new vistas of virtuous happiness, but in reality leading only to an awful catastrophe which shall seal the degradation of the species. It does not seem in accordance with the same beneficence, that the injunction of the Sacred Volume to labour with the sweat of the brow should be obeyed with the self-sacrifice and the endurance which the labours that lead to a high state of civilisation involve, and that the end of all should be to prove that the injunction is a hollow fallacy, and that men had better have remained without progress, unproductive and uncultivated, contented with the earth as they found it when they first trod the turf.

Accordingly, observation opens a more cheering view; and indicates that, great as are the requirements of advancing civilisation, the Deity has imparted to the human race resources sufficient to meet them. If greater concentration of industrious numbers require greater energies in the individual, those energies exist in man, latent or developed, and may be invoked for the occasion. It is true that, as we have already stated, the citizen of the community far advanced in industrial civilisation, must make up his mind to obey the conditions on which alone the members of such a society can live; but we have not seen that hitherto these conditions are incompatible with the faculties which civilisation nourishes and strengthens, nor have we reason to believe that, as centuries pass over an advancing people, they

will ever become so. How much do the twenty millions of the population of this island require to do, which the ten millions of its population sixty years ago left undone, and probably believed to be beyond the power of human capacity? We move at thirty miles an hour instead of seven; we send messages five hundred miles in half an hour; we print between two and three thousand sheets an hour instead of from two to three hundred; we turn five hundred millions of pounds of cotton-wool into manufactures instead of thirty-two millions; we communicate with America, and are about to do so with Australia and India, as rapidly as we then did with Gibraltar, and with far more regularity and certainty. Withdraw from us the arts we have learned, the faculties which energy and enterprise have opened up to us, and assuredly the twenty millions could not live with the same facilities and the same individual exertion that supplied the ten; while, on the other hand, had the ten been informed how much it required of discovery and of increased exertion to support the twenty which their progress onwards was to bring into existence, there might have been desponding spirits to shake the head of distrust, and proclaim that the days of our prosperity were now numbered, and a terrible fate awaited the people whose subsistence depended on the discovery of so many new elements of production, and the development of so much additional industrial energy in the human race.

From the past let us augur of the future, and believe that while men are true to themselves, and endeavour honestly and faithfully to act up to the conditions of an advancing civilisation, their right hand will not forget its cunning, nor the innate progressive energies which their race has heretofore shown desert them. The scientific triumphs of civilisation lighten the toil to which man is thus doomed. From time to time great discoveries have done the same thing for mankind, as if some new element had opened its resources to the world: thus have printing, steam, the inventions of Arkwright, and railway locomotion, respectively put into the hands of the civilised human being an instrument for facilitating and abridging his combat with the difficulties which his own progress forward requires that he should overcome.

We are reminded that those who predict the probable insufficiency of the produce of human industry to meet the wants of the increasing population, look to the fact, that food must come from the surface of the earth; and though the fertility of the human brain be inexhaustible, the extent of the earth's solid surface, and consequently of its productiveness, is limited. It is said, and with truth, that the most fertile soils are first cultivated; and that, when the pressure of population renders it necessary to

have recourse to inferior lands, their produce is obtained with more and more outlay of labour the nearer we are driven by the pressure to absolute barrenness. It is stated, and with equal truth, that machinery does not produce the same multiplying effect on farm produce as on manufacturing. A machine may be invented for manufacturing purposes which will enable one man to produce as much as ten men could produce without it; but certainly this has never been exemplified in agriculture, nor are we likely ever to see the phenomenon transferred to that department of labour. But even here machinery has done much; and the chemical applications which have in later times been discovered afford facilities for developing the organic powers of the soil, of which it is impossible to calculate the precise effect. Even before this source of increased agricultural production had made great progress, it has been shown by careful calculation, that between 1811 and 1831, while the population of this island had increased at the rate of 34 per cent., the number of families engaged in agriculture exhibited an increase of but 7¼ per cent. 'The increased production,' says Mr Porter, 'which is thus seen to have been brought about by a comparatively small addition of labour, has in a great degree resulted from the employment of capital in improving the soil, in draining and manuring, in throwing down a great part of the fences with which our forefathers were accustomed to divide their farms into small patches, through the use of improved implements of husbandry, and, above all, through the employment of a better system of cropping by rotation.' In exemplification of these views, Mr Porter gives a tabular view of the increase of our population in decimal periods, from 1811 downwards, along with the corresponding consumption of British and foreign grain respectively. It appears that, in 1821, the additional number of persons fed on home-grown wheat over the numbers so fed in 1811, amounted to 1,866,860. The increase from this period to 1831 was 1,894,843; and thence to 1841, 1,697,706; so that in 1841 the produce of our own fields fed 5,459,409 more people than it did in 1811. Mr Porter admits, from the indications which have appeared since the removal of the restrictions on the importation of grain, that if the increase of home supply is to keep pace with the population, there must be new stimulants to agriculture; and he observes that the possibility, nay, the easy accomplishment of this, 'is a very general belief among persons who have given attention to the subject, and among whom it is held, that by the judicious application of improvements already within our knowledge, we may not only provide for the entire population, but become, and continue for some years to come, exporters of grain, as we were up to nearly the close of the last century.'*

* Porter's Progress of the Nation, 140.

To those only accustomed to contemplate the multiplying results of manufacturing machinery, this advance, in being little more than a mere keeping up with the race of population, may seem tardy and laborious; and a dread may be entertained that this latter increase, which is propelled by the natural propensities of man, may continue to go on; while the other, which has been kept only slightly ahead of it by great exertion and vigilance, may cease. If we are entitled to speculate on any such possible disaster, we are at the same time as well entitled to suppose that some new productive agent may be discovered, showing us in agriculture results little short of the triumphs of machinery. If we have no experience of such an agent, there is nothing in the laws of nature to render it impossible or absurd. Let us even suppose the common belief to be the true one—that the organic matter throughout nature is incapable of being enlarged; that it does not increase or decrease, but merely changes its form, passing from one shape of animal or of vegetable existence into another, or transferring itself from the one kingdom of nature to the other. Holding it to be true that the organic matter of the world, which must constitute the food of man, is thus limited, it must be remembered that men, any more than the other organic existences which absorb it, do not consume and extinguish it, but are merely phases of its perpetual metamorphoses. The quantity of organic matter directed to the production of human food, we easily know to form but a small part of what the earth contains. We have not yet pressed upon the more distant lands ready without any improvement to produce grain and feed cattle—we have not even touched them. This is a source which our scientific enterprise is continually widening, and our manufacturing industry gives us the means of commanding. Railways and steamships make the most distant regions of the earth virtually as close to London as the sheep pastures of Devonshire or the wheat lands of Yorkshire were to the London of our fathers. The Manchester and Birmingham manufacturer draws their produce towards his own table by the fruits of his own manufacturing energy; and in these combined operations we have, in a modified shape, the productiveness of machinery affecting agricultural produce. Another such twenty years of rapid productiveness at home as that which the inventions of Hargreaves and Arkwright kept in motion from 1780 to 1800, would lay out millions of acres of grain land for our consumption around the Black Sea and on the borders of the great Ohio.

In various shapes throughout the world, and even in the centre of civilisation and population, there are materials now abandoned which it is no great stretch of speculation to believe capable, through increased attention and science, of becoming sources of agricultural riches. It is calculated that manure worth

£150,000 a year pollutes the waters of the Thames; and throughout the whole of Europe, with a very few exceptions, there is a similar waste of the impurities of cities. Science appears to be at this moment developing the means by which these impurities may be rendered less offensive to the community, while they will be more extensively applied to the enrichment and fruitfulness of the soil. In forests, lakes, and marshes, heaps of organic vegetable matter lie decomposing, and producing gases obnoxious to animal life; and it is not extravagant to presume, that more ample means may be found than those hitherto employed, for divesting them of their noxious qualities, and turning the elements that now occasion disease and death into a source of wealth. In the most thickly-peopled portions of the world—not only in Scotland and Ireland, but in England and in the upper parts of Holland—there are great plains of moorlands where the surface of the earth is as unproductive for human purposes as the sand of the desert. On the track of the first railway—between the great cities of Manchester and Liverpool, Chat Moss stretches for miles on either side. In the populous county of Lanark, lying between Glasgow and Edinburgh, are the dreary wastes of Carnwath Moor. The bogs of Ireland are held to exceed two millions eight hundred thousand English acres. The surface of these wastes would be, in the general case, the most valuable alluvial earth, were it not for the presence of one chemical element which, as it were, paralyses the organic qualities. The effect of the tannin with which peat-moss is saturated, is to prohibit either vegetation or decay. When the moss is removed, valuable improvable soil is often found beneath it, and by slow processes the substance of the moss itself may be made a useful ingredient in agriculture. But the operations by which these advantages are obtained are tedious and costly, and they fritter down only in a very gradual manner the morbid masses which thus lie in the midst of our teeming cultivation like clods in a bee-hive; the depth of Chat Moss is about thirty feet, and some of the Irish bogs are still thicker. A distinguished agriculturist once observed to the present writer, that he could not reconcile it with the general testimonies of the wisdom of the Deity, that so large a portion of the crust of the earth should be so near being eminently valuable, and should ever remain worthless, from the presence of but one deleterious element. He said that he could not help hoping some day or other to welcome one great discovery that should at once, as it were, throw these lifeless masses into productive soil, and make them like the alluvial deposits of Egypt, where on either side of the Nile the brown earth lies sixteen feet deep, like a huge cake of chocolate.

Sir T. B. Head, in his life of Bruce the Abyssinian traveller, commences some curious and interesting speculations on that

huge continent, that lies in the centre of our globe, so profitless, save in the one narrow stripe just referred to, in the higher meaning of the term—so prolific in the direst moral horrors—Africa. 'Although Africa,' he says, 'is thus sentenced to be eternally roasted before the sun, yet, if it were well watered, we are sensible that it would become a most productive, luxuriant garden, the superabundance of which Europe would scarcely be able to contain.' Describing the causes which produce the tropical rains in the centre of the continent, and keep a belt of land intersected by the line, upwards of two thousand miles broad, perpetually soaked in moisture, while the great districts to the north and south are plains of arid sand, he continues his picturesque description:—

'Within the limits of the tropical rains, the country, rank from excessive heat and moisture, in some places is found covered with trees of most enormous size, encircled by kossom and other twining shrubs, which form bowers of a most beautiful description, enlivened by the notes of thousands of gaudy birds, and perfumed with fragrant aromatic breezes. These trees are often the *acacia vera*, and Egyptian thorn. They seldom grow above fifteen or sixteen feet high, then flatten, and spreading wide at the top, touch each other, while the trunks are far asunder; and thus, under a vertical sun, for many miles together, there is a free space, in which both men and beasts may walk in a cool delicious shade. Other parts of this region produce coarse grass high enough to cover a man on horseback, or a jungle, composed of high underwood and briers, which would be almost impervious to human beings, were it not for the elephant and other great animals which, crushing everything in their progress, form paths in various directions. In many places the land is highly cultivated, divided into plantations, fenced as in England, possessing towns of more than 30,000 inhabitants, and swarming with an immense population.

'Strangely contrasted with this picture of the wet portion of Africa, are its dry leafless deserts, composed either of mountains and plains of hot stones, or of vast masses of loose burning sand, which, sometimes formed into moving pillars by the whirlwind, and sometimes driven forward like a mist by the gale, threaten the traveller with death and burial, or rather with burial and then death—a fate which befell the army of Cambyses. In some places, however, the sand is found like a layer of mortar firmly cemented on the surface by an incrustation of salt; and it is in these scorching regions of salt and sand that the traveller experiences what he has emphatically termed "the thirst of the desert;" and yet, with all their horrors, the desert parts of Africa are more healthy, and afford a residence which is often more desirable, than the rank luxuriant regions.'

Proceeding from these physical characteristics, the writer describes the moral contamination of the inhabited districts of the continent, as exemplified in the ceaseless wars and the horrors of slavery; and he subjoins the following reflections, not inapplicable to our present purpose:—

'Now it is very curious to reflect that the deserts, the pestilential climate of Africa, and the dreadful moral state of the country, are all effects of one and the same cause—namely, the unequal distribution of water. No one will deny that the deserts of Africa would cease to be desert if they were watered; that the stagnant waters of Central Africa, which now pollute the climate, would cease to be stagnant if they were drained; and consequently, that the one country has a superabundance of an element necessary for vegetation, of which the other is greatly in need. With respect to the moral state of the country, it must surely also be evident that Africa is uncivilised, because its desert and pestilential regions encourage narrow prejudices, narrow interests, and evil passions, which would at once be softened and removed if the inhabitants could be enabled to live in constant communication with each other—in other words, *if the one country were to be irrigated and the other drained.*'

Perhaps the practical improver or engineer may laugh at the suggestion of such a project; but to meet speculations as to the probability of the productive industry of mankind not being able to feed the population, in its rapid increase wherever these productive energies are highly developed, it may not be quite inappropriate to offer other speculations, tending to show the possibility that these productive energies may find new elements on which they can be exercised in the supply of the deficiencies they are said to produce. At all events, that pressure on subsistence which theorists predict, has not yet come; and the industrious men of the present day need not be called upon to act as if it were a phenomenon certain to take place in some specific century hereafter. 'Let us take courage,' says Thiers in his work on Communism: 'of the nations of Europe, some have not yet cultivated a fourth, others a tenth of their territory; and there is not a thousandth part of the globe occupied.'

It is an undoubted fact, that the productive energy of rich and populous states does not shower its blessings impartially over all. There is evidence but too appalling to those who perambulate our largest cities, of the lamentable distinctions in the rate of participation in the riches created by well-directed industry. Perhaps it was the contemplation of the miserable objects that pass the doors of the merchant princes and the cotton lords that first pointed to the economists the way to their conclusions about population outrunning subsistence; for speculations of a purely abstract character are often suggested by actual occurrences.

We are here brought back to the proposition with which we set forth—that to participate in the benefits of advanced industrial energy, the human being must perform the conditions which his lot imposes on him, and must continue to develop the energy, the patience, and the forethought, with which his race has been gifted, for the purpose of encountering those difficulties which the previous exercise of these very qualities has entailed on a people far advanced in civilisation. In every nation, city, or class of people, there will be a certain number who do not obey these conditions; but who, instead of developing the energies proper to the stage of advancement which the rest of society has reached, allow themselves to lapse into the indolence, the thoughtlessness, and the improvidence of the savage. To these not only the lot of the savage, but a far worse lot belongs, unless in so far as they may be relieved from it by the humanity of their more energetic neighbours. If they be few in number, and there be little danger of their influence spreading as a disease through society, the kindness, and even the carelessness of the community, will allow them to partake of its abundance; but if they become a large body, and especially if they show signs of increase, society becomes justly alarmed for its own safety. The industrious man, and the man of realised wealth, both know that their resources would little avail to supply the difference between the produce of an idle and that of an industrial population. The idle or imperfectly productive are left to their own resources, unless in so far as they are protected from extinction by a poor-law; and society is justly said to be in a diseased and dangerous state.

We have stated the proposition, that the man who takes the indolence and carelessness of uncivilised life into the midst of busy civilisation, is more miserable than the original savage. In specific physical suffering this is perhaps not true. We do not know precisely what savages suffer. They have no parliamentary returns, no novels, no newspapers, to express their miseries; but from the symptoms which travellers have noticed, it may be questioned if even the lowest grade of our own city savages are subject to the privations of the original child of nature, whose food each morning when he awakens must be found on the tree, or under the turf, or in the bosom of the waters. Among the many unpleasing things in the stern treatise of Malthus, is his evidence—so strong and full as to horrify and sicken the reader—that sheer death by starvation is the main operation by which the population of barbarous tribes is kept down.* But in all

* Perhaps one instance will suffice. It will give the reader who remembers the circumstances connected with the last Irish famine an idea of the physical differences between such an event in the unprotected East, and in a member of the powerful British empire. 'At half-past six we arrived at Ganjana, a village whose inhabitants had all perished with hunger the year before, their wretched

civilised communities, the field of suffering is more or less enlarged by that inexhaustible source of susceptibilities—the mind. Degraded as the city savage is, he has not lost all consciousness of surrounding objects—all sense of what he might have been—all regrets for opportunities of wellbeing neglected, and miseries voluntarily courted. Especially if he have—and it is too often the case—stepped gradually out of the ranks which are pushing onward in the great race and competition of life—if every day has seen him further off from his proper place as a civilised and energetic man, and nearer to the caste of the savage, in whose soul the onward spirit of victorious human energy has never dawned—his miseries will be of a kind to which the aboriginal human animal is a stranger, and he will walk the earth embittered with a sense of degradation—or, it may be, of injustice, as believing that his miseries are not the doing of his own hands.

He is right sometimes in this supposition; but misery, like prosperity, blinds the sight, and he charges his calamities against the wrong person. He sees the energetic and the industrious around him prosperous and happy, and he believes that *they* have robbed him. The robbery was committed by other and nearer hands. He was robbed in early life of the opportunity of knowing what the enlightened industry and active intelligence—the true secret of the prosperity of his neighbours—are, and can achieve. Some father or grandfather has fallen out of the ranks of progress, and the offspring has never had the opportunity of joining in the march. Of the services which society should do to him who has been thus early deprived of the advantages of civilisation, and the method by which a still higher civilisation may replace him, we shall have to treat in another place. Let us, meanwhile, proceed to the practical testimony to these views, contained in the state of the people of this country as they may now be seen.

No one can contemplate the industrious classes of this country without seeing how much more intensely some work than others. Occupation and labour are not the same thing; and two men may be occupied for the same length of time, the one working twice or thrice, nay, eight or ten times as much as the other. It was an early doctrine of the political economists, that labour is the measure of value. Abstractly, this may be true; but practically, labour is a thing too varied, and the distinctions between its different aspects are of too subtle a character, to admit of its being made an actual measure of value. Speaking of the labour that seems to be merely mechanical, shall we measure by the locksmith, the machine-maker, and the chaser of the precious

bones being all unburied, and scattered upon the surface of the ground where the village formerly stood. We encamped among the bones of the dead—no space could be found free from them.'—*Bruce's Travels*, iv. 349.

metals, or shall we measure by the ploughman, the handloom weaver, and the net-maker? The former class make sums varying from 3s. to 15s. a day, and even more: the latter keep pretty close to the level of 1s. When we come to the field of intellectual labour, we find still wider differences, and soon see that it is impossible to establish labour as a practical measure. To speak of a thing being worth a day's labour generally, is, adopting the vulgar but discarded pecuniary measure of value, to speak of it as of some value between 1s. and 15s. Nor shall we be more successful if we take the produce of the labour. Who can compare the relative worth of the ploughing of a field, the weaving of a web, and the making of a watch, otherwise than by the sums they will respectively bring? Thus, practically, before it can itself serve as a measure, labour must be meted out by that other measure of value which is considered so uncertain—money. This criticism is held on the present occasion, not for the purpose of impugning any principle of political economy, but merely of indicating an incidental circumstance which has tended, along with others, to make labour be spoken of by political economists as if it were all alike, and to withdraw attention from one of the most momentous practical phenomena connected with industry—the infinite distinctions in point of intensity, and in point of productive value, between the labour of different classes of men, all coming within the general category of workers.

We shall always find that certain classes, more or less numerous according to the state of the society we are examining, are engaged in some kind of occupation that, however much time it may consume, makes a near approach to idleness. The man who stands at the corner of a thoroughfare holding an advertisement-board mounted on a pole, he who attends a single horse and cart lazily wending its way along a country road, or who herds an individual donkey, or pig, or cow, puts forth but a feeble exercise of his human faculties, and deserves but scant reward of his brethren for his services. If we mount a little higher, we come to the humbler sorts of agricultural labourers, whose wages are on the verge of starvation; and to another class, so large as to form a melancholy feature in our industrial history, and demand that we should stop to consider their case as the great type of the class of imperfect workers—the handloom weavers.

It is computed that there are in the United Kingdom eight hundred thousand followers of this trade. In some departments, such as the weaving of peculiar silks and velvets, there are still high wages to be earned; and the Handloom Commissioners, who made their memorable report in 1841, said of these higher and skilled branches, that 'when trade is brisk, instances are by no means rare of families earning collectively upwards of £3 per week; and if all branches of the silk trade were equally paid,

and employment were constant, their state would be superior to that of any other class of operatives. But this is very far from being the condition of the weaver of plain sarsenets or *gros de Naples*, the staple of the trade.' This prosperity is an exception that includes but few; and it is specially remarked, that 'velvet weaving *requiring a peculiar degree of skill*, there has not been the same influx of new hands into this branch of the trade (although the demand has increased) as among the plain silk-weavers, with whom wages have generally fallen.' In the common branches of the silk trade, the average which a manufacturer, with 1750 looms at work, paid per loom, 'allowing for sickness, idleness, deductions, and all sorts of allowances, was 8s. 6d. a week.' In other departments of plain weaving, the average is still lower, and men work from dawn till midnight for wages averaging from 4s. 6d. to 7s. a week.

This is a frightful fact, and surely it would be difficult to discover a more vitally interesting object of inquiry than the causes which have produced this disastrous phenomenon.

It adds to the almost melancholy grandeur of the position of these men, that they have seen better days; and even in their penury, and the degradation that must necessarily accompany it, the vestiges of their obsolete respectability and intelligence may be traced among the older members of the trade. The commission of inquiry were interested to discover in the possession of some of their families remnants of old furniture, preserved through all their misery, for the sake of the happy days of which they recalled the memory—and scattered volumes which had formed part of the wealthy workman's library. A writer of fiction, whose views on political economy it is not easy to divine, and who seems to think that the whole population of the empire ought to be idle and enjoy itself, without giving us the very needful information whence the elements of that enjoyment are to come, has given us in one of his pleasant fictions a picture of the reflections of a handloom weaver, probably not far distant from the truth:—'Twelve hours of daily labour, at the rate of one penny each hour; and even this labour is mortgaged! How is this to end? Is it rather not ended!' And he looked around him at his chamber without resources: no food, no fuel, no furniture, and four human beings dependant on him, and lying in their wretched beds because they had no clothes: 'I cannot sell my loom,' he continued, 'at the price of old firewood, and it cost me gold. It is not vice that has brought me to this, nor indolence, nor imprudence: I was born to labour, and I am ready to labour. I loved my loom, and my loom loved me. It gave me a cottage in my native village, surrounded by a garden, of whose claims on my solicitude it was not jealous: there was time for both. It gave me for a wife the maiden I had ever loved;

and it gathered my children round my hearth in plenteousness and peace. I was content: I sought no other lot. It is not adversity that makes me look back on the past with tenderness.

'Then why am I here? Why am I, and six hundred thousand subjects of the queen—honest, loyal, and industrious—why are we, after manfully struggling for years, and each year sinking lower in the scale, why are we driven from our innocent happy homes, our country cottages that we loved, first to bide in close towns without comforts, and gradually to crouch into cellars, or find a squalid lair like this, without even the common necessaries of existence: first the ordinary conveniences of life, then raiment, and at length food vanishing from us?

'It is that the capitalist has found a slave that has supplanted the labour and ingenuity of man. Once he was an artisan; at the best he now only watches machines, and even that occupation slips from his grasp to the woman and the child. The capitalist flourishes, he amasses immense wealth; we sink lower and lower, lower than the beasts of burden, for they are better fed than we are, cared for more. And it is just, for according to the present system they are more precious. And yet they tell us that the interests of capital and labour are identical.'*

True, but the solution after all is a simple one—it is, that the handloom weaver does not labour according to the sense in which the term is employed by a people far advanced like our own in productive enterprise. He works with no more energy than the Hindoo, and yet expects a common share of the produce of the most energetic and productive nation in the world. He does not fulfil the condition necessary to the holding a place in the industrial society to which he professes to belong. While he believes that he is doomed to labour more than other men, and obtain less, the real calamity of his lot is, that he has never known what true labour is; for if we really and seriously compare it with the other efforts of the human beings around us, it is an abuse of words to call the jerking of a stick from side to side, with a few other uniform motions, by the name of labour. A machine does it, and a machine ought to do it: men were made for higher, more intricate, more daring tasks. And yet it is the most abject slavery. The man who works hard has his hours of relaxation—he who never knew what hard work is has none. He has chosen, or, to speak more charitably, his misfortunes have thrown him into the position of being physically a machine, and, like a machine, he must be ever present at his post, and unvaryingly uniform in his motion: morally he is a slave, but not a workman.

* From Mr D'Israeli's *Sybil*, vol. i. pp. 262–264.

CHAPTER II.

LABOUR (CONTINUED).

The History of the Handloom Weavers Examined, and Inquiry into their Peculiar Condition—Their Fate a Beacon to the Working-Classes—How Avoided—Skilled Labour—The Rewards of Labour Measured by its Intensity—Unhappy Position of those who give Time instead of Labour—Are Slaves while the Real Workers are Free—Risks Peculiar to Manufacturing Workmen—Importance of those who have the Training of Children Resisting the Temptation of Easy Trades—Recapitulation.

Looking at the fate of the handloom weavers as a great and memorable example to the working-classes, it will be interesting to trace the circumstances to which we owe the calamitous phenomenon of their present condition.

When weaving was almost a purely handicraft occupation, scarcely aided by machinery, it admitted of the application of a wide range of ability and exertion to the production of equally widely differing effects. It is the natural privilege of the self-acting fabricator, who is not bound by distinct rules, but may follow the dictate of his own genius or perseverance, that there should be many grades of excellence open to his ambition. The handloom weaver of old exercised his inventive skill on the pattern or the fabric while he wove, and had the personal merit of its beauty or durability. Whatever is beautiful or valuable can only be produced by the hard work, not only of the human hands, but of the human brain. This intellectual labour, to which we owe a fine fabric, is now expended by the machine-maker or the adjuster of the Jacquard patterns—it formerly in a great measure belonged to the man at the loom. The weaver was sometimes a great artist; and his profession included men of all grades of capacity, from the village operative who made his web of homespun-linen, to the proud fabricators of tapestry in the looms of Ghent and Brussels. Hogarth introduces us to the 'Industrious Apprentice,' who was afterwards to be lord Mayor of London, at the loom, and the pewter pot of his idle companion is stamped with the name of 'Spitalfields.' Every exercise, however, of inventive genius on the machinery of the loom, served to narrow the field of the weaver's skilful energy. Even Kay's invention of the flying shuttle in 1738, while it nearly doubled the rapidity of the weaver's production, tended to make his labour less difficult and more monotonous, and to bring it nearer to the uniform action of machinery.

After the invention of the power-loom, its formidable machinery was for a considerable time used only for uniform fabrics; and there still remained some scope for the weaver's ingenuity and skill. The twills required more skill than the plain fabric—the figured tissues gave great scope to ingenuity, even in the arrangements for adjusting the pattern, though it were the production of another hand, to the machinery of the loom. The number of threads of warp which had to be passed over or under by the woof were of infinite variety, as well as the spindles that had to discharge their many-coloured contents; hence the varieties of vertical and horizontal threads, and petty machinery attending the draw-loom, which made the 'cording of the loom' for some particular and cunning pattern the arduous labour of weeks or months. But by the beautiful invention of the Jacquard loom, these last vestiges of the exercise of skill and ingenuity were withdrawn from the weaver and transferred to others; and its intellectual operations one by one removed from it, nothing remained to handloom weaving but that rotatory motion which a machine can do, and can do most satisfactorily; while, on the other hand, sinking from the position in which he was gaining the true rewards of labour, the weaver found that his wages, instead of the value of work, became the sum which the capitalist could afford to pay for a human being to hold the place of a machine. 'The elaborate specimens of brocade,' says Mr Porter, 'which used to be brought forward as evidence of skilfulness on the part of the Spitalfields weavers of former days, were produced by only the most skilful among the craft, who bestowed on their performances the most painful amount of labour: the most beautiful products of the loom in the present day are, however, accomplished by men possessing only the ordinary rate of skill, while the labour attendant upon the actual weaving is but little more than that demanded for the plainest goods.'

It might naturally be expected that a shrewd and energetic people would have soon abandoned the idea of being able to derive the reward of skill without imparting it; that the enterprising spirits among the weavers must have early seen the evil days in store for those who allowed themselves to lapse into the indolence of mere routine occupations; and that they would at least have, with timely forethought, warned their progeny against the dangers of indolence. But there were peculiar circumstances in the history of their trade which go far to explain the cause of their imprudence. Before the great manufacturing improvements in spinning machinery, the weaver's great difficulty was to obtain sufficient home-spun weft to keep him in occupation at his loom. It was in the year 1769 that the first impulse was given to invention in spinning, by Arkwright's roller machine; and as

every few years developed some new improvement, the increase of the cotton thread manufactory was so rapid, that while the imports of raw cotton were in 1770 about four millions of pounds annually, they rose before 1790 to thirty-one millions and a-half, and at the commencement of the present century were fifty-six millions. Instead of finding it difficult to supply himself, the weaver was now overwhelmed. Before being applied to its main use as human drapery, the greater part of the thread brought so marvellously into existence had to pass through the hands of the weaver. Machinery had done just half its work, and done it in such fashion as to give an immense impetus to hand labour; for before the public could enjoy the reduction in price effected by the spinning machines, some one had to make the fabric into cloth. There was no abatement in the price of his part of the operation; on the contrary, there was an increase; but, at the same time, the abatement caused in the machine-wrought department, gave him all the advantage of cheapness in securing an increased consumption. Thus there came to be rapid additions to the numbers of the weaving trade; and even in the plainest work, all were fully employed and fully paid.

If we had known as much about machinery as we do now, there might have been advisers to warn these men, that the phenomenon of easy work and high pay could not last, and that the progress of invention indicated that the single operation so strangely left to them between the raw produce and the finished fabric, would one day be supplied by machinery. Edmund Cartwright once made the casual observation, that it would be necessary for Arkwright to invent a machine for weaving the illimitable quantity of thread that would be prepared for the loom when his patent expired. Cartwright himself subsequently dwelling upon this remark, set his ingenuity in motion, and gradually invented the power-loom. Though his first patent was obtained in 1785, there were so many difficulties to overcome, that some years of the present century had elapsed ere it came into general use. But from its first suggestion, the doom of the handloom weavers was sealed: they might as well hope to outswim the steam-ship, or outrun the railway train, as to compete with the machine, in which a boy or a girl, managing two looms, can produce three or four times as much cloth as the adult and experienced handloom weaver in the same period, and cloth of more accurate and uniform texture.

It is well said in the Report of the Commission of 1841—'The trade of handloom weaving is not only incapable of improvement, but of remaining in its present state. The best friends of the weaver are those who would advise and assist him to transfer his labour to other channels of industry. If he cling to the

handloom, his condition will become worse from day to day. A few of the more skilled class of weavers may indeed maintain their position, but the fate of the many (unless their intelligence and foresight avert it by change of occupation) is decreasing employment, decreasing wages, and ultimate destitution.'

Machinery hurried on and aggravated the catastrophe; but the handloom weavers must, even if the power-loom had not been invented, have suffered—though it might have overtaken them gradually—a severe reverse of fortune. The rapidity with which the demand increased, kept up their wages so as to resist the levelling effect of the multitudes who were rushing into the trade; but in the facility with which it was acquired—it took but a month to make a tolerable weaver—and the ease with which it was practised, it must ere long have been overstocked. It is written in the unalterable laws of human nature, *that no trade shall continue to be at the same time lucrative and easy.* It has been stated as the cause of the intelligence of the old race of weavers, that they could read while they worked. If they had possessed a still greater fund of intelligence, this feature of their position should have alarmed them. Reading is the most civilising and ennobling occupation of the leisure hours, but in this busy country, that trade which admits of the workman reading, while he performs it, can never bring him plentiful bread.

'There must always be a worst-paid trade, and weaving is naturally that worst-paid trade,' is the remark of one of the Assistant Commissioners of Inquiry,* alluding to the ease and pleasantness of the occupation. We have seen the reasons which found a more than usual number of persons landed high and dry, as it were, in this miserable pursuit. It is another melancholy feature of their whole history that, far from drawing the proper wisdom of experience from their own calamities, the parents taught their descendants to follow their trade, only to partake of their misery. Heart-broken and objectless in their squalid poverty, their insight into the active, stirring world beyond them, with its various moving springs and wires, became perverted, and they stuck to their falling trade with a sort of obstinate fatalism. They had at the same time temptations all too strong to initiate their children in the easy mysteries of the craft; for the very circumstance that attenuated the parents' wages, enabled the child to add its earnings to the family income; and so the young generation slipped, as it were, into the loom, and by the fatal vice of yielding to the temptations of indolence, enslaved themselves for life. Such are the secrets of the eight hundred thousand handloom weavers of the present day, with fair remunerating work for probably no more

* Symons on Arts and Artisans, 154.

than a third of the number. The phenomenon has often been referred to by those who maintain that the labouring man is not capable of choosing his own occupation, and that the state must select it for him. Perhaps we shall find that imparting more intellectual light to the new generation of the working-classes, may be a more sure, as it will certainly be a more simple remedy for such evils.

It is a costly thing to produce a great manufacturing machine—costly from the quantity of labour, intellectual and bodily, exercised in its production, from the inventor down to the stoker who assists in heating the furnace out of which the molten metal is poured. If a man can be found to do any of the purposes of a machine, he is sometimes a cheaper agent. But wo to him whose indolence tempts him to fall into this gulf! It is the general character of the workmen who are neither skilled nor possessed of great physical strength, that they merely perform the simple and uniform functions of a routine occupation, which machinery could be got to execute, were it not that a human being offers to do it for less; in other words, were it not that the unskilled and indolent man offers to undertake the details for a less sum than the skilled and highly-industrious machine-maker demands for making a machine, adapted to the execution of the task. Our working-classes are always in an evil position when men are to be had so cheap. Labour should be dear, and to be dear it must be powerfully productive. Real labour is not measurable by time, but by what it produces. The man who gives exertion, and the man who gives time, are as different from each other as the freeman from the slave. He who works hardest has at the same time most leisure; and while the poor handloom weaver who can make so little, scarcely knows an hour of relaxation, we find the hardest-worked men in the country enjoying their month of relaxation, and gathering strength for the renewal of their contest.

Among the many attacks on competition, which is the soul of all strong and hearty exertion, there are frequent references to its exhausting effect on those who, to the number of hours a day they have heretofore worked, add another half hour, and then another, until they gradually sap away the portion of each revolution round the sun which human nature requires for repose. But there are two kinds of competition—the one is in giving productive skill, the other in giving time. Even in the occupations which are commonly said to be purely mechanical—although none really are so, unless those uniform motions which have been already characterised as mere substitutes for machinery—there are great varieties in the productive powers of men of different skill and energy. It is known that in the same trade—and we have heard authenticated instances of it—two men will sit working side by side, the

one making £4 for every £1 made by the other. A person who possesses skilled productive powers of this kind, will be in a position for encountering the oscillations of trade very different from that of the poor creature who has no skill and energy to give, but who gives his *time*. When evil days are threatening to approach, the skilled workman can economise, if he have been working up to the full extent of his powers; or if he have not, he can 'exert himself,' and stretching his faculties rather farther than they were stretched in the prosperous days, at least modify, if he do not avert, the pressure of the hard times. And at the same time that, by this increased economy or exertion, he is saving himself and those dear to him from the calamities of the crisis, it has to be observed that he is doing precisely what, by tending to the re-establishment of confidence and prosperity, contributes to the restoration of the general welfare. Whether it be by a financial or monetary mistake, or by any other incidental circumstance, that any great commercial panic or depression takes place, we may depend on it that there is but one way in which prosperity can be permanently restored. It is not by any financial operation, or any currency regulation, though such things are often effective in creating the necessary confidence, and affording a hopeful stimulus, but it is through the energies of industrious productive individuals—from the great inventor, artist, or author, down to the humblest man who has any means of increasing his productive powers—that the general prosperity of the community is restored by the reproduction of the substantial riches it has lost in its period of calamity and sacrifice.

This is a work in which the man who is paid for his time only, and not for his labour, cannot participate. He cannot economise, for his wages are already no more than will support existence; and they are only so much as they are, because if they were less the man would not be alive, and could not even fulfil the functions of a machine.* He cannot increase his exertions. His value as a member of society is measured by time, not by what he produces; and unless he could add some more hours to those which the earth takes to revolve round the sun, he has no disposable fund on which he can draw to meet the emergency. These unhappy men, in the convulsions of labour and capital, are like that portion of a crowd standing on the ledge of a precipice, who are nearest to the edge, and who are the most likely to fall over when there is an oscillation.

It will perhaps be objected to all we have been saying, that

* The writer of this volume published during the summer of 1848 a short series of 'Letters to Workmen and their Employers' in the *Daily News*, in which some of the subjects of which the present chapter treats were referred to. The circumstance is mentioned in case it should possibly happen that any reader of that paper should notice a coincidence between any of the opinions that had been there expressed and those of the present essay.

such views are easily stated, but are far from being easily put in practice—that they simply amount to this, that skilful labourers are comparatively well off, and unskilful are ill off; while nothing is said to show how occupation can be found for the unskilled workmen if, by some miracle, they should be made capable of competing with their skilled brethren. We shall have something to say on the wider political economy of this subject in the next chapter, which is devoted to production. In the meantime, the fact may be observed, that while skilled as well as unskilled labourers are subject to calamities from oscillations of trade, it is generally true that those who have cultivated their faculties—whether in any of the pursuits dignified by the name of professions, or in any of the trades which, though reputed merely to occupy the hands, find work for the head also—never are in the same abject position with the unskilled labourer, who has nothing in this world but his body with its bones and muscles to offer to any one who finds it for his advantage to keep them in existence that he may have the use of them. We hear often of overstocked professions and trades: the easiest are *always* the most overstocked; because, besides those who go no farther in industrial training than to be able to fill them, all who have aspired at higher occupations, and have failed, may fall back upon them.

Indolence has been the great lion in the path with which mankind has had to struggle from the days of Solomon, who proclaimed that 'the hand of the diligent maketh rich,' to those of Louis Blanc, who proclaims that the idle shall be as rich as the diligent. It is a mistake to believe that this indigenous human defect is displayed only in sheer idleness. There is often the dreariest indolence where there appears to be occupation. He who plies his muscles daily in one direction, without attempting to improve his faculties, by applying to them the mental resources of which the human race is so abundantly possessed, is but a degree less indolent than he who also refuses to give mere muscular exertion. The hardest work in life is done with the head; for mental exertion admits of indefinite extension, while the sphere of mere muscular exertion is limited. It is for this reason, and for this only, that the highest rewards are paid for mental labour. In a free country, all the money rendered for services, whether in the shape of the counsel's fee, the superintendent's salary, or the hodman's wages, is the equivalent in value of the services obtained. There are many degrees in the scale of remuneration, and there is the same number of degrees in the value of the service. There are very wide differences in the remuneration between the extremes of the scale—between the head of the law, or the first London physician, with his fifteen thousand a year, and the hodman with his twenty pounds a year. The difference in their services, if we consider it capable of calcu-

lation, is probably not so great; it would be a strong assertion to say that the professional man works seven hundred and fifty times as much as the hodman. But these high rewards are to be considered as of the nature of prizes in a race—most of the competitors have dropped off, seduced from the arduous struggle by the various prospects of competence and ease that present themselves in stations of inferior eminence. The lower down we come in the scale of exertion, the larger we find the multitude of competitors. Hence it is part of the character of any high class of exertion carrying a man beyond the sphere of his fellows, that the reward obtained appears to be disproportioned to the amount and merit of the exertion. The chief London physician, the head of the bar, the first popular writer of the age, the greatest inventor, the most enterprising merchant, and the ablest organiser of productive workmen, generally obtain larger incomes than their inferior fellow-workers deem them entitled to; yet we shall find it an almost invariable rule, that when a man derives a higher reward than his fellows, he is performing services which they do not perform.

The diversity in the condition of those who come within the class of hand labourers, is so palpable and so well known, that it may seem superfluous to dwell on it, or adduce instances to prove it; but it is a peculiarity not always kept in view, that the difference in money wages represents a difference in actual services, obtained by drawing on the mental resources, from which skill and steady energy are thrown into the task. On the contrary, indolence too often consoles itself with the idea, that the success of skilful industry is a matter of destiny over which the human beings who have been distributed through the various trades and occupations of the labouring world have no control. While the worker in the simplest and least-skilled hand-occupations has difficulty in making 6s. or 7s. a week, the compositor is making from £1 to £2; and in the more difficult branches of some occupations, such as watch-making, machine-making, braziery, jewellery, and the chasing of the precious metals, there are men earning a guinea a day. Indeed, in some of these higher departments of handicraft work, the example we have already alluded to, of the high prize to the first in the race of competition, is exemplified; and some one individual, who excels all others in the perfection of his hand—a perfection brought about by great study—is making more than a general in the army, or a physician or lawyer with a medium business, or the holder of a comfortable ecclesiastical benefice. Even within the walls of the factory, with all its uniformity of operation, the distinctions are considerable. We take up a return of the wages of the different classes of factory workers, prepared for the Manchester Chamber of Commerce in 1832. Setting aside women and children, the

two extremes of men's work are 13s. a week and £1, 10s. Thus of weavers by power, the wages average from 13s. to 16s. 10d.; in the card-room, men have from 14s. 6d. to 16s.; spinners have from £1 to £1, 5s.; stretchers from £1, 5s. to £1, 6s.; and dressers from £1, 8s. to £1, 10s.

In the resources which skill puts at the worker's disposal, we have the secret how the man who works hardest is the least of a slave—it is work, not slavery—production, not time, that he offers, and that his employer buys. The greatness of his exertion, while he is exerting himself, affords him intervals of leisure to hold self-communing, to look around at nature and at art, and to devote somewhat of his life between the cradle and the grave to those nobler thoughts and aspirations for which the human being can only prepare himself by shaking off the dust and fleeing from the din of busy life. It is thus that the great author, statesman, or engineer, while the world is wondering at the multiplicity and extent of the labours he accomplishes, may be met musing in the solitudes of the Alps; or, perchance, in these days, when his skilful labours have removed so many of the impediments of time and place, he may even find leisure to wander among the tombs of Thebes, or to gaze upon the Holy City. Alas for the unskilled and unlaborious man, whose sole contribution to the exactions of busy civilisation is some uniform movement of his body! The times are exacting; and since he fails to contribute his share in the intenseness of his exertion, he is bound to give it in continuity; to resign every hour seizable from needful rest, yet without satisfying his rigid master—the world. He is the true slave of civilisation. He has not an hour which he can call his own. If his machine-like motion ceases, his bread ceases also; and every minute of relaxation must be bought with a portion of subsistence.

The calamitous history of the handloom weavers, to which we have so fully adverted, should be taken home by the working-classes, especially by the manufacturing branch, as a solemn example and warning. It should teach them never to believe that they have a vested interest in any particular manual occupation, especially if it is an easy one; and to be at all times prepared to meet revolutions and changes. It should teach them that if the particular kind of work to which any large class have been accustomed become superseded, society cannot, if it would, provide for those who are thus deprived of occupation—they must look to themselves. It should teach them, if a concurrence of peculiar circumstances happen to make an easy occupation also a profitable one, to be then peculiarly distrustful of its continuance, and ever on the watch for some change that may annihilate it.

The workman might do much to protect himself from the convulsions of the manufacturing system, by studying the inherent

defects that accompany its many advantages. The handicraftsman who produces a separate commodity, with no more manufacturing assistance than his tools, is seldom, if ever, likely to find all at once that his occupation is gone. Shoemakers, tailors, and carpenters, may throw their entire prospects into their respective trades, without the risk of finding some day, when they recommence their toil, that the world requires no more of their particular species of labour. Perhaps the most remarkable instance in late times of the great bulk of a considerable class of handwork producers being superseded, was that of the wig-makers, whose trade dissolved before a change of fashion, and left one of their members—Richard Arkwright—free to invent the spinning machine. But it is the peculiarity of the factory system, that sometimes a multitude of people are trained to the practice of doing just one precise function, probably adapted to fill up the interstice between two machines, and a new invention at once renders it unnecessary, and throws them on the world, to be idle, or to do something else. Their true wisdom will be to make the right choice, and do something else instead of being idle. As well may they dream of changing the motion of the earth round the sun, as of making machinery retrace its steps, and restore to hand labour what it has taken to itself.

There can be no better suggestions given to the workman, to enable him to accomplish the middle passage between one occupation and another, than to arm himself with skill, intelligence, and caution beforehand, and with earnestness of purpose when the hour of trial comes. Here, as everywhere else through the great struggle of the world, skill and intelligence will have their victories. An instructed mind can easily adapt the hands to a variety of occupations. A person brought up to one of the highly-skilled professions could easily acquire a simple trade, were it necessary for him to do so, at an advanced period of life. In the intellectual occupations, we frequently see that he who fails in the profession he has chosen, is able, through the education he has acquired, to adapt himself to another: it is thus that so many authors and editors are supplied from the bar and the College of Physicians. In pin-making—proverbial for giving occupation to many hands performing many different functions—the wages vary from 4½d. a day, paid to the boy who assists in twisting and cutting the heads, to 6s. a day, paid to the man who performs the most difficult part of the finishing; and we may depend on it, that of all the workers occupied in the preparation of this little article, the highest paid being the most skilful, could the most easily turn his hand, were it necessary, to some other pursuit.

Again, let us adduce the instance of the handloom weavers as a warning to the working-classes in the training of their children. What the state should do towards enlightening the rising gene-

ration we shall hereafter have to consider. But in the meantime, it should be forcibly impressed upon the working-classes, by all who are placed in a position to address them with effect—from the newspaper, from the lecturer's chair; nay, when occasion occurs, to talk of the duty of parents—from the pulpit—that to allow their children to drop easily into unskilled occupations is to allow them to become paupers. We have spoken much of the advantages of skill; we will be told that it is a thing, alas! too unattainable. Gray-haired men have lived their day, and borne their share of misery without it, and are too late to learn. As to their children, the parents have not the means, if they were enlightened enough to have the intention, to enable them to acquire skill; they must take their lot where it is cast, and the sooner they begin to add to the scanty subsistence of the household the better: hunger is impatient, and cannot wait. This general fact is too true, and contains the reason why there will be in the next generation, and perhaps always will be, a large amount of unskilled labourers ever on the verge of pauperism. But this only calls on all whose advice or exertion can mitigate the calamity by doing somewhat to keep down the number, to do accordingly. The true health of the community consists in the smallness of this class; when they are few in number, these few will be the more respectable and comfortable.

It need not surprise us to find that the uneducated parents of the poor thus indolently yield to the temptation of handing their children over to easy unskilled trades, when we see those of the upper classes who have put themselves in the position of guardians of the juvenile poor, thoughtlessly committing the same blunder. Thus before the passing of the Poor-Law Amendment Act, the boards of guardians in apprenticing pauper children had no rule for inquiry whether the proposed master followed any productive skilled trade: if the boy were got rid of, and taken off the parish books, all was accomplished that was deemed necessary. The premium, amounting to from £10 to £20, given with the parish apprentices became of course a temptation strongest to those who had least to give for it in the shape of industrial training. The parish children became thus, by a sort of law of moral gravitation, the patrimony of the miserable followers of unskilled and overstocked trades; and the system was pursued in defiance of the instructive fact, that within a year or two, both the apprentice and his master were generally thrown upon the parish for relief. In the Industrial Schools which have been lately established on so considerable a scale, and to which we shall hereafter have more particularly to refer, the system has heretofore, with but a few exceptions, been to devote the children to picking oakum, sorting wool, making nets, and handloom-weaving, all occupations which, if they be pursued through life, must keep them on the verge of

pauperism, and expose them to continued temptation to sink into that moral and physical degradation from which it is the professed object of these institutions to release them. Having before them the prospect of drafting many thousands of hands into the ranks of the working-men of the new generation, the form of industrial training adopted by them ought to be matter of serious moment and deliberate adjustment to the patrons of these institutions.

We cannot deny that the spirit of our remarks throughout is the hard precept of labour. Man works and yet starves, and we call upon him to work more, till he come up to that intensity of exertion which the state of society requires of him as a condition of membership. There is another and opposite view often taken of this great question, but we cannot say that it ever comes accompanied by remedial hopes. It proclaims that labour and competition are the source of all our social miseries; that the primitive age, when man tended his few sheep, or slew a stag in the forest and brought it to his hut, was the type of human felicity; and that, in our artificial state, we are labouring on only to increase our misery. The great argument against any practical advantage arising from such views is, that the thing is already done; that the course of the world is taken in obedience to the impulse of man's restless energies; that we must go onward; and that we need as well think to stop the course of time as the progress of industrial energy.

Let us, then, look this phenomenon of invention and acceleration, of new discoveries substituting machinery for handwork, of capital bringing crowds together, that the subdivision of labour may have full scope, of rapidly-increasing population and fast-accumulating cities, fairly in the face. Let us neither call it progress nor retrogression, but a reality, palpably developing itself before our eyes, and certainly not capable of being interrupted by whomsoever may desire to interrupt it. Perhaps the views that have been here developed show that there is not so much cause for despondency, and that it is not very clearly proved that, even if men be allowed to hold on in their course, they are hurrying to utter ruin. On the other hand, it may be admitted that the lamentations of those who weep over what their opponents call progress, are not without apparent justification. We cannot press onwards without crushing those who fall in the crowd —and without leaving behind, at the mercy of that great enemy, want, before whom we flee, those who are too indolent to keep up with us. We repeat it, because it appears to be a truth demanding more consideration than it has hitherto received, that a rapidly-advancing, or a dense and complex state of society, demands resources in energy and activity raised to its level; and it is one of the great proofs of man's nature, physical and intellectual, being

formed to meet his lot, that his resources are generally sufficient for the occasion, if his own indolence and prejudice, or some peculiar accident, do not prevent him from calling them forth. In fact, it is the possession and exercise of these energies that demand their sustained use—enterprising spirits *will* press onwards, and those who would be among them must be of them.

There are two ways of speaking of large towns. 'There you may get on and make rich,' says one. 'It is very expensive living there,' says another. Both propositions are true; but those who feel that they will be subject to the latter without enjoying the former, had better remain where they are in the lazy village, than join the toiling multitude of the city, with its sharpened energies, its ceaseless vigilance, its restless, tearing competition. It is a truth too well known to all the world to demand particular evidence, that the same man, with the same amount of exertion, will be rich in a poor place, and poor in a rich. An eminent shopkeeper in Kirkwall will make £100 a year, say at the back of his counter, performing his functions in so leisurely a fashion, that it would drive a London tradesman distracted to behold im. He supplies his customers with the deliberation of a judge deciding on a difficult point, or a physician making up his mind on the possibility of saving the life of an only son and heir by some bold remedy. He takes his time to find a piece of paper to wrap up the parcel—he takes a farther noticeable portion of the day to find a string to tie round it—he has to cut the string, and the scissors are not to be easily found. All this time he is pleasantly employed in discussing the affairs of the parish, and he thinks himself a busy man. Let him go to London, and not only will he not be able to make his £100 a year with his indolent habits still clinging to him, but if he did make so much, he would be only half as rich as he was in Orcadian origin by any means unfits him, sed me started early in life, to compete in the great central schoogot rcompetition and exertion. The founders of some of the greatt fortunes in our empire have been among the sons of the peasantry; nor can it be said that the bracing of their nerves to the great battle of competition they have gone through, has made them less happy than they would have

* 'Whoever looks into the social economy of an English or Scotch manufacturing district, in which the population has become thoroughly imbued with the spirit of productiveness, will observe that it is not merely the expertness, despatch, and skill of the operative himself, that are concerned in the prodigious amount of his production in a given time, but the labourer who wheels coals to his fire, the girl who makes ready his breakfast, the whole population; in short, from the pot-boy who brings his beer, to the banker who keeps his employer's cash, are inspired with the same alert spirit, are in fact working to his hand with the same quickness and punctuality as he works himself. English workmen, taken to the continent, always complain that they cannot get on with their work as at home, because of the slow, unpunctual, pipe-in-mouth working-habits of those who have to work to their hands, and on whom their own activity and productiveness mainly depend.'—*Samuel Laing's Notes of a Traveller*, p. 290.

been had they remained in their father's fields. Certain it is, however, that had they taken with them into that great ocean of struggles the same placid indolence that might have sufficed to make them comfortable in that primitive simplicity, they must have been miserable indeed. The youth indulging in the first aspirations of ambition, and longing to struggle with the world, is finely described in the lines—

> 'Eager-hearted as a boy, when first he leaves his father's fields,
> And beholds along the dusky highway, near and nearer drawn,
> O'er his head the lights of London flaring like a dreary dawn.'

It is the red glare sent up from the lights kindled by science to meet the wants of millions packed together as in a hive, who must see by night as well as by day. It is dreary, according to the poet's happy expression, in comparison with the dawn that arises over the dewy fields and the copse alive with early birds; but it hangs over that stirring world where the youth has chosen to cast his lot, and he must pursue his aim with stern purpose. If he do, the dreariness will be forgotten, and he may some day find that an interval of well-earned leisure in his paternal fields is an enjoyment doubled by the contrast: if heart and strength fail him, sad indeed is the lot that awaits him.

To put the influence of cities and of advancing civilisation in stronger contrast, let us suppose a Malay or a Caffre dropped in the Strand, with full liberty to make his bread as he best could. Taken probably from the prospect of a sufficiency of his simple food for all the days of his life, easily procured, he would feel utterly helpless; and far from being conscious that he had reached the centre of the world's riches, a spot containing as many prizes of fortune as the diamond valley of Sinbad, he would feel himself like the same Sinbad when cast upon the desolate shore. Now the individual so dropped, though utterly unable in the complex social machinery around him to discover any department in which his small capacities of service would entitle him to even the most sordid support, might by his very helplessness make a strong appeal to the generosity of the crowd—what is one unproductive man to the wealth distributed among the millions who are producers or enjoyers of produced wealth? But then suppose some hundreds of thousands of these unproductive beings dropped into the busy throng, like so many snails into an ant-hill. What then? It will be beyond the inclination, if it be not even beyond the ability, of the energetic producers to supply the wants of all. They are in their wrong place. We can suppose that those who have conquered so many other difficulties, will set their shoulders to this too; and viewing the helpless strangers as members of the same human family with themselves, will appoint committees, raise subscriptions, organise means of employment, and otherwise endea-

vour to make them participators in the gains of the great mart. By such efforts something may be done; but it will probably be impossible to bring them up to the average of the industrial position of the community—to bring them into that class who consume no more than they produce; and more or less they will be among the drags upon the wheels of society—among those whose faculties are not trained and strengthened for the exertion necessary for self-support in such a community. Hence they will belong to that department of the people with whom the police and the poor-laws have to deal, and they will furnish materials for the lucubrations of those who maintain that society is degenerating as towns are increasing; while the champion of opposite opinions, looking at docks, warehouses, and banking offices, sees in the increasing city only hope and progress.

It were better that people should see, and see fully, both pictures; and indeed that of the sudden dropping of a multitude of helpless, barbarous, unproductive human beings in the midst of a prosperous industrious town, is not so violent an exaggeration of actual common experience, as the figurative language of political economy frequently displays. It represents a phenomenon too often exhibited; for we in the British isle have close by us another, whose inhabitants—whether it be from misgovernment or any other cause it is unnecessary here to inquire—afford a ceaseless supply of immigrants into our cities, who come there nearly as unfit to struggle with the aspiring and energetic spirits around them as the children of the desert; and who, between the efforts to adapt them to some method of self-sustaining labour, and the other efforts—unfortunately only productive of larger importations—to supply them with eleemosynary relief, constitute a large proportion of that element in our city population which prompts some people to consider the whole system of civilisation and progress an unmitigated calamity to the human race. They forget that it is the barbarous, not the civilised element in our community, that has occasioned the misery they lament. We have maintained, and shall hereafter have to show more fully, that if these beings, instead of being thus idle and unproductive as they are, were as industrious and energetic as the rest of the population among whom they exist, they would be individually comfortable, and collectively respectable; and as it cannot be doubted that there are in their nature the elements out of which such a change of character may exist, is it too sanguine a hope to be formed, that some day or other the change may, in degree at least, be effected?

CHAPTER III.

PRODUCTION.

Fallacy that the Field of Production is Limited—Enlarges before Well-Directed Enterprise—General Increase Distinguished from Partial Gluts—How the Supply may Create the Demand—The Value of Personal Enterprise to the Community—False Ideas that there can be Wages and Salaries without Production—Machinery—A Fallacy that in Increasing Production it Decreases Hand-work.

The supporter of the opinions promulgated in the two preceding chapters must of course be prepared to meet the argument, that the various fields of productive labour are limited; that each man has his place there and his function; and that, if we take the unskilled labourers from their easy work, and train them so as to enable them to compete with those of the higher departments, they will degrade these their superiors without bettering their own condition, and effect nothing more than the transference of surplus hands from the one trade to the other. To make this view consistent throughout, it should be maintained that to make the idle man work is no benefit either to himself or the community; that the places are all filled, and as there are but a certain quantity of the fruits of industry wanted by the world, all men have already got their assigned tasks, and there is no employment for more. The truth is, however, and every one sees it around him, that the skilled labourer, unless he be vicious or idle, never becomes a permanent pauper. He suffers occasionally by the calamities of the times and the convulsions of trade, as the professional man and the capitalist do; but he rights himself again, and in ordinary times he has always the means of possessing a comfortable home, with the necessaries and the main enjoyments of life. Now it will be said that this may be attributed not to the skill of these labourers, but to their limited number. This is begging the great question before us. The wide principle is this—that there are no limits to available productiveness; that it is part of the great scheme of Providence, that, in the general case, as a man produces he will possess; and that the cause of the poverty of the poor is, that they produce little.

There surely cannot be a grander prospect for political economists to lay open and explain in its fullest capacity than this inexhaustibility of the objects of labour, and corresponding inexhaustibility of the wealth it is capable of distributing throughout society. It has hitherto, however, received but little atten-

tion; and the latest of the great economists, Mr Mill—from whose high analytical powers it would have been of much interest to have obtained a full discussion of so important a matter—has rather started it as an object of inquiry than exhausted it. Discussing the effect of capital on production—which, in other words, is merely the effect of accelerated production, for capital is past labour laid by to assist in increasing the impetus of future—he supposes the possibility of the richer classes being already satiated with the amount of things produced, and desiring no more, and then he continues to say, 'There are two possible suppositions in regard to the labourers: either there is, or there is not, an increase of their numbers proportioned to the increase of capital. If there is, the case offers no difficulty. The production of necessaries for the new population takes the place of a production of luxuries for a portion of the old, and supplies exactly the amount of employment which has been lost. But suppose that there is no increase of population: the whole of what was previously expended in luxuries by capitalists and landlords is distributed among the existing labourers in the form of additional wages. We will assume them to be already sufficiently supplied with necessaries. What follows? That the labourers become consumers of luxuries; and the capital previously employed in the production of luxuries, is still able to employ itself in the same manner: the difference being, that the luxuries are shared among the community generally, instead of being confined to a few. The increased accumulation and increased production might, rigorously speaking, continue until every labourer had every indulgence of wealth consistent with continuing to work; supposing that the power of their labour were physically sufficient to produce all this amount of indulgences for their whole number. Thus the limit of wealth is never deficiency of consumers, but of producers and productive power. Every addition to capital gives to labour either additional employment or additional remuneration: enriches either the country or the labouring class. If it finds additional hands to set at work, it increases the aggregate produce; if only the same hands, it gives a larger share of it; and perhaps even in this case, by stimulating them to greater exertion, augments the produce itself.'*

The proposition is among the simplest that can be stated; the practical solution of it as a problem is the difficulty. The productions of industry are what all the world desire, under the guise of the pursuit of riches, though many exercise their ingenuity in evading or throwing upon others the condition necessary to its attainment—labour. *If production, in the form*

* Principles of Political Economy, i. 85.

of the usual objects of commerce, were multiplied any number of times over, the world would be by so much the richer, and the people who are scattered over its surface by so much the nearer to opulence and comfort, and the further removed from the miseries of penury, and the dread of starvation. And as the only means by which such an increase can be obtained, is by those working much who have heretofore worked little, and those becoming busy who have been idle, the increased produce would be distributed among the individuals who have brought it in existence: the man who was idle and starving deriving a competence, and he whose faculties were but half exerted doubling at the same time his diligence and his possessions.

A general increase of production is carefully to be distinguished from a disproportioned increase in particular commodities—a phenomenon too well known in the commercial world by the name of a 'glut.' Such a partial unbalanced increase will effect no advantage to the human race at large, but will rather do injury, by its disheartening influence on trade. Thus, while there cannot be too much produce in the abstract, this country may send too many skates to Columbia, and too many fans to Nova Zembla. We shall waste our industry and enterprise if we send lawyers' wigs to the backwoods, and satin slippers to Greenland. But to preserve the balance of the applicability of produce to time and circumstance, there is a great adjusting principle in the cupidity and selfishness of mankind. Men may long abstain from supplying a commodity much desired by the influence of this selfishness in the direction of indolence and inertness; but they will never long be permitted practically to blunder in the other direction, by keeping up a supply for wants that do not exist. If a few months saw the productive energies of the world doubled, the same period would see the produce adjusted with almost perfect nicety to the wants and desires of mankind.

We have already looked to the question of the practicability of labour finding means of satisfying the demand for food created by increasing enterprise. This feature of production does not require that it should be dwelt upon. If it be found that the food is producible, we need no more to show that, in the course of the productive operations of mankind, it will not be neglected; and that whatever reckless and extravagant individuals, whose conduct is rather the symptom of moral disease than an example of ordinary human nature, may perpetrate, we shall not find the world in general supplying itself with pictures and bronzes—with carriages and Turkey carpets, while it wants food. The supply of that prime necessary of life, whether it be to be raised on the spot where the producers live, or to be drawn from afar off by the power of commerce, will be the first element of consideration; and when a community makes a step forward in industry and productiveness,

the most notable symptom of its progress will be the increase of the comforts of the humblest order, and the adequate feeding of those who were previously but imperfectly supplied. A principle in political economy says that the supply is always equal to the demand. We must understand this in the limited sense, that when a certain quantity of articles of commerce are in existence, or easily producible, they will find their way to the place where they are wanted, and can be paid for. If we carry the principle any farther, so as to include the proposition that the demand must precede the supply, and that when it does, the supply is always forthcoming, we are at once contradicted by all that we see around us, and are driven to the opposite conclusion, that in the market the supply precedes the demand. At all times, and in all places, the human being has unsupplied desires or demands. There is such a demand at this moment in Britain for a great dramatic work, for an epic poem, for an aërial ship; but the supply does not respond. The demand to be conveyed at the rate of thirty miles an hour, and to be clothed in cotton at sixpence a yard, was as strong a century ago as it is at this day, though such desires may have remained unexpressed and latent in the human breast, from the hopelessness of their fulfilment. It may safely be inferred that, if four or five men who did exist had not existed, we should have been at this moment without railways and without steamboats. No demand can at any moment supply a Watt or a Stephenson, any more than a Scott or a Milton.

We may safely bring these views down to more vulgar objects. Enterprise is the first practical step in industrial progress. The whole human race is full of latent desires; they are called into activity and exertion by enterprising men, who open new sources for supplying them. Such is the constitution of our nature, that every new effort in this shape is the stimulus and creating cause of another effort. *Every production that stimulates the desire of acquisition, raises the industrial energies of others to the creation of some equivalent that will purchase it.* When we look around us in the great markets of the world, we find them placed here and there with their various distinctive characters, as if they were so many natural productions, indicative of different climes and soil. In Lyons we have silk, in Oberstein jewellery, in Berlin ornamental iron, in Birmingham steam-engines, in Manchester cotton. But if we examine the germs of these great schools of labour, we will find that they have had their first vitality from the enterprise of individuals who have opened new sources of industrial enterprise, and have supplied desires which never sleep, though their external development in the shape of demand has not appeared until the method of supply has come into existence.

It might be well if a larger portion of those whose energies and

ambition do not aim at the establishment of some new national trade or manufacture, would, instead of selecting one of the principal established professions or trades, endeavour to create some new source of enterprise, though on a small and provincial scale. The world has small markets as well as large, and the one class almost insensibly mingles with the other. In Spa, an enterprising workman stained wood of a pleasing slate-colour, and converted it into small articles of tiny cabinet-work; the demand for this class of productions grew current and prolific among the visitors of the great watering-place, and they became a staple manufacture. In some portions of the Swiss valleys, where the earth freezes out agricultural operations for a great portion of the year, the knife is in ceaseless operation, constructing small articles of woodware, which are sold to the visitors in summer; in other parts of the same country the peasantry pursue the more skilled and productive craft of watch-making. Those who inculcate on us that the supply follows the demand, would not easily procure a supply of duplex-movement watches from the Isle of Skye; yet were all the inhabitants of that island, which, in its physical peculiarities, is not unlike the great watch-manufactory of the Jura, to start at once into accomplished producers of the various compartments necessary for the construction of a timepiece, they would find a market for their produce on such terms as would at all events, notwithstanding competition, make them richer people than they are. To continue the instances of petty manufactures: some of the peasantry of the Black Forest found a pursuit in cutting the ivory portions of the horn of the stag into representations of sylvan life; the productions of their ingenuity by degrees found a market in Frankfort; and now they are beginning to be dispersed as personal ornaments all over Europe. The Laurence-Kirk snuff-boxes, at one time celebrated and peculiar, were the fruit of the handicraft ingenuity of one man, who, with his assistant workmen, supplied a considerable market. An industrial impulse once communicated, has the faculty of gathering as it proceeds. The manufacture of wooden snuff-boxes was adopted at Mauchline in Ayrshire by a man of activity and enterprise. He improved the colouring process, which communicates to the wood used in the construction of the boxes a beautifully soft enamel. It was suggested to him by a retailer of ornamental goods, that he should extend the range of his produce beyond snuff-boxes, and the hint was adopted. The Mauchline manufacture now gives forth a variety of beautiful specimens of woodwork. Boxes for all purposes, in which perfection of finish is not thrown away—pincushions, paper-cutters, card cases, memorandum books, and all the varied class of pleasant useful trifles, issue from the establishment, and find a wide market; while the enterprising manufac-

turers have endeavoured to increase the range of their productive powers by finding aid in the higher branches of art for the finishing of their wares.

The following notice of the rise of a small manufacture in a distant mountain village has been read, and will be read again, with interest:—

'We look upon the springing up of a man of active intellect in some dull little village or town—the struggles of that man with local and other difficulties—his successes—the other exertions made in consequence of his example, until the place becomes a noted seat of manufacture—as all of them circumstances of such interest, that, could a minute detail of them be in any instance given, we believe the result could not fail to be one of the most interesting of books. And this interest Hutton's account of the rise of Birmingham has in a great degree. It is still more interesting, however, to behold with one's own eyes, or hear of as going on at no great distance, in some place recently, or still, an obscure village, the first difficult, but therefore all the more meritorious efforts, which are yet perhaps to confer fame and wealth, and a larger measure of all common human comforts, on that particular spot of the earth. We recollect having thus had our sympathies much interested, a few years ago, on visiting the retired village of Earlston in Berwickshire, in hearing of two females named Whale, who had set one or two looms a-going for the fabrication of ginghams—an article never before woven in that district—and who had already been so successful in producing a strong, well-coloured, and everyway suitable article, that their name was beginning to be favourably known, their trade was extending, and they were already the most important persons about the place. Since then, "Earlston ginghams" have become ticketed in almost every mercer's window in the Scottish capital, and probably in other places; and the Misses Whale have become the heads of a factory, which employs a large section of the population of the village. It is by no means unlikely that, from this *beginning*, made by two unpretending, industrious women, Earlston may go on in constantly increasing manufacturing energy, until it becomes a town of some note. What makes the merit of the beginners in this case the more striking is, that so many other towns, larger and smaller, in the same district, continue indolent and indigent, as Earlston itself was not long ago. Those must surely be no common persons who have done what is done by so few, and in so few places. * * * Generally, there is a great tendency to adopt some one of the more conspicuous kinds of manufacture, just as there is a tendency amongst educated young men to go into one of the three leading professions, all of which are overstocked, and ever will be, by reason of their very conspicuousness. These manufactures are generally fixed

on a large scale in certain districts, where they are carried on under such advantages, that a new place has little chance in competition. We would hope more from an attempt to establish some one of the obscurer kinds of manufacture, or at least some subordinate department of the larger. A certain originality is necessary in these matters, as it is in those who would distinguish themselves in literature, music, or imitative art. Such an originality we conceive to belong to the case of the Misses Whale at Earlston: *ginghams* was a clever and a happy thought!'*

In all great marts, whether of the higher productions of human intellect, or of simple merchandise, we find that, instead of the field being narrowed, and the market overstocked, enterprise begets enterprise, and emulation rouses emulation, so that inferior producers in a great multitude are richer than the sole individuals who had first occupied the field. In Manchester, Sheffield, and Glasgow, increase has not produced exhaustion, and the stirring of each to excel his neighbour does not bring them to the limits of the demand. In schools of art or literature, emulation enlarges the dignity and the wealth not only of the whole body, but of each individual. The inferior artist who lived in the same town with a Titian or a Rubens, felt art and his own position dignified and adorned, rather than overshadowed and depressed, by the presence of the master who so far excelled him. Scott and Byron raised the estimation of literature and the position of the literary man, down to the humblest member of the craft. Wherever there is something produced which encourages a new taste, its market is found by counter-production. When the burgesses of Nuremburg or Amsterdam saw the fine pictures of Durer or Teniers, they struggled hard, by more production in their own department of exertion, to obtain the means of purchasing them. The working producer of the nineteenth century, that he might enjoy the perusal of the Waverley Novels, or the possession of some cheap periodical, would achieve it in the same manner—by bringing into existence an equivalent.

We see this spirit of counter-production in its most animated and lively shape, when a nation of high energies like our own is struggling to recover itself from the prostration of some great calamity. Labour and economy combining to secure a larger amount of available produce, are the levers by which the machine of society is again put into gearing and set in motion. Every one desires to have what his neighbour can give, and thus every one produces and saves, that he may have an equivalent to offer. 'It is but mounting so many thousand more stairs,' was the remark of a physician who had lost his savings by a bubble speculation. The persons whose stairs he mounted might be losers too; they

* Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, 29th July 1839.

must work in their particular department; and so—as in an ant-hill which a thoughtless boy has disturbed, ruining the labour of thousands of animated creatures with a touch—all are busy and energetic, and their concentrated exertions restore the fabric to its wonted strength and security.

It is difficult to estimate the blessing shed around him by the man who first plants the seeds of industry among an indolent people, by some new enterprise to which their faculties, their tastes, and subsequently their wants, adapt themselves. If we look on the one hand to all that human nature has accomplished, let us sometimes also reflect on all that has been unaccomplished; and in millions of human beings idly succeeding each other for centuries, estimate the quantity of creative faculty that has lain dead for want of stimulus. In this survey of shadowy possibilities, let us count the houses unbuilt, the railways undreamt of, the pictures that have never been painted, the great poems that have never been written by mute inglorious Miltons, the nobler sympathies and impulses of high civilisation that have been as dead as the salt desert of Africa. Compare the multitudes who have lived on since the creation of the world in barbarism and indolence, with those that have tasked the high faculties of our nature, and we have the proportion of the work undone to that which has been done.

It is a rational, as well as a beautiful and elevating view of human nature, to think that man, not only collectively, but individually, was placed here rather to increase than to consume the objects of human desire that he sees around him; rather to leave marks of his godlike and creative faculties, by manifest production, than of his more animal propensities by consumption. Apart from the high, and sometimes selfish ambition of those who strive to be remembered among their fellow-mortals by great deeds, it is substantial evidence of a well-spent life, on which a man may look back with consolation as he is about to part with his labours, that he has left behind him, among his fellow-creatures, some relic of his services, increasing, to however small an extent, the possessions of the human race, and making the earth by so much the less barren, and hard, and hopeless, to those who are to follow. This is a source of honest pride, which the humblest workman may possess, and which may prompt him to indulge in blameless self-laudation, when he compares his own history with that of the heir who has scattered the savings of his predecessors, surrounding himself with ruin, and approaching the grave degraded and despised.

'Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way,
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife!
Trust no future, howe'er pleasant;
Let the dead past bury its dead;
Act, act in the living present,
Heart within, and God o'erhead.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time:
Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing;
Learn to labour and to wait.'

The Communists have not done much to add to the dignity of labour by their renowned proposition, which received the sanction of the French Provisional Government, that every man is entitled to have work.* It bears too close a resemblance to the poor-law principle, that every person is entitled to subsistence. It makes the giving or the withholding of labour appear as if it were a thing within the power of governments and individuals; as if the employment and sustaining of the millions were a matter in which aristocratic legislators might use their influence, and sage officials employ their wisdom. Governments might as well seek to control the seasons as to regulate the supply of labour. Its amount is ruled by a will greater than theirs—a will, to the mere incidental expression of which they owe their own political existence—the will of the great body of the labouring and producing people. In their own productive energies, exercised in individual labour, exists the power that can find them work. A government may impede and mar the operation of their energies by impolitic interference, or may give them a false direction by promulgating rash promises and raising vain hopes, but it cannot give a people employment. It is strange to mark how blind the republican promulgators of this principle have been to its slavish-

* Le Droit au Travail.

ness. The old argument for personal and predial slavery was, that it made the poor man independent of chances and calamities, by making him dependant on a master. If the state is bound to find work for the labourer, and to support him, it is a natural converse that the workman is to be the slave, if not of individual men, at all events of the state; and that, as he declines to work for the value in money of what he produces, he must work as the state orders or compels him.

A want of any acknowledgment of the true dignity of labour —of its necessity to society—of its ability to support itself—is conspicuous through all the arguments of the Communists. Louis Blanc's argumentative climax on the miseries of competition is embodied in the following brief dramatic conversation:—

'Is competition the way to secure work to the poor? But to put the question in this shape is to solve it. What is competition with respect to labour? It is labour put up for auction. A speculator requires a workman. Three present themselves:

"How much for your labour?"

"Three francs. I have a wife and children."

"Good. And you?"

"Two francs and a-half. I have no children, but I have a wife."

"Indeed! And you?"

"Two francs will content me. I am single."

"You, then, are preferred."

It is done: the bargain is struck. But what becomes of the two rejected workmen? They will die quietly of hunger, it is to be hoped.'

Not at all. Perhaps, out of sheer despite against Louis Blanc's theory, the man of three francs may, by exertion and acquired skill, make his labour worth four, five, or six francs; and may find that there are employers glad to have his services at that rate—for there is such a thing in the world as competition for workmen as well as for employers. And if the man with the family could not make his labour worth three francs, it will ever remain a mystery in what Pactolus or El Dorado Louis Blanc, or any other person, can find it. Speaking of three francs and of one man is a small matter; but when such principles are applied to great nations like France and Britain, these units have the faculty of extending themselves into millions, and our French neighbours have too sorrowfully found, on more than one occasion, that before wealth exists to be distributed, it must go through the vulgar ordeal of being produced.

At all times, in talking of labour and employment high and low, people are apt to overlook its main element of value—production, and to look to some secondary concomitant as the circumstance to which it owes its importance. Perhaps it is not necessary here to open up the old question of productive and

unproductive labour, which affords so much exercise for minute analysis and keen dialectics. We lately found the editor of a newspaper calling his own occupation productive, because he aided in producing weekly a broad sheet of tangible printed paper, while he maintained that a great public singer was an unproductive labourer. A musical enthusiast, on the other hand, who took an hour to read the newspaper, and did not remember many hours afterwards, when it had gone to light the household fires, the politics he had read in it, said that the public singer supplied him with ideas, and products of science, and pleasurable emotions, that would last him all his life. Whatever society pays for, and ought to pay for, may fairly be considered as productive labour for our present purpose; for though there are no tangible objects created by it, yet it contributes in the end to the increase of production. Whatever tends to organise and civilise mankind is thus productive; and it would be difficult to decide what proportion of the majestic fruits of civilisation which lie everywhere around us we owe to the judges who, by their strict enforcement of the law, have protected private liberty and property from oppression and plunder, and to the instructors of youth, who have disciplined our citizens to fulfil their respective parts in life.

Cicero could not see on what ground merchandise could be profitable, unless the one party cheated the other. The two things were of equal value—the commodity and the money. How, then, could there be a benefit to either in exchanging them? Modern opinions tell us that there is a gain in A obtaining what he wants from B, who does not want it, and in making a commodity change its place, so that, instead of lying at the foot of a bush in Arabia, it shall be present at our breakfast-table, supplying an exhilarating meal. But society is still apt to be pervaded by the notion, which must be a natural and inherent one, that labour and occupation may and ought to have other grounds of remuneration than their value. In truth, the fallacy that what any person gains must be to some other person's loss, and that men only improve their condition by pushing others aside, has been encouraged by some social arrangements and habits, which require to be examined and explained, in order to get a correct view of this subject. We are apt to look not at what the world in general gains, but at what individuals gain. Now individuals may either raise their position by being useful to the community, or by recommending themselves to the favour of rich or influential individuals. The former class do good to the world as well as to themselves—the latter only serve a personal end, and obtain an individual advantage. By far the larger portion of the realised success of mankind has been of the former class—all great discoverers, authors, artists, inventors, speculators, and other men who have raised themselves simply by their own

talents or industry, have belonged to it; and it has been represented in later times by Goëthe, Scott, and Arkwright, by the Rothschilds and the Barings.

Yet owing to the indolence of mankind, or some other propensity, which it would be too complicated a task to examine at this moment, the other method of rising in the world is the one chiefly looked to and weighed by ordinary mortals. Wherever there are men with power and riches beyond those of their fellows—which is equivalent to saying, wherever there are men as human nature is at present constituted—one of the resources of those who are poor will be, to rise by the favour of the rich; and in every society there will be a larger or a smaller number, according to circumstances, who, without any intrinsic merit of their own, will thus gain something they would not otherwise have gained. It will always be in a country of enterprise and energy like our own, where gigantic fortunes have been realised, that the field for this sort of worthless enterprise will be in reality largest; though proportionally to the legitimate means of success, it will be larger in indolent and poor countries, where dependance is the general rule of society. Whatever may be its actual or relative extent, however, it is always limited; and it is distinguished from the field of productive energy, by success in it adding nothing to the wealth of the community. It came out in connection with a late trial that the valet of a marquis had realised a hundred thousand pounds in his service! Here was an instance, perhaps, of the acquisitive energies of the parasite stretched to their utmost capacity; and to appreciate the value of the two kinds of success we have been describing to the world at large, we must pit against this man, as achievers of success not more signal in their own sphere, a Columbus, a Newton, or a Watt.

The more a nation advances in wealth, the more the effects of independent energy and enterprise are palpably perceived—the less we see of fallacious reliance on this propensity. It has always, however, more or less hold on the natural timidity of the respectable portion of mankind. How often we hear it said of a young man that he has made good friends for himself, when the species of exultation wasted on this assurance should have been reserved for the statement, that he had shown genius, intelligence, self-reliance, or independent firmness. That these notions were more prevalent among our ancestors than they are at present, is shown by our fictitious literature. Fielding and Smollett, both shrewd observers of society, never dream of resting the fortunes of their heroes on any better foundation than the countenance and favour of some great man. It may be said, indeed, that fictitious literature in general is unfavourable to a sound tone of precept on this matter. The dramatic

interest, whether of a novel or a play, requires generally that a rapid change of fortunes should take place at some particular juncture; and it is much more convenient to make accident, or the favour of some rich patron, the cause of the revolution, than the intrinsic merits of the hero, which are a species of operating cause generally too tedious to be developed with sufficient suddenness for the occasion. It is a misfortune that light literature is thus, to a certain extent, incapable of giving a prominent place to some of the most valuable, in a temporal sense, of human virtues; and that the advocate of reflection, industry, frugality, and forethought, as instruments of human elevation, has little aid from this department of intellectual exertion. It is in some measure a compensation for this deficiency, that grave literature of the higher and sounder class is generally in favour of these useful virtues. It is a circumstance worthy of curious notice, that the unpopularity of Chesterfield's Advice to his Son, among severe moralists, has arisen from the supposition that his precepts embody the art of rising in the world, not through merit, and by being really useful to mankind, but through the favour of the great. Perhaps it would be a more charitable view to consider this cold philosopher's precepts as the means by which the intercourse of people in different ranks of life, and with different tastes and pursuits, may be rendered tolerable when they are thrown into each other's company, than a deliberate series of instructions to enable a man to elevate himself, by gaining the good opinion of his superiors through the aid of superficial accomplishments. Yet this latter principle, generally believed to be the one inculcated by Chesterfield, and on that account so heartily condemned, is the very principle inculcated by the plot of many of our best novels. A popular writer, who was apt to draw some of the characteristic incidents of his own department of literature with the pen of a caricaturist, represented a lady making earnest inquiries of a veteran officer as to the causes of the miraculous success of her lover. She expected to hear that he had performed some great feat of arms or diplomacy, or that he was learned in tactics or fortification. She was told that all was owing to his admirable carving at the governor's table! The cause of his rise produces a laugh; but it was not in the slightest degree less advantageous to mankind, and especially to the nation who paid for the rank he had gained in the army, than if his assiduity, politeness, and finished gentlemanly bearing had, according to the ethics of the majority of novels, constituted the secret of his good fortune.

The main distinctions for our present purpose to be kept are these—1*st*, That where men rise simply by their own exertions, and without favour, the field before them is as unlimited as the wants, the desires, and the possible progress of the human race;

while the field of those who rise through the favour or generosity of others is always limited; 2*d*, That those who rise by the former means are essentially producers, each step they take in their ascent being placed on some benefit conferred on the human race; while the other class add nothing to the possessions of their fellow-creatures, but merely compete with each other for the fund, whatever it may be, that is free for distribution among them. To an individual, if he have as good chances of personal success in the latter as in the former department, it may be of no moment which he adopts; but to the community, and to those who endeavour to speak for the community, it is of moment that the productive class should be encouraged, at least by precept and the influence of public opinion.

We have hitherto spoken simply of man as a producer; let us now devote a few words to the class of productive agents which do not appear directly to embody man's labour, yet are in reality mere shapes and developments of labour—machinery.

It is now generally admitted that machinery, by multiplying at a cheap rate the necessaries and the luxuries of life, puts at the command of the poorer classes a widened source of comfort and enjoyment; and in this view it has been said that each great invention has been to those among whom its produce has been distributed, as if the earth had grown more fruitful or the sun warmer. On the other hand, it is stated that every invention is a permanent evil to the working-classes, by superseding human labour, and doing through insensate instruments that which the human being gained his bread by doing with his hands. That incidental hardship is often suffered by those whose hand labour is immediately superseded, cannot be denied; but that the change has a general effect in reducing the aggregate amount of hand labour in the community, admits of contradiction.

The amount of available employment in any country will of course bear a proportion to the amount of its capital. If a man has so much capital to invest in manufacturing production, on what can he spend it? Part of it may go to pay the rent of the land on which his raw produce has grown; that can never be a large proportion. Another part will go to pay the profits of the various persons through whose hands the commodity passes; the amount of this will depend on incidental circumstances, and it is not likely to be a greater proportion in machine manufacture than in hand manufacture. We have now the remaining and largest share; and *whether machinery intervene in the operation or not, this portion must be spent as wages of labour, and not otherwise.* We must, then, presume either that the capitalist will have less to spend when he supersedes hand labour by machine power, or that he will be disposed to spend a smaller proportion of his capital. It is quite possible, as we shall show presently, to sink

capital in machinery; but, practically, this is not done, and the capital not only continues entire, but generally, from the rapid market obtained, and the consequent addition to profits, becomes gradually enlarged. On the other hand, the owner cannot keep his capital from being invested if he would. If he leave it in his bank, or if he lend it on security, it is employed by other people, and it must be employed in the same way—on the wages of labour. Let us exemplify the necessity of capital finding its way to the worker in the form of wages by a simple supposition. A man has £1000, which he chooses to invest in the making of stockings. If he employ women to knit them, he pays wages directly to these women. If he erect a machine for making them, he will of course have less wages to pay for the conversion of the worsted threads into a knitted texture; but on the other hand he will have to pay the machine-makers who construct the frame, and those through whose hands the materials have passed, back to the collier who extracts the coals out of the earth, and the miner who extracts the iron. With the small exceptions we have above-mentioned, his £1000 must go as payment of wages just as it did before; and the general effect which his operations produce on the community is, that he multiplies the number of stockings which he can bring into the market. In reality it will be found that the £1000 employs fewer persons—for the machine-maker and the miner demand higher wages than the knitter, and something must generally be understood as paid to the inventor of the machinery, as the reward of his labours; but still the money goes to producers, and is virtually *wages of labour*.

It has been very ingeniously argued, however, that machinery tends to contract capital, and consequently the reward of hand labour, since the price of the machine, though it has once given employment to labour, is sunk in producing the machine, and cannot again be employed. Thus, should a man have £2000, which he proposes to embark in manufacturing production, if he buy a machine with £1000, he has only thenceforth £1000 which he can continue to embark in production; and though it is true that the £1000, with the aid of the machine, will produce more than the £2000 without its aid, yet this is not by hand labour, the market for which must be thus so far contracted. If the machine were a permanent object—like water-power, or the wind, never requiring repair or replacement, and never superseded by new inventions and improvements—this would be so far true; and it may be observed in passing, that it is an argument which has much more applicability to agricultural improvements, and to permanent fixed works, such as warehouses, harbours, &c. than to machinery. In fact every worker in tile-draining, which is a means of increasing the produce of the soil without labour, and

every erector of piers, harbours, and other permanent structures, is absorbing the capital that forms the fund of wages. Thus it may be said that every mason and excavator works to reduce the amount of capital to be devoted to the support of the labouring population. We had indeed lately a melancholy instance of the truth of this theory. In the making of a railway, for instance, the capital employed is sunk, and constitutes so much removed from the general fund for the payment of wages, until it is restored by the tedious realisation of profits. The railway bills obtained in 1846 authorised the expenditure of £132,617,368, and those of the ensuing year an expenditure of £35,000,000. Many of the vast operations thus commenced became paralysed by insufficiency of capital; but enough was laid down upon the earth in iron, stone, and wood, materially to narrow the sum available for the wages of labour, and cripple the resources of the labouring-classes.

Manufacturing machinery is, however, ever decaying and being replaced. The making of machinery is itself one of the steadiest manufactures in the country; and instead of hearing that a sufficiency of machinery has at any given moment been constructed to supply the general market for manufactures, there is no commodity for which there is so unceasing a demand, and of which the supply is so often deficient.

But if it be admitted that there is some small sinking of capital in manufacturing machinery, and that the rewards of the inventor —a workman, though of a high grade—make some small deductions from the fund for distribution in the wages of labour, it is never denied, on the other hand, that machinery creates great marts of industry, which otherwise never would have existed. It is that development of the fruitful intellects and high inventive powers, which enables us, in our cold northern clime, to compete with and excel the dwellers on the fruitful soils nearer the sun. Without it, cotton would not have come ten thousand miles across the sea to be manufactured into a fabric, and sent back to clothe the Indian who hoes and waters it. Without the productive brains of Arkwright and Watt, we would not have defied all Europe to exclude our produce from their markets, to which their cheapness and excellence gave them access through the thousands of little pores which the most powerful armies and the most vigilant police could not shut up. It is calculated that thus our cotton manufacture, the creature of machinery, gives employment to a million and a-quarter of human beings, and disperses £20,000,000 annually in the shape of wages.

CHAPTER IV.

WEALTH AND PROPERTY.

How Wealth is the Produce of Labour, and held by Transmission from those who have made it—Exceptions to this Rule, and their bad Effect—Sacredness of Property in this Country—Prejudices which interfere with a proper Estimate of it—Railway Legislation an Example—Some kinds require peculiar Protection—Patents and Copyright—Question if Field-Sports entitled to be as laboriously Protected?—Saving and Expenditure.

From labour and production we make a natural step to wealth, for all wealth is the produce of labour. Whatever objects of value we see around us in our great cities or our fruitful agricultural districts—the public edifices, the manufactories, the docks and harbours, the railways, the wheat-fields, the pleasure-grounds, the gardens—all are the produce of human labour; and if these objects are to be increased in abundance to the next generation, it will be by the instrumentality of human labour that they are so increased. Perhaps if we trace back the history of some articles of property, whether fixed or movable, we may find that they owe their possession to oppression, injustice, or fraud; perhaps we shall find that a jewel was stolen a century ago by the ancestors of those who possess it now; that a house was unjustly obtained by oppressive litigation; that an estate was acquired by an unscrupulous commissioner of inquiry into monastic foundations. These are matters for the law to deal with as they occur; it may be well to guard against such violent or fraudulent changes of possession; and the laxity that permitted them in more barbarous times may well suggest more accurate and stringent rules in future. But when the injurers and the injured have been alike in the grave for centuries, it would serve no good end to open up inquiries on the abstract justice of their mutual transactions. If no person can appear as the loser demanding satisfaction, and there is no person alive who can be charged with committing the injury, surely the tribunals of our day have too much to do with living quarrels to raise up these dead ashes of controversy?

Political economy tells us that part of the value of fruitful land to its owner is not produced by labour, but by monopoly, and that rent is the difference in value between the produce of the more fruitful fields and that of the least productive soil, which the pressure of population drives into cultivation. Without investigating this principle, or even professing to state it with scientific

accuracy—for it has been stated in various forms, and nearly all of them have been attacked as harbouring some small fallacy—it may be sufficient for the grand question, whether society ought to open up the present disposal of landed property on the ground of its monopolist origin, and re-distribute it, to observe that it would be impossible to analyse the landed property of Britain in such a manner as to separate what had been provided by nature, what had been gained by monopoly, and what had been done by human industry. In our large towns there are pieces of ground not many yards square without an ounce of agricultural produce growing on them, which yet are worth acres of our most prolific corn districts. An inextricable mixture of natural advantages, produce of labour, and legal monopoly, are the elements of this value. There is an often-told story of a hunchback who drew a good income from letting out his bent shoulders as a desk, on which the close-pent mob, who crushed forward to destruction in the French Mississippi Mania, might write their transfers and applications for stock. His revenue was in a great measure the same in character with that of the owner of town-building areas—nature did something for him in the bent back; monopoly also did something, in his being the only bent back in that crowd; and labour added something to the ingredients, in his repairing daily to the crowd, and patiently enduring the operation for which he was paid.

Mr Macaulay gives us this rapid sketch of what labour has done for landed property in England:—'Could the England of 1685 be, by some magical process, set before our eyes, we should not know one landscape in a hundred, or one building in ten thousand. The country gentleman would not recognise his own fields: the inhabitant of the town would not recognise his own street. Everything has been changed but the great features of nature, and a few massive and durable works of human art. We might find out Snowdon and Windermere, the Cheddar Cliffs and Beachy Head. We might find out here and there a Norman minster, or a castle which witnessed the wars of the Roses. But with such rare exceptions, everything would be strange to us. Many thousands of square miles which are now rich corn-land and meadow, intersected by green hedgerows, and dotted with villages and pleasant country-seats, would appear as moors overgrown with furze, or fens abandoned to wild ducks. We should see straggling huts built of wood and covered with thatch, where we now see manufacturing towns and seaports renowned to the farthest ends of the world. The capital itself would shrink to dimensions not much exceeding those of its present suburb on the south of the Thames. Not less strange to us would be the garb and manners of the people, the furniture and the equipages, the interior of the shops and dwellings. Such a change in the state of a nation

seems to be at least as well entitled to the notice of a historian as any change of the dynasty or of the ministry.'*

But those who are so anxious for a readjustment of all proprietary rights, are not searching after such niceties of distribution as to separate what has been produced by labour from what has arisen in monopoly. Their views are of a coarser and more substantial character. Once let the whole be tossed into the crucible, and, like the nobles who seized the church lands at the Reformation, they would talk of the analysis of its elements as a fond imagination. An illustrious Frenchman has written an elaborate and brilliant treatise to prove that property ought to be allowed to exist. In this country we are fortunately beyond the necessity of proving such a proposition; and perhaps, if the distinguished author who undertook the task, instead of having to soothe and persuade, had felt himself at liberty to examine both sides of the question at issue, with the impartial indifference of a scientific investigator, he might have put it in this shape—Whether property was or was not preferable to robbery? To those who are so simple as to believe that human beings will live without ambition, without individual projects, without energy and exertion, the idea of a community without property may be a dream sincerely indulged in. But those who know that it is not in man to have an existence separated from individual character and qualifications, and to consent to be a uniform portion of a pre-organised system, like one of the pillars of a colonnade, must believe that there are men who cannot help being in some measure at freedom to exercise, for however short a time, the superior faculties of their minds and strength of their limbs, and thus to possess something which their neighbours have not. No one endowed with a particle of practical sagacity believes that he can keep property out of existence; and therefore it is not uncharitable to conclude that those who profess to be the enemies of its existence, are only, under the shadow of such doctrines, preparing themselves to seize it when it comes into being. To seize and to destroy are comparatively easy; they are feats that have been performed by all armies and all undisciplined mobs from the commencement of the world. To reorganise the world is not so easy; it is weak, limited man taking on himself to do by artificial means what the Deity had made provision for by endowing us with our various passions and propensities.

There are people who have no objection to the existence of property abstractly, but who object to its transmission by descent. But the principle that any man should be permitted to possess anything being once admitted, transmission follows as an almost necessary consequence. If human beings had nothing in them

* History of England, vol. i. p. 281.

beyond the brute propensities, possession and enjoyment would be all that they required. The lion, the king of beasts, consumes all that he acquires, and cares for nothing more than he can consume. Man, when he has risen beyond the first stage of utter savageness, looks a degree beyond himself, cares to acquire for other motives, when his mere animal propensities are satisfied, and finds that he can distribute the surplus of his possessions, beyond what he consumes, in a manner not unpleasant to himself, and beneficent to others. When we once admit the right to give away, the principle of descent cannot be avoided. If a man may give to others, he will surely not be prohibited from giving to his own children. M. Thiers says—'Enter into the domestic sanctuary, place yourself in these sacred precincts, and tell me if you can discover there any means sufficiently sure, sufficiently excusable, to restrain a father from giving up to his son that which he would bequeath to him at his death. If you permit a father to give during his life, and not at his death, he will be anxious to dispossess himself even during his lifetime. He will give, a day, an hour before expiring—from hand to hand, the movable goods easily transmissible on a deathbed, such as money, precious stones, or negotiable securities—immovable property, more difficult of transmission, such as lands, houses, &c.; he will convey one year, two years, ten years before dying, or rather he will sell them, and lower their value, in order to convert them into cash transmissible at will. In a word, he will make your law null, by dispossessing himself during his lifetime. But from this obligation, which you have imposed upon him, to dispossess himself before death, there will spring two consequences —the good father will be punished for his goodness, the bad father recompensed for his selfishness. The good father, despoiling himself before death, will find perhaps an ungrateful son —he cannot plant a tree or dig a drain in that field which he has given to his son, and will live as a stranger in the midst of that wealth which he has created, and of which he deprived himself before the time, lest his son should not reap the benefit of it; the bad father, on the contrary, who may be unwilling to dispossess himself, or the cowardly father, who would not look steadily on the idea of death, in order to secure a fortune for his children, will enjoy his wealth, and will enjoy it unto the end of his days. Thus the good father will have been dispossessed: the bad father will have possession until his latest hour.'*

In fact, with a few exceptions, wherever we see property, we see the produce of the labour of him who possesses it, or of some one who has transferred it to him. If a Turkey merchant, by his own industry, intelligence, and probity, made to himself an estate

* From the work 'Sur la Propriété,' &c. as it appeared in the *Constitutionnel.*

a century ago, and was rendered by the law absolute proprietor of that which he had so acquired, he was entitled to give or leave it to his son, and that son was entitled to transfer it to his successor; and so it has passed down to our day—not perhaps made, in the commercial acceptation of the term, by its present owner, but certainly given to him, without any person, or any public who were entitled to it in the meantime, having been dispossessed or defrauded.

There is no natural propensity in the people of this country to attack either property or its transmission, but they have found the proprietary principle stretched in some cases beyond its proper limit. They have found a principle which ought to be held especially sacred by those who enjoy the advantages of it, converted by them into an instrument for humouring their vanities, and peculiar propensities and partialities, at the expense of the public. A law of entail is a law not only allowing a landed proprietor to have full scope for his humours and prejudices while he is alive, but promising to respect them for centuries after his death. He chooses that a person, selected from the human race on a principle which has no more definite application to any rational desires and sympathies than if it were fixed by the cast of a die, shall have the estate at some distant period, and the law promises to put his desire in force.

When the manufacturer or the mechanic looks around him among the fields which have descended from father to son by the simple course of succession, or have been transferred from owner to owner, he sees the produce of industry, if not possessed by the producer, at least in the hands of some one to whom it has been handed over by him. But if he sees an estate which, either by an entail, or by the general law as it was of old in England, is protected from being seized for the debts of its owner by just creditors, he can acknowledge no such honest origin and transmission of property; he cannot then say that no one has lost that the owner may gain; he sees before him the fruits of pillage; and he knows that the estate has been kept together in all its magnificence, not by the honest industry of those who have acquired or transmitted it, but by seizure of the industry of tradesmen and labourers, who have been sacrificed to its respective owners. One cannot thus look on an old entailed estate, the successive owners of which have run in debt, without thinking of a great receptacle for stolen goods. It cannot be matter of surprise that such things often make the aspect of landed property offensive. This feature of the law was greatly improved in England by the act for rendering real property liable for simple contract debts; in Scotland, by the late modification of the law of entail. Our posterity will wonder that we ever tolerated the laws which required such modifications.

The tolerance of these abuses of the law of succession may be cited as part of a series of incidents, to show that in this country we have hitherto suffered more from false stretches of the right of property, than from any fear that its *existence* may be menaced. There is, in fact, often a fanatical spirit against all proposals importing an interference with property; and when there is any abuse, oppression, or injustice to be protected, it cannot find a better shield than the term 'vested interest,' nor its opponent meet a more fatal weapon than a charge of interference with rights of property. It is necessary, however, that the community should protect itself against the abuse of proprietary rights; and in a well-constituted country like this, where, in fact, the failing of public opinion leans to the side of property, it can never be wrong to keep its sources and appliances in view, that we may judge how far it is justly entitled to the protection it demands.

There are some kinds of property which, on account of their delicate and evanescent nature, exact from the law a much more watchful protection than others. Literary property and patent rights are not easily guarded. It requires special and distinct enactments to put them into the position of property; and indeed they require virtually to come under the shield of monopoly. A diamond, a cabinet, or a watch, may be kept in its place, or traced when it leaves it; but a thought or a discovery must be communicated to mankind before it has its value, and there it becomes so mixed with the great ethereal world of intellect, that it cannot easily be severed and appropriated. The reward of literary ability and inventive genius is the justification of the complex laws which have from time to time been passed for the creation and protection of these descriptions of property; and such laws, when they can be enforced without great sacrifice to the community, are of much value and utility.

Other descriptions of appropriation sometimes demand the protection of stringent laws, and occasionally only too effectively. The game-laws are a miserable and scandalous instance of such a misapplication of the institutions which ought to be made only for the protection of services and substantial rights. The protection of the field-sports of a portion of the aristocracy entails on the country an amount of outlay in the administration of the law—and, what is far more dreadful, an amount of demoralisation and crime—on which our posterity cannot fail to look back with amazement.

For purposes of pasturage, large districts of country are sometimes left open, or but partially enclosed. If these fields had been subjected to the plough, they would have required to be intersected by roads, for the removal of the produce, and for the intercourse of the inhabitants. Not being cultivated and enclosed, they are not generally intersected with roads; but on

the other hand, the sheep-farmers and cattle-graziers who occupy the districts have generally allowed the public to traverse them, and have, at all events, sought no special protection from the law against the passing pedestrian, who crosses no fences, but wanders on from waste to waste in the direction of his journey. Some gentlemen have thought it fit to establish a new sport in this country, called deer-stalking, derived by imitation from the practice of the North American Indians. They maintain that for the enjoyment of this sport utter solitude is necessary, and that the presence of an unexpected human being within a few miles of the chosen spot ruins it. For the protection of such their enjoyments, they demand legal powers which the law has never been asked to give for the protection of commerce and agriculture. If such special privileges be conceded to them, legislators need not wonder if it should be maintained that some departments at least of the law of property have not been built upon a sure foundation.

It is curious to observe how, in many cases, the national predilection for the inviolability of property leads to great proprietary revolutions. There is so acute a nervousness on the subject of a fair adjustment of questions between landowners and the public, that they have been left to the sort of accident involved in railway legislation, in preference to being based on any fixed principle of judicial intervention. Though the law admits nothing of the kind, yet it is a fact known to every one who reads newspapers, or observes what is passing around him, that the tenure of all land in this country is subject to the contingency of its being taken possession of at an arbitrary valuation by any railway company desirous to possess it, and willing to expend money enough to purchase the necessary parliamentary powers. It is true that the old fiction is still kept up: each transference is considered a peculiar and isolated instance, in which the necessities of the public demand a sacrifice of individual rights, according to the principle, that the public safety is the supreme rule of law. It is no matter of judicial routine, founded upon general powers arising out of the common law, or even conferred by legislative enactment; but in each particular instance the legislature steps forward, professing to make a new law to meet the peculiar emergency. Yet so frequent is now the recurrence of the exigency which invades the ordinary legal right of property, that it may be questioned if, during the last three years, so much land has passed from hand to hand in the legitimate course of sale and purchase as by these compulsory enactments. Nay, so far is the taking of lands, for what are called public purposes, now a matter of routine, that in the local acts authorising the transference, they are only hereafter to be indicated; and the method in which the proprietor is to be dispossessed, is made uniform for

all cases by a statute called 'The Lands Clauses Consolidation Act.' This is a great practical revolution in the tenure of property in Britain. In regard to an indefinitely extensive portion of the surface of the country, it makes the owners' right, not a title absolutely to possess the actual land, but to hold it in security for so much as a jury shall pronounce to be its value. If we were able to point out the precise tracts of land which all the railways, and other like undertakings in the country, shall require for fifty years to come, we would at the same time be pointing out so much land over which the owners' right is merely a right of security, with reversion to certain corporations, on their paying a contingent sum.

It is believed that those who have had much experience in railway compensation practice, could give curious instances of the fluctuations and inequalities that arise from this great department of the transference of landed property not having been the creature of positive and uniform law. The system would be found to be a lottery covering all varieties of fortune, from prizes at one end of the scale to confiscation at the other. In one case, the proprietor of a few barren acres becomes a man of fortune because a railway is to pass his door; on the domain of his next neighbour, some object that to him was of incalculable value—some monument of ancestral greatness, some local treasure of natural or artificial beauty—is obliterated with as little compunction as if it fell before a tempest or a marauding army. Everything must give way to the public claim; and the great exigency which has justified a legislative infringement of the ordinary rules of law and the rights of property, stops all individual murmurs, and converts the complaints of the man who has been recklessly pillaged, into a selfish preference of his own paltry interests over the general welfare of society. It has frequently been remarked that on a new line of railway, and in a district not accustomed to such proceedings, the compensation adjudications are commenced with a solemnity and decorum indicative of the consciousness of all concerned that they are adjusting the application of a new and special law, which invades the rights of certain British subjects for the sake of the public interest. It is at this stage that the great prizes are drawn; for the juries are told, and they feel, that they should award sums far beyond mere pecuniary compensation between buyer and seller, and should stamp by their liberality an acknowledgment of the exceptional character of the proceeding—a protest that, as representing the public on the occasion, confiscation is far from being their object. As the cases proceed, and the character of the operation becomes more familiar, 'a common sense view' of the matter is recommended and adopted. Liberality gradually evaporates, until the scale of compensation falls below the line of just pecuniary value, and the profuseness

of the earlier verdicts is balanced by the inadequacy of the others. When the lowest point has been reached, there is generally a reaction, justice at last stepping in to adjust the conflicting demands of liberality and forfeiture.

This theory, that the judicial transference of land for public purposes cannot be considered matter of ordinary routine, but must, in every instance, be a special legislatorial act, forcibly reminds one of the story of the Chinese believing that the luxury of roast pig could not be procured without the burning of a house. We are forbidden to view the operation as one that may be performed by some machinery resembling the other tribunals of the country. We are forbidden to look upon this matter of daily occurrence as a thing that exists, and should be provided for. It is said to be fraught with danger to the sacredness of property, to entertain the principle that the owner may be deprived of it for public purposes; yet daily the thing is done. Hence we leave this delicate operation to the rough and capricious operations of legislative committees, and submit to the action of this heated arena questions that are considered too momentous and difficult to be intrusted to the sober discretion of the bench.

We are naturally a practical people, cautious of change; and being able to work with the worst tools, often prefer the labour and vigilance they demand to the smooth prospect of employing a better instrument. Thus it must be conceded that the natural difficulties of the parliamentary system have been met and overcome with a promptness and a success that could not have been anticipated. Yet the effectiveness of standing orders is limited; and among the things which they appear to be incapable of achieving, is that fixed principle of action, that establishment of a general rule, exemplified in every operation great and little, which, when adopted in the judicial tribunals, is comprehended in the word Law. Where our courts of justice are not led by statute, they are guided by a series of precedents, which, by their sequence and connected uniformity, indicate the track in which the disposer of justice ought to walk with reference to the future. Everything that has been done is treasured up with reverence, as a practical indication of the principle on which everything that follows ought to be done. We thus, although there be no principle of law declared and promulgated by the legislature, find one in the main element that is common to the whole of a series of decisions in the ordinary courts. Parliamentary practice is scarcely capable of evolving such a guide in local legislation. The very reason why it is held that the procedure must not be in the hands of the ordinary tribunals, but in those of the legislature, is because it follows no precedent, and is bound by no ruling principle. Each transaction is a separate new-made law, which requires no precedent for itself, and is not itself to be a precedent for the

future. It cannot be expected that bodies so acting can create for themselves a proper and independent ruling principle for each case. Such a creation would be admittedly beyond the capacity even of the bench, with all its experience, learning, and isolation from outward influences. Hence, in the past course of railway business, we can never have a guarantee for the future. That the public interests are in many respects thus sacrificed there can be little doubt. If we take the single case of the rule that should be adopted relating to the preservation of objects valuable to the nation as monuments of archæology or art, we shall find how inadequate the system is to surround them with a safeguard. In the application of the national funds for the purchase or the preservation of such objects, a committee of the House of Commons would naturally desire the opinion of persons who have devoted themselves to the studies that render men acquainted with their value and usefulness. In a railway conflict, they will seldom hear any other views but those of individuals actuated by interest or prejudice. With a company offering liberal terms, and no one feeling an interest to oppose them, it is difficult to conceive how any monument, however valuable for its historical reminiscences or its artistic merits, could escape. The whole of this system of railway legislation, which forms so large a feature of the business of this age, is thus a grand illustration of the mischief which property itself suffers from the timid reluctance of lawyers and statesmen to investigate the principles on which it is founded, and to concede to it a just and practical position, instead of a blind veneration that dares not look it in the face.

When property is enjoyed by individuals in large masses, it receives the general name of wealth or riches; and since we have observed that there are people who object to all property whatever, and that there are others who have no objection to its general existence as a principle, but object to its transmission by descent, so there are some who would countenance or even encourage small fortunes, but who would limit the extent to which riches may be allowed to accumulate in the hands of individuals.

It would not be desirable or even safe to limit the extent to which individuals may possess wealth; and it would be found that all regulations directed to such an object would invariably tend to produce some defect greater than they obviate. We need not go farther than the mere inexpediency of limiting the exertions and aspirations of ambitious wealth-gatherers—who, in the progress of their accumulations, are benefiting the community—to find a solid argument against any restriction. But, on the other hand, there are many reasons against encouraging the unnatural aggregation of colossal fortunes. They afford so wide and appalling a contrast with the humblest grades of society, they present a pitch of territorial greatness, so unapproachable by the most

abundant talents and the highest services, that they are detrimental to the tone of society by the discontent they diffuse throughout it. It is an extremely rare thing to see these colossal fortunes created by individuals in a good sound system of trade and enterprise—they are the creation of generations. The fortune accumulated in a successful and industrious lifetime is not so effective an object of envy, because what one man has made some other may make. But the gigantic masses of wealth, such as those accumulated through centuries of concentration, aggregation, and sometimes aggression, by portions of our great aristocracy, are of such a magnitude as no man by any good fortune or perseverance need hope to realise. We have here another of the evils bequeathed to us by the feudal system. An entailed estate is a fortune, as to which it is fixed by the law, that it may increase, but shall never decrease. It may keep what succeeding generations add to it, but so long as it remains strictly entailed, it is incapable of diminution. Here we see a positive regulation for unnaturally building up large fortunes; and the ordinary hereditary system, though not so strict and definite in its operation, is a law that has a decided tendency towards the same detrimental accumulation of unwieldy estates. Excessive wealth in the person of individuals is no boon to the community. If it were not so concentrated it would still exist, and probably, nay, almost certainly, would have been employed to better purpose. Wealth exceeding a certain extent is beyond the management of the owner, who, however desirous he may be to use to good purpose the means with which God has blessed him, cannot accomplish his aim. He must be more or less subject to the machinations of the tribe whose business it is to attract into their own pockets all the loose money passing through the world which is obtainable without corresponding services. He is in the hands of domestics, insolent and idle from their excessive number; of parasites and sharpers; of the fraudulent and the profligate. The money not misspent is wasted, for he has not the slightest motive to exercise the virtue of economy. He diminishes the productiveness of the country by keeping up costly wastes, that he may enjoy his field-sports solitarily in the midst of a crowded population. The stimulants which make the poor man work, and the moderately rich man endeavour to make the best of his little patrimony, are wanting; and losing these natural impulses, tending towards the good of mankind, he must find others more artificial and less innocent. He is a kind of personage who should be permitted to subsist when the chances of free industry and exertion cast him up; but he is by no means such an acquisition to the world, that he ought to be artificially brought into existence by the laws which profess to be made for the general happiness of the people.

Though the various paths to fortune which honest industry

and skill point out should be open to all, yet there may be ways of treading them, tolerated even by great communities, which are not sound and just. It has already been observed, that the largest fortunes in the land are, according to any rule we can derive from experience, necessarily the accumulation of ages, and beyond the capacity of one man to realise. The two capitalists who have rendered themselves in our days almost illustrious by the vastness of their wealth—Coutts and Thelusson—left each from £600,000 to £700,000; huge fortunes, certainly; yet though some of the speculators of the present day should excel these eminent predecessors to a considerable extent, their fortunes would still be far below the value of the domains of our richest peers. It is at the same time very questionable if the commercial system, which admits of fortunes so great as those of our chief speculators being made by individuals, is a healthy and sound one. The amount which the most skilful and industrious man can realise by productive industry is necessarily limited; but the amount which fortunate accident may transfer from the stores which others have produced is unlimited. It is to be feared, therefore, that all the sums made by individuals in a commercial country beyond a certain amount, indicate appalling risks corresponding to the great gains.

The ordinary returns of a safe and skilfully-directed commerce, or the emoluments of a lucrative profession, bring together sums which, by prudence and moderation, may go on increasing until their possessor acquire as large a fortune as he can satisfactorily manage. Few of the bloated capitals are so realised. They have gone on in huge strides, each great gain representing some calamitous loss. The means by which the largest fortunes have, since the great days of government stockjobbing, been realised, has been the gambling in railway-stock, that has ruined thousands to make a few Crœsuses. These men do not make rich by production—by increasing the comforts and luxuries of life—but by managing that what is produced shall pass from others and belong to themselves. They lead a life of wild perils, ruin ever in the midst of their greatness suspended over them by a thread, like the sword over the Sicilian parasite. Those among them who have died rich, have sometimes looked back on storms, just barely weathered, when some little incident about the presentment of a bill, or a call of subscribed stock, would have been sufficient to exhaust the last fund of credit. Some of them walking forth at noon with the majesty of merchant princes, find themselves ere eve irretrievably bankrupt, penniless, and obscure, only for a little while astonishing the world by the magnitude of the amount associated with their failure. In this class we shall find two men start in life, equally meritorious, equally honourable, equally able, using like opportunities in precisely the same manner, yet the one dies in

his palace worth half a million, and the other expires in his garret leaving a starving family. The system where so much depends on fortunate accident, so little on probity, ability, and labour, cannot be sound.

The discussion of the subject of property and wealth would naturally lead us to the two methods in which wealth is used when it has been realised—industrial capital, by which it is returned, or is expected to be returned, with increase to its owner; and expenditure, by which it becomes exhausted. Both these subjects belong to another department of the volume. The question of the employment of capital is so intimately connected with the condition and prospects of the working-classes, that it is reserved for separate examination in connection with an inquiry into their present state and future interests.* Expenditure, in which realised wealth is allowed to disperse itself, instead of being employed as a means of reproduction, is considered in the immediately following chapter. In the meantime, we may devote a few words to the subject of the preservation of realised wealth.

Capital, which is the great power by which the complex machinery of society is moved, has its existence in the saving of what is produced by industry and skill. Its possession is the simplest element that distinguishes the civilised human being from the savage. The possession of a certain quantity of capital is a necessary condition of civilised life: it pervades all grades of society, from the hundred thousand pounds with which the cotton lord establishes a new mill, to the mere cap, jacket, and trousers, which equip the navie for asking day's labour. It constitutes that portion of production which is saved from consumption; and the more that is thus saved, the greater is the fund which society at large have as a security for future production, and which the labouring portion of it have as a security for permanent employment. It is one of the many beneficent characteristics of self-denial, that as society is at present constituted, the most profitable shape in which money can be saved is its employment as capital during the process of saving. In the language of Mr Mill:—

'To the vulgar, it is not at all apparent that what is saved is consumed. To them every one who saves, appears in the light of a person who hoards: they may think such conduct permissible, or even laudable, when it is to provide for a family, and the like; but they have no conception of it doing good to other people: saving is to them another word for keeping a thing to one's-self; while spending it appears to them to be a distributing of it among others. The person who expends his fortune in unproductive consumption, is looked upon as diffusing benefits all

* See chaps. vi. and vii.

around; and is an object of so much favour, that some portion of the same popularity attaches even to him who spends what does not belong to him; who not only destroys his own capital, if he ever had any, but, under pretence of borrowing, and on promise of repayment, possesses himself of capital belonging to others, and destroys that likewise.

'This popular error comes from attending to a small portion only of the consequences that flow from the saving or the spending; all that part of the effects of either, which are out of sight, being out of mind. The eye follows what is saved into an imaginary strong box, and there loses sight of it; what is spent it follows into the hands of tradesmen and dependants, but without reaching the ultimate destination in either case. Saving (for productive investment) and spending coincide very closely in the first stage of their operations. The effects of both begin with consumption; with the destruction of a certain portion of wealth; only the things consumed, and the persons consuming, are different. There is, in the one case, a wearing out of tools, a destruction of material, and a quantity of food and clothing supplied to labourers, which they destroy by use: in the other case, there is a consumption—that is to say, a destruction—of wines, equipages, and furniture.

'Thus far the consequence to the national wealth has been much the same—an equivalent quantity of it has been destroyed in both cases. But in the spending, this first stage is also the final stage; that particular amount of the produce of labour has disappeared, and there is nothing left; while, on the contrary, the saving person, during the whole time that the destruction was going on, has had labourers at work repairing it, who are ultimately found to have replaced, with an increase, the equivalent of what has been consumed. And as this operation admits of being repeated indefinitely, without any fresh act of saving, a saving once made, becomes a fund to maintain a corresponding number of labourers in perpetuity, reproducing annually their own maintenance with a profit.'*

It is necessary to the realisation of this view, that the money invested be absolutely reproduced; an effect which does not always take place, as many people who have speculated in railway and other undertakings with the intention of increasing their savings can testify. At the same time it must be kept in view that money invested and reproduced does not go through precisely the same operation as money spent in the usual acceptation of the term. Money invested and increasing, is never presumed to pass into the hands of any one who does not work so as to replace it. Of money spent, a great part goes into the hands of persons who are

* Mill's Principles of Political Economy, vol. i. pp. 88-89

not called upon to replace it. The difference between the two classes of receivers comprehends the whole range between producers and mere consumers. We see them daily in our walks abroad—the consumers occupying all grades, from the fashionable sponge down to the crawling mendicant—the producers filling a more worthy range, from the engineer or artist down to the horny-fisted mechanic.*

* See this subject farther considered in chap. x.

CHAPTER V.

THE POOR AND THE RICH.

Men naturally Unequal—Civilisation smoothes the Inequality—Its Tendency to Equalise the Happiness of the World—The Distinctions in Riches do not represent the Distinctions in the main Elements of Happiness—Practicability of the Labouring-Classes being made as Happy as any—Usefulness of the Rich as an Insurance Fund for Calamities—Effect of Charity by the Rich—Effect of the Expenditure of the Rich—Literature and Art—Crowds of Ornamental Servants—The true Principle of Domestic Service—Public Works.

In the many fallacies embodied in party cries, there is not a more false or foolish saying than the often-repeated one, that in a state of nature all men are equal. On the contrary, in a state of nature men are frightfully and calamitously unequal; and it is the province of civilisation to reduce the natural inequalities of their condition; to divert the strength of the strong, from personal aggression to public benevolence; and to make the weakness of the weak an object of solicitude and care, rather than of oppression and plunder.

There are elements of vast inequality in the endowments, both mental and physical, of mankind, as developed in the period of childhood. We have on the one side the acute, the cunning, the healthy, the strong; on the other the obtuse, the facile, the diseased, and the feeble. As human beings increase in years, the contrasts would become the greater were it not for the levelling checks of a sound civilisation. The peculiarity, whatever it may be—strength or weakness, talent or stupidity— of the infant, becomes multiplied in the man, in whom the strength that can tyrannise, and the weakness that must submit, are necessarily increased in corresponding ratio. The farther we look from civilisation through savage life, the greater we find the inequality; until going back even beyond slavery in all its grades, we come to that first bloody stamp of human inequality—cannibalism. The original elements of this inequality are not to be exterminated—indeed they are evidently conducive, by the energies they set at work, to the good of the human race. But it is the boast of a high state of moral civilisation, that it counteracts the tyrannical influences of inequality, and protects the weak, whether they be so physically or intellectually, from the tyranny of the strong. Travellers have found the dominion of physical strength most perfect wherever the arts of civilised life have been least developed. The natural impulse of man, individually powerful, is

to oppress and crush his weak neighbour: it is by the progress of civilisation that the weak unite their interests against the strong, and raise barriers which he cannot overcome. It is within the memory of living travellers, that if a Turkish slave happened, through trepidation or clumsiness, in passing a great man, to press against him, the offended dignitary seized the opportunity to show how expertly he could cut off a human head with his scimitar. The European aristocrat might wish to follow so fascinating an example, but the law is too strong for him. That there is one law for the rich and another for the poor—that the criminal code is not used to protect the person and property of the citizen, but to enable the strong to oppress the weak—are among the standard grievances of imperfectly-developed liberties and incomplete civilisation. Perhaps it is not in human nature that such abuses should be entirely eradicated, just as it is not in the power of manufacturing art to achieve the perfection expressed by the exact sciences. But the progress which man has been able to make in smoothening these social inequalities, is perhaps no less wonderful than his mechanical triumphs. Little more than half a century has elapsed since, among the most polished people of Europe, punishment was entirely at the will of individual great men. The Bastille was then standing—a dark mysterious type of the power of aristocratic vengeance. A story of the capricious use of imprisonment in that dread fortress is recorded by Marmontel, which would be amusing if such a quality can ever attach itself to the grossest forms of human oppression. Marmontel had been accused of writing a witty poetical satire on the Duke d'Aumont. This nobleman, who had a personal hatred towards him, obtained a promise from the minister Choiseul, that the novelist should be committed to the Bastille. Marmontel had subsequently an interview with the minister, whom he satisfied of his innocence. Choiseul, who had the reputation of an honest and able man, felt himself awkwardly situated by this discovery, but he nevertheless found it necessary to send Marmontel to the Bastille. He explained that the king and he had promised the Duke d'Aumont that he should have the gratification of seeing the man of genius punished; and considering the services of the duke and his predecessors to the crown, it was necessary to comply with his desire.

It has been elsewhere shown, that we cannot with safety and propriety interfere with the inequalities which fortune and conduct create throughout mankind. The line of interference is, however, a pretty clear one—we are to allow every man individually to make or mar his fortunes as he pleases, but we are not to allow him to interfere with those of his neighbour. We are to allow him who is diligent and acute to accumulate as large a fortune as a propitious concurrence of circumstances can pos-

sibly bring to him, while we are to leave his indolent and obtuse neighbour to his threadbare coat and brown bread; but we are not to let the rich man in his wantonness ride down the poor with his chariot, nor are we to allow the poor to take the rich man's wealth, on the plea that he has too much of this world's goods.

If the state remove all means of oppression, give ready and effective redress for injuries, and step in to remedy the misery created by calamitous accidents, we shall find that the inequality of the human race is not so real as it is apparent; and that no class is liable to such forms of unhappiness, that some, nearly as great, cannot be seen haunting its neighbours. And here we may state, as a general proposition or text on which the remarks that follow are a commentary, *that all human evils which are incident to one class and not to another are remediable.*

It would be a far worse world than a good Deity has made it, if felicity increased proportionally with riches, and the occupant of the castle were as much happier than the occupant of the cottage as his rooms are more stately, his drapery and furniture more costly, and his viands more dainty. It is not by multiplying twopence by thirty that we can estimate the happiness of him who drinks claret over him who drinks beer. It is a trite saying, that the poor are as happy as the rich, and happier; but perhaps the reasons for holding this belief have not been often closely examined, and hence the general principle has been attacked as a vain sentiment, invented by the rich to appease the poor. But if we look at the main elements of human felicity, we shall find that they are among the objects of moderate attainment. They consist in health, physical and mental – in food sufficient to satisfy hunger—in clothing sufficient to protect the body from the elements—and in that enjoyment of the domestic attachments which continues the existence of our species. *The wealth of the richest man that ever lived will not add to the list a fifth element of enjoyment so large as any one of these.* The next in greatness will be found in intellectual pursuits; but this class of luxuries is unknown to those in whom a taste for them is not cultivated, and it rarely happens that where the love exists it is not gratified. It possesses, like the luxury of virtue, the rare faculty of ministering to its own demands; and it has the peculiarity of affording a method in which the poor can enjoy the possessions of the rich without humiliation, for the passing study of pictures and statues gives them some advantage from their rich neighbour's possessions without their picking the crumbs that drop from his table.

Where there are equal laws, and the labourer, without exhausting exertion, can house, clothe, and feed himself; can marry and bring up children; he thus satisfies to himself the main conditions

of our imperfect human happiness. There is none of these truly rich endowments that have not in their very nature a counteracting quality in every effort to expand them. The appetite has its limits of enjoyment. Its fastidiousness rises fully to a par with the art that indulges it; and he who makes a gradual progress onwards from the coarsest to the most exquisite food, certainly forfeits all relish for the simplicity he has deserted, but gains no new pleasure from the excitements which his appetite demands. The labourer suddenly raised to affluence by some freak of fortune, often leaves irrecoverably behind him the true pleasures of the table.

Now the real beauty and beneficence of this arrangement is to be found here—that it seems not to be beyond those powers of organisation, and of administering justice with which man is endowed, to enable the labouring population of a country to enjoy these great elements of happiness. If there are times when, or parts of this empire in which, this has not yet been accomplished, it seems still to be within the faculty of statesmanship to remedy the defect. But if it were necessary that, to possess these primary blessings, the head of every household must spend an income of £500 a year, the object would be abandoned in despair.

Riches nourish revolutions and calamities of their own, which are perhaps not much less distressing than those to which the people who have a humble subsistence are liable. Human life is the first object of solicitude—the main cause of anxiety and distress throughout the world. Among those who have the sort of humble competence we have been alluding to, it must be a rare incident that a life is about to be lost which money could save. A man who is bringing up his family on an income of a thousand a year, is apt to believe that he saves them from many calamities to which they would be liable if he had but a quarter of that income. He has the first physician, the most careful nurses, the most select servile attendance. Alas! all these are but the artificial supports of decrepitudes which his wealth has produced; and he may behold, with satisfaction if he is a benevolent man, with envy if he is not, the rosy-cheeked urchins at the cottage doors, who have learned how to save themselves from the accidents against which his children are protected, and who have hardened themselves against the ailments for which his children are physicked—imbibing health and happiness which all his gold cannot purchase.

It is true that in the rapid accumulation of our city population, in the migrations and concentrations which manufactures have caused, there have lately been influences of disease affecting the working-classes of the population from which the richer are exempt. This is an evil which seems to be no exception to the

principle, that all human calamities, which are incident to one class and not to another, are remediable. The local, or even the general increase of mankind, may sometimes outstrip the arrangements which the organising portion of the human race have made to combat with the difficulties so arising; but everything gives hope that in the end the intellectual will govern the physical, and when men set earnestly to the work of organising they will accomplish it. At this moment we are in Britain endeavouring to open up new resources for the protection of the public health. In looking at them, even in their present stage, no one will dare to say that they are likely to abridge the health or happiness of the community; while it is impossible to predict how great and comprehensive may be the blessings they will confer on the race. The sanitary measure carried during the last session of parliament, dawns upon us with the hope, that before many years are past we shall see the working occupants of the densest quarters of our crowded cities as little amenable to the influences which shorten life, as the richest lord whose feet have never touched the damp earth, and whose well-ventilated mansion has never known the absence of the family physician.

We have abundance of evidence from statistical facts, that the causes of disease which affect the poorer classes of the community are removable without requiring fulfilment of the impossible condition that they should be made rich. Tables of mortality show indeed that people of the working-classes, among whom very noxious influences, chiefly arising from their own vices, are in action, are short-lived. It is a remarkable fact, at the same time, that the best class of lives is found in the friendly societies, consisting entirely of members of the working-classes. Their average of vitality is better than that of the tables of insurance offices, notwithstanding the self-interested precautions of these corporations in selecting their lives. The government annuitants, who might be supposed to sell their lives dear, are found in vitality to be also below the average of the friendly societies. These friendly societies consist of the cautious and moral members of the working-classes. They are selected by no stronger criterion than that of their choosing to belong to a benefit society, and exercising the self-denial necessary to enable them to preserve their membership. We thus find their occupation and way of living so conducive to health, and so little amenable to disease, without peculiar causes, generally of their own creation, that no class of the community has in reality a better command of life.

A mine of information, from which many facts tending to support this view have been derived, is a quarto volume called 'Contributions to Vital Statistics, being a Development of the Rate of Mortality and the Laws of Sickness, from Original and

Extensive Data procured from Friendly Societies,' by F. G. P. Neison.* Along with his tables of vitality of the members of friendly societies, he has given others applicable to the middle classes and the high aristocracy. The shortest average duration of life is found in this last division. The author of the inquiry says, 'It could be clearly shown, by tracing the various classes of society in which there exists sufficient means of subsistence, beginning with the most humble, and passing on to the middle and upper classes, that a gradual deterioration in the duration of life takes place; and that just as life, with all its wealth, pomp, and magnificence, would seem to become more valuable and tempting, so are its opportunities and chances of enjoyments lessened. As far as the results of figures admit of judging, this condition would seem to flow directly from the luxuriant and pampered style of living among the wealthier classes, whose artificial habits interfere with the nature and degree of those physical exercises which, in simpler classes of society, are accompanied with a long life.'—(P. 39.)

We thus find that the riches of the rich have been unable to buy off, or even to defer, the approach of the great enemy—death. In fact, all classes of the human race are liable in their turn to the calamities incident to their race; and even a Roman poet, unacquainted with the melancholy grandeur of expression with which the right of teaching the causes of these calamities had invested the authors of our sacred books, could point his moral by representing the men whose lot the world most envied, as by the very eminence of their position doubly punished, in subjection to calamities to which their humbler brethren were amenable as well as they. No one has hitherto been able, either by the extent of his genius or the vastness of the apparent resources which fortune has placed at his disposal, to exempt himself from the ordinary frailties of his race; and the man who has been the wonder of this, and will be the wonder of future ages, by the height of human greatness to which, by a steady and unerring flight, he rose from the flat plain of the ordinary population of a multitudinous empire, had to undergo an ordeal of humiliation, the depth of which can only be appreciated by measuring it from the greatness whence he had fallen.

We thus see that the rich, as a class, are not exempt from calamities as great as those which visit the poor, although perhaps it may be admitted as a general fact that, in the present state of society, they are amenable to them in a less degree. But we shall find, if we look to the position of the rich, that the advantage of their wealth is not entirely for themselves, but distributes itself through society. It is useful to a people collectively, as

* London. 4to. 1845.

well as to individuals, to be possessed of surplus floating capital, not locked up in investments or speculations. It would be impossible for any laws or fiscal regulations to create this capital—it can only exist in the possession of individuals; and as we have found that the acquisition and transmission of wealth prompts the speculator or professional labourer to accumulate capital, so the pomp and circumstance, the ease and luxury, of a rich unoccupied gentleman, induce his descendant to live upon his made fortune, without encountering the labours and anxieties with which he might increase it. Here we have, through the operation of the ordinary selfish passions of mankind, a reserved fund to meet the incidental calamities to which the human race is subjected. It is taken from no one—it has been brought into existence before the present generation was born: even if it have been acquired by peculation and rapine, the present owner is guiltless of the offence, and none living have suffered by the accumulation. Though the unproductive rich are not, as we hereafter have to show, the most valuable members of society, yet the collective funds of the rich men of a country or district will always be, from time to time, performing some office of benevolence. Does a fire level the habitations and destroy the slender property of a thousand poor industrious people; does a storm at sea desolate a fishing village; does some frightful explosion, or railway collision, slay the heads of many humble families—the unemployed money of the rich is the insurance fund out of which the calamity is to be mitigated. It is upon this fund that every extraordinary expense naturally alights; for what is taken from it is spared from pomp and luxury, not from necessity. The capital of the merchant or manufacturer may be engaged—the wages of the worker are required for his daily wants—it is to the unemployed rich that society naturally and justly looks for the liquidation of extraordinary claims. Nor, though there may be hard, selfish, and foolish exceptions, is the appeal often made utterly in vain. One man has his social hobby to promote; another is open to the solicitations of the humane female members of his family; a third is in the hands of his clergyman, who is proud of being the influencing cause of munificence; the very shame of being behind their neighbours and equals in liberality operates with many; and thus, in some shape or other, the tax is pretty fairly levied without legal sanction.

We must, however, cautiously guard against the admission, that whatever a rich man may give forth in his carelessness, or even his humanity, is beneficial to the world. It is advantageous that his wealth should exist; but it is sometimes expedient that some other persons—for instance, the poor-law authorities—should have the charge of its distribution, in so far as it may affect the pauperism of the country. There are many men benevolent and

thoughtful, who yet, having studied the effect of indiscriminate charity, would often call upon the rich to restrain their benefactions. It is a great evil to a community to substitute dependence for honest industry—to displace a class of free producers and rear a race of beggars. A rich man who should spend his time in tossing half-crowns and shillings to every one who asked for them, would perhaps be worse employed than in breaking windows and tearing off knockers. The charity of this class is often necessarily indiscriminate. Inquiries into the reality of distress are painful and laborious—satisfying importunity is, to him who can do it without leaving one want or desire of his own ungratified, easy and agreeable. The charity best managed is that which is taken from unwilling givers—from those who are prompted to give by the dire necessities to be relieved, and the security that their money will not be abused. This may, perhaps, teach us not thoughtlessly to arraign that peculiarity of human nature which makes the rich man, wallowing in his luxuries, seem callous to the wretchedness of others of his race. Rich men are not always disposed to be philosophers; and if they were so, they would, in the majority of instances, neither bestow exertion nor ability on the question of pauper relief sufficient to come even so near to its solution as an experienced board of guardians. By the heedlessness of a profuse and unwise distribution, they may do more mischief than even by the mere unamiable carelessness of a callous disregard for the suffering part of mankind.

It is part of the utility of this fund, that it is the best object of taxation; and though to tax it exclusively would be a species of confiscation, there is no doubt that in laying on direct taxes on income, and in levying duties which may either fall on luxuries or necessities, there is every reason, both of justice and policy, why a larger proportionate share of the burden should be laid on the spender of realised capital, than on him whose income is the produce of his daily exertions.

The position in relation to the other members of the social family, of the unproductive rich, has been discussed in the midst of so many clashing interests and sectarian animosities, that it is difficult to look at it through an uncorrupted medium. One would think it, on a first approach, a sufficient qualification to save the lot of this peculiar few from the animosity of the producing class at least, that it is the goal to which they are all striving—the ultimate prize for which they are all competing. To those who have achieved it, it frequently recalls the poet's regret—

> 'Oh happiness, how far we flee
> Thy own sweet paths in search of thee!'

But to those who are struggling onwards, it is the summit of sublunary ambition and earthly happiness. Where the first wants of

nature are supplied—for they are immediate, and come before all prospective desires—the worker, of whatever grade, from the head of a learned profession downwards, looks forward to an affluent or a comfortable independence in declining years as the reward of his exertions; and there is no class more susceptible to the joys of competence and ease, than the humblest grade of industrial life. That it thus affords a reward for industry and exertion, should be itself a protection to the realised wealth of the unoccupied. Nor can this reward have its full influence if any man's wealth is touched because he has not created it. If he has not himself created it, it must have passed, as we have elsewhere shown, from the hands of those who *have* created it; and if you remove the right of disposal of the wealth created, you remove one of the strongest, and at the same time one of the most estimable motives for its production. The advocates of free exertion, stimulated by its natural rewards, are accused of encouraging the selfish and engrossing propensities of human nature; but surely the restriction that would limit a man to production for his own personal consumption, and would forbid his pursuing exertions which enable him to leave substantial tokens of affection to his family, and liberality to the rest of the world, better deserves the denomination of 'the selfish system.'

We must look, however, at the wealth of the unproductive classes in all its aspects; and among these we shall find demanding attention, not only the effect which the stability of created wealth has in promoting its production, but the effect of its expenditure on the community. The view favourable to wealth, as an encourager of labour, cannot perhaps be better expressed than in the terms used in one of those small pamphlets addressed to the working-classes, which have lately swarmed forth from the teeming brains of the Parisian economists. The writer is Mr J. Schmit, who addresses a few words to the working-classes as 'one of themselves.' He says:—

'You are told that the rich man who does not work with his hands, does nothing for society. But if he employs a number of servants, he finds means of subsistence for them. If he has carriages and horses, he pays the workmen who made the carriages, the farmer who reared the horses, or who grows the oats or hay with which they are fed, the smith who shoes them, and the saddler who harnesses them. If he has a fine house, he finds means of subsistence for the masons and bricklayers who built it, and keep it in repair, the painters who paint it, and the carpenters and cabinet-makers who furnish it. If he buys pictures, statues, and engravings, he supports the artist, who, in his turn, gives employment to a variety of persons, including even the woman who spins the thread of which the canvas is made, and the miner who extracted the ore from which the statue is eventually cast. If

he buys diamonds or cashmeres, does he not give employment, not only to the merchant whose business it is to import them, but also to the sailor? * * * Look at the numbers among you who gain their daily bread by labour employed in the production of all sorts of luxuries. War against the rich would, therefore, be nothing more or less than war against those workmen who are employed in such great numbers by the rich. For what could they do if employment was no longer to be found in those branches of industry which are only supported by the wealthier classes? Project-mongers, who only know the working-classes by theory, will readily reply that "they will do something else." But are men, such as working jewellers, opticians, painters on china, embroiderers, compositors, musical instrument-makers —I mean the workmen employed in these occupations, and above all operatives in factories, are they prepared to become paviours, navies, carters, or porters? And taking for granted for a minute that such a transformation be possible, are there enough streets to be paved, railways to be made, carts to drive, and loads to carry, to employ so many extra hands?'

There is a certain confusion incident to arguments of this sort, from their being supposed to imply some merit in the person who is represented as distributing such advantages. They bear the aspect of praise to the idle rich man for being rich, since his wealth flows forth with advantage to the community; the argument ought to be strictly limited to a plea for the inviolability of wealth for its own sake, not for the sake of any merit in those who enjoy it without making it; for they have none on that ground, though they may have earned well of their fellow-men by the manner in which they spend it. Inevitably circulated in some shape or other among those who make their bread by the sweat of their brow, it matters not in whose hands it is, provided it exist. If it be not in the form of an estate of ten thousand a year, in the person of some young man of title, it may be in the form of ten separate fortunes of a thousand a year, each possessed by the sons of so many successful shopkeepers; and it is all one to the world at large which form it assumes, with the difference, applicable not to its existence, but its expenditure, that it is likely to be more frugally and beneficially spent by the latter than by the former.

We cannot, then, attribute any merit to the idle rich for their riches, nor for that inevitable expenditure whereby they benefit the working-classes in the pursuit of their own pomps and pleasures. They have no special merit in wearing fine clothes, whereby tailors are in requisition; nor in buying jewels, which encourage the lapidary; nor in sporting dashing equipages, to the satisfaction of the coachmaker, with all his painters and varnishers, and the comfort of certain grooms and postilions. Though the man who has

sent it forth in these directions had never existed, the money itself would have existed, and possibly it might have fallen into hands by which it would have been more discreetly employed.

We have considered unemployed wealth as an insurance fund against calamities, and thus beneficial to the community: there are, however, other functions of no slight importance and value which are peculiar to large fortunes. There are services which the owners of great wealth can perform, which could not have been obtained had the same wealth been scattered among several individuals. The man who has far more than he requires to expend on his own comforts, or chooses to expend on his pleasures, has a surplus to devote to those objects which raise the character of the people—to those productions which are used to their utmost use without being consumed, and require but to be seen to nourish the highest intellectual appetite. Literature at one time came largely within the class of objects which the rich man could aid. There was a time when the author could not rise above the earth without his patron. Formerly in France, in later times in Germany, the monarch thought it one of the main glories of his crown to be a patron of genius and erudition. In England, singularly enough, no monarch since the days of the least sensible monarch who ever mounted the throne—James I.—has ever considered it one of his functions to patronise literature, and perhaps literature has lost little by the omission. There were, however, formerly solid patrons, in the shape of peers and rich citizens, who subscribed for large-paper copies, gave dinners, and made presents. Let us not blame them, even if there was a little ostentatious liberality and profuse condescension in the giver—even if the cheek of the child of genius burned with shame when he received the gift. Whoever was to blame, it was not the author's kind patron: he did his best, according to his knowledge and his delicacy; and too often the author could not have lived, or at least could not have lived an author, without his aid. All this is now altered. Through the expansion of the educated and reading class, a good author may now be read by as large a public in a year as have read the works of Richardson in a century. Formerly the few bought, and the author was destined to immortality; but immortality could not remunerate him. At this day he has his chances of immortality as strong as ever, but he has also a reading public around him large enough to remunerate him, if his works be as popular as they are valuable. It may be that works of great erudition, and of too much genius to be at once appreciated, are lost to the world under our present system; but its superiority over the dynasty of 'the Patron' is too great in other respects to be thus neutralised. The rich man, however, if he is not called on to patronise literature in the old sense of the term, may still buy magnificent books, and may benefit the world of let-

ters by creating a library of costly rarities. It is to be feared that in this country, however, the wealthy aristocracy find so many other recreations more pleasant than literature, that the proportion of each man's expenditure on books to his annual income would be found to decrease in a ratio nearly corresponding to that of the increase of fortune. Booksellers know that great costly learned works, printed in small quantities at high prices, and published with a view to their being purchased by the very wealthy, do not constitute speculations so secure as the cheap volumes bought by the middle classes. In this respect our neighbours put us to shame. The encyclopædias and biographical dictionaries of Germany and France are extensive and costly enough to show that the aristocracy of these countries, so much less wealthy than our own, must purchase books with the same liberality as our own humbler classes. A work was attempted in England, under the best auspices, of the same description with the 'Biographie Universelle' of France—of which a second edition is either in progress or completed, but it failed; it appealed to the men who can pay from £40 to £50 for a great book of reference, but they would not come forward. Another work of reference, in some measure under the same superintendence—the 'Penny Cyclopædia'—appealing by its price to a humbler class of purchasers, was eminently successful. The few members of the high aristocracy who are purchasers of costly books do eminent service to literature, and more perhaps by the ancient and curious books which they bring together, than even by the purchase of modern works. Rare books are sometimes of great value, even to the literary investigator whose labours are to come forth in a shape calculated for wide popular use; but without great wealth no one can possess a large collection of rare books. Those who bring them together are seldom envious of their mere inspection and use; and so the library of one rich man may often supply the wants of many poor scholars, without loss to the imparter of the benefit, or degradation to the receiver.

The department of the fine arts developes a still better field of public service to the rich man. By allowing the poorer world to see his paintings and statues, he does what greatly enriches them, yet makes himself no poorer. The middle classes even are quite unable to possess great works of art, unless by co-operation and the creation of public galleries; but even when they are sufficiently enlightened and patriotic to organise such establishments, the great duke, who chooses in his own magnificence to make a gallery outshining in its glories that of the neighbouring manufacturing town, is just adding so much to the national materials for the cultivation of art and taste, and all the humanising and elevating sentiments of which art and taste are the parents. How truly consecrated are the thousands thus bestowed, when

compared with those expended on drunken lackeys, on horse races, on dog kennels, and at the gambling table! There are pictures and statues in the world valued individually at £40,000; and those who have the privilege of looking on them, have the means of training the eye and mind to new and sublime ideas. Alas! these greatest works of human genius are not in this the richest country in the world. There are other lands, where more is sacrificed to art and less to the vulgar symbols of external pomp, from which we cannot drag them. It is humiliating to Englishmen to find in continental cities, which for population or wealth would here be counted provincial market towns, collections with which our national gallery cannot compete.

Indeed the remnant of the feudal system has strongly contributed in this country to depress high art. At the time when the Dutch merchants were buying the paintings of Rubens and Rembrandt, Howard, Earl of Arundel, was deemed to be a man labouring under some peculiar insanity because he spent money on ancient statues; and the taste of Charles I. for paintings was looked on as something in common with his other failings. A feudal aristocracy, even when they appear to have adjusted their habits to a more civilised age, retain a vitiated and dangerous partiality for personal followers. The Dutch merchant, who had 'more ships than houses,' was neither really nor nominally a territorial lord, and the pomps on which he spent his wealth were the ennobling pomps of great works of art. The English lord still retained round him, in the form of crowds of powdered and plushed lackeys, the hereditary representatives of the jackmen and bowmen of elder days; and the prosperous merchant or manufacturer, that he might appear before the world in the guise of the old nobility, too often followed the example.

The expenditure on a parade of useless retainers is one of the natural follies incident to riches—naturally yielded to, not easily avoided. Almost every man has some latent love of popularity and applause; and the silent assiduity of servile domestics is the form in which wealth naturally indulges in this amiable weakness. To obtain it gratuitously, one must either do public services, or flatter the passions and the prejudices of the people. The rich man may choose to do neither: both functions are troublesome, while one of them is sometimes inconsistent with a nice sense of public honesty; and in either, efforts, however earnestly made and pursued, may fail; while hired applause is secure, or at least does not flaunt its failure in the seeker's face. It thus will frequently happen that the great man, shutting himself up in his spacious mansion, amid an army of hirelings and a staff of parasites, believes that he is magnanimously disdaining the noisy manifestations of popular applause, while he is in reality nursing and gloating over the sweet though silent tributes of hired idolatry.

It is far from being beneficial to the happiness and peace of the people, especially in times of depression and discontent, that the hard-working, independent man, whose twelve hours a day are mortgaged to the subsistence of his family and himself, and who is able, after all his exertions and endurance, barely to keep their heads above the drowning waters of pauperism, should see perpetually flaring before his eyes the particoloured liveries, indicating so many individuals of his race and class, who, having sold their independence, are kept by the insolent caprice of the rich who have bought it, not only in ease and idle luxury, but in pomp. True this pomp is the badge of servility; but the native dignity of independence, when clad in rags, is a poor rival among the uneducated to the pompous exhibition. He whose selfish vanity supports it is sapping the independence of the people; and if he find among them, and especially among those most closely subjected to the influences of his princely establishment, a growing partiality for parochial relief, and a relaxing of the hold on honest independence, he may thank himself for having sown and fostered the humiliating taste.

A person whose position and sympathies were by no means allied to democracy, once told the writer of this, that in a year of pressure and distress, after seeing many painful objects of sympathy among the poor inhabitants of the by-lanes of the metropolis, emerging from the squalid alleys to a fashionable thoroughfare, the first object that struck his attention was a handsome open barouche flaunting in the sun—for the day was fine, though one might have passed through the dreary districts of poverty without knowing that it was so. In this vehicle sat a little haughty beauty alone. There were two footmen behind, a driver, a postilion, and an outrider—five men all studded round this one human being, and making it the serious business of life to be her attendant! There may be people, females as well as males, whose position in the state requires that a cordon should be drawn between them and the rest of the world, to prevent impertinent, foolish, or selfish interference with the public business: here, however, all was a mere wanton display of superfluous wealth; and the remark with which our friend concluded his description was, that had he been an operative, offering to give the labour of his hands for the subsistence of his family, and denied the privilege of working for the wife and the children who in their dreary home were watching his return with faint hopes, it would require more than his own knowledge—and it was not inconsiderable—of the true rules of political economy to refrain from murmurs, and, if there were cunning spirits near to take advantage of his feelings, from outbreak.

It is a common remark in the middle-class life of this country, that female servants are, as a body, more respectable than male

servants. The reason of the difference is, that females are never employed but to be of use, while males are often employed for mere ostentatious ornament. There is nothing degrading in the profession of a servant. It is an honest term, applied sometimes to persons of considerable dignity; and a manager or secretary speaks of himself as the servant of a public company or corporation, while a minister of state dignifies himself as a servant of the public. It is a word seldom, if ever, used as a term of reproach; and it is only when the words lackey and flunkey, indicating the idle menials of the great, are adopted, that the reference to domestic employment is intended to embody a censure or a sneer. The duty of looking after the domestic accommodation and comforts of the man whose time is seriously occupied in labour, whether it be with the head or with the hand, is so little humiliating, that if it be not convenient to employ hired persons for the duty, it falls to be performed by relations. The arrangement, on the whole, only carries out the division of labour. The secretary of an insurance company, or the cashier of a bank, would not be able to attend to his duties if he did not find some one to cook his meals, whiten his linen, and blacken his shoes. In the simplest republic, it might be more a loss than a gain to the community if the laws against personal service by the citizen compelled the secretary of state to brush his own coat and shoes; and sometimes republics get over the difficulty of declarations of independence, by substituting slaves for servants, and committing robbery of the most atrocious kind on their fellow-beings, to supply those services which their principles of liberty will not permit them to buy.

Yet it is not a favourable indication of the prosperity of a country, or of the soundness of its social state, that domestic service can be had cheap. It was matter of much complaint in great houses before the pressure of 1847, that it was difficult to find well-recommended men who would wear livery. The symptom was a very perplexing one to those who did not know their own home but by the colour of its liveried ornaments; it was not equally regretted by people who found in it an indication that it required strong inducements to draw men out of independent industry into servile ease. There is a clear symptom of general prosperity when we find that servants are costly appendages, and that they are rising in their demands; though it might not, probably, be easy to get the respectable housekeeping ladies of the middle class—a powerful body in their influence over general opinion as to such matters—to coincide in this view. The lowest departments of the employing classes may sometimes be found doing the same mischief in their penury as the great are doing in their superfluity. Wherever the hireling is brought in to perform services which there is difficulty in remunerating,

while the employer remains idle, the state of society is wrong. Domestic service is dear in London, and cheap in Dublin—perhaps there is no other considerable town in the empire where it is so cheap; and in this, as in many other features, we see the capital of an industrious and rich community contrasted with that of an idle and a poor. Arithmetic will at once bring us to the conclusion, that where servants are obtained on easy terms there cannot be much industry. If in Dublin or Cork a clerk living on £70 a year can keep a servant, his wife and daughters will not of course perform the domestic services that would fall to their lot if the price of service were too dear for them to obtain it. On the other hand, if in London or Liverpool a family living on such an income must not dream of hiring an attendant, this is because the humbler class have in other capacities inducements to labour, such as the householder with £70 a year cannot afford to compete with. In this state of society the humble householder's family makes an addition to the industry of the community; in the other it does not.

Thus all the saucy demands and conditions of servants, which make prudent housewives turn up their eyes and speak eloquently of the retrograde character of the times, and the good old ways—gone, alas! never to return—are, if rightly considered, but so many indications of an industrial prosperity which should be hailed with satisfaction by all parties. Perhaps the transition state, when demands are made sometimes in wantonness, and are unwillingly yielded to, is the most unpleasant. Along with it there is generally a breaking up of the old feudal notions which put the servant in the position rather of a retainer, whose lot in life lay very much at the discretion of his employers, than of one who had made a bargain equally binding on both parties. But when the transition is completed, and on the one side service, attention, punctuality, and character are offered, while the receiver stipulates for wages, comfort, and toleration, there can be little more difficulty in the satisfactory adjustment of this than of any other contract, such as the hiring of a house, or the freighting of a ship.

To return to the simple question of the expenditure of the rich—they may sometimes, with great advantage to the community, employ their wealth as mercantile capital. The Duke of Bridgewater thus established the great Lancashire canal system; and with the superabundant produce of his great estates, not only bestowed lasting benefits on the community, but found in the wholesome excitement and exertion attending on the control of these weighty projects, a relief from the bitterness of domestic disappointment. His example has been worthily followed by some men of rank in the present day, who will leave on the surface of the earth the vestiges of their public spirit and useful exertion

in the form of bridges, harbours, roads, and railways. On the close of a life devoted to such objects, it is probable that the rich man might look back upon the work of his hands with no less complacency and sense of internal satisfaction, than he who could enumerate his five-barred gates leaped, his stags hunted to death, and his millions of brace of birds bagged in a long series of seasons, devoted, with undeviating punctuality and untiring perseverance, to the moors on the 12th and to the stubble-fields on the 1st. Not driven to exertion by the necessity of making a livelihood, or the desire of grasping more wealth, but actuated, in some respects at least, by less selfish motives, such a person can be subject to few of the inducements for employing capital tyrannically, and will have many motives for adjusting his speculations to the public good and to the welfare of the persons he employs.

Here we find the aristocracy taking a lesson from the middle and productive classes, and affording practical testimony to the opinion—that it is a boon and blessing to these classes to have inducements to labour, and to find the craving excitement of human nature supplied by pressing on in such a fashion as to do service to themselves and to the whole human race. Hundreds of thousands of novel volumes have been exhausted in displaying the miseries of aristocratic listlessness; as many poor-law and hospital reports have been devoted to proclaiming the more substantial and perceptible, though perhaps not always more afflictive, miseries of abject pauperism. The idleness produced by superabundant wealth, with the concomitant removal of practical duties and services to the human race, has more in common with the idleness of hopeless despondency and ignorance of or indifference to all means of social regeneration, than most people imagine. The icy mountain top, and the stagnant marsh in the deep valley, are equally productive of torpor. Life and energy lie between, in the gardens and corn-fields, rich in the productive testimonies of industry, where man is found performing the true journey of life—ever struggling onwards with the burden on the back. It is the natural and the beneficial state for the human being to be placed in; and as it is the greatest source of true comfort and self-consolation to man, it is denied to none, for no one can ever be placed, while in possession of his human faculties, in so abject a position but that he can perform some service to his species; while those who are surrounded by the greatest profusion of wealth and social distinctions have all the greater number of instruments in their hands, which by neglect and perversion may become curses, but by exertion and attention may be made blessings to mankind. Thus all may bear the burden if they will; and it is another attribute of the Wisdom that has regulated human passions and propensities, as well as the movement of the spheres

and the power of the physical elements, that all may, if they so choose, contribute in this the great temporal duty of the human race—a duty thus far essential and important, that those who perform it frequent the earth as a benefit to their fellow-creatures, and as part of the active circulation which the Deity has designed for the human family; while those who do not perform it are the sores and morbid portions of humanity—useless, offensive, and dangerous.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPITAL.

Has no Privileges beyond its Natural Influence—Labour free to Compete with it—Inquiry whether Workmen would find its Profits worth Dividing among them—Never gives Large Profits without being attended either by Risk or Exertion—Manufacturing Capital—Its Effect in Enlarging the Field of Labour—Advantages to the Working-Classes of making Capital for themselves—Extent to which Small Sums would assist them—Value to their Offspring—Extent to which Capital may act Injuriously.

No one, of course, objects to the existence of capital—it is the portion that has been preserved, and not consumed, of what the industrious people of the earth have created by their industry; and among the designers of new systems, and the repudiators of all that has been done, none have been ungrateful enough to wish that our ancestors had not performed these services, or that, having performed them, they had consumed the produce, and prevented it from being at the disposal of the existing generation. No one says that capital ought not to exist; but there are people who maintain that it is not properly distributed, and there are others who desire that its advantages should be obtainable by people who do not possess it.

On the last point it may be well to remember that capital has no peculiar privileges in this country. Though there are laws which nourish the creation of large hereditary estates, they do not tend to nourish capital to be expended in mercantile or manufacturing adventure, unless in those few instances in which hereditary landowners have so much surplus wealth as to be tempted to embark in such speculations. Whatever capital accomplishes, either for its possessors or other people, it performs through its own natural and inherent powers, which, like the fructifying principle of vegetation, may be directed and influenced, but cannot be artificially created. If any person can produce and enjoy the effect of capital without using it as a means, he is as much entitled to do so as he is to produce artificial vegetation. If the working-classes can do without the capitalist, they may; there is no law that binds them to him—he has no more authority over them than they have over him. They are as free to produce without his aid, as he is to invest his capital without theirs. The relation between the parties is one of mutual accommodation, treated in the purest spirit of free trade; the law only seeing that, whichever party takes what the other possesses, does so on the terms which may

be mutually agreed on. If a number of workmen can unite together, and, dispensing with the capitalist, bring their commodities into the market, the law allows them to compete with him, and undersell him if they can. There are many capitalists, and supporters of capital, who would be disposed to go farther than the law, were this necessary to secure the contentment of any extensive discontented body among the people, by giving some encouraging privileges to labourers producing and selling their own commodities; and they would do so in the conviction that some restless people might be thus quieted, by finding that, unless the privileges granted to these producers were extravagantly extensive, they could not compete with the natural power of capital.

There are no solid temptations for classes of men to invade each other's rights and possessions. The contemplated advantage of robbery, theft, and all descriptions of fraudulent crimes, arises in the perpetrator believing that either through his criminality or his talent he has a monopoly; if the pillagers in any country were one-fourth part as numerous as the producers, there would soon be nothing to steal. Classes cannot commit spoliation with any profit to themselves. The wealth of any order of society goes on with a steady produce from day to day; and it is not in what it is worth at this moment, but what it will continue to afford to-morrow, and day after day, and year after year, while it remains protected, that its value consists. When you seize it, you stop this continuance—you take it, such as it is, at the moment, and it is often of as little value in comparison to its prospects as the goose to the future golden eggs. Thus it is that war and internal convulsions are so destructive to capital. Of this phenomenon it is unnecessary to adduce instances. It would be difficult to find any one in this country who, in denying it, would find listeners. Projects violently to seize on the wealth of capitalists, we may safely indeed class among those with which exasperated political partisans may charge their opponents, but which no body of men really entertain as a practical design.

There are, however, and there will perhaps long be, among the working-classes and their enthusiastic friends, notions that capital is a vast fund of wealth very unequally distributed, which, by some operations upon society, not of a violent nature, might acquire a tendency to disperse itself more impartially, and thus to neutralise those appalling contrasts of great wealth and extreme penury which society exhibits. It is important that people who harbour such thoughts in a vague shape should see them reduced to practical arithmetic, in order that they may consider whether the fund annually produced to the rich, through the profits of capital, would really so materially raise the wealth of the humbler classes were it distributed among them, as to present them with substantial inducements for great efforts to alter the

existing and natural disposal of capital and profits. The higher we rise in the grade of wealth, the fewer possessors of it we find; and thus those whose great wealth would be the chief temptation for a partition would be found so limited in number, that their united riches would add little to the millions if dispersed among them. Capital represents what is saved. The savings of mankind are, unfortunately, small in comparison with what is consumed; and thus wages, which are the fund of consumption, at the disposal of the great body of the people, form at the same time the great bulk of the annual income of the country—giving rise to the apparent anomaly, that the chief riches of the country pass through the hands of the poor, if it is proper to apply that term to the productive labouring-classes. Chancellors of the Exchequer are well aware of this general fact when they ask for duties on commodities. The main bulk of the annual income of the country consists in that of the working-classes; and, notwithstanding professions and honest efforts to throw more than a proportional per centage of taxation on the rich, the main proportion of the revenue is derived from the tobacco, tea, malt, and spirit duties, which are chiefly paid from the expenditure of wages.

In estimating the aggregate wealth of classes, the greater the individual income the less shall we find to be the whole collective income of the class. If we possessed any means of knowing the aggregate amount of the receipts of hand-labourers, including those who work at the various artisan trades, and the other miscellaneous workers who have acquired no skill but depend entirely on their strength, there is little doubt that the incomes of all the rest of the community, from the richest peer downwards, would bear a small proportion to the aggregate result. Our only means of making an approach to the collective incomes of classes of the community, is through the returns of the income tax, which it is to be hoped are not very far from the truth. In these we find it an invariable law, that as the scale of income ascends, the aggregate general amount of income decreases. Thus, in a return to parliament in 1848 of the various incomes as they paid duty down to April 1846, it appears, in the department of trades and professions, that the whole amount assessed between £150 a year and £200 a year was £6,102,195. This was a difference of £50; but taking the next rise at a difference of £100—namely, incomes from £200 to £300—the amount was not much greater, being £6,585,715. Rising by steps of £100 a year, each step shows a great aggregate decrease. Thus in incomes between £300 and £400, we sink from the amount last quoted down to £4,680,493; and this decrease goes on by acceleration, so that when we come to incomes from £900 to £1000 a year, the whole sum is £863,478. Abandoning the difference by hundreds, and taking it by thousands, we now find the same phenomenon continuing; so that as

the increase in individual incomes becomes larger, the decrease in aggregate incomes is correspondingly conspicuous. The incomes from £1000 to £2000 were £6,924,203, including a range of a thousand pounds, yet not much more than the aggregate between a hundred and fifty and two hundred, including a range of a twentieth part of the extent. Yet when we go to the next step, and take the amount between £2000 and £3000, we find it less than half of the aggregate of the preceding range—namely, £3,313,432. When we go to the amount between £4000 and £5000, it is found to be £1,699,546. The amount of income returned between £5000 and £10,000 was £5,207,535. The amount between £10,000 and £50,000—a range ten times as great, came to an aggregate sum not much greater, £5,672,827—a sum considerably less than the gross sum of the incomes between £150 and £200 a year. The whole aggregate incomes above £50,000 a year were returned as amounting to £1,198,842.

In selecting out of these returns the items which form the profits of the great capitalists, we descend far enough in the scale when we come to £1000 a year—those who realise smaller incomes can scarcely be considered of the class who live in splendour on the wealth made by others. The sum-total of incomes taxed at £1000 a year and upwards amounted, in the return already mentioned, to £26,584,964—considerably less than four times the amount paid for the relief of the poor in England in 1832 (which amounted to £7,036,968). If we should divide the amount of incomes above £1000 a year through the whole population of Britain, it would amount to between 25s. and 30s. a head. It has been doubted, and with reason, whether the income-tax returns contain the full amount of the income of each individual. As the amount above stated contains the incomes of professional workers, as well as capitalists whose income is called profit, let us suppose that the professional incomes are equal to that amount of capitalist income in which the returns are deficient, and on this supposition endeavour roughly to estimate what the artisans and other workmen would gain by adding the profits of capital to their respective incomes. It has been calculated that the population returns of 1841, show the number of males above twenty years of age engaged in 'profitable and for the most part manual occupations' to amount to 3,494,622.* Perhaps the number of working-men above twenty years of age may now be fairly stated in a round number at four millions; and if the sum set forth as the estimated gains of the great capitalists were divided among this class entirely, without women and younger workers participating, it would afford between £6 and £7 a year to each.

This is a considerable sum; but perhaps a very small propor-

* Porter's Progress of the Nation, p. 65.

tion only of the few working-people who have contemplated the distribution of profits, have expected that the fund would exhibit so poor a result when divided among them.

We shall offer another estimate, of a less wide and general character, and holding in view only the wages and profits in one department of production—the cotton trade. Mr Macculloch, fixing on the year 1833, estimates the 'profits of capital, sums paid for materials of machinery, coals, flour for dressing, and other outgoings,' at £6,000,000; and of this sum he considers that £3,400,000 may represent profits. The sum paid in wages, taken from the careful calculations of Mr Baines, stands thus—237,000 spinners and powerloom weavers, £6,044,000; 250,000 handloom weavers, £4,375,000; 45,000 calico-printers, £1,170,000; 159,300 lace-workers, £1,000,000; 33,000 makers of cotton hosiery, £505,000; for bleachers, dyers, calenderers, machine-makers, smiths, joiners, porters, and all the miscellaneous class of workmen who contribute to the production of the article, a sum of £4,000,000 is set down. The whole expended on wages is thus estimated at £17,094,000. In round numbers, the wages of the workpeople are five times as much as the profits of the capitalist, or the profits of the capitalist are equal to 20 per cent. on the wages of the workpeople. Hence it arises that if the latter could add the gains of the former to their own, with each pound at present received, they would obtain an addition of 4s. Mr Macculloch himself estimates the amount of wages at £21,000,000, an estimate which would reduce the worker's addition to his emoluments to about 3s. on the pound.

We have seen at the same time that even in the narrow range of variety within the walls of the cotton manufactory, the same which forms the material of the above calculations, the difference in men's earnings covers a scale from 13s. to £1, 10s.* The workman may thus see whether the increase of his own skill, or a participation in, or even a complete absorption of the profits of his employer's capital, would be the more promising method of bettering his lot; and he will find fuller means of making such a calculation, when he looks to the services he would require to perform as a condition of obtaining the profits; for they are not obtained at present by the capitalist for nothing, and are not capable of being so obtained by any one.

In the first place, if the workmen make use of the capitalists' money, they must, of course, be prepared to pay him interest for it; if they are not, their use of it, instead of being a loan, forced or voluntary as the case may be, is confiscation, and a destruction of all proprietary right. To take a man's wealth, and profess to use it, without paying the market value for that use is making it

* See p. 34.

change owners; and to profess to consider it as in any shape the property of the original owner, would be a poor evasion, which he might well consider as adding insult to injury. To do the working-classes justice, none of them—at least none who have a considerable body of serious supporters—would advocate such a scheme. Those who envy the capitalist his enormous profits, as they believe them to be, would leave him in the undisputed enjoyment of the interest of his money. Mr Macculloch estimates the capital of all kinds embarked in the cotton manufacture at £34,000,000, and Mr Baines calls this a moderate estimate. The sum supposed to be realised, in the shape of return to the capitalist, from this sum has been already stated as £3,400,000, or 10 per cent. on the capital. The half of this must be set down as interest; so here we have to take from the 3s. or the 4s., whichever it may be, that would be added to the workman's pound, one-half; and all his clear gain, by putting himself in the place of the capitalist, would be 1s. 6d. or 2s. in the pound.

Let us now look to the services that have to be performed for this sum, and see if the workman performing them himself, or through hirelings, will in the end be a great gainer.

A profit equivalent to 10 per cent. or 5 per cent. over the ordinary rate of interest, cannot be obtained without very successful speculation; and successful speculation infers skill in the system of transacting business, the adaptation of the goods to the markets to which they are to be sent, the choice of materials, the selection of proper superintendents, clerks, and the other performers of incidental services; along with attention to the progress of invention, so that advantage may be taken of every improvement in machinery. In fact it may be safely pronounced that the man who makes so large a profit as 5 per cent., works for it, and works hard. It is only in the case of great enterprise, sometimes assisted by inventive genius, and always attended with increasing vigilance, that such a rate is realised. Some establishments which have pushed their way from small beginnings, and still continue to keep up their superiority over their neighbours, by being at the head of a race of competitive rivalry, make such profits, or even in many instances larger amounts: but their gains constitute in a great measure the reward of genius and enterprise, and the working-classes could not get possession of the rewards without possessing the genius and enterprise that have bought them. Whenever they acquire these qualities, and employ them, they may justly expect to obtain the rewards attached to them. And here let it be observed, that many of the people who have by such means reared up stately fortunes, have been members of the working-classes, standing forth as conspicuous instances of the height to which men may raise themselves by talent, perseverance and integrity. These men must not be confounded with the

mere capitalist who never works, but perhaps leading a gay life in London, leaves the vast fortune which his father has bequeathed to him invested in the manufacturing districts which he has never visited, in a department of manufactures of which he scarcely knows the name. A considerable amount of what may appear to be the profit of capital is the reward of inventive ingenuity. Inventors whose sole property is in their practical discoveries, must be considered as workmen, entitled, like other workmen, to the price they ask for their services. If the subsidiary labourers, who only work with their hands, should think fit to deny this, and call the inventor's profits a usurpation, *they* at all events will gain little by the spoliation. They may seize the rewards that have been gained, but they cannot divide unexercised skill. It would be a more impracticable project than even Fourierists and Owenites have yet attempted, to compel a Watt or a Stephenson to give forth his undeveloped discoveries, that the value of them might be divided among the community. The individual would triumph over the wisdom of the organised multitude.

But it is not with the rewards of discoverers, or with the gains of those smaller capitalists who are seen working for their incomes, that the supporters of a distribution of capital would generally be inclined to interfere. Their eyes are usually directed towards those great owners of wealth who sow not, neither do they spin, and whose vast riches they suppose to be the fruit of other men's labour. They will find, however, that the more they separate it from labour, the smaller does the rate of profit become. From an indefinite per centage of profit enjoyed by the small capitalist, who is a workman using his capital as a tool, we shall find the proportion dwindle, until we reach the idle gentleman investing his hundreds of thousands in manufactures, whose profits will probably not exceed 2 or 2½ per cent.—reducing the workman's share, if he should obtain possession of this source of income, to from eightpence to a shilling on the pound sterling. Yet even here there are conditions to be performed which the working-classes would find it difficult to accomplish.

No man can at his will obtain this 2 or 2½ per cent. of profit for capital whenever he pleases, and to whatever extent, small or large, he may choose to invest it. Those who live upon the profits of realised money know this to their frequent mortification. The current interest of the time is the value of money secured; and he who obtains any addition to it, must perform corresponding services, or incur sacrifices. One conspicuous sacrifice attached to large returns for capital is the risk of loss; and the bankrupt list of 1847 would show how many princely fortunes paid for the increased per centage, in a risk too fatally realised by their being swept out of existence. But there is a

further condition of capital so invested in manufactures—it must be in large masses, unremovable, and subject to individual management. If the capitalist is not a man of skill at the head of affairs himself, he must have an acting partner in whom he has absolute reliance, and to whom he intrusts the fate of his wealth. It is probable that if a thousand working-men had each £100 at his disposal in the shape of capital, they would scarcely be inclined, with one consent as a body, to hand it over to a managing partner, with the risk of absolute loss, and the prospect, if the manufacture were prosperous, of receiving 2 or 2½ per cent. beyond the market interest; they might consider it possible, by uniting their little capital with their labour, to apply it to more profitable, as well as more pleasant uses. If a body of men desired to borrow a sum sufficient to support a manufactory, there would certainly be difficulties about the security, and the lenders would rather hand their money over at once to the acting partner, than allow 2 per cent. of its produce to be reaped by an intervening body, whose intervention would scarcely increase the strength of the security. If such a body should determine to manufacture on their own account, they must of course have a staff of officers, for a thousand men would not be prompt or energetic in their management—presuming them to be of one mind—and they would find that they could not both work and manage. It is to be feared that when this new element of cost is met, there would be little indeed of the 2 or 2½ per cent. remaining for distribution. The Constabulary Force Commission had a conversation on this subject with an ingenious workman, who thought he saw the condition of the future regeneration of his class in their having the use of a part of the capital of the country. It was presumed, for the purpose of practically testing the soundness of his views, that £100,000 being wanted, all questions as to the security of the loans having been got over, one thousand men had each tabled his £100, and that there was among them perfect harmony and unanimity as to the course of management to be adopted. The dialogue then proceeded thus:—

'*Q.* Supposing, however, all difficulties as to the capital overcome, a proper building erected, proper machinery obtained, and all contentions as to which of the co-operatives should take the best, and which the worst and most irksome labour settled, and proper subordination obtained, there still comes the business of buying the raw material; and next, that of selling the manufactured product, a business requiring, as you will admit, much skill promptly applied to guard against failure or bankruptcy. How would you that a committee should transact such business in the market?

A. For that business, it might undoubtedly be expedient that they should choose some skilful and trustworthy person.

Q. Who having large capital, or the success of the undertaking in his hands, and being open to the temptations of embezzlement, or to large bribes on the betrayal of his trust, you would perhaps think it right should be well paid to diminish those temptations?

A. Certainly. I see no objection to that: he ought to be well paid.

Q. That being so, what would you, an operative capitalist, say, be willing to give to such a person for the management of your £100, productively to obtain a return of weekly wages for your subsistence, for obtaining and superintending the fitting machinery, selecting and buying skilfully the raw commodity, and selling the manufactured produce, without any labour or care on your part?

A. I have never considered the subject in that point of view, and can hardly say; but I think £4 or £5 a year would not be unreasonable; for my own part I should not object to that.

"It may surprise you," continues the querist, "and it is well that the respectable mechanics engaged in this branch of manufacture should know, that the service spoken of is all rendered to them for one-half; now, indeed, when trade is depressed, for less than one-fourth of the sum which you, and perhaps they, would deem a fair remuneration; that the £100 capital is furnished; the building erected; the machinery of the most efficient description is supplied, and raw commodity purchased; the labour in working it up directed; the markets vigilantly attended; and the sales of the manufactured produce faithfully made at the best price, without any care or thought on their part; and that the manager or capitalist who is provided for you does all this, and is well satisfied with a remuneration of 40s. or 50s. per annum for each individual whom he serves whilst serving himself." "*

The utter inability of mere capital to produce large proportional returns, without aid from labour, is one of the most important matters on which working-men can look. In reality, the capital which produces to its owner a large per centage of profit, is not an element distinct from labour, but the fruit of past labour lightening the toil to come. According to the political economists, the amount of productive labour is measured by the amount of capital—a community can produce to the extent of its capital and no farther. This method of stating the power of capital seems, however, applicable properly to a population separated into two classes—the capitalists who alone have capital and do not labour; and the labourers who alone labour and have no capital. Wherever the two elements of production are mixed up with each other, as they in a great measure are in this country, no such absolute

* First Report of the Constabulary Force Commissioners, p. 156.

principle can be the only law, as the productive effect of capital must depend on the nature of the person who possesses it, and the manner in which it is employed by him. Of capital offered for investment, it may be predicted that it will, on an average, produce so much, or that it will set so much labour in force at a uniform labour rate; but relating to capital in the hands of an able active man, who is himself working, there can be no general abstract rule fixing the amount of labour it may set in motion, or the amount of commercial commodities that may be produced by it.

It should be remembered that capital is merely labour in a particular phase of development. While it is said that you cannot have more labour in a country than its capital will employ—on the other hand, it may be said, that unless labour had taken the initiative, no country would have possessed any capital. Of the operative influence of capital no one can doubt; but in its most powerful shape, it is just the workman's past labour facilitating his future exertions; and it will depend in a great measure on these future exertions, and not entirely on the past, how much the general produce will be.

The disposition to contemplate capital as a fixed power producing a fixed result, is a sort of superstition of political economy, the propensity of which always is to reduce to the rules of the exact sciences phenomena which do not admit of rules. It would be in vain to call on the working-classes to make increased exertions, and produce a larger amount of the objects of commercial traffic, if labour and its fruits were limited by capital. It is a great adjunct of labour and production; but it no more defines and limits their extent, than the saw and plane of the carpenter limit the mechanical productions to which they so effectively contribute. Thus labour is perpetually altering the amount of capital in operative force; and if it be labour well executed and directed, is always enlarging it. All labour in a progressive country must leave behind it a per centage, to be added to the amount of capital it absorbs and reproduces.

Let us remember that capital is not limited to the collections of thousands of pounds invested by the monied aristocracy; it exists wherever man possesses facilities from past labour, whether exercised by himself, or by those who allow him to have the benefit of it, for labouring to better effect in future. A carpenter's well-equipped tool-chest is capital, producing, when combined with his labour, a far higher per centage than the sum it cost would procure for an idle man of fortune. Education, skill, even good principles, are capital: they are something that has been made by the individual who enjoys them, or by others who have communicated their benefit to him. The savage when he has made a bow, and fitted it with a string of twisted grass,

and has got a quiver of arrows made with reeds and pointed with ebony, is a capitalist. Few could be in a better position for estimating the efficacy of capital than a New Zealander, who, dependant on his native bones and muscles for obtaining food, finds himself suddenly possessed of a bow and a quiver of arrows. All that is saved from labour past, is an accelerator of labour future. The saving from past labour that enables a father to train his son to a skilled profession is capital, though he should never give that son a farthing in the shape of money. If the father can afford the son food for a few years, that he may gain strength for bodily labour, this also is capital. Everything that endows the human being with more than the naked forked animal, which man has been described to be, is capital. It is a great advantage to any one to have capital made to his hand—it is the uniformly acknowledged felicity of possessing a fortune; but there is always a person who has created the capital, or made the fortune: and in answer to all statements, that the quantity of productive labour depends on the amount of capital, we have to set forth the existence of the productive labour that has created the capital.

There are few workmen in this country who do not possess some capital: it is represented by their skill, and the small possessions that enable them to labour for a future reward, however short may be the futurity, and exempt them from requiring to devote their faculties to the momentary production of food. We may exemplify in the following shape capital in its different existing grades and aspects. The wealthy publisher prints a book, calculating that in six years he will be repaid his expended capital, with a profit sufficient to meet his risk and labour. The author who writes the book is paid for it when it is finished, perhaps he has not sufficient capital to enable him to wait for the final result of the sale; but unless he had some capital at his disposal, he could not have waited even thus long for the fruits of his daily industry. Among the persons connected with the preparation of the book, will be the respective superintendents of the printers, the papermakers, and the binders—they require to be paid quarterly, or perhaps monthly. From these we come down to the journeymen compositors, binders, and others—they are paid weekly; and, in general, the short or long period during which each person connected with the work can remain unremunerated, represents the extent of his capital.

The persons who in a civilised community have least capital, if they can be said to have any, are its beggars. They generally demand, or profess to demand food, because they have not capital enough to sustain them, even until they can buy food with the sums they receive in charity. There are wealthy beggars, who trade upon the popular belief in the poverty of their tribe. But in general the claim of the beggar is founded on his utter desti-

tution of capital; that is, the condition on which he proclaims himself entitled to alms.

Perhaps the most solemn and serious lesson for the workman to learn in connection with the subject of capital is, that whatever he can save and store up from his own labour is an incalculable saving of the labour of his offspring. The most profitable investment of capital is in making the human being valuable and productive. The sum with which a father may give a son a practical education, and make him a competent artisan, may be perhaps but a petty saving out of that father's earning; but it is to the son the whole difference between a comfortable livelihood and a miserable struggle for existence. Those who have the ear of the labouring population cannot too strongly inculcate on them the extent to which, by the acquisition of capital through their own skill, industry, or economy, they may raise their position in life. The worker who has saved enough to enable him to wait for superior employment, rejecting invitations to adapt himself to a subsidiary grade of labour, has done much for himself; and in doing so much for himself, has perhaps done the best that lay in his power for the human race at large.*

There is a secondary lesson to be learned on this subject—that the smaller is the trade, and of course the capital embarked in it, the larger are the proportional profits. We have seen the rates acquired in the shape of profits by the great capitalists from their hundreds of thousands. When profits become proportionally larger, and swell on from 2 to 15 per cent., they become gradually mingled up with the wages of labour, until it becomes impossible to distinguish the two sources of income. Adam Smith says—'The apparent difference in the profits of different trades is generally a deception, from our not always distinguishing what ought to be considered as wages from what ought to be considered

* 'We shall suppose that an artisan, by saving, one way and another, has ten pounds accumulated and safely lodged in a savings' bank. Now, just think for a little on what can be done with ten pounds. A working-man with ten pounds, and free of debt or encumbrances, is in an enviable state of independence. For this sum he can transport himself to any part of America where the highest wages are given for labour; and this being done judiciously, he will be in the midst of plenty for life—be in a condition to be envied by half the gentry in Britain. For this sum he can perhaps set up in business in a small way at home. Or he can weather out any serious dulness in his trade, till better times arrive. Or he can endure with complacency a temporary illness, which lays him off work. Or he can remove to a distant town where the best kind of employment in his profession is to be had. Or, supposing he be an aspiring young man, he can greatly improve his skill by travelling. We mention these things to show what advantages are frequently lost by working-men having never anything to spare. A few pounds, the result of saving, well laid out in the way just spoken of, will furnish ideas, which are a sort of capital for life. Besides, for the sake of the mere rational gratification of seeing other scenes of industry than those which surround a man's birthplace, it is worth while making a little sacrifice, exercising a little self-denial.'—'*Hints to Workmen*,' p. 15.—*Chambers's Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts.*

as profit. Apothecaries' profit is become a byword, denoting something uncommonly extravagant. This great apparent profit, however, is frequently no more than the reasonable wages of labour.' *

The profits of petty retailers would be enormous if wages of attendance at least, if not of labour, did not enter into them as an element. In the large, handsome, ready-money establishments which have lately arisen in many of our great towns, the profits are very small—probably amounting (besides the annual interest) to from 1 to 2 per cent. on the capital each time it is turned over. In petty retail shops, especially those in which credit is given to the poorer classes, the profits average from 20 to 40 per cent.; while the profits on ballads, matches, and the other articles sold by the lowest pedlers, are sometimes 100 or 150 per cent. The retailer must live, and the smaller the business, the larger proportion must go to him, instead of the manufacturer or wholesale dealer. Thus the scale of profits ascends with the descending scale of general wealth, until we reach the class of whom Dickens says one knows not which most to commiserate, the poverty of the sellers or the poverty of the buyers. These high profits are chiefly earned as wages; but it may be a question if they are earned in a service that ought to be performed, and by which society benefits. The purchases of the poor are thus, in all their sordidness, a means of lavish profusion. The improvidence and recklessness which deprive them of the advantages of the ready-money shop, compel them to pay for the support of a small retailer on credit; and to keep up such a person, they are taxed from 15 to 30 or 40 per cent. on their scanty expenditure.

When the labouring man looks well to the nature and functions of large capitals, he will see that they have numberless beneficial influences which he would be insane were he to strive to destroy. To the manufacturing labourer they are especially beneficial—without the existence of the money in some form or other, whether in possession of the present holders or otherwise, he would not exist. There is one mighty cause of difference between him and the agricultural labourer: he can scarcely find subsistence except under the complex social relations of civilisation, trade, and operative capital. The agriculturist also is dependent on these facilities, but not to so large an extent; and in the midst of convulsions, and the wildest internal discord, which have ruined the trade and manufactures all around, he may cultivate the ground to some profit. Nay, in comparative wealth, he may be richer than he was before, though in absolute wealth he should be poorer. His produce is the prime necessary of life, and there are no longer others to compete with him in the market, for the trade that

* Book I. chap. x.

would have purchased foreign produce is exterminated. We thus find that in the ages when agriculture was the chief source of industrial riches, civil convulsions had little effect on the wealth of the country except where armies marched and fought. But in the present age, and especially in this country, the system which supports by far the larger part of the population is so complex, and so dependent on peace, protection, and regularity in all the proceedings of society, that any shock to the stability of the institutions of the country would scatter indescribable havoc around. It thus happens that the industrial class, who are most prone to convulsion from their greater facilities of combination, are at the same time those who are the chief sufferers from political revolution. The manufactory, which may be the source of livelihood to a thousand families, disappears at once like a house of cards —a breath will do it when directed against the owners in the form of a protested bill. It passes away, and leaves no sign. But the earth remains, and whether it be in the hands of a great landlord or of peasant proprietors, its fruits will be desired; and he who has them at command in a distracted and poverty-stricken country, will monopolise a large share of whatever remains in the possession of the people.

It has often been maintained by the advocates of what used to be called 'the agricultural interest,' an expression becoming obsolete in this country, that those who till the earth, as the producers of the prime necessaries of life, are the truly independent and important class. To render this to a certain extent a true remark, it is only necessary to pull to pieces the complex fabric of the commerce and manufactures of the nation.

There is no doubt that capital has some evils attendant on its benefits. It is a strong engine, and like every other strong engine put into the hands of man, with all his prejudices and frailties, it is liable to do mischief. Like its most remarkable physical type in the present day, it may be heated till it burst; it may, by reckless acceleration or carelessness, be driven off the rails; it may be brought into collision, part against part, with frightful sacrifice of life to the feeble human beings crushed between the masses. But it has an element rendering it liable to abuses greater and more devastating than any that can be represented by a purely mechanical simile. When a boiler has burst, or an engine has been run off the rail, or a train has dashed into another, an inquiry at once develops the physical cause of the accident, and the incident serves as a warning for the future. But the operations of capital are so complex, and the results are so wide in comparison with the apparent causes, that it has, hitherto at least, been impossible to derive for future government a strict guiding rule from the past. A few gentlemen, deposited by hackney-coaches, meet together in an obscure corner

of the sombre east end of London; they have perhaps before them some question about an increase or reduction of a fourth per cent. on discounts; or they have to accommodate their arrangements to the decision of the Chancellor of the Exchequer respecting a farthing a day on the interest of Exchequer bills. At the opposite end of the capital, a queen is receiving the homage of her chief subjects, and the acknowledgments of the ambassadors of other powers; there is a ceaseless torrent passing through the streets of the most gorgeous equipages in the world—the great people are proud in the display of their wealth and finery; the poor stare in amazement at so much riches, and wonder how its owners can have the heart to leave any poverty in the world. In a day or two the gorgeous exhibition has almost faded into oblivion, but the edict issued from the dingy group of west-end capitalists is an event never to be forgotten. According as the time has been timed, it creates confidence, alacrity, and enterprise, or spreads around the sense of devastation and ruin, making men's faces pale with the certainty of destruction, or disordering their nerves by the prospect of a terrible and uncertain battle.

There are few who will forget October 1847. The bankruptcies declared in the ensuing month in England amounted to 233; nearly twice the ordinary number for that month, which is always the most prolific of the year in these types of commercial calamity. The whole number of bankruptcies in England in that year came very nearly to 1700; while the sequestrations in Scotland amounted to 530. And yet we know that some of the most serious failures did not appear in the Gazette, as the gigantic sums at issue could be better managed by voluntary trusteeship. The price of consols had sunk to 79¼ on the 19th October. At the same period of the year they had been, in 1846, 95; in 1845, 97; and in 1844, 100¼. To the railway mania, which tempted parliament in the session just concluded to pass acts for expending a fraction more than a hundred and thirty-two millions, in addition to the sixty millions which had been sanctioned in the previous year, the pressure was naturally and justly attributed; but this railway mania was itself a profligate employment of capital—a rushing on of men making haste to be rich, who cared not how much of integrity and humanity—of honest deserving frugality, with its well-directed hopes and projects—of the savings of the prudent—of the just expectations of the respectably industrious, they crushed beneath their feet in their relentless competition. A great corporation was charged with adding to the horrors of the retreat, when the day had turned, by thinking fit all at once to restrict accommodations which it had induced the commercial world to expect, finding that they were inconsistent with its obligations; and whether this one act of this corporation had the wide influ-

ence attributed to it or not, the very imputation shows the extent to which it is believed to be capable of wielding destinies which affect nearly the whole civilised world. At all events one act of this corporation, in which it practically did little more than smile on the desolate and appalled mercantile world, restored confidence—restored it by a promise the fulfilment of which was never exacted.

There were few hearths throughout the British dominions to which the pulsations of these monetary convulsions did not reach;* and if the great speculator were often the most conspicuous victim of the ruin he had helped to spread, the diligent working-man, whom the apparent prosperity of the hour of enterprise had tempted to become a husband and a father, but who was nowise guilty of fictitiously inflating the riches and the prospects of society, was also a victim, with his hopes and expectations no less cruelly prostrated, and with the further grievous calamity of being, at least for a time, cut off from the means of gaining his bread by honest industry. By a return to parliament in May 1847, the number of persons engaged on the new railways, the progress of which was so extensively paralysed by the money pressure, amounted to 256,509, of whom 240,301 were labourers with their hands.

Whatever other remedies there may be for these calamitous oscillations, the labouring classes have a certain amount of protection in their own hands. We have shown them that they would be alike foolish and unprincipled were they to attempt to take or forcibly use the capital that exists in the possession of others; but *let them make capital for themselves*. The gains in the overcharges of credit shops, the self-denial of resigning two-thirds, or even a-half, of the ardent spirits consumed by the labouring classes, would of themselves make a considerable capital. With some savings, however small, they would have strength and solidity by which they might bear up against the oscillations of trade. The man utterly needy is always the first and easiest victim; and the man utterly needy on Monday is often the man who has drawn a good week's pay on Saturday. With considerable savings, many of the working-classes might increase the valuable class of small capitalists, whose interests are strongly bound up with the best institutions of society, its most effective energies, and its choicest social virtues.

It must be admitted that the law, in its thoughtlessness, has not

* Nay, the position of London as the mercantile capital and general settling money-market of Europe, is every day widening over the world the circle affected by its monetary revolutions; and there are not wanting people who can show, and with plausibility, that the French Revolution might be traced to the Stock Exchange and the Bank of England, where they find the original springs of that prostration of commerce in France which created the discontent, and then the turbulence, of Paris.

performed the duty it might have done for protecting the employment of small capitalists. Whoever embarks a sum or an interest, however slight, in a commercial or manufacturing enterprise, becomes responsible to the utmost extent to which the law can ever afterwards strip him for the obligations of the establishment. A man cannot throw his labour into the adventure, and measure his remuneration by its proceeds, of which such a participation would give him a powerful interest to exert himself for the enlargement, without thus entangling himself with serious and permanent responsibilities. Many painful cases have occurred where managers and clerks, whose labours are generally remunerated by a fixed income, have been ruined by receiving the more tempting reward of a share in the business. A gentleman, evidently of considerable experience in trade, has written a book in favour of limited partnerships, chiefly with a view to the position of the small capitalists of the middle class. He says—'If the middle classes, who really are the proprietors of the greater proportion of the capital of the kingdom, had the opportunity of investing it, under a liability not extending beyond the amount which each person actually brought into the adventure, business could be carried on to a much greater extent than at present, and in a manner not less profitable, and certainly much more safe; because a firm consisting of two or three individuals would naturally be more likely to speculate in a loose and dangerous manner, than a firm consisting of numerous individuals, each contributing to the general business fund an amount more or less according to his or her means. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the public at large would be greatly benefited by such a system, inasmuch as there would be fewer insolvencies, suspensions of payments, compositions, frauds, and bankruptcies, than there are now.'*

Many people will be disposed to question if the working-classes would promptly and earnestly take advantage of such facilities, but the law ought at least to give them the opportunity of doing so; and it can accomplish the object with no greater violence on established principle and practice, than by giving the creditors of a company recourse only against those partners who have come forward avowedly to represent the company and its obligations, and refusing remedies against the separate property of persons with whom the creditors never dealt, and of whom they never knew.

It must be admitted, at the same time, that in the midst of the general clamour about union and association, the small tradespeople and farmers of this country have never tested the capacity of quantities of small sums combined together, to perform the

* Partnership *en Commandite*; or Partnership with Limited Liabilities, p. 15.

functions of capital, in the adaptation of skill and economy to their operations. They might here derive a lesson from the Swiss dairy system, where the union of several petty holders brings into operation all the boasted advantages of the large-farm system in this country. Co-operation of this kind, where all are to draw according to what they contribute, is not to be confounded with Communism, where the share of all is to be uniform, or fixed by some arbitrary authority. The extension of this principle has been recommended to the middle and working-classes by two able advisers—Mr Babbage* and Mr Mill.† It is expected that under such a system, workmen, participating in the profits, would gain much larger incomes than they obtain in the shape of salaries. But it would be a mistake to suppose that they would do so by obtaining a portion of some great fund which now finds its way to the hands of the capitalist in the shape of profit. The great source of increase would be the enlarged energies of the workers, who, depending more directly for their incomes on the amount produced, would naturally labour with increased energy and vigilance.

* Economy of Machinery and Manufactures, chap. xxvi.
† Principles of Political Economy, chap. vii. sect. 5.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WORKING-CLASSES.

Increase of Production their True Interest—They limit Production by Combinations and Strikes—Cruelty and Injustice of these—Always Defeat their End—Effects of Isolation and Class Interests to Keep the Working People to a Level—Do not give Sufficient Encouragement to a Proper Ambition—Want of Professional Pride.

The labourers of all descriptions, from the most skilled and eminent members of the community down to the humblest hand-workers, are the sources of all the riches that are created in the country in which they live and work. Whatever object of value or wealth is brought into existence, may be said, not only figuratively, but literally, to have come out of their hands. The more they exert themselves, the richer will the community be; the less they exert themselves, the poorer it must become. Of all that is so produced, they have, as a body, the principal share; and whatever they do not enjoy of their actual produce, is bought from them by their obtaining an equivalent for it in the produce of past labour, by those who fortunately possess part of its results.

The amount of the benefits of production which the workers as a general body will enjoy, will be measured by the amount that they produce. The interest, then, of the working body is always to extend the range of their production; and any labour or exertion which they bestow on other objects, especially if they tend to narrow rather than extend this range, is at least wasted.

Among the educated classes of workers we generally find a practical adaptation of this view. The saving of his fellow-beings from disease and death is the commodity, if we may so call it, which the physician produces; and if we look to the conduct of the general body of medical men, we shall see that they devote themselves singly to this end, and that they do not imagine, at least when they are avowedly consulting their professional interests, that it is of service to follow any other. The artist pursues the production to which he has devoted himself, be it painting or statuary, and depends for success on the value of his works and their general estimation among mankind, never dreaming that he can do service to himself, or to his profession, or to the human race at large, by organising a system to make the public purchase his works for more than their market value, or by compelling other painters to adopt his method of pursuing his profession, and his idea of its proper rewards. So of the author.

If the reading world will not buy his books so abundantly as he desires, if publishers will not accede to his own estimate of his labours, he does not expect to improve his position by efforts which are not of a literary character; but wisely believes that if he condescended more zealously to consult the taste of his readers, or if he laboured harder to condense and systematise his labours, they would be better appreciated, and their author better rewarded.

Unfortunately, when we come to the hand-working classes—not, it must be admitted, to the most ignorant among them, but to those who apparently have light enough to lead them astray—we find that they often believe themselves able to further their interests as a body, and increase their value to society, not by increasing their productions, for which they are paid, but by operations and exertions of a totally different character, the general effect of which is rather to diminish than to increase their productiveness. If it were asked how the class of hatters or of cabinet-makers could best further their interests, an impartial adviser would naturally say, by increasing their effectiveness as hatters or cabinet-makers through increased skill or industry. Unfortunately they themselves will sometimes think that the object is to be accomplished by holding meetings, making speeches, organising combinations, and collecting funds to enable some of their members to live in idleness.

The fallacies that production is limited, that the labour which the working-classes have to do is a fixed quantity, and that the fund to be divided in the shape of wages is of the same stationary character, are at the root of these false principles and foolish acts. Instead of knowing that he can increase his value by being more productive, the artisan often acts as if there were a certain quantity of the wages of labour to be divided, and his share of it must depend, not entirely on his productiveness, but in a great measure on operations to drive competitors out of the field, and to prevent others from getting a larger share of the fund than himself. Hence they spend so much time and labour on combinations and strikes, and so much of their earnings in the different expenses connected with these operations. Sometimes they are individually successful, just as robbers and treasure-seekers are occasionally successful; but the pursuit is not, on the whole, a profitable one; and they would wisely, as a body, exchange it for productive occupation. Perhaps the most preposterous manifestation of this spirit is to be found in the 'dry grinders' of Sheffield, whose lives very seldom last to the age of forty, but who have high wages during their brief working existence, and in their addiction to pleasure and dissipation, painfully work out the problem of 'a short life and a merry one.' According to an experienced medical man, who bore testimony to the commission of 1843 on the employments of

children, these workers 'view with jealousy any precaution to prolong life as a means of increasing the supply of labour and lowering wages.' Thus they stick to the monopoly that is bought with life; and rather than throw their skill and energy on the great labour market of the world, would give up a part of their sojourn on the earth to keep off competitors.

We need not wonder if we generally find the workman more ready to sacrifice other people than himself to the preservation of what he considers his monopoly. We shall first consider the justice of his attempts, and next the probability of their being in the end successful.

If I am a consumer, and a labourer offers to produce for me a certain commodity at a given price, it is gross injustice to me if any person interferes with this free disposal of labour and its reward, and compels me to pay a higher price for the commodity. If I am a workman, and am prepared to sell my labour to all comers at a certain amount of wages, it is injustice equally gross if any man forcibly interposes, and, compelling me to retract my offer, requires me rather to starve than accept of terms on which I would willingly have worked. Labour is said to be the poor man's property, and whoever forcibly deprives him of it, robs him of this property. Combinations and strikes accomplish these iniquities under the guise of protecting 'the sacred rights of labour.'

They who forcibly insist that the rest of the community, whether rich or poor, shall pay for the labour bestowed on any species of production more than its market value, forcibly abstract money without giving an equivalent. They enforce payment of wages without giving the corresponding value in labour, and thus violently deprive the consumer of his money; for whether it be exacted for no return at all, or exacted for an inadequate return, is but a question of secondary degrees. The person who exacts money without giving any equivalent for it, wishes to live idle and gain the wages of labour; he who exacts it for an imperfect equivalent, does the same thing. If the free labourer will give me eight hours' work for my money, and the unionist will only give me four, the latter forcibly takes four hours of idleness at the expense of others. He thinks it is at the expense of the capitalist. No: if he be purely a capitalist investing money in manufacturing or other labour, he looks to a certain general profit for his outlay, whatever it be expended on; and though the thousand pounds should go to labourers who work four days in the week, or labourers who work six, his profits will be much the same. Of course if one employer gets the six days' work at the same rate at which the other gets four, the latter will not conduct a profitable business; but capital will soon flee, as unionists often find, from such unequal exactions.

If the capitalists, then, are not the chief sufferers, who are? In the first place, the consumers—and all consumers are not rich—pay a higher price for their commodities, and pay it that the workers may get more than the market value of their labour. But the chief sufferers are those who are, by the forced monopoly, driven out of the field of labour. That the classes excluded from their just place as producers by the operation of combinations and strikes should have endured the infliction so long, and should not have broken out in violence against this illegal tyranny—as often, since they were subject to it, they have broken out against what they considered the tyranny of legal and established government—is one of the greatest mysteries of inconsistent and frail human nature.

The following is a passage from one of the official documents of the Glasgow cotton-spinners, produced at their trial in 1838:—'*June* 15, 1837.—Moved at the general meeting by William Johnston, and unanimously carried: the name of every nob at present working, and the districts they last wrought in, should be enrolled in a book; and at the end of the strike, unless a change in the list takes place, they be printed. But at all events, the names of all who remain nobs at the end of the strike shall be printed, and sent to all the spinning districts in Scotland, England, and Ireland; that they remain nobs for ever; and *a persecuting committee be appointed to persecute them to the utmost.*'

'I see an entry,' says a witness examined in this case, 'looking at the book of outlay, of "expenses with nobs, £19." The expense might be incurred by reasoning with them, and giving them drink, or the money may have been given as rewards for maltreating them.' And then afterwards he has to say—'Cairnie was burned in 1822 or 1823; and three people got aliment then for being concerned in it, as I understood from what was said!'

In the words of another witness—'One John Kean was tried for shooting at Graham, convicted, and transported, after being publicly whipped at Glasgow. It was on account of the shooting at Graham that the names of the select committee were made known to the board. I knew payments were made in reference to that matter. Five men were appointed referees to investigate a claim made by one Daniel Orr. I was one of these referees. His claim was, that he was hired in a house at Barrowfield Toll, along with Kean and one Lafferty, and another man, to shoot at Graham. He demanded £20 from the committee. * * * I recollect a person named M'Dead. He was not convicted that I know of. I know a payment was made to him of £4, 16s. It was for maltreating a woman named Margaret Banks, and was either in 1825 or 1826. She was maltreated because she was a nob.'*

* Trial of the Glasgow Cotton-spinners, p. 81.

'I have been three times in prison,' is the statement of a workman in Kirkdale jail to the inspector of prisons; 'each time for stealing. I was driven each time by want to steal. I have sometimes been two or three days without anything to eat. I applied several times to the parish, but they would not do anything for me. I wanted to go into the workhouse at ——, but they would not let me. They gave me bits of notes to go from officer to officer, but I could get no relief. *I could not get any work because I did not belong to the union!* The masters would have employed me, but the men would not let me. Every man when he first joins the union has to pay a guinea, and I had not the money.'*

How simple a statement this is, yet how pregnant with tyranny, when we know that the victims have been millions! But of the atrocious and appalling acts by which the system has been conducted—the invasions, the assaults, the maimings, the throwings of vitriol, and the murders—the reader will have a sufficiently lively recollection; the narratives of these multitudinous crimes need not be here repeated.

Last in the enumeration of victims are the authors and leaders of the combinations, who, unable to fight against nature and justice, sink wretched victims in the struggle, and find out, when it is too late, that their iniquities, like those of many other criminals, retaliate on themselves. The system can never be made perfect. Free trade *will* force its way through all barriers; and as naturally as water finds its level, capital passes from the places where labour is restricted to those where it is free. The conduct of our manufacturing operatives some years ago forced a considerable amount of capital abroad. Ashton and Stalybridge owe their origin to the outrages in Stockport, Blackburn, Westhaughton, and the other older manufacturing towns; and if combination should continue to follow capital in its new places of refuge, it will flee still farther away. But even where capital remains in its original place, if it make war with the system, it is victorious over combination, which then suffers all the calamities of disastrous defeat.

The commissioner who reported on the mining population in Scotland and Staffordshire in 1844, after having adverted to grievances having their origin in the conduct of employers, said—'But any grievances which the colliers may trace, or suppose they trace, to the regulations imposed on them by their masters, sink into insignificance when compared to the injurious consequences of the regulations as to labour which they impose upon themselves. It can scarcely be credited by one calmly investigating the state of this large body of labourers, that many thousands of them—in fact the whole of the colliers and miners in Lanarkshire, with few

* Thirteenth Report of Inspector of Prisons, Northern District, p. 22.

exceptions, amounting to 16,000 men—have for many years past (since the repeal of the combination laws in 1825) placed themselves under regulations as to the amount of their labour, which, had they been attempted to be enforced by the authority of any government whatsoever, in any country calling itself civilised, would have roused the indignation of every thinking man, as against an act of the most intolerable despotism. And yet these regulations were intended by the working colliers, and by those of their own class with whom alone they take counsel in such matters for their good, for the maintenance of wages at a fair level; for their protection against over-work; and against an overstocking of the market of labour and the market of coal. Among the many mournful instances recorded in the volumes of parliamentary inquiries and elsewhere of the fatal blows dealt by the labouring-classes themselves against their own interests, in attempting, with their imperfect knowledge, and necessarily limited experience, to regulate matters which the caution of the most enlarged and mature wisdom shrinks from meddling with, lest it produce more evils than it can hope to cure, this will be found to be one of the most striking. These regulations are based on the irrational principle of allowing no one man to do more work than another; of forcing into an unnatural equality of earnings the young and the old, the strong and the weak, the industrious and the idle. A certain day's work, called the "darg," is fixed, which the colliers themselves allow no one to exceed. The young man desirous of employing his strength and industry to accumulate a little money before marrying; the young man newly married, and anxious to lay up a little store against the pinching time when he is bringing up his children; the young, and industrious, and active father of a growing family, wishing to clothe and educate these properly—each of these is allowed to earn no more, though he could get through his quantity in six hours, than the old man who takes ten hours to do the same work. The "darg" is regulated by the capacity of the elder men, and the younger are compelled to conform to it.'

The practical result of the system, like almost all attempts to force nature, was to produce the very evils it was designed to guard against. The colliers desired to restrict their numbers—they artificially enlarged them; they desired 'a fair day's wage for a fair day's work'—they undermined the general fund for distribution as wages: and thus the share of each individual was doubly reduced—by the enlargement of the participators in the first place; by the diminution of the general amount in the second. To keep the monopoly of collier-work among themselves, they gave advantages to those who brought their sons into the mine. 'They allow the men who have sons to take them down the pit, and to "put out," with their help, a certain proportion

above the "darg," according to the age of the boy, who is reckoned as a quarter, a half, or three-quarters of a man at progressive stages, until, at sixteen or seventeen, he counts as a whole man.' The workman denied the privilege of increasing the darg by his own efforts, might improve his emoluments by associating his son in his labours; and thus every one had a personal interest to add to the number of workmen from among his own offspring. But the great and calamitous enlargements of the numbers have been created thus:—An employer gives battle to the system. His men leave him, or are turned off. They remain for months idle, and during that time a new gang are making themselves competent workers. When the original colliers, defeated and exhausted by the great reducer—time—come back to their old sphere of exertion, they find their places filled. So may 100 men, by preventing their numbers from amounting to 110, make them 200. 'When the masters,' continues the Report, 'find that their men are attempting to impose unreasonable terms upon them, they are compelled to introduce new men into their pits. These are generally Irish labourers, who in a few weeks learn to hew coals, and in time become tolerably expert colliers. The number introduced into the various collieries in Lanarkshire within the last few years is stated to amount to nearly 4000, or one-fourth of the whole number employed. * * * Under their artificial system of restriction, one-fifth more men are at work as colliers than would be required under a system of free labour.'

As a contrast to this picture, we may adduce the account of the Shotts collieries, where the system of free trade in labour had been established since 1837. 'They stood out against it,' says one of the managers, 'for four months, when they gave in. Since that, every man has done as much work as he pleased. Many of our men, colliers and others, have saved money. We have had a branch of the savings' bank here for three years. The amount in it is nearly £600.' 'Within the last ten months,' he continues, 'six of our colliers went away to Australia, and three to Canada, each with £30 to £100; also about twenty-six houses have been built in the village, principally out of the savings of others of our colliers.' It appears that under this system, or rather this absence of system, leaving nature free, the young and healthy earned from 18s. to 25s. a week, and the more infirm from 15s. to 18s. 'Under the restricted system, the young men would not have been allowed to earn more than about 15s.'

This city of refuge was not without its charms for those who could flee from the tyranny of the combinations—the tyranny of ignorance and idleness. The same witness says—'We have constant applications to take men into our works. We find that the men who offer are the best men to be had anywhere. They are attracted by the liberty secured to them, to earn what they can

for themselves and families. We have always numerous applications as soon as any reduction of the darg is made by the unions. In the last three months we could have filled our works three times over with good respectable hands, who applied, seeing what was going to take place in the west country, where the union prevails. Some came at night, for fear of being discovered by the unionists. There are numbers who are anxious to break through the regulation; but they are afraid, as they would inevitably be ill-treated and persecuted by the rest.' *

A favourite juncture for a strike is the time when a master manufacturer has some great order to complete, or heavy obligation to meet: the men think that he must then listen to their terms, or meet ruin as an alternative. Sometimes this is not, strictly speaking, an alternative, but an inevitable result either of yielding or of holding out. When the master is in the 'Gazette,' the workmen are of course successful, and may rejoice after the fashion of the Irish mob who tried to ruin a banker by burning such of his notes as were in their own possession. A gentleman who had acquired much practical information on this subject, as an active magistrate in a district liable to combinations and strikes, gives the following result of one of these movements, which had been effective in rendering the employers bankrupt:—

'Two thousand persons were immediately thrown idle by this calamity. They immediately made the most piteous complaints to the magistrates of the county, who, however, had no public funds out of which to afford them any relief; and the helpless multitude were in a great part thrown upon the parish funds, or reduced to utter despair by the consequences of their own acts; while the print-fields in that quarter were totally destroyed, and that thriving branch of trade altogether extinguished. Some of the ringleaders, convicted of rioting, and breaking into the mills, in order to intimidate the new hands during this strike, were apprehended, and brought to trial in the winter assizes at Glasgow in January 1835. The principal pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to eighteen months' confinement in Bridewell. When liberated from prison, he found the print-fields, in which he had formerly been earning from 30s. to 35s. a week, deserted, and the buildings shut up or in ruins. By faithfully following up the directions of the "Liberator," and timing the strike at the moment when heavy bills were running against their employers, the workmen had succeeded in rendering them bankrupt, and destroying the great and thriving manufactory which they had set on foot. The consequence was, that this ringleader found himself without employment; his furniture and effects were sold off by his

* Report, p. 36.

landlord for rent; and he is at this moment, when burdened with a wife and eight children, *breaking stones upon the public road for eight shillings a week!* and has lately tendered himself as a witness to be examined before the Combination Committee of the House of Commons, in order to make public, by the detail of his own sufferings and folly, the practical consequences of those measures in which he formerly took so leading a part.'*

The expenses which a state incurs in preserving itself from external violence, and internal tumult and wrong, are to a certain extent an unavoidable evil, though many people believe that this expenditure generally exceeds the necessary amount, and is capable of being advantageously economised. The smaller the proportion of the exertion and energy of a people that is devoted, whether necessarily or by misapplication, to these objects, the more will there be to devote to productive purposes, and the richer will the community be. If a nation, having thus to incur no inconsiderable outlay for its central government, should divide itself into compartments, all having interests conflicting with each other, like so many rival states, a like number of new demands would be opened, for unproductive expenditure, on establishments for defence or attack. This is precisely what combinations effect; and their members, after being heavily taxed for the purposes of the general government of the country, are again taxed, and not lightly, for the little state they have chosen to raise up, with interests hostile to those of the rest of the community.

They support a costly tribe of officials: committee-men, secretaries, guards—people whose function being to commit crime, must be highly paid—and lawyers, who defend the accused, when they are attacked by their adversary the law of the land. Sometimes they have a sort of stipendiary official press. In a document produced at the trial of the Glasgow handloom weavers, there appeared a charge of £97⁸ for the 'Liberator' newspaper. The preservation of supposed advantages in trade, the enforcement of hostile tariffs, have occasioned much useless and mischievous outlay by nations on custom-house and coast-guard establishments; and while statesmen have been imbibing instruction on the folly of these costly organisations, the operative protectionists have been reacting them in little, by creating their own peculiar establishments of taxing-officers and armed guards, for precisely the same purpose—interrupting the natural course of free trade.

But these causes of outlay will naturally have but a small operation in comparison with the calamitous sacrifice, of industry and all its invaluable fruits, so often produced by a great strike. In the renowned strike of the Glasgow cotton-spinners, the authority already cited thus estimates the amount lost in

* Edinburgh Review, April 1838, p. 230.

direct wages during the seventeen weeks and five days to which it extended :—

Wages lost by 800 spinners, for seventeen weeks, at £1, 10s. each,	£20,400	0	0
Lost by 2100 piecers, at 8s. a week, - - - -	16,320	0	0
Lost by 2400 card and picking-room hands, at 8s. a week, -	16,320	0	0
Lost by 2000 porters, carriers, oilmen, carters, colliers, &c. thrown idle by strike, at 15s. a week each, - - - - -	25,500	0	0
	£78,540	0	0

To this there were added, as the supposed losses of tradesmen and shopkeepers with whom the factory operatives dealt, £34,000. These sums were distinct from a calculation of the losses occasioned to capitalists, importers, machine-makers, and other people whom it was the main object of the strike to injure.

The circumstances under which combinations can be most successfully carried on, and are most cruelly efficacious, are when the workers in some one particular process of a great manufacture can combine alone, without consulting the other operatives, and can thus paralyse not only a great trade, but the labour of a large multitude of human beings. This is the peculiarity that has made combination to a certain extent effectual in the trade of cotton-spinning, where a strike immediately exhibits its disastrous effects on other occupations. When 660 spinners struck work in Preston in 1836, it was calculated that they threw out of occupation 1320 piecers, 6100 card-room hands, reelers, and power-loom weavers, and 420 miscellaneous workers, packers, engineers, &c.—making in all 7840, who suffered by the remorseless tyranny of the 660. It will be seen from the statement given above, that the 800 Glasgow spinners are supposed to have driven into idleness 6800 people, over whom their peculiar position gave them control. 'It may readily be conceived,' says the writer already cited, alluding to the female workers, and the female relatives of the male workers, 'what must have been the consequence of six or seven thousand women being kept in a state of destitution and idleness for four months; especially when in close proximity to equal numbers of the other sex, also trained to disorderly habits by the habitual receipt of high wages and the practice of frequent intemperance. The necessary consequence was, that crime and immorality increased to a frightful degree; and the rapid progress of fever, as well as the great increase in the rate of mortality, evinced in an appalling manner how fatal such strikes are to the labouring poor.' * And yet the picture which these combined spinners drew of their success was not an inviting one. Sir Walter Scott, in his Demonology and Witchcraft, tells a story about an insane patient who believed the huge hospital in which he lived to be a palace, and its numerous inmates his own personal retainers; while at the

* Edinburgh Review, as above, 245.

same time he had to communicate privately to the attending physician, that notwithstanding the splendour and luxury in which he lived, all his food tasted of porridge, which was precisely the humble viand on which he was chiefly fed. In the middle of their exultation over their successful tyranny, the cotton-spinners could not conceal from themselves the unhappiness of their position; and in one of their private documents, produced at their trial, they were found thus lamenting the rivalry they could not wholly suppress:—

'It is evident that one great cause of the increase of hands proceeds from the fact, that Glasgow is higher paid than any other cotton-spinning district in Scotland. On this account, spinners are anxious to come to Glasgow from other districts, in order to obtain a higher remuneration for their labour; and it is a well-known fact that they are always employed in preference to a Glasgow man. Now the very circumstance that Glasgow men have boldly and fearlessly struggled against every opposition, whether it were from the capitalist or from the combination laws of a cruel and tyrannical government, upwards of thirty years, spending enormous sums of money, and the youth, the health, and even the lives of her best men, when other districts were partially asleep on the subject—we need inquire little farther into the cause how others are employed in preference to them. The tyrannical dispositions of many masters have been too successful in making examples of our active men; and for the truth of this, we have only to look to our streets to see men who have known better days suffering with their wives and starving families every human privation, and sinking every day lower and lower in vice, from the effects of poverty and depressed hearts. These are causes and effects of our noble conduct in supporting our union; and it is our duty, as men and as Christians, to remedy the evil.'

Then comes the remedy:—'We propose that those called illegal men—nobs excepted—presently occupying wheels in Glasgow, should be offered a union on the same terms as proposed to the west-country spinners—namely, by paying £5 as entry-money. That these illegal men pay 5s. per fortnight, along with the regular instalment of the trade. They shall grant a bill of security for value received. The £5 of entry-money, and the current instalment from the time they occupied wheels in the Glasgow body, must all be paid up before they can be admitted as legal members. If any illegal man now occupying wheels shall be refractory, and not agree to those reasonable terms of union, No. 60 [meaning idle men] shall receive £5 for each of them they unshop; also £1 for every stranger which they shall keep from occupying wheels.'*

* Trial of the Glasgow Cotton-Spinners, Ap. x.

The results of these measures were afterwards seen, in more expense, idleness, and misery, and in crimes which went on from one atrocity to another, until at last justice, fairly roused, smote the oppressors, and exposed their crimes and follies to the gaze and astonishment of the world.

If the ingenuity of man had been rewarded to invent the most effectual method of suppressing talent and enterprise, it is not likely that it would have discovered a more potent instrumentality than these combinations. They are a general organisation to keep down the able energetic man to the level of the stupid, the idle, and the profligate. They levy a penalty on every workman who attempts to raise his condition in the world. We might understand the general philosophy of their operation by supposing that, in literature, Macaulay and Dickens should be prohibited from gaining higher rewards than the stupidest man who tries to make his bread by what he terms literature. To those whose productions are not dignified by the title of literature in any other mouths than their own, the change might perhaps be an acceptable one. But to the respectable teachers of mankind in books, however humble, and however far distant in merit or popularity from the leaders of their order, such an arrangement would convey no satisfaction, for it would at once be felt by them that it degraded the whole rank of the caste, even below their own present humble position. Among the other deleterious effects of the system of combination, we may reckon its propensity to keep the working-classes at a dead level, even beyond the circle of its immediate agency. It diffuses through the whole of that vast community a sense of level separation from the other ranks of society. It thus deprives the workman of inducements, through meritorious exertion, to lift himself above his sphere, and form, what is so much needed in the social system of the present age, a middle class between the workers with the hand and the other members of society.

The labouring-classes complain that those who rise from their own order, when they become rich or great, have the fewest sympathies with those that remain in their deserted sphere. It is not unnatural that it should be so. There is no middle class of communication—no easy inclined plane by which the working-man can pass upwards, insensibly rising, unconscious of any sudden alterations of circumstance or tone of living. He who rises above their body, must generally do so by a sudden and manifest exertion, such as ordinary men hesitate to undertake. It is a bold, and often rash act to change one's sphere of life; and if we would encourage any class of men to rise in the world, we should make their ascent gradual and imperceptible. So we find it in other spheres of life. The successful lawyer or physician scarcely knows any distinct stage of progress—any great barrier passed

from the time when he was obscure or penniless to that in which he finds himself rich and great; and gradually he has surrounded himself with the pomps and appliances of his changed circumstances, without having done any act more effectively to excite the jealous attention of his compeers, than enlarging his house, hiring an additional servant, or harnessing a second horse to his vehicle. We sometimes, indeed, find the man whose abilities and enterprise so far surpass those of his fellow-workmen, as to raise him high above them, still professing to belong to them—wearing their dress, and accommodating himself to their manners. But in the present social state of the working-classes, it is too often found that such men have an end to serve, and that they propose, by flattering the prejudices of the class, and obtaining the confidence of its members, to pursue some sinister design.

The inability of the workman to ascend thus gradually into a higher sphere, clogs him with many social difficulties and evils. If he can make more money than his brethren, it is considered a sort of treachery to his order to apply it to the raising of his condition, to the education of his family, the comforts of his home, or the objects of intellectual enjoyment. It is looked upon as the sort of common property of the caste, to be lawfully spent in the alehouse, where the idle consume what the industrious creates.

There is no such startling difference in the emoluments of classes, as in their habits and social peculiarities. The half-pay officer, the dissenting clergyman or curate of the establishment, the government or mercantile clerk, draw salaries which are often exceeded by those of working-men, yet they do not consider it their duty to appear in filthy attire, or to expend a third of their income at the tavern; and, on the other hand, they do not give testimony to their utter want of self-command by requiring that their wages should be paid weekly. It is an appalling thing to reflect how large a fund, if we look on it merely as a pecuniary question, is sunk in that unfortunate peculiarity which prevents the workman from raising the tone of his mind and the character of his habits above the level of the lowest of his fraternity. It is natural to anticipate that when accident throws enlarged funds into the possession of the mere unskilled hand labourer, they should be wasted and misapplied; but the class influences rise higher, and are found so tainting the able and accomplished workman, as frequently to make his ingenuity and energy contribute to demoralise and degrade him. An employer of skilled workmen lately told the author of these remarks that he gave out work occasionally to a man who could make £1 a day, and who, both by his skill and his income, might be expected to take his rank among professional men. But nominally he was a worker: he stuck to his order, and

would not permit his capacities to raise him above the condition of his brethren, so that he had never saved a farthing from the tavern, and was then lying penniless in a public hospital.

It is part of the same set of peculiarities that workmen have so little of what may be termed professional pride. Their chief talents and exertions are too often misapplied to the combination and organisation which cannot raise their position in the world, instead of that improvement of their skill and enlargement of their productive powers from which they may reap solid and substantial advantages.

It is a farther unhappy attendant of these social peculiarities, that as those who rise in the world find inducements to sever themselves so completely from the working-people, they in their turn have less respect for the individuals who, by their industry and abilities, have risen from their own body into distinction, than for the other members of the richer classes. Instead of all pressing onward, and viewing the foremost in the race as objects of emulation, they look across to them as the occupants of a hostile camp; and while viewing the other members of the richer class as enemies, they bestow on the fortunate achievers of a higher position who have gone over from their own ranks the opprobrium and the unpopularity of deserters.

Let us leave this subject with good hopes. Education and enlightenment are making progress. The working-men, like the other departments of society, must in the end find out their true interest. Combinations have become less conspicuous and alarmingly prevalent; and when a few social extravagances, to which they have lately lent a partial ear, have experienced the demonstrative practical exposure which they are even now encountering in various parts of the world, a better day may dawn on the meritorious children of toil.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WORKING-CLASSES, AND THEIR DUTIES TO THEMSELVES.

How they may Raise their Condition—Enlightened Industry—Self-denial—Frugality—Home Comforts—Ambition to Rise in the World—Desirableness of a Practice of Saving—Appliances for its Encouragement—Insurances, Benefit Societies &c.—The Rise of the Middle-Class as Compared with the Aristocracy, an Example to be Followed—The Rise produced by their Merits and Services, the Natural Influence of Rank and Birth still subsisting.

The services which the working-classes of this country are capable of achieving for themselves, are mainly indicated by the neglected capacities for improvement, which we have already endeavoured to point out. An attentive industry, which goes farther than the mere machine-like motion of the hands; skill; a discreet reliance on their own resources; knowledge; temperance, frugality—all these, not to speak of the higher virtues, with which we have not here occasion to deal, are the instruments by which they can raise their condition.

In some respects the outward manifestations of their improvement will be, as those of their failings very often are, quite different from the indications pointing in a like direction among other classes of society. A desire to amass money is not always a pleasing characteristic of the rich, though even in the higher classes it is better than its opposite defect, extravagance. But the selfishness of working-men naturally takes so different a direction from the love of accumulation, that we can scarcely see this quality appearing among them without hailing it as a manifestation of improvement. In the man who may purchase all the personal enjoyments he can desire, from a very small portion of his yearly income, saving is often a sordid quality, approaching to a vice. But in him who must necessarily take it from enjoyments for which his uncultivated nature leaves him a keen relish, the preservation of money is generally an act of noble disinterestedness, performed for the benefit of others who have wound themselves fast round his affections. There cannot be a more pleasing or ennobling sight than the virtuous and well-conducted mechanic, who brings to his frugal, yet well-kept home, and to his expectant smiling family, the funds which labour and self-restraint have united to devote to their use and comfort, and their elevation in the scale of life. The Communist says it is selfish and degrading; and perhaps he will get the profuse and the idle to join him in this condemnation: but nature will in the

end be stronger than Communism; and the affections which the Deity has implanted in man, for wise and beneficent purposes, will be stronger than the ingenuity of social philosophers.

Yet the man who is looking upwards from his position need not neglect *himself*. In the mechanic, refined tastes are virtues. A partiality for art and literature not only imparts to him their native dignity, but raises him higher by contrast with the prevalent tastes of his class, and by association with the difficulties he has overcome in their pursuit. Nay, the mere vulgar manifestations of ease and comfort—the carpet, the clock, the hardwood tables, and the easy chairs; the clean linen, the good coat—measured for the workman himself, not the cast-off finery of a richer man—are so many indications of good social habits, and securities to society; and, what is more important to the workman's family—against the dog-fight and the gin palace.

From Ebenezer Elliot, one of the many working-men who have dignified literature, we have the following sketch, which no one can read without pleasant emotions:—

'To-morrow will be Sunday, Ann,
Get up my child with me;
Thy father rose at four o'clock
To toil for me and thee.
The fine folks use the plate he makes,
And praise it when they dine—
For John has taste; so we'll be neat,
Although we can't be fine.

Then let us shake the carpet well,
And wash and scour the floor,
And hang the weather-glass he made
Beside the cupboard door.
And polish thou the grate, my love,
I'll mend the sofa arm;
The autumn winds blow damp and chill,
And John loves to be warm.

And bring the new white curtain out,
And string the pink tape on—
Mechanics should be neat and clean;
And I'll take heed for John;
And brush the little table, child,
And fetch the ancient books—
John loves to read, and when he reads,
How like a king he looks!'

We are tempted to show another picture by the same master:—

'You seek the home of taste, and find
The proud mechanic there,
Rich as a king, and less a slave,
Throned in his elbow chair,

Or on his sofa reading Locke
  Beside his open door.
Why start? why envy worth like his,
  The carpet on his floor?

You seek the home of sluttery,
  "Is John at home?" you say;
"No, sir; he's at the Sportsman's Arm's—
  The dog-fight's o'er the way."
O lift the workman's heart and mind
  Above low sensual sin;
Give him a home—the home of taste;
  Outbid the house of gin.

O give him taste, it is the link
  Which binds us to the skies—
A bridge of rainbows thrown across
  The gulf of tears and sighs;
Or like a widower's little one—
  An angel in a child—
That leads him to her mother's chair,
  And shows him how she smiled.'

There is a sort of conventional generosity, a devotion to class interests, that frequently clogs the working-man with misgivings, if opportunity and inclination should unite to induce him to improve his condition. The old prejudice, that there is a limit to production and its fruits, and that each man has his place and share assigned to him, makes him feel that what he gains is something abstracted from others. Let him abandon this phantom difficulty, and believe that, by the very act of gaining, he is creating the fund out of which he is rewarded. The fear that a man may injure the rest of his race by rising in the world through integrity and worthily-applied industry, is the most chimerical of all social fears. Everything honestly gained by individuals is gained to the world; and he who, by honourable labour, whether of the head or of the hand, enriches himself, instead of abstracting the wealth of others, scatters blessings around him.

Under the head of Capital, we have considered the vast influence over the workman's prospects of savings made by the sacrifice of the present to the future.* To be dependent on immediate exertion for the wants of the moment, and to cease from those exertions whenever the craving is supplied, is a characteristic of barbarism. The savage often undertakes the hardest and direst labour to satisfy an immediate want, but when he has accomplished that end, he ceases to toil or care, and leaves futurity to supply all its new wants with new labours. To lay out labour for future produce, to put the seed into the earth, and await the harvest, is the characteristic of cultivated men, and a

* See above, chap. vi.

condition of reaping the advantages of civilisation. An English traveller in the Scottish Highlands towards the commencement of the eighteenth century, found that the people could not generally wait for the harvest, but cut the green corn, and ground it in a hand-mill, to satisfy their cravings; and he wisely concluded that, having laid out so imperfect a quantity of labour for the prospective benefit of the ripened grain, they had made but partial advances in civilisation.* There is another part of the empire to which the like fact and the same deduction might be found only too calamitously to apply at the present day.

Among our working-classes, the necessity of a weekly settlement, followed, as it generally is, by the immediate dispersal of the money received, indicates an imperfect civilisation, that must keep those who exhibit it subsidiary in position to their neighbours, who have more thought and self-command. When the workman does not require this rapid remuneration—when, according to the vulgar expression, he 'can wait for his money,' he will be more civilised and more powerful; he will feel substantially that 'knowledge is power.'

It is maintained by many philanthropists that a wide harvest of moral improvement might be reaped if employers would adjust their payment system to the improvident habits of their workmen. It has thus been suggested that wages should be paid daily instead of weekly. It is every man's duty to do his best for the promotion of sound morals among all on whom he can exercise any influence; and if the employer finds that no higher impulses will rule the habits of his workers, it may be his duty sorrowfully to adopt so humiliating an alternative.

We find the manager of a gas company making the following report to the directors on the success of such an experiment:—

'The system of paying the stokers daily has been in operation exceeding four months, and it affords me very great satisfaction in stating that a complete change has been effected in the habits and health of the men.

'I will point out the evils of the old system, and the loss entailed on the company by it.

'The stokers of the night-gang were paid their weekly wages on Saturday morning on leaving their work: having been on duty all night, it was natural that they should require rest; but instead of going home to bed, and preparing themselves for the labour and fatigue of the following night, their uniform practice was to resort to the public-house, and there dissipate a considerable portion of their hard earnings. Many of them were constantly to be seen reeling home in the middle of the day in a state of intoxication. The consequences of these gross irregularities

* See Burt's 'Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to his Friend in London, Letter xiii.'

were seriously felt in the loss of labour to the company by the men being rendered utterly unfit for the performance of their duty, the heats of the retorts being lowered, and the work generally neglected. It not unfrequently happened on a Saturday night that five or six of the men have been absent through the effects of drunkenness, whilst others have been absent from alleged illness, produced from the same cause. In all these instances the company have suffered severely, as men unacquainted with the duties have been substituted. The same evil occurred every week with the day-gang, and many were incapacitated for their work on Sunday. To this general system of drunkenness and dissipation may be attributed the serious increase upon the sick fund, up to the time when the alteration in the mode of paying the wages was suggested, and which increase was one of the causes of inducing the alteration. Independently of the losses the company have sustained, the moral and physical condition of the men was in the most lamentable state of degradation. The bulk of their wages having been spent in drink in the course of a few hours, and the remainder early in the week, they were left destitute of the means of procuring proper food to sustain them. Hence, independently of sickness, they were driven to the lowest shops to procure on credit whatever food they could so obtain, the same being of very inferior quality, and charged at the rate of 30 per cent. above the price at which the best commodities could be obtained at the first-rate shops—another description of misery these men brought on themselves by incurring debts at the low shops alluded to. If the proprietor is satisfied the man applying for credit is in the service of the company, he hesitates not to trust him; and I have frequently found in the letter-box of the office a dozen summonses, which have greatly contributed to the misery.

'Having as briefly as possible stated the general grievances of the old system, I have now to draw the attention of the court to the practical working of the new.

'It is most gratifying to perceive that in the habits of the men an extraordinary improvement has taken place. The evil complained of in regard to the Saturday night-gang is completely removed: the men come to their work cheerfully, and without the slightest appearance of intoxication; the work is as well done on a Saturday and Sunday night as any other. In short, the men are all regular in their attendance, and there are no excuses. From this source alone I anticipate a considerable saving to the sick fund, which will be free from the abuse sustained under the old system.'

To those who would bespeak a higher destiny for the class, there is something hopeless and humiliating even in the success of such an experiment. It is peace and sobriety bought at the

expense of independence. The workmen who could not exercise a week's self-command, and who could be redeemed by daily payment, showed that they were better fitted to be slaves than freemen. They proved the utter impossibility of their placing themselves, for even one day, in a position of independence towards their employers and the world; for they acknowledged that they had not preserved for themselves enough of the fruit of past labour to last them for twenty-four hours; and every morning when they arose, they were dependent on their employer's payment, or that of the parish. Such men make a close approach to that savage state in which the human being labours only to supply momentary wants, and reserves nothing for the future.*

It is humiliating that it should be said, as it often is with too much truth, that high wages do more harm than good among the working-classes, by tending to their demoralisation rather than their independence. While this stigma attaches to a considerable portion of this body—for luckily it is only to a portion—they cannot but be considered in a state of partial barbarism. It is a bitter thing for the honest working-man to cry aloud before his fellow-men for labour, and to find none—to see the partner of his days, and the children he has given life to, sinking gradually before his eyes into the danger and the degradation of pauperism, while, with all heart and willingness to labour for their behoof, he is denied this privilege. But if the man so placed have much reflective spirit in him, the bitterest of all the elements in his bitter cup will be the remembrance of the surplus wages of better days spent in the tavern.

Those who have the least protecting store from their past labours, are the most calamitously exposed to the effects of oscillations in trade. When evil times come, the well-conditioned workman should man his heart for the strife—should remember that the storm passes by, and that it lies with men, by their own efforts, to ameliorate and abbreviate it. If he have had the self-denying forethought to save somewhat from the earnings of better times, he will be doubly armed; first, in the means that put him above immediate want, and the necessity of humiliating himself to be fed on any terms that may be dictated to him; and second, in a consciousness that his past conduct has shown resources of restraint and forethought, which give him the self-reliance best adapted to combat with the coming difficulties.

Want of self-command is a defect to which all classes are more or less amenable; and the flagrant illustrations of its influence which sometimes occur in the high and privileged ranks, are sad

* See above, p. 124.

impediments to those who would desire to preach the exercise of these virtues in a humbler sphere. To counteract the inherent weaknesses of his race, man has adopted many ingenious devices, and among these we may reckon the plans which reduce the temptations to extravagance, and mitigate the tension of self-restraint, by graduating, as it were, and subdividing the several efforts. Thus the gentleman in easy circumstances who attempts to save money, adding £50 to his store from time to time, may have temptations to break in upon his reserved fund, or to leave it unaccumulated, which he cannot sometimes easily resist. It occurs to him that the accustomed deposit need not be made precisely at this period of the year—there will be time enough a month hence; or perhaps there is a pressing claim on his funds, or some strong temptation to extravagance; and the store is temporarily reduced, of course with the best intention to replace the draft.

Various plans have been adopted for raising a barrier against these too common weaknesses; and among the best and the most important in its action is life-insurance. It is difficult fully to estimate even the present blessings of this system, and still more so to anticipate the extent to which the progress of civilisation, industry, and wealth will naturally carry it. It not only raises a wall of protection round the accumulating fund of the insured, but enables him to anticipate the long tedious process of accumulation, and guard against the calamity of his days being cut short before he has been able to accomplish it. It has been well remarked that even he who lives long, and pays a sum in premiums beyond what he has assured, is still a gainer. In the first place, he has actually accumulated a fund, and he might not have done so had he trusted to his own continued efforts of self-restraint. In the second place, he has bought ease of mind from the commencement of the insurance, in the knowledge that he had made provision against calamities which might have fallen heavily on those near and dear to him.

The friendly societies of the working-classes are a partial adaptation of the insurance system. These institutions have received much attention from the legislature, and have been the object of many amendments tending to security, fairness, and an accomplishment of the best means of employing the savings of the working-classes; but it may safely be said that they are still widely open to improvement. By various acts of parliament, particular privileges have been communicated to savings' banks, having a general tendency to increase the security they afford, by uniting them with the safety of the national funds. The sums that may be deposited in them are limited to £30 in one year, and £150 in all. Yet the general amount of deposits in these institutions, continuing to rise from year to year, in 1838 exceeded

twenty millions, and in 1844 passed upwards beyond thirty—such is the power of accumulation in small savings. Commencing with these humbler aids to accumulation, however, the working-man should be ambitious of joining his wealthier brethren of the community in the insurance office. To a tolerably well-paid working-man, 10s. a quarter is a small matter—to almost every working-man, £100 is a serious and imposing sum. Yet generally in a life between the ages of twenty and thirty, a little less or more than 10s. a quarter will insure £100. And if the workman should find that his duty prompts him rather to provide for his own old age, than for children who are likely to be supporting themselves before he leaves them, he may, by a like payment of small sums from time to time, buy for himself a superannuation annuity. Nay, so far does the science of statistical calculation apply itself to all the demands of society, that should he desire to provide for the old age of his partner in life as well as of himself, he can easily find an office that will contract for a superannuation allowance to be paid to both, or to the survivor.*

It were well if the working-classes would not only in this, but in many other matters, bestow attention on what they see in the world around them. If they desire an example of an order of men raising their position in the social scale, let them look at the progress of the middle-class for the past century, and the changes that have taken place in their position towards the high aristocracy. The moderate capitalist, the clergyman, the lawyer, the physician, the professional author, the artist, stand respectively higher than they could have stood a century ago, when between them and the hereditary aristocracy there was a great gulf fixed.

The familiar literature of the eighteenth century shows us that there was then nearly as marked a difference between the hereditary aristocracy and the middle-classes as there now is between the dining-room and the servants' hall. A scene in 'Joseph Andrews' is curiously instructive on the relative position of the aristocracy and middle-classes in Fielding's day. A dispute takes place in a stage-coach. A person who represents herself as a gentlewoman is carrying on the war of tongues with an avowed upper servant in a great house, proud of her position. We are told that Miss Graveairs, the representative of the gentry, becoming indignant, observed that 'Some folks might sometimes give their tongues a liberty to some people that were their betters which did not become them; for her part she was

* For more specific information on this subject, reference may be made to 'Chambers's Information for the People,' No. 46, old series (No. 84, new series). The various insurance offices are profuse enough in the circulation of their proposals; and the perusal of some of them, with the reports of speeches at meetings of the shareholders, might beneficially occupy the workman's evening hours.

not used to converse with servants.' Slipslop returned, 'Some people kept no servants to converse with; for her part she thanked Heaven she lived in a family where there were a great many; and had more under her own command than any paltry little gentlewoman in the kingdom.' Miss Graveairs cried, 'She believed her mistress would not encourage such sauciness to her betters.' 'My betters!' says Slipslop; 'who is my betters, pray?' 'I am your betters,' answered Miss Graveairs; 'and I'll acquaint your mistress.' At which Mrs Slipslop laughed aloud, and told her 'Her lady was one of the great gentry; and such little paltry gentlewomen, as some folks who travelled in stage-coaches, would not easily come at her.'

But the tables were speedily turned. It was discovered that the person whose peculiar humour it was to appear as a small gentlewoman, was in reality the daughter of a great man—of a postilion who had risen to be his master's steward; and then 'the prudent woman, who despised the anger of Miss Graveairs whilst she conceived her the daughter of a gentleman of small fortune, now she heard her alliance with the upper servants of a great family in her neighbourhood, began to fear her interest with the mistress. She wished she had not carried the dispute so far, and began to think of reconciling herself with the young lady before she left the inn.'

'As soon as the passengers had alighted from the coach, Mr Adams, as was his custom, made directly for the kitchen.' So commences one of the chapters of this delightful fiction. And there, when we follow the parson in his social habits, we find him taking his pot and pipe with the upper servants, not unconscious of their superior power and influence, even if it should sometimes cross his mind that he, a clergyman, a scholar, and of irreproachable morals, ought to occupy a higher social position. Sometimes he gets access to the great squire, and he keeps up a friendly intercourse, not unmindful of the mighty chasm between their different ranks in society. And he must be careful of his walk on this perilous ground, for he has his own projects of ambition: he hopes that, through the squire's influence, his son may rise to the rank of an exciseman, and that his daughter may succeed the housekeeper at the Hall.*

* Mr Macaulay, alluding to a period a little earlier, says—'The coarse and ignorant squire, who thought that it belonged to his dignity to have grace said every day at his table by an ecclesiastic in full canonicals, found means to reconcile dignity with economy. A young Levite—such was the phrase then in use—might be had for his board, a small garret, and ten pounds a year; and might not only perform his own professional functions—might not only be the most patient of butts and of listeners—might not only be always ready in fine weather for bowls, and in rainy weather for shovelboard, but might also save the expense of a gardener or of a groom. Sometimes the reverend man nailed up the apricots, and sometimes he curried the coach horses. He cast up the farrier's bills: he walked ten miles with a message or a parcel. If he was permitted to dine with

Poor Fielding—he was himself often reminded how small genius, and even a public official position, were beside hereditary aristocracy. He was one of the permanent Middlesex magistrates, and thus filled an office of so much importance to the administration of criminal justice, that it called for, whether it obtained it or not, skill, industry, and integrity. An anecdote of Walpole's, showing how he and his aristocratic friends treated the magistrate, would be considered rather startling if it applied to such an official at the present day.

'Rigby gave me a strong picture of nature. He and Peter Bathurst t'other night carried a servant of the latter's, who had attempted to shoot him, before Fielding; who, to all his other vocations, has, by the grace of Mr Lyttleton, added that of Middlesex justice. He sent them word that he was at supper; that they must come next morning.' The young gentlemen, instead of respectfully representing that their business was pressing, 'did not,' says Walpole, 'understand that freedom; but ran up, where they found him,' &c. Here his company is described—characteristic and curious enough, and constituting the reason why the story was deemed worth telling. But our business in the meantime is with the symptoms of the mutual social position of the official and the young aristocrats. 'He never stirred, nor asked them to sit. Rigby, who had seen him so often come to beg a guinea of Sir C. Williams, and Bathurst, at whose father's he had lived for victuals, understood that dignity as little, and pulled themselves chairs.' In short, the youthful aristocrats treated the police magistrate, who gave himself airs, just as some of their class might at the present day treat a sub-inspector or a sergeant who appeared to forget his place. The magistrate is now raised above the influence of such haughty insolence. Perhaps at some not distant day the inferior official may be so too, and may be found not the less civil to the humbler members of society that he is no longer subject to the haughtiness of the higher.

Walpole, who tells the anecdote about Fielding, has left us more memorials of the high life of last century than any other man; and in doing so has afforded us fuller evidence of the scorn and contempt with which the son of a peer was entitled to treat

the family, he was expected to content himself with the plainest fare. He might fill himself with the corned beef and the carrots; but as soon as the tarts and cheesecakes made their appearance, he quitted his seat, and stood aloof till he was summoned to return thanks for the repast, from a great part of which he had been excluded. Perhaps, after some years of service, he was presented to a living sufficient to support him; but he often found it necessary to purchase his preferment by a species of simony, which furnished an inexhaustible subject of pleasantry to three or four generations of scoffers. With his cure he was expected to take a wife. The wife had ordinarily been in the patron's service; and it was well if she was not suspected of standing too high in the patron's favour.'—*History of England*, i. 327.

the whole mercantile and professional class. The great terror of his life was to be considered a man of letters. He loved the occupation, but dreaded as much being caught in the act of devoting himself to it, as any man can dread the exposure of a weakness, a folly, or a vice. Hence his private press, at which he pretended to amuse himself with trifles, hoping that the world would wildly grasp at them: his letters, so elaborately polished and carefully copied over, that posterity might find them, and remark how brilliant were the casual gems that dropped from his careless pen when compared with the laboured literature of professional authors. When alluding to one of the most illustrious men of his age, D'Alembert, to whom a common friend had offered to introduce him, he could say, 'For Monsieur D'Alembert, I said that I was mighty indifferent about seeing him: that it was not my custom to seek authors, who are a conceited, troublesome sort of people.' In speaking of literary controversy, he said, 'What are become of all the controversies since the days of Scaliger and Scioppius of Billingsgate memory? Why, they sleep in oblivion, till some Bayle drags them out of their dust, and takes mighty pains to ascertain the date of each author's death, which is of no more consequence to the world than the day of his birth. Many a country squire quarrels with his neighbour about game and manors, yet they never print their wrangles, though as much abuse passes between them as if they could quote all the Phillipics of the learned.'

Even very high nominal rank and position as a statesman did not save men who had raised themselves from being reminded of their 'proper place' in the presence of the courtier or the hereditary peer. We need not go back and adduce Bacon with the Great Seal in his hand, sitting in Buckingham's ante-chamber, and waiting for an audience, while he was shouldered by the minion's lackeys. Almost in our own day, Romilly, who had too high a spirit to have trodden in these footsteps, even after one so illustrious, was reminded in parliament of the natural influence of his birth when he was pleading for popular claims. When argument and declamation were in vain thundered against Sidmouth, his little nickname of 'The Doctor' could still wound him: it was so anomalous that the son of a physician should rise to be a prime minister. Even the fierce and unscrupulous Thurlow did not, in the pomp and power of the woolsack, escape some sneers on his lowly origin: he was the son of a clergyman of the Church of England. Those who were tempted to beard so daring a spirit in his pitch of pride, must have felt very secure in their own position; and a member of the haughtiest class of the English peerage—the descendants of Charles II.'s mistresses—led the attack. But as the reader will see from the following spirited account of the skirmish, the strength lay with the besieged:—

'At times Lord Thurlow was superlatively great. It was the good fortune of the reminiscent to hear his celebrated reply to the Duke of Grafton, during the inquiry into Lord Sandwich's administration of Greenwich Hospital. His Grace's action and delivery when he addressed the House were singularly dignified and graceful; but his matter was not equal to his manner. He reproached Lord Thurlow with his *plebeian extraction, and his recent admission into the peerage.* Particular circumstances caused Lord Thurlow's reply to make a deep impression on the reminiscent. His lordship had spoken too often, and began to be heard with a civil, but visible impatience. Under these circumstances, he was attacked in the manner we have mentioned. He rose from the woolsack, and advanced slowly to the place whence the chancellor generally addresses the House; then fixing on the duke the look of Jove when he grasps the thunder, "I am amazed," he said in a level tone of voice, "at the attack the noble duke has made on me. Yes, my lords"—considerably raising his voice—"I am amazed at his Grace's speech. The noble duke cannot look before him, behind him, and on either side of him, without seeing some noble peer who owes his seat in this House to his successful exertions in the profession to which I belong. Does he not feel that it is as honourable to owe it to these as to being the accident of an accident? To all these noble lords the language of the noble duke is as applicable and as insulting as it is to myself. But I don't fear to meet it single and alone. No one venerates the peerage more than I do; but I must say, my lords, that the peerage solicited me, not I the peerage. Nay, more; I can say, and will say, that, as a peer of parliament, as Speaker of this Right Honourable House, as Keeper of the Great Seal, as guardian of his majesty's conscience, as Lord High Chancellor of England—nay, even in that character alone in which the noble duke would think it an affront to be considered—as a MAN—I am at this moment as respectable—I beg to add I am at this time as much respected—as the proudest peer I now look down upon."' *

It said much for the proper feeling of that day that the chancellor's speech achieved for him a high popularity. But who would now venture to reproach a Peel or a Gladstone in parliament with the obscurity of his birth and the brevity of his pedigree? An able man of business, or of science, is an important personage at the present day among all bodies of men, however lofty their pretensions; and the hereditary wisdom of the reddest blood and the highest rank in the land will be unable to counteract the influence of this class of men. A deputy-chairman, an under secretary, a head clerk of a large department, is now often a person of more weight than an affluent peer of the realm; while

* 'Butler's Reminiscences;' 'Roscoe's Lives of Lawyers,' p. 281.

the head of a profession, or the man who, by his business abilities, has obtained even a secondary leadership in parliament, is a person of infinitely greater importance, not, as we shall have to show, in the eyes of an undiscerning mob—for there the glitter of rank is often too dazzling to admit of a discreet discernment—but among that considerable class of orderly and unassuming citizens who affect respectability and sagacity, who desire to pick their steps safely through life, and wish to be ably guided and strongly backed.

In a country where there is no other kind of aristocracy, an official aristocracy may be a dangerous thing, especially if it be at the disposal of a monarchy. But in this country, the rising influence of official and professional men—an influence created by the services which their skill enables them to perform to society—is a satisfactory and hopeful sign. Nor can it be said that this arises from any capricious revolution in public sentiment, which reaction may some day soon invert, and lead in the opposite direction. It is produced by the sense and honest discrimination of the public becoming victorious over their sentiments and prejudices. The popular feeling in this country has always been partial to rank and birth, and there is every reason to believe that it ever will continue to be so. The most democratic shopkeeper in theory, will lose his presence of mind when he discovers that his customer is a peer. If we go farther down in social life, we shall find that there is no bauble that so effectually dazzles the eyes of all the uneducated classes, from the porter to the sweeper of the crossings, as a coronet. It is quite natural that what the learned, the ingenious, and the sagacious have set over their heads, should be treated by the ignorant with an extravagant and thoughtless admiration. The middle classes of this country are scarcely just to the aristocracy when they blame them for a system of patronage which is in reality but a species of homage to the appreciation of the vulgar. Notwithstanding the progress which the middle classes have made, and their invasion of what used of old to be the absolute domain of the aristocracy, there is still no doubt that if a peer's son and a shopkeeper's be equally qualified for a public office, the former will, as a matter of course, obtain it. Party spirit nepotism—the support of the order—may perhaps respectively have their influence; but there is generally, in weighing the eligibility of two such persons, an element to be taken into consideration separate altogether from their personal qualifications—the completeness of their command over subordinates, who, from respect to their position in society, obey their injunctions, and so render their services efficacious. As long as the train of uneducated official subordinates will obey the peer's son with more alacrity and effectiveness than the man who has raised himself from a humble rank, the former

possesses a qualification which the latter has not. If the office of a policeman were, in its income and its duties, compatible with the expectations of an honourable, the police force would be by so much more respectable, and consequently more effective than it is. The idea is not wholly ludicrous, for we have something near it in Ireland. In that country, where rank and family have a still higher influence than they possess here, where the feeling in their favour is rather a religion than a prejudice, the reckless extravagance of the gentry has driven many of their sons to seek such humble offices as those connected with the rural police; and the gentility thus infused into it is said to add much to the effectiveness of that fine body of men.

In our army, nothing but the fame and authority of the most brilliant military achievements can cope with the influence of rank and birth. In the mess-room, the aristocratic prejudice makes its distinctions among the field officers; among the common soldiers, the subalterns who have been raised from the ranks are far from being the most popular. There is thus often too much soundness in the opinion of those who think that men raised from the ranks seldom make good officers, and thus, as it often happens in human affairs, the prejudices of the soldier are the barrier against that gradual progression which would so essentially raise his own condition, and benefit the military service of the country. And yet it would be unfair to leave this incidental subject of the popular veneration for aristocracy, without admitting that, in other less civilised and less energetic countries, the same mental phenomenon is more strongly developed, though the aristocracy may not be precisely of the same kind. The wonder so often expressed towards the aristocratic prejudices of England, if analysed, would probably be resolved into a feeling of surprise that this lingering respect for old traditions should co-exist with the democratic institutions of the country, and the hard, practical, utilitarian, independent habits of the people. The elements of French society admit not of being just now calmly examined. In Germany, notwithstanding all that has passed within the past year, it will be strange if the old predominant feeling in favour of the aristocracy do not in a great measure revive. Of Russia it is unnecessary to speak. Spain and Denmark, at the opposite extremes of Europe, are alike subject to the disease of a poor aristocracy, which is the worst of all. Holland is far from being free from the influence of rank and birth: and when we pass into Asia, we find that most distinct and enduring of social distinctions —the division into races or castes.

To return to the main subject—the circumstances under which the middle-classes of Britain have acquired their present influence, through the sole merit of their services, and not only unaided by, but in defiance of, popular prejudices, customs,

and institutions. It deserves to be remembered that, besides the popular prejudice in its favour, birth alone, independently of the authority it confers in dealing with the vulgar, is still deemed a qualification among the intelligent, or at least throughout a great portion of them. We are apt to consider that, with the progress of education, we are becoming more abstractly philosophical about such matters than perhaps there is any chance of our ever becoming. But no one can look at the almanacs, peerages, baronetages, histories of the commoners, books of heraldry, family antiquities, and county annals of the present day, without feeling that in this respect the ancient spirit is not dead—that it is indeed fed by new lights from modern research and scientific investigation. In fact a nation must have reached maturity, and must own long-settled institutions, before its citizens can possess long pedigrees. Wars, revolutions, and migrations, are apt to snap these delicate chains. The idea that things now ancient were not more ancient at their commencement, clings so firmly to the mind, that it is difficult to remember that the distant ancestors of great houses were upstarts, and that long antiquity of race must be a thing of modern times. Adam's sons could count but a brief pedigree.

It must be in a great measure the same with newly-migrated races. Emigrants have seldom pedigrees, and they must be long settled in peace and prosperity in the territory of their adoption ere they acquire them. It is the highest glory of our nobility to trace back their descent to ancestors who came in 'with the Conquest.' As the vulgar honour the descendant for this his ancestry, they think that the ancestor's claims to distinction are of the same class—high birth. But these Norman adventurers were more like the American citizens who, already tired of their state in the Union, some fifty years, or at most a century old, swarm off westward and southward, seizing on the territories first colonised by the effeminate races of the peninsula—rough, adventurous, unscrupulous men, with the elements of a great civilisation in their blood, but in the meantime fiercely hungering after conquest and acquisition. The Normans were essentially upstarts, men who made their own fortunes by their courage and enterprise. From the first inroads of Rollo and his northern barbarians on the fruitful plains of Normandie, till they divided among themselves the rich inheritance of the Saxons, their history was precisely that history of turmoil, revolution, and change of place, as well as system, which keeps the most active and courageous at the head of affairs, and never lets the elements become sufficiently settled to form themselves into dynasties. Such was the source of our proud English aristocracy—a source which has only been examined on this occasion for the purpose of reminding the reader that ancient birth is the fruit of old dynasties and political

institutions — that the older a country is, the older will be its families—and that regard for birth is not an exhausted prejudice, sinking into decay, but a substantial existence, holding its share in the interests and feelings of our multifarious population.

Guizot justly remarks that in this country our progress is made not by deserting old opinions and habits, in favour of novelties, but by letting the new principles run their race side by side with the old, and gain the victory by their superiority. So the progress of the middle classes in power and influence has not arisen from the aristocracy being superseded in public opinion; upon the contrary, as we have endeavoured to show, birth and rank have also had their rise in public estimation, but a rise which has been far outstripped by that of substantial personal merit.

It is in this form that the middle class—the gentry, as they may be termed, to distinguish them from the aristocracy, who are constituted by the nobility and great landowners—have triumphed, establishing practically and substantially to so great an extent the principle of which revolutionary democrats idly dream—the empire of merit and ability over traditions and conventionalities. Again we say to the working-classes, let them look at this gradual and peaceful victory, and mark how it was accomplished. Not by the inferior class standing in fierce and hostile array against the superior—not by declarations of inherent inalienable natural rights—not by ruinous combinations and strikes—not by dictating to employers, and intimidating willing workers at inferior remuneration. It was *not* by any of these means, nor yet was it, on the other hand, by fawning flattery or unworthy compliances; for these arts may raise *individuals:* they can never raise *classes.* The upward progress of the professional classes is to be attributed to the increased value of their labour—to the skill which study, industry, and regularity have endowed them with; to their general freedom from those grosser vices which reduce a man's value in the productive world, as they sink the estimate of his character in the moral world; to the intelligence that has enabled them to rear their children to the occupations where there is room for them, avoiding those which have been overstocked; to the prudence and self-restraint which have taught them that all their gains are not the mere instruments of immediate luxury and sensual indulgence, but are intrusted to their hands for the education and training of their children, and for smoothening, so far as a parent's aid can do so, the passage of the new generation through life. To these, and to the countless other productive virtues which follow the steps of conscientious industry and active beneficence, must we attribute the position of that middle class which, when all the varieties of this chequered human life are examined, is found to have more of the sunshine, and less of the shade, than any other lot which the world has to offer.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DUTIES OF WEALTH.

Mutual Dependence and Sympathies of the whole human Race—The Theology of Political Economy—The Development of this Order of Nature by advancing Knowledge—Treatment of Plagues and Epidemics—Multitudes heretofore allowed to Congregate without organising Elements—Manufactures—Railway Labourers—Mines, &c.—How far the Effects of the Past Remediable—The Hopes of the Future—Prospects of Civilisation being Pursued as a separate Acquirement—A Function of Wealth to Study it.

Every new day, with its new facts discovered and laws explained, tends to show more clearly to us the intimate dependence of the members of the whole human family upon each other; and within the past few years, as much has been developed about this interesting law of the world's nature as might supply a Paley with materials for a new Natural Theology—showing how the Deity has thus cared for the preservation, the happiness, and the indefinite improvement of the race whom he sent to people and command the earth. Our legislature has, after a long conflict, done homage to the presence of this influence, in free trade, by which the diversities of clime, habits, and productions, and the natural passion of man to increase his acquisitions, have been made subservient to a principle of union, which all the nations of the earth must more or less acknowledge. Voltaire sneered at that distribution of the earth's bounties which left the coffee, so grateful to the children of the north, to be produced only by the burning sun of the tropics, and while fever raged in Europe, confined the remedy to America; but wise as the sneering Frenchman was after the wisdom of this world, subsequent events and increased knowledge have only tended to show that these things were arranged by an Intelligence which his own was not even able to fathom. We had long been taught that our national wealth and prosperity depended on the depression and poverty of other nations, and that the natural and often laudable spirit of acquisition was not sufficient for the accomplishment of our prosperity as a people if we failed to assist it with the illaudable spirit of jealousy and exclusion; but here, too, the gradual development of our knowledge of the economy of the human race, has tended to dispossess us of our unamiable and cruel philosophy, and to teach us that in the pursuit of our own prosperity it is not necessary to trample upon others, and that whether it be unfortunate or not that our neighbour should be rich it will add nothing to our com-

forts or enjoyments to make him poor. In early barbarous times, industry and commerce were not believed to be in any form the source of wealth; it was not by production, but by robbery and forcible seizure, that it was deemed possible for nations to enrich themselves. Some steps onwards in civilisation led to the view that there ought to be commerce and productive industry; but it was believed that the supply was limited, and that a nation could only enjoy a large share of it by driving others from the field. Another step onwards, and we have discharged this anti-social element in the philosophy of trade; and so it is that the more we know, and have experience, the more we see the beneficent wisdom with which this world has been organised.

The philosophy that thus widens itself to the connection of nations with each other, has a still more lively reference to the intercourse of individuals. Of old, our protection from the evils, physical and moral, of mankind, was believed to consist in separation and exclusion; it is now found in sympathy and communion. It is ever more deeply impressed on those who notice what is passing around them, that none can be virtuous, happy, or prosperous, who are only separated by a partition or a street from vice, misery, and starvation. We learn that our safety from the attacks of disease, moral or physical, is not to be found by leaving it to rage at freedom in the sphere that seems to be its proper element, while we seek a selfish security by building a protecting wall of isolation around us; but in struggling with the beginning of the evil, and saving our fellow-creatures from its ravages, as the means of saving ourselves. We have learned that it is not sufficient to make war on criminals, and to increase the cruelty of our punishments a palpable amount above every stage where we find the infliction ineffectual to suppress crime—we must look at the causes and temptations of offences, the traditional community of wickedness in which the offender lives, and the circumstances that have kept him from ever holding his place in that portion of society where honesty is the best policy. We learn that to cast the coin to the beggar, that we may get suddenly rid of his importunities, will not help to reduce mendicancy, or poverty either; and that we must examine more carefully into the true means of saving a people from the degradation of pauperism, before we have reached the solution of the question of the relief of the poor. We shall find, as it is shown more at length in connection with the subject of Population, that the sickness or the death of human beings, however depraved, useless, or burdensome, can never be advantageous to the rest of the community—can never be wisely encouraged by them—and should, in accordance with the true philosophy of a humane prudence, be ever prevented, when that is practicable. We learn that a high and polished gentry, who abhor whatever is disgust-

ing or degrading, cannot securely enjoy their fastidious tastes by closing themselves out from the bad odours, the offensive sights, the obscene sounds of a low, degraded, debauched, idle, profligate people; but must expect their own purity to be invaded, if they permit this cancer in social life to spread unheeded and uncured.

Isolation was the old protection from epidemics. In the great plagues which devastated our cities, when an inmate of any house was struck, a red cross was painted on the door, and there was written above it, 'The Lord have mercy upon us!' The hitherto uninfected gave their prayers, but nothing more; and the victim was left in horrible isolation, because the cruel selfishness of his species drove them to believe that safety lay in flight from the sufferer, instead of preventive arrangements, that might have had a saving influence over all. This relentless isolation not only led to the abandonment of whole households in their hour of misery, but instances are recorded where the doors and windows of infected houses have been closed with masonry, and families have been built into their dwellingplaces, in vain efforts to stay and bury the contamination along with the living beings on whom it had laid hold. No isolation that man has been able to accomplish has stopped the progress of epidemics. Those who have seemed most exposed to their influence have been spared; those who have, with endless toil, attention, and expense, been severed from the infected parts, have been all at once mysteriously smitten. We are beginning to learn that isolation is not equivalent to safety, and that there is a sounder, as well as a more humane, philosophy in sympathy and organisation for common protection. It is at the present day startling to peruse the isolating provisions contained in the order of council issued to meet the approach of cholera in the year 1831:—

'To prevent the introduction of the disorder, not only the most active co-operation of the local authorities along the coast in the measures of the government, but likewise the exercise of the utmost caution by all the inhabitants of such parts of the country, becomes indispensably necessary. The quarantine regulations established by the government are sufficient, it is confidently hoped, to prevent the disorder from being communicated through any intercourse with the continent by the regular channel of trade or passage; but they cannot guard against its introduction by means of the secret and surreptitious intercourse which is known to exist between the coast of England and the opposite shores. By such means, this fatal disorder, in spite of all quarantine regulations, and of the utmost vigilance on the part of the government, might be introduced into the United Kingdom; and as it is clear that this danger can only be obviated by the most strenuous efforts on the part of all persons of any influence to put

a stop to such practices, their utmost exertions should be used to effect this end.'

To apply the theory of quarantine regulations inland, the nation is warned that, in case of the actual invasion of the disease, 'all intercourse with any infected town and the neighbouring country must be prevented by the best means within the power of the magistrates, who will have to make regulations for the supply of provisions; that measures of a coercive nature may be rendered expedient for the common safety, if, unfortunately, so fatal a disease should ever show itself in this country in the terrific way in which it has appeared in various parts of Europe; and it may become necessary to draw troops, or a strong body of police, around infected places, so as utterly to exclude the inhabitants from all intercourse with the country.'

It is further stated, that 'as the most effectual means of preventing the spreading of any pestilence has always been found to be the immediate separation of the infected from the healthy, in order to carry this separation into effect, it will be expedient that one or more houses should be kept in view in each town or its neighbourhood, as places to which every case of the disease, as soon as detected, might be removed, provided the family of the affected persons consent to such removal; and in case of refusal, a conspicuous mark ("Sick") should be placed in front of the house, to warn persons that it is in quarantine; and even when persons with the disease shall have been removed, and the house shall have been purified, the word ("Caution") should be substituted, as denoting suspicion of the disease; and the inhabitants of such house should not be at liberty to move out or communicate with other parties, until, by authority of the Local Board, the mark shall have been removed.'

During this isolation, in order to avoid all unnecessary communication with the public out of doors, it is recommended that 'all articles of food, or other necessaries required by the inhabitants, should be placed in front of the house, and received by one of the inhabitants of the house, after the person delivering them shall have retired; and that until the time during which the contagion of cholera lies dormant in the human frame has been more accurately ascertained, it will be necessary, for the sake of perfect security, that convalescents from the disease, and those who have had any communication with them, should be kept under observation for a period of not less than twenty days.'

Later and fuller inquiries have taught us that we would lay a more effectual foundation for our protection from the ravages of this epidemic, could we widen and clean the streets, and ventilate the houses of Constantinople or Moscow, than by our attempts, by quarantine, or any other restrictive regulations, to protect ourselves when others are victims. We are taught that we have

stronger grounds of common sympathy than we believed ourselves to have with the victims of epidemic; that when it once begins, we are involved more or less in the same liabilities; and that our protection is not in fleeing from our brethren of mankind, but in making common cause with them. At the same time that there are certain defects and calamities which probably give an origin to the disease, and certainly nourish it, yet, like all epidemics, when it has once begun its march, it leaves no class entirely exempt from its ravages; and occasionally a few of those whom wealth and all other favourable circumstances seem to point out as beyond its reach, are struck down, as if to teach their class that all are in danger, and all are interested. There are solemn lessons to be learned in the new views of the philosophy of epidemics which are now practically developing themselves. If all the world were housed and fed like the English gentleman, we would perhaps scarcely know what cholera and typhus fever are; but the English gentleman cannot be assured of his safety from these scourges while there are filth and misery in the same island with himself, or even in any part of the globe; and thus he is taught that he has other functions in the world besides adding acre unto acre, and that there are other interests demanding his care besides the comfort, the luxury, and the elegant enjoyments of his own family.

When cholera revisited our shores in 1848, the results of the intervening experience showing the predisposing causes of this, as of all other epidemics, was thus authoritatively announced:—

'The want of sufficient and proper food, by diminishing the vital energy, and thereby the power of resisting external noxious influences, renders the body the easy prey of whatever causes of disease may surround it; but it is difficult to determine its exact share in predisposing to epidemic disease; because those who, from ignorance, mismanagement, and attendant poverty, are destitute of proper nourishment, are generally, from the same causes, the inhabitants of the worst localities. On the other hand, the dreadful extent to which entire classes of the population, who have abundance of wholesome food, but who habitually live in impure air, suffer from certain epidemics—as, for example, artisans, and the lower class of shopkeepers, from the very pestilence in question — affords a demonstration that the habitual respiration of impure air is an incomparably more powerful predisponent to epidemic disease than that which has been commonly assumed as the main cause — namely, absolute poverty. The evidence of Mr Bowie, and that of Mr Taylor, in relation to the means of healthful subsistence possessed by the population of Spitalfields, may be cited in exemplification of this conclusion. In the present state of most towns and cities,

number of persons whose constitution is enfeebled by want

of food, compared with the number whose vital energy is depressed by want of pure air, is found to be an exceedingly small minority. We have little power to deal with the former class of predisposing causes; but we have complete power, by arrangements which are known, and which involve large and manifold economies, to remove from the metropolis, and from every lane, court, and alley of every town, the sources that poison the air. Here, then, is the true field for exertion.

'The disease which may be taken as the type of the entire class of epidemic diseases that infest this country, is typhus fever. The *habitat* of typhus is that of the class; and the conditions which favour the spread of this disease, and which convert it into a pestilence, and those which locate to a great extent in these very places all other pestilences that come, and which give them their fearful fatality, are, as far as we have any knowledge of them, precisely the same.

It is now universally known that in the metropolis, as in every town and city, the places in which typhus is to be found, from which it is rarely, if ever, absent, and which it occasionally decimates, are the neglected and filthy parts of it; the parts unvisited by the scavenger; the parts which are without sewers, or which, if provided with sewers, are without house drains into them; or which, if they have both sewers and house drains, are without a due and regulated supply of water for washing away their filth, and for the purposes of surface-cleansing and domestic use. The evidence that the track of typhus is everywhere marked by the extent of this domain of filth, has been so often adduced, that it is needless to repeat it; but the evidence that during the prevalence of cholera this was also everywhere the precise track of this pestilence is not so well known. With the steady approach of this formidable malady towards us, it is, in our opinion, of the last importance that public attention should be directed to the evidence of this fact.'*

The remark of the Commissioners, that poverty is a predisposing cause which they 'have little power to deal with,' while impurities and defective ventilation are causes over which they have 'complete power by arrangements which are known,' is eminently instructive. As we have already endeavoured to show, if it lay with the rich to feed and clothe all their less fortunate brethren, their riches would soon be exhausted, and the function would be as far as ever from being performed; for whatever the rich gave, would only displace so much of the industry of the poor. To find the means of their individual support lies with mankind; and unless in the small exceptions which a poor-law can reach, if it is not done, society must fall to pieces. But the

* First Report of the Commission on the health of the metropolis.

other adjuncts to health and happiness, which depend more on that skill and opportunity of observation which the wealthy classes alone possess, may be imparted from the wealthy to the poorer orders of the community, without the one making extravagant sacrifices, or the other receiving humiliating benefits. It is a matter of common sympathies, and the removal of common calamities and evils; and it would be hard to say that even if the class who are the first affected, and at all times furnish the greatest proportion of victims, should be inclined to suffer in sullen silence, their more fortunate and better-instructed brethren would not be entitled, by the great law of self-preservation, to interfere for the removal of the common danger.

On this subject we shall have more to say when we consider a sanitary law as one of the functions of the government. The main object, in the meantime, is to point out the general nature of the causes of sympathy which give an actual inducement to those who are rich in the world's goods to interest themselves in the position of the rest of their race.

We have already considered the subject of strikes and combinations, without any intention to spare the conduct of the wicked men who have conducted them, and we have said what truth requires us to say of the advantages of capital, and the services of men of enterprise to the rest of the world. Wherever we see crime or misery, it is a general and fair conclusion that the main fault lies with those who have committed the crime or lapsed into the misery. But that very widening of interests, and extension of sympathies from class to class, which we have just noticed, prompts us to reflect that there are often others who cannot be entirely without reproach, and that while the guilty and the degraded, as they have been most to blame, have most severely suffered, so there are others who, as they might have made some efforts, which they have failed to make, for preventing the catastrophe, need not consider it utterly unjust if they should partake in some measure of the misfortune.

The capitalists of this country, especially the manufacturing capitalists, cannot be altogether acquitted of contributing to the disorganising elements which have produced the strikes and combinations, as well as the other evils of ignorance and prejudice, from which they and their workmen have severally suffered. Men cannot live to good purpose without the social affections of family and kindred, uniting their household civilisation with the external influence of the clergyman and the schoolmaster. When population grows by natural increase, without being influenced by adventitious circumstances, these regulating influences naturally grow with it, and become sufficient for their purposes. The increase still preserves the family shape and consistency; as the tree still consists of branches, leaves, and flowers, however

great it grows. Even the clergy and the schoolmasters naturally increase with the gradual demands on their attention; though there should be no more specific inducement to this increase than the mere habit of a people who have been accustomed to the services of a certain number of these spiritual and temporal teachers to each hundred of the population.

When a mass of human beings, almost as great as the population of a city, are suddenly brought together by the temptation of lucrative employment, they do not naturally consist of families bringing to the new place of residence their home-sympathies, their family ties, and the gentle, but strong influence exercised by these regulators over their conduct. They consist of the class of persons who are wanted for the occupation—men alone, or men with a certain proportion of women and of children, as the nature of the labour suggests. If the manufacturer think of nothing but wages and profits, he cannot expect to gather round him a circle of moral, well-disposed, and agreeable neighbours; and if he suffer some inconveniences or graver evils from the state of society which he has himself been so instrumental in creating, he is not an object of deep compassion. But other people also have been sufferers. The peace of the community at large has been often shaken, and large portions of society have been demoralised by these inconsiderate aggregations of people, suddenly cast free from the usual controls of the domestic and social connections; while they rear children, who, in a great measure, continue on to future generations the peculiarities of character thus created, and indeed are themselves subject to but few organising influences likely to counteract them.

The man who has brought together such a multitude without any other object of consideration than the profit he is to derive from his own enterprise and capital, and their labours, and who abandons them to all the temptations which human beings, destitute of their natural controlling influences, and brought together in great masses, are liable to, must be held to incur a very serious responsibility to the whole of his species. That it is a responsibility capable of being legally exacted, would be a dangerous proposition. Laws cannot safely be made for such cases until after the mischief is done; for prospective legislation, proceeding without a full experimental knowledge of the circumstances to which it is to be applied, is a very precarious operation. Whatever legislator, looking at the origin of the factory system —say about the year 1780—had penned an act of parliament to direct its progress, and especially to regulate the relative connections of the employer and the employed, would probably have committed more mischief than ever the indifference and indolence of the manufacturers has permitted to arise. Some subsequent legislation has been applied, by way of remedy, to the evils of the

manufacturing system, after long and vexatious inquiry, and many doubts as to the policy of attempts legislatively to control the conduct of free citizens in matters relating to hiring and employment. Children have been protected from the selfish carelessness of their employers, and from the far more selfish cupidity of their parents, by restrictions on the time during which they are permitted to work. There are provisions for accompanying the hours of children's work with so much time devoted to education; arrangements for medical inspection and superintendence; sanitary regulations to preserve the health of the workpeople, and especially of the children, from the effects of cold, damp, bad ventilation, and unwholesome occupations; and there are statutary checks and precautions against accidents from machinery.* It may perhaps be considered of more moment that there is a regular system of factory inspection, connected with the office of the Home Secretary, who becomes thus liable to be appealed to in parliament for explanations when any abuse of power or other evil not controllable by the ordinary tribunals of the country exhibits itself in connection with the manufacturing system.

Still, it may be questioned if such legislative measures, or any other operations, whether by the legislature or individuals, are sufficient to eradicate the evil that has been done. It is of that class to which prevention is more applicable than remedy. Had the public been as capable of predicting it in the infancy of the manufacturing system, as they now are of seeing it in its full developed shape, there would have been a pressure against manufacturing capitalists and employers, to organise and civilise the population thus brought together, so strong, that they would have found difficulty in resisting it. But when habits, which it would have been easy in their infancy to bend in another direction, become strong and stiff, an attempt to alter them is tyranny. Men are entitled to be barbarous and prejudiced—the enemies of their own health, their own success, and their own happiness if they will; and none but a Chinese legislature would attempt by imperial edict to make them happy, contented, abstinent, and virtuous. The main remedies which may be desired for after-times from the past evils of the factory system, will perhaps be found in the mass of experience it has provided for the future regulation of whatever community the coming years may witness. We know not what changes we have to see. It might be as easy to predict that we shall never see any aggregate progress of labour and production far excelling that exhibited in the history of our manufacturing system, as it was some years ago to predict that a steamboat would never cross the Atlantic; but there are no predictions so unsafe as those which limit what may be accom-

* See the Acts 7 and 8 Vict., c. 15; and 8 and 9 Vict., c. 29.

plished by science and labour. Let us hope that whatever our future may be, our past errors may at least produce the good fruit of teaching us how to avoid their repetition.

It must be admitted, however, that a late formidable example has shown how difficult it is to influence the cupidity of men in their haste to become rich, so far as to make them reflect on the consequences of their acquisitive operations to society at large. We have already spoken of the social evils of the railway speculation of 1847 in connection with the pecuniary fluctuations occasioned by it. It was another evil of that mania that it brought into existence an army of men—powerful in bodily strength, but totally uneducated, and little restrained by religious and social influences, who had necessarily, from their aggregation in large numbers, almost all the peculiarities of a military body, except its discipline. The number of labourers employed in the spring of 1847, in the construction of the various lines of railway, amounted, as we have elsewhere had occasion to say, to 240,307. Of these a large number were, by the late depression of trade, dispersed through society as suddenly as they had been originally brought together; and the various destitution funds throughout the empire, along with the riots which disturbed the peace of the community, were the indications of this partial disbanding of an army. Yet when we observe the utterly disorganised and chaotic nature of their amalgamation, their excesses and their mendicancy have been far less than might naturally have been expected.

The moral effect of these sudden aggregations of men who have no education, exercise no mental powers, and only sell to their employers brute force, has been thus described:—'The labourer has been detached from the habits and influences of his home and his village, and set to work amongst promiscuous assemblages of men, attracted from all parts, has received double his ordinary amount of wages, and has been surrounded by direct inducements to spend them in drink and debauchery. If he were a married man, little or none of his earnings have been returned to his wife and family, who, in his absence, have commonly obtained parochial relief, on the ground either of "desertion by the husband," or of his "absence in search of work." Whether he were married or single, the whole of the excess of money earned beyond his ordinary rate of wages has been expended, under the inducements to which he has been subjected; and at the completion of the works, he has been discharged penniless, and has returned discontented, reckless, deteriorated in bodily and mental condition; or he has, with others of the same class, entered the ranks of the dangerous swarms of able-bodied mendicant vagrants and depredators, of whom the committals within the last few years have been so largely increased.

'In the case of deaths occurring in the prosecution of such works, the relief of the destitute widowhood and orphanage (as well as the relief of all consequent sickness, and inability to work or obtain work after illness) has fallen upon the distant parishes from which the labourers have been frequently taken.

'The employment, it is apt to be said, is transitory; though two or three years are enough to create habits, and are not a small proportion of a labourer's period of working ability: the evil effects, however, have been permanent. The extra labourers available for such undertakings—the loose men unattached to any place of work—could not be expected to be of the best description of labourers; but, from the absence of proper regulations, the good have been deteriorated, the indifferent characters made positively bad, and the bad worse; and when children have been living amidst these assemblages, they, too, have been depraved by communication with them, by the neglect of their education, and by the total absence of moral training and religious observances.'*

The following description of a railway gang—differing only from a savage horde in the quantity of labour performed by them, and the sensual indulgences purchased by it—is as picturesque as it is appalling:—'Cast your eye on a map of Cheshire, and you will see a narrow tongue of land, at the easternmost corner, which extends between the counties of Lancaster and Derby to join Yorkshire. At this junction, or rather approximation, of these four counties, is the great Summit Tunnel which, by the aid of gunpowder, has been carried through the sandstone and millstone grit rocks, whereof the central ridge of hills in this quarter is chiefly composed. The tunnel commences in Cheshire, not far from the small village of Woodhead, and terminates, after a course of 5192 yards, within the county of York. The surface of the intervening ground is chiefly covered with dark heath and bog, and is as barren and dreary as it is possible to conceive. At certain distances along the line of tunnel, the moor is pierced by five shafts, averaging in depth about six hundred feet; and it is around these five shafts, and at each termination of the tunnel, that the huts of the workmen cluster.

'The huts are a curiosity. They are mostly of stones without mortar, the roof of thatch or of flags, erected by the men for their own temporary use—one workman building a hut, in which he lives with his family, and lodges also a number of his fellow-workmen. In some instances as many as fourteen or fifteen men, we were told, lodged in the same hut; and this at best containing two apartments, an outer and an inner, the former alone

* Papers read before the Statistical Society of Manchester, on the Demoralisation and Injuries occasioned by the want of Proper Regulations of Labourers employed in the Construction and Working of Railways, by Edwin Chadwick.

having a fireplace. Many of the huts were filthy dens, while some were whitewashed, and more cleanly; the difference no doubt depending on the turn and character of the inmates. In stormy weather, and in winter, this must be a most dreary situation to live in, even were the dwellings well-built and comfortable. At No. 1 shaft, a workman told me that he has cut a road through the snow, from the door of his hut, four yards deep.

'My friend and I, on reaching the Woodhead end of the tunnel, were fortunate enough to meet with a gentleman whom we knew, officially connected with the works; and it was from him we obtained information which led us, ultimately, to institute a more particular inquiry concerning the health and morals of the workmen; and especially as to the dangers attending the mining, and the treatment of the men by their employers.

'By this gentleman we were told that the numbers employed in and about the tunnel, might reach nine hundred or a thousand, besides women and children; that the work, which would be completed probably in November, had been in progress upwards of six years; and that at one period, as many as about fifteen hundred labourers were employed, but that the numbers had fluctuated. The hands, he said, were excessively drunken and dissolute—that a man would lend his wife to a neighbour for a gallon of beer—that a large proportion of both sexes (more than half, he stated) laboured under some form of syphilitic disease; and, in a word, that it was difficult to conceive of a set of people more thoroughly depraved, degraded, and reckless. With reference to the danger attendant on the work, he stated that there had been about thirty fatal accidents within and on the tunnel (thirty-two I am given to understand) since the commencement of the working, besides several maimed or disabled, and an almost incredible number in a lesser degree wounded and variously injured.

'List of the accidents of all kinds, excepting such as were fatal:—23 cases of compound fractures, including 2 cases of fractured skull; 74 simple fractures, including 3 fractures of clavicle; 2 fractures of scapula; 1 fracture of patella; 1 fracture of astragalus—140 severe cases; including burns from blasts, severe contusions, lacerations, dislocations, &c. One man lost both his eyes, and one the half of his foot. Most of these accidents were connected with other injuries—for instance, a man had his arm broken by a blast, the limb being also much burnt, together with one eye, and all that side of his head and face. There were also several cases of broken ribs among these, and in connection with other injuries.

'There have also been about four hundred cases of minor accidents, including trapped and broken fingers (which form a large proportion of them; *seven* of them required amputation), injuries

to the feet, lacerations of the scalp, bruises, broken shins: many of these minor cases were occasioned by drinking and fighting.

'The foregoing is not a complete list (you will please take notice) of injuries *not fatal*, because I as yet have no returns from a surgeon who, for about a couple of years, I believe, attended on the men employed on the eastern half of the tunnel.

'Moreover, we were told, what I mention with hesitation, that a serious proportion of the accidents was owing to the men *going to work more or less in a state of intoxication*. We asked if there had been religious instruction provided for the people, or the means of public worship? Our informant answered in the negative; adding that there was one school at the Woodhead terminus, supported by the men in the vicinity, for their children; that he had heard of Methodists attempting to hold a prayer-meeting there, but, he believed, with little success; also that certain clergymen used sometimes to visit among the men, but this had not been recently.' *

Believing that the time when working-people will be effectively protected from the selfishness and recklessness of their employers will come when the employers, along with the rest of the community, are protected from the barbarism of the workmen—that civilisation or education, or whatever we may term the regenerating element, will leaven the whole mass—it should not be forgotten in the meantime, that for whatever disorganising influences in the arrangements between employers and their workpeople are removable, the former—being the better educated of the two classes, having the chief opportunities for reflection and observation, and being able to make the most considerable sacrifices—ought to be responsible.

In this view, the parliamentary inquiries regarding payment of wages in public-houses, the Tommy-shop and truck system, the intervention of butties, and many other demoralising arrangements, must in general have a beneficial effect in turning public attention against all abuses, and bringing the employer's duty more closely home to his observation; if they do not sometimes unfortunately counteract these beneficial influences, by giving the working-people hopes of redress that cannot be fulfilled.

The upper classes often contribute to the encouragement of those reckless habits which they so ardently condemn. A capitalist may be found paying his workmen their weekly wages in a gin-shop, where they are led into the very temptations that ignorance can least easily resist; and having thus planted the seeds of a riotous Sabbath, he joins an association for the preservation of the sanctity of the Lord's-day, and declaims against the natural fruit of his own acts. Some of the expositions of the truck and butty

* Letter from Mr Roberton in the papers read before the Statistical Society of Manchester.

system in the collieries and iron mines are flagrant instances of the employers doing their best to encourage intemperance, improvidence, and violence among the employed. In the report of 1843, we find such evidence as this:—

'I worked at Gospel Oak, where there was a Tommy-shop. We was paid by the butty every week; but if you did not go to the shop, you were sent off the place. You were obliged to have somewhat whether you wanted it or not. I have two waistcoats now that I was forced to get, though I did not want them. The butty said, "You must give somewhat to have it up." The shop was open Wednesdays and Fridays; and you had to go to the butty's house and get notes made out for what you wanted.'

The next witness says: –'I've given 10d. a pound for fat bacon at his shop, when we could have come into town and bought as good every bit for 6d. It was not his own feeding; he used to buy it; and flour 10s. a strike when it was 8s. 4d. * * * The way with that gentleman was this: the Friday in the week before the fortnight's pay, he'd have the doggy over to his house close at hand to the pits; and he'd look at the books, and asked the doggy what each man had earned, and what he'd spent at the Tommy-shop; and if the man had earned just enough to cover the shop-debt, he'd stop him the next day, and never let him have any more work till after the pay. He would never let you do too much. He kept the truck-shop and public-house in the same place—the place where he lived, and his father before him.'*

Here is a description of a scene at a Tommy-shop:—'There was a great crowd to get flour, and when I got into it, I was forced to stay, or else I should not have got anything for my children or husband. He was hurt in the knee, and his field-pay, or most of it, was to be paid in goods; fifteen shillings was paid so out of twenty shillings. When at last I got into the shop, my bonnet was off, and my apron was all torn with the women all trying who should get in first.

'There were two women carried off who had fainted, and I helped them to come to themselves, and that got me out of my turn, and made me longer; and there was a little boy who wanted a loaf for his mother, and having no dinner, he was quite smothered, and I thought he was dead, and the sweat poured off him. They carried him up to bed, and he went home afterwards. Oh, it's cruel work is the Tommy-shop! Banks's shop has got much worse of late, since young Mr Charles Banks came to the shop. He swears at the women when they are trying to crush with children crying in their arms: he is a shocking little dog!'†

The following less highly-coloured, but equally unpleasing de-

* First Report of Midland Mining Commission, xcv. † Ibid. p. xcii.

scription of the Tommy-shop system, is given by an overseer. 'The Tommy notes are to be had whenever a man has done any work. They are given by the butty. Suppose I am a butty, and owe a man twelve shillings for work done by me; I have some printed notes on a shop before me in my desk, and the man's wife comes and asks for a note for her husband's wages. I fill up the note with the amount, and she takes it to the pay-office connected with the shop, when she gets the money for this note, and then lays that money out in the shop close at hand; and if she wants a shilling or two of change she can keep it. They will not let her keep any of the money if they can persuade her to lay it all out. But she will ask for some article which she knows they have not got, as some barm (or yeast) for baking, and they'll say, "We don't sell that, you must buy that elsewhere," and so they let her keep a little of the money.'*

On railway works the same system has been widely prevalent. It is thus described in operation in Lancashire:—

'By the railway there is easy and cheap carriage of goods from Manchester, Ashton, and other places, to the Woodhead terminus. Nevertheless, it is perhaps to be expected that a crowd of people, encamped on a desert moor, should have to pay rather high for their provisions. These poor people, however, pay an inordinate price for every article. On my last visit, I heard little but complaints from the workmen and their wives of the dearness and badness of the provisions—this was in the beginning of October. For flour they paid 2s. 8d. and 2s. 10d. per stone of fourteen pounds; for tub-butter (of very indifferent odour), 1s. 1d.; for brown sugar (the worst sample), 8d.; treacle (commonest), 5d.; bacon and butcher-meat, 8d.; but the most surprising thing was the price of potatoes—namely, 1s. 2d. the score. Thinking, that as the highest price in Manchester was only 8d., they were imposing on my credulity, I inquired at several huts, widely apart, and received the same answer—1s. 2d. per score. The beer, at the public-houses, represented as very inferior, is sold at 6d. per quart.

'The inferior quality and high price of the provisions, varying from 20 to 50 per cent. and upwards, above what the same class of people paid in Manchester, may perhaps be thus accounted for: the shops and beer-houses belong, directly or indirectly, to the contractors; and although, as before-stated, the men receive their money-wages—that is, those who have any to receive—at long intervals, there is no difficulty in their obtaining their wages at any time in the form of printed money-tickets, wherewith goods and beer can be purchased, and with which all, or nearly all, the provisions and drink of the workpeople are *actually*

* Appendix.

purchased. The tickets in question are of two descriptions—provision-tickets and beer-tickets; the former are obtained from the clerk of the works under certain regulations as to time; the latter, daily, at all times, and with no other limitation than the sum that may be due to the workman. Even this limit I was told is often overstepped. To show in what manner the beer-tickets drain the hands of their earnings, take this example, given me by one perfectly familiar with the habits of the place. A workman carries a five-shilling ticket to one of the beer-shops, and asks to have out of it a quart of beer. The drink is furnished, and the ticket, with "quart" written on the back, goes upon the file of the publican. The man has, it may be, glass after glass, gets intoxicated, and at length in this state goes home. On returning again the following day, trusting to the ticket on the file, it will often happen that he finds his credit exhausted; he must bring another ticket: altercation ensues, the man accuses the publican of cheating, and thus uproars, fights, and (it may be surmised) the grossest roguery are of perpetual occurrence. I refrain from saying more on the present subject; some things were stated to me concerning *this*, the very worst and most ruinous description of truck, which I hesitate to credit. It was evidently a sore subject with the workpeople, one of whom exclaimed to me, "They give us great wages, sir, but they take it all from us again." Everywhere there were sullen looks, complainings, and gloomy discontent, chiefly in reference to the *quality* and *price* of the provisions.'*

With such instances to refer to, it is asked if there are not great grievances to be redressed, and if capital should be permitted to do its work upon the poor in such a fashion? Nay, if we mistake not, some of the very passages we have quoted have been interwoven, with no small dramatic effect, into the substance of a popular novel. The commissioner, the editor, and the romancer, cannot be better employed than in exposing such moral abominations to the public indignation they deserve; but they will fall short of the public service they might otherwise accomplish, if they attribute to these things too large an influence, and believe them to be the causes of those failings in the working-classes of which they are only the characteristic effects. Social reformers are too apt to find individual and separate causes for great class evils. Thus one man finds the whole evils of the working-classes in paying them on Saturday evenings and in public-houses; another, in paying them weekly, instead of daily; another, in paying them weekly instead of monthly and quarterly. The truck system, the 'Tommy-shops,' the 'butties' or 'gafers,' the 'doggies,' all are in their turn charged with the whole mass of

* Mr Roberton's Letter, as above.

moral evils. Alas! these evils are more deeply rooted—in the ignorance, prejudice, improvidence, and general barbarism which are a temptation to selfish and grasping individuals to speculate on the benefits which the working-classes throw so carelessly aside. The poorest workmen have, like the rich aristocracy, their blood-suckers, battening on what they so freely and foolishly part with. No act of parliament will protect the one or the other from the infliction. Where the carrion is, there will the ravens be. If they appear not in one shape, they will come in another. To get rid of the butty, the doggie, and the Tommy-shop—along with his other great enemy and pillager, the keeper of the gin palace—the workman must become more enlightened, and know better the value of his services, and the comforts and enjoyments they ought to secure to him. When the labourer knows where his labour is wanted, and its value, and has not made himself a slave by his own recklessness in anticipating, by wild profuse indulgence, the rewards of his exertions, he may then defy the butty and the Tommy-shop. But unless the class themselves become armed with the true weapons for resisting such frauds and oppressions, it will be in vain that the legislature profess to offer its protection: it is not only less powerful than the opponents with whom it would have to combat—it is less powerful than the very victims it would profess to protect.

The inferences made by some people from the disorders attending the large aggregations of workers in manufactories, railways, and mines, is that the whole system of progress and production by which they are occasioned is an evil to society that ought to be put down or checked. The supposition that human beings might be brought together in numbers beyond the power of the organising science of man to govern them, and that our great cities must, if they continued to grow, become chaotic masses, is as old as every other fallacy founded on the limitation of the progress of mankind. In the reign of Charles I. many efforts were made to stop the growth of London, but in vain. Even so philosophical a mind as that of Hume lost itself in this maze; and we find him talking of the metropolis as a bloated mass of disease terrible to the rest of the country, when it was not above a third of its present size. Where cities have thus increased, we have seen that the powers of organisation have increased yet more rapidly. There are few parts of the world where one is safer by day and by night than the streets of London, with its two millions of people; yet a century ago it was infested with banditti; and in Walpole's 'Letters,' and Captain Brown's 'Lives of Highwaymen and Robbers,' we read of many instances of gentlemen knocked down and robbed, or even murdered on the public streets in the open day.

The science of organisation—perhaps it might be called the

science of civilisation—is one that stands apart by itself. We may have large cities, large manufactories, great mining works, business and labour going on at accelerated speed, but civilisation, in this sense of the word, lagging behind, as the least studied and pursued of the various objects of human attention. The views of those who would check or suppress our progress in manufactures and all industrial projects, are hopeless in practice, if they were even sound in theory, and embodied what is most conducive to human happiness. As they cannot unmake what is done, or stand in the way of what is still in progress, let them open up a new sphere of exertion—that of reducing the chaos that alarms them to order and symmetry. With the existing creations of enterprise this may be a hard task; but if the sound principles of civilised organisation be once discovered, the future will be ductile. In many secondary instances we see how easily the monster, industrial progress, may be tamed down to the repose and peace of dreamy indolence. Turmoil and action may be the means of sweeping us into peaceful and reflective solitudes. From the stir, noise, and dirt of the manufacturing city, the railway train wheels us in half an hour to the solitude of the mountains. Twenty years ago, we had to clatter through a long suburb —through ceaseless dirty villages—along a weary dusty road, ere the long-wished-for repose was reached. Many people predicted that railways would for ever disturb the peace of rural residences; but when properly adjusted to the circumstances of a country, they scatter fewer unpleasant elements around them than a turnpike road. The line, when its smooth banks have become green, is no ungraceful object; and the swift trains, as they appear and vanish, performing their journey straight forward, and turning neither to the right nor to the left, are more forcibly calculated to rouse proud reflections on the potency of science, than to excite disagreeable associations with bustle, and dust, and toil. When the original fabricators have disappeared, nothing prevails but civility and order; and the neighbours find, to their agreeable surprise, that the railway sweeps the traveller straight forward on his business; and has not, like the old turnpike-road, the faculty of scattering vagrants along its banks on the right and on the left.

Public cemeteries may be mentioned as another instance where there has been progress without offending old hallowed feelings, or invading the domain of solemn reflection. The venerable cathedral, crowded with memorials of the great dead of centuries, had a religious and awing influence on the mind: the village churchyard, where the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep, with its yew-trees, its quaint headstones, and its old Norman church, that had stood uninjured for centuries, had also its awakening and humanising charms. Mankind did not possess so many of these sources of elevating sentiment that any of them could well

be dispensed with; but wants of a more utilitarian and important character demanded attention. The old edifices, even if it ever had been fit that mortal remains should be deposited beneath the floors where human beings congregate, could not, in many instances, with safety to the living, be any longer used for such a purpose. The old village graveyards were often surrounded by huge manufacturing towns, and their contents were becoming masses of decomposition, distributing deadly influences all around. Yet it was predicted that the grave would be stripped of all its solemnity and impressive gloom by being removed from the spots traditionally devoted to the purpose. It was said that every owner who had an arid field useless to the living, might make a good speculation by disposing of it for the dead; and the joint-stock cemetery would be treated with no more reverence by the speculators who made money by it, and the thousands who trod its beaten and blackened turf, than the school play-ground or the factory-yard. So it might have been if judicious taste had not in many instances watched over the supply of this new demand, and found retired places embosomed among old ancestral trees, and in the neighbourhood of solemn hills or pleasant streams, where art could easily assist nature in beautifying the spot; and the mourners could visit the resting-places of the departed amid leaves and flowers, and all that nature supplies to give gentleness and solemnity to sorrow.

We need not despair of the taste and talent which have worked in these minor fields in the direction of refinement, taking a larger scope, and showing how the thousands collected in the manufactory, the mine, and the uncompleted railway, may be surrounded by humanising influences as strong as those which watch over the pristine village. Those who look back upon the past twenty years, review projects accomplished, whether in the moral or the physical world, which first presented themselves in an aspect far more hopeless. The very complaint about the absence of social organisation in the factory system, and other gregarious methods of employment, shows that there is a demand for an extension of regulating influences to the multitude of human beings who are there congregated. The machinery with which they work is itself a wonderful symbol of the inventive powers of man; and no one who views its marvellous ingenuity can doubt, that if the faculties which brought it into existence were applied to the proper civilisation of the human beings who attend to its motions, we might expect to see marked changes in their moral and intellectual position.

It may be a strange thing thus to announce, in the midst of electricity and steam—of the geological triumphs of the age—its chemical revolutions—its numberless titles to look back on its progenitors as barbarous, that he who feels the social evils of the

present generation must look for their remedies in the higher civilisation of the next—in a civilisation that may possibly look back upon us with all our scientific triumphs as, in one respect at least, barbarians. An age may mark its progress in science and in activity—it may look round at the many physical powers which it has discovered—the number of things it has created out of shapeless chaos—the railways with which it girds the earth—the bridges with which it spans the flood. All these things tend, beyond doubt, to the civilisation of mankind—they give facilities for comfort and happiness unknown before—they provide the human animal with more comforts and luxuries—they provide the human soul with more intellectual stores and objects of pride and admiration. But there are reasons to believe that there is a separate science which all these things may aid, but which they do not supersede—the science of civilisation or enlightenment. There are reasons for supposing that we have come but to the threshold of this science, where we see the possible prospect of a refuge from the social misery around us, but that we are not yet within the temple. Progress is not the same in all things: the speeches of Demosthenes were scratched in irregular characters upon leaves, while those of a corporation orator of the present day are cast forth in symmetrical columns of regular type from the steam-printing press. Too many facts show that progress in particular branches of human intellectual effort may leave other branches and the general civilisation of the race far behind. For logic, poetry, metaphysics, rhetoric, sculpture, and architecture, we look back to ancient Greece, finding that there they were not only cradled, but matured. In government and laws, in mechanics, and in physical science generally, that people were but children to ourselves; while in social morality we find that the finest literature of their civilisation gives voice to the most horrible immoralities, and that, unknown to the ruder age of Homer, these evil peculiarities grew with the growth of art and literature. Rome added to the acquisitions of Greece those of the governor and the lawyer; she bequeathed to us the method of ruling distant dependencies and a code of laws from which we daily gather wisdom. She must have possessed the method of preserving order and subordination among the dense multitudes of a huge city, and she established the principle of municipalities from which the people of the feudal ages reaped so many signal advantages—yet all her intellectual civilisation was darkened by the great moral barbarism of slavery, and her exquisite literature is blotted with brutalities which all the inmates of our jails, except the class most deeply plunged in degradation, would rather shun than court. While human nature is engaged in the pursuit of some one engrossing object, another may be neglected—whence we are not to infer that it is lost, but rather that it will have its

turn. In Europe, from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, were produced the finest types of Gothic architecture—edifices so noble and so beautiful that the present age, with all these models before it, and the aids of greater science and experience, in vain endeavours to rival them; and yet, in the presence of this high perfection of architectural art, there was not literature enough in Europe barely to record its triumphs; and letters, science, and philosophy, were as dead in the presence of this high development of architectural power as they now are in Greenland. We may well believe that there are now, as there have been at all other times, large gaps to be filled ere some of the acquirements of the age are placed side by side with those which, from their rapid advance, have become the more prominent. Need we, from what we have seen human nature accomplish, despair that the progress of civilisation, which may make the working-man skilful, provident, and unselfish, shall yet arise, and that we may here see contrasts with the present time as wonderful as the railway train with the lumbering coach, or the steam-press with the reed of the monkish copyist?

The large sums spent by our working-classes on dissipation and bad economy, are contemplated by many people with feelings of despondency. Under such a view of possible progress, they appear on the contrary in the aspect of a mine of rich ore unwrought. They show the valuable elements on which social reformers can work; and in a country in which so much is done for the social improvement of the antipodes, there may surely be found missionaries to preach, in such courteous fashion as independent citizens ought to tolerate, the proper use of the resources which the working-man of this country has at his disposal.

It is naturally to the educated classes—to those who have leisure and who have learning—that we must look for all suggestions and opinions tending towards such prospective progress in civilisation; but at the same time it must be remembered that of whatever is to be practically done and endured, the main share must lie with the classes who are themselves to be benefited.

CHAPTER X.

THE DUTIES OF WEALTH (CONTINUED).

Plans for the Improvement of the Condition of the Humbler Classes—Should avoid Compromising the Workman's Independence—Should not have the Aspect of Charity—Just Title of the Working-Classes to Places of Recreation and Public Enjoyment—Projects that will do Good and Remunerate their Projectors—Supplies of Water in Towns—Lodging-Houses—Questions as to Encouragement of Humanising Pursuits—Danger of believing that Small Means effect Great Regenerations—Temperance Societies—Common Idea of the Duty of Spending for the Benefit of Trade—Social Breaches between the Middle and Working-Classes to be Healed.

In the meantime, and while we look to a large future harvest of civilising progress, the various projects which philanthropists suggest for the temporary benefit of any class in society demand, and are entitled to serious attention.

The furtherance of schemes benevolently intended for the benefit of the working-classes, is one of the most delicate and perilous of social operations. Whatever has the aspect of charity passing from the rich to the poor, has so virulent an effect on independence of character, industry, energy, and self-restraint, that it often produces frightful moral devastation as the practical fruit of the purest benevolence of purpose. For this reason alone, that which the working-man can procure and ought to procure for himself, should never be given to him in his capacity of a labourer—it should only be given as pauper relief, and subject to the humiliations and restrictions attending on the management of the able-bodied poor. The line, which ought to be the broadest of all social lines—the line between self-sustaining industry and pauperism—is then distinctly drawn, and visible to all the world. But there is another reason not less cogent. Supplying to the labourer what he can supply to himself, is just displacing so much of his labour, and opening up a bottomless pit of expenditure, which would swallow up all the wealth of the community, along with all its industry. The wealth of the rich would do little to replace any considerable gap in the produce of the labour of the working-classes; and whatever is provided for them gratuitously has the direct tendency to displace a corresponding amount of labour.

A certain looseness of nomenclature has produced much confusion in connection with this subject. In common conversation —in parliamentary debates—even in acts of parliament—the term 'poor' has often included the industrious classes along with

those for whom, as unproductive paupers, the public must find support. A measure that is to be beneficial to the poor, always sounds as if it were something right that demands applause; and nothing can be more distinctly proclaimed as beneficial to them, than anything that makes them better off. The confusion in terms, and the consequent confusion in treatment, are degrading to the independent labourer, and should be repudiated by him. Whatever he obtains should be the fruit of justice, not of charity; and if there is anything that the rest of society justly owes him, he ought to receive it in hard cash at the pay-table, instead of enjoying it in a form which leaves him to be confounded with the mendicant and the parish pauper.

There are at the same time services which the richer classes owe to the rest of society, and which they alone have education, leisure, and wealth sufficient to perform. The proper character which these services should assume is, that they are to be done to the public, not to individuals; and while there are portions of the public, and consequently particular individuals, to whom they are more beneficial than they are to others, yet it should be part of their character that they communicate a general benefit around them. Open areas for the recreation of the inhabitants of crowded towns possess this character. If a benevolent rich man has a thousand pounds to spare, he will do a far greater amount of service by buying a piece of land, and devoting it as public property to the inhabitants of a working district, than if he were to expend it on two thousand hats for so many workmen. No independent man could wear the charitable hat without a certain feeling of degradation—no man could feel his independence touched by walking with his wife and children in the public garden, while his gratitude to the general benefactor would not be weakened by his consciousness of self-respect. The one distribution of hats might not perhaps have in itself a very deteriorating effect; but if the benevolent donor pursued the system, he would find that for every comfort and luxury with which he supplied the workman, he withdrew from him a motive for honest industry, and in the end he would see that his riches were deeply drained, without adding one particle to the comfort and respectability of those to whom they passed.

There might be many arguments founded on simple justice, on which the establishment of such places of recreation at the public expense may be indicated. They are abundant in the districts inhabited by the aristocracy. Behold the various parks at the west end of London, while in the thickly-peopled and poverty-stricken east, there are no open spaces where the people may breathe, but dusky Goodman's-fields, and many burying-grounds. If the interest of the working-classes had been attended to in the series of enclosure acts from the year 1719 to 1837, our large

towns would not have been so deficient in open spaces. While individuals—chiefly the neighbouring proprietors—had distinct rights, which might be valued and compensated in the shape of an enclosed portion of the common land, the people at large, who wandered over the untilled plain, and there breathed the air of heaven, had privileges also, which, though less definite, and not very capable of individual compensation, they sometimes felt it hard to part with, that others might be enriched. The most natural form in which this public interest could have been adjusted to the system of enclosure, was by reserving portions of the land to be still common property, neither capable of appropriation by individuals, nor of application by them to any purpose which might interfere with their public enjoyment.

The reason why the Enclosure acts from 1719 to 1837 have been specially referred to, is because the system commenced in the former year; and in the latter, Mr Hume, after meritorious exertions, for which thousands will bless his memory, succeeded in carrying a resolution, which became a standing order of the House of Commons, that in all Enclosure bills some portion of the waste lands about to be appropriated should be set apart for the healthful recreation of the neighbouring towns or villages. Unfortunately, before this arrangement was accomplished, nearly all the common lands close to the existing large towns had been appropriated; and if a few of the rich, more generous than their neighbours, should now present the public with some patches of pleasure-ground, it will but be a partial restoration of the millions of acres appropriated by their class, not only through the legitimate legislative procedure of Enclosure acts, but by that cementing and aggregating process by which landed property attaches to itself from time to time all the petty public rights of roadway or recreation in its vicinity which happen to be imperfectly guarded. If the rich and powerful had always been just to the other classes, they would not be called upon so often as they are to exercise towards them a questionable and unsatisfactory generosity. It used to be humiliating to return from the happy groups amusing themselves in the beautiful pleasure-grounds belonging to foreign despots, and find that in this country the freedom of appropriation, and the cupidity of unprivileged subjects, had been more cruel to the people than autocratic tyranny. In Manchester, where all were free—free to make millions by bold speculations, and keep a deer-park—or free to wander through dusty, smoky streets, without the chance of seeing a flower or a green leaf—it was painful some years ago to reflect that there should be so much wealth concentrated on one spot, and yet that there should not be a square acre of ground where the man, and the child also, whose hands and head were busied with the complex produce of man's inventive genius, might converse a while with nature, and breathe the fresh

air. So it was ten years ago; but these characteristics have now been altered with the energy and rapidity peculiar to the manufacturing race, when they have been once awakened to their duty. The first public act of munificence of this description was, we believe, the establishment of the Derby Arboretum in September 1840, a free gift to the town by their eminent citizen Mr Strutt. It contained eleven acres of land, costly from its proximity to the city, and with the planting and decorations, it was valued at £12,000. The giver of this magnificent gift, as enlightened as he was generous, made, in presenting it, an observation indicative of his consciousness that a line must be drawn, beyond which it defeats the end of generosity to do for the public what they can do for themselves. 'I have purposely,' he said, 'omitted any endowment to keep the Arboretum in order, as I know by experience that I shall best provide for its future preservation by intrusting it to those who will enjoy and profit by it, and who will take an interest in its permanence.'

On the same occasion some further remarks were made worthy of notice:—

'It has often been made a reproach to our country, that in England collections of works of art, and exhibitions for instruction or amusement, cannot, without danger or injury, be thrown open to the public. If any ground for such a reproach still remains, I am convinced that it can be removed only by greater liberality in admitting the poor to such establishments; by thus teaching them that they are themselves the parties most deeply interested in their preservation, and that it must be for the interest of the public to protect that which is intended for the public advantage.'

This leads us again to the question of abstract justice between the rich and the poor in the distribution of public benefits of this class. Great picture galleries—vast collections of treasures illustrating history, art and science, like the British Museum—extensive public libraries—are all objects on which public money is well bestowed. But it should be remembered that they are enjoyed solely by the comparatively affluent, or but by a small portion of the working-classes. The British Museum and the National Gallery furnish no direct enjoyment to the Manchester or Derby workman. The neighbouring proprietor, the lawyer, the newspaper editor, and the mill owner, may take their occasional trip to London for the purpose of luxuriating in these treasures; but the workman cannot afford to be locomotive, and unless they lie near his own door, he derives no advantage from them, save so far as they afford matter for the comments or the pictorial illustrations of cheap books, or tend generally to improve the literature of the day. It should be remembered, too, that while works of high art, and the literary produce of great learning, are

invaluable possessions of a nation, there are humbler elements of civilisation and instruction, more fit for less educated minds, which should not be denied to them. Independently of the wider question of their right to a general system of education, the working-classes have a very just claim on the nation, and especially on the richer part of it, for public institutions calculated to enlarge their understandings and humanise their ideas. Yet how often do we find that great edifices, and other establishments raised at the public cost, are accessible only to 'respectable people,' which means people who wear a certain quantity of clothes of a certain goodness. How often, too, do we find the public edifice—the *people's* edifice—intrusted to the keeping of some sordid menial, whose object it is to deprive the public of the benefit of that which has been created by the public money, and to limit its enjoyment to those who bribe him with a fee.

We turn, in examining those things which may safely and properly be done for the working-classes, from the ornamental to that which is commonly called the useful. Although it may not be right that the workman should be supplied with the aids and comforts of existence gratuitously, it is sometimes right that the skill of the educated classes, and the authority of the legislature, should enable him to obtain them cheaply. By combination and scientific engineering, all the rich men of a large town may be supplied with water in luxurious abundance throughout their dwellings, at a price less than a tenth of what it would cost each individual to sink a well and provide himself with the element in the same abundance: the principle should be carried out and adapted to the working-man, as well as to the noble and the capitalist. If the legislature, in passing a local act, should either, by investing the function of providing water in a grasping joint-stock company, or by an injudicious method of taxation, put the proper supply beyond the reach of the poorer classes, who, by a better arrangement, could be served, as well as the rich, for a price corresponding to their means—it simply evades the performance of a public benefit which is within its power. The directors of joint-stock companies must consult the interests of the members, to whom the main consideration is the price of the shares in the market. They are liable to rivalry. A rival company that should make smaller profits by arrangements for supplying the poorer classes, would not be much dreaded by an existing company; but the hardest battle of rivalry is of course fought in the department of the largest profits. One of the well-known means of supporting a company is to keep down visible charges—to make its services appear cheap, whatever they may actually be. Hence it has been the practice of joint-stock water companies to keep down their ostensible expense, by leaving a great part of the actual charge of supplying houses with water—the expense of cisterns, and

means of regulating them—to owners. By providing the water at high pressure, which dispenses with cisterns, there is more outlay by the company, but the water comes cheaper to the consumer. 'The existence or the danger,' says an authority on this point, 'of the introduction of a rival company, operates powerfully to induce public companies to keep down all *visible* charges, and to this end they throw as much as possible of the burden of investment upon the party supplied. * * * Many water companies would be glad to take upon themselves the expense of laying on water, *especially to the poorer classes*, provided they could *secure* a fair return on the necessary investment by a *visible* addition to the charge for the water supplied; but this security the companies cannot obtain, so long as parliament shall prefer the ill-working check of interested rivalry to the disinterested control of a national authority.'*

It seems to be proved by sufficient professional evidence that the cheapest, and at the same time the most effective form in which towns can be supplied with water, is by the high-pressure system, in which all the pipes—both the mains in the streets, and the service pipes branching into houses and rooms—are pressed full of water, so that whenever a cock is turned, it rushes out. An arrangement of this kind throughout a town would probably furnish a safeguard against fire, such as few cities have hitherto possessed; but the more immediate consideration on this occasion is its expense. The practice had been for some time followed by the Trent Water Company in Nottingham; and according to the statement of the gentleman whose evidence has just been quoted, water was supplied to the houses of the working-people at the rate of 1d. per week to each. The annual water revenue derived from 5000 houses showed an average of 4s. 7½d. each.

It is difficult to estimate the blessing to the working-man of thus obtaining this healthy, cleansing, healing element, not as a charitable boon, but at the price at which it is capable of being furnished to him without subjecting any man to a sacrifice. Mr Chadwick, in his Sanitary Report, speaking of more costly methods of supply, says—'In most towns, and certainly in the large manufacturing towns, those members of the family who are of strength to fetch water, are usually of strength to be employed in profitable industry; and the mere value of their time expended in the labour of fetching water is almost always much higher than the cost of regular supplies of water, even at the charge made by the water companies. * * * In illustration of the economy of the two modes of conveyance, I may mention that the usual cost of filtered water carried into the houses at Paris by the water-carriers is two sous the pailful, being at the rate of 9s.

* Evidence of J. Hawksley—Report on the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, p. 29.

per ton; whilst the highest charge of any of the companies in London for sending the same quantity of water to any place within the range of their pipes, and delivering it at an average level of 100 feet, at the highest charge, is 6d. per ton.'

A well-employed labourer in Bath, having to carry his water from the public pump, curiously remarked—'It is as valuable as strong beer; we can't use it for cooking, or anything of that sort, but only for drinking and tea.' People who have noticed the pumps in market towns will have observed that they are the centres of all the idleness and inferior gossip of the place. They are fertile producers of female brawls; and a pump has been known to support an attorney, from the various disputes about precedence leading to more serious quarrels. The author of the Sanitary Report says—'The whole family of the labouring man in the manufacturing towns rise early, before daylight in winter-time, to go to their work; they toil hard, and they return to their homes late at night. It is a serious inconvenience, as well as discomfort, to them to have to fetch water at a distance out of doors, from the pump or the river, on every occasion that it may be wanted, whether it be in cold, in rain, or in snow. The minor comforts of cleanliness are of course foregone, to avoid the immediate and greater discomforts of having to fetch the water.'*

The practical engineer already quoted having been asked, 'What has been the effect produced on their habits by the introduction of water into the houses of the labouring-classes?' answered—'At Nottingham the increase of personal cleanliness was at first very marked indeed; it was obvious in the streets. The medical men reported that the increase of cleanliness was very great in the houses, and that there was less disease; there was also an advantage in the removal of the assemblages round the public pumps. At Newcastle-on-Tyne, where they have common fountains, and where young girls are brought into contact with every species of character, the effect is highly objectionable.'

Q. When, on the return home of the labourer's family, old or young, tired perhaps with the day's labour, the water has to be fetched from a distance out of doors, in cold or in wet, in frost or in snow—is it not well known to those acquainted with the labourer's habits, that the use of clean water, and the advantage of washing and cleanliness, will be foregone, to avoid the annoyance of having to fetch the water?

A. Yes; that is a general and notorious fact. When the distance to be traversed is comparatively trifling, it still operates against the free use of water.

Q. Before water was laid on in the houses at Nottingham, were the labouring-classes accustomed to purchase water?

* Sanitary Report, p. 70.

A. Before the supply was laid on in the houses, water was sold chiefly to the labouring-classes by carriers at the rate of one farthing a bucket; and if the water had to be carried any distance up a court, a halfpenny a bucket was in some instances charged. In general, it was charged at about 3 gallons for a farthing. But the company now delivers to all the town 76,000 gallons for one pound; in other words, carries into every house 79 gallons for a farthing; and delivers water, night and day, at every instant of time when it is wanted, at a charge twenty-six times less than the old delivery by hand.' *

It is thus evident that the humblest of the labouring-classes can be supplied with this inestimable blessing and agent of civilisation—not in charity, but for an honest price; and it is surely within the proper province of those who have it in their power, whether as members of the legislature or otherwise, to make arrangements for enabling it to be so procured—arrangements which would no farther interfere with capital, trade, or labour, than merely to the extent of, by science and combination, enabling a commodity to find a good and cheap market.

The provision of lodging-houses for the working-classes has lately occupied some share of public attention. Here science, combination, and capital have a great field of beneficence to work on. In our complex state of society, the workman cannot be his own builder or fitter-up. His hours are occupied from morning till night in the peculiar labour by which he lives, and he must accept of such a dwellingplace as circumstances put at his disposal. The exterior influences by which he has been surrounded have generally been these:—The predominance of a particular kind of labour in some spot has congregated large numbers of workmen suddenly together: where the human beings have flocked together, house speculators have also assembled, as to a good market: each has competed with his neighbour in making his plot of ground and his building most productive; and regulating the personal avidity of each, there has been no general plan or organisation for the public benefit. Thus the individual possessing the next plot to an existing house, built another house on it. It might be for the general interest that there should be an open space there, to afford light and air to the houses already built; but this was not conducive to the owner's interest, and so he built. Each acting separately, and desiring to make the most of his little capital, combined operations for securing general health, comfort, and refinement were totally neglected. The workman, coming perhaps from the fresh fields or the breezy hillside, might at first revolt against the stench and closeness of his den; but it was of primary moment to him to have warmth

* Report—Health of Towns Commission, pp. 36–37.

and shelter, and that was the only form in which they could be obtained. The same effect would be produced if, instead of building new houses, the owners adapted to the working-people the dwelling-houses—probably originally destined for a richer class—already in existence. The consequence of each small capitalist making the best of his own, without any system of co-operation, would be a condensing of the population, bad ventilation, filth, and contamination. The methods of obviating these evils by sanitary regulations are elsewhere considered;* in the meantime, we look to the extent of relief that may be legitimately distributed, and may not unreasonably be expected, through voluntary operations.

It has been shown by repeated instances that by the force of capital the property perhaps of a joint-stock company, and, by enlightened combination, lodging-houses for single men, and dwelling-houses for families, can be constructed, with all proper appliances for health, comfort, and purity, at a cheaper rate than the dwellings provided by small speculators; and that the working-people may be put in possession of all these advantages at a cheaper rent than they have hitherto been in the habit of paying; while the projectors may receive full remuneration for the use of their capital, and for their skill and exertions, in the form of a dividend. The economy does not stop with the mere structure of the dwellings; it penetrates into the management of the establishment. From the unfortunate incapacity to keep sums of money in their hand, which we have already lamented as characterising the working-classes, the rents of their dwellings are often collected weekly or monthly. The collection is laborious, and must be paid for, and the workman pays for it. The letter of a few houses, of which he is perhaps himself the tenant, will make a considerable profit—perhaps the greater part of his livelihood—by the speculation; and a preponderating proportion of the whole gains will go to compensate him for his weekly or monthly visits to collect the rents. The more miserable and improvident his tenants, the more must they pay him, for they give him the more trouble; and here, as in everything else, improvidence reduces people to the necessity of paying double. The following advertisements will indicate pretty distinctly the manner in which this system works:—

'For sale, for 250 guineas, five small houses, bringing a clear income of about £70 a year.'—*Morning Advertiser.*

'A lot of houses to be sold for £250, producing £76 a year above the ground-rent.'—*Ibid.*

'Twelve houses to be sold for the small sum of £200, to pay yearly 25 per cent.'—*Ibid.*

* See chap. xvii.

'£150 a year to be sold for 700 guineas, arising from houses eligibly situated near the city.'—*Times.**

The operation even of collecting the monthly or weekly rents may be economised by the enlargement of the establishment; and a joint-stock company, by having this and other functions performed by officers whose time is completely devoted to them, can greatly reduce the expense of collection, and consequently the rent of the houses or rooms. Nor, in a well-organised establishment of this kind, should it be forgotten that the periods of collection should be as widely apart as the habits of the tenants or lodgers will permit, for everything that adjusts itself to the feebleness of improvidence tends to nourish it; and everything that stretches firmness and self-reliance, without overstretching them, tends to strengthen the character.

There are two mistakes that benevolent people, in founding such establishments, are likely to fall into. The first is to make them an instrument of too stringent an interference with personal habits. Looking upon drinking, smoking, and other like practices, as filthy and degrading habits, it will be supposed to be a good thing to make a law to prohibit them. But such a prohibition would probably defeat its end, by undermining independence and proper self-respect. It is well that all external aids to cleanliness, propriety, and good habits should be administered; it is well that there should be rules for preventing those whose habits are degrading, from interfering with the comforts and tastes of their neighbours: but the independent workman should never be dictated to, or ruled in his personal habits. Few of this order who are truly independent and respectable, will betake themselves to an institution where they are liable to restraints which cast a reflection on their character; and the victims of evil propensities, conscious of their own weakness, and glad to put themselves under the operation of restraints which they cannot impose upon themselves, would more probably be the usual class of inmates.

Another mistake not unlikely to be committed in connection with such institutions, is the making them the means of beneficence and charity. If they are to succeed to any great extent in elevating the condition of the working-classes, it will be by paying their projectors, and, in fact, becoming good speculations. No evil can arise from expenditure for the mere purpose of affording examples of what may be done. Experiments are generally costly; and to provide the means of undertaking them, is a service which the wealthy may gracefully and appropriately perform to the general community. But if any persons believe that the provision of improved dwelling or lodging-houses for the work-

* Advertisements quoted in article 'Juvenile Criminals' in 'North British Review,' November 1848.

ing-classes is an object to which private beneficence can be wholesomely or satisfactorily applied, or even an achievement within its capacity, they will soon find themselves grievously mistaken. To pay any portion of the working-man's rent is to give him charity, and degrade him into a pauper, unless he has a just claim on such assistance. If he have a just claim on it, he is not bound to take payment in house-room: as a free man, he is entitled to receive it in money, to be spent as he pleases—it may be in improving his dwelling, and surrounding himself with comforts, or it may be in gin and tobacco. These may be degrading resources, but they are not so degrading as charity. The working-classes at this moment pay several millions annually in the shape of rent; and if charitable individuals undertook to see the whole mass better housed, they would require pecuniary resources in some degree commensurate not merely with this annual expenditure, but with the capital it represents. The pecuniary arrangements would not be economised by the objects of the promoters being disinterested and charitable; on the contrary, not being checked by projectors, whose self-interest sharpens their discernment, the persons employed in the realisation of the scheme would treat themselves liberally, and all the expenditure would be on a handsome and bountiful scale. It will at once be evident that private benevolence is not capable of accomplishing such a scheme, even if it might wisely undertake it. If, then, such schemes be attempted, not as profitable speculations, but as operations of the beneficence of the wealthy, their sphere must be but narrow. They can serve some portion of the working-classes—a thousandth, or it may be only a ten-thousandth part. This is a small benefit to the whole mass, even if the method of administering it do not neutralise it; and it will be a sad mistake if those whose operations are so partial and limited, believe that they have worked out some great organic improvement in society.

An innocent pursuit, or, as it is commonly called, a 'hobby,' is an indication of happiness and comfort: it shows that the person who indulges in it can afford himself some relief from the sordid cares of life, and that his gratifications are not sensual and vicious. Hence a garden-plot in which the leisure hours are spent—the making of neat boxes, pincushions, or other trifles exhibiting the mechanical ingenuity of the workman—the rearing of animals not of the sporting kind—and other such indications that the leisure hours are not unoccupied, give a favourable notion of the inhabitants, whether of the cottage or of the city street. For each thousand ruined by dissipation, not one is ruined by pursuits of this description. Still higher than them all, as a pleasing contrast to manual labour, and a regulator of the conduct, is reading; but even when the mind is not sufficiently cultivated to enjoy a purely intellectual exercise, minor pursuits, such

retail trade. The customer who desires to purchase something at its just price, is said to give an 'order;' a sort of absolute command, that is not expected, under any circumstances, to be disobeyed. The advertiser and writer of circulars, while modestly drawing attention to the sacrifices he is enduring, or the talent, enterprise, and vigilance which he has embarked in his trade, still humbly appeals, like one who is not making an advantageous offer, or even giving value for value, to the 'patronage' with which he hopes to be honoured. The obsequiousness of this class—their bareheaded obeisance to the carriage at the open window of which they display goods for selection—would be intolerable, were it not a sort of traditional etiquette, like that which makes the proud man subscribe himself the 'most obedient humble servant' of the person who is perhaps soliciting him for a place; and if it were not that it is a homage that goes with an impartial uniformity to the regular payer, whose appearance is heartily welcomed, and to the old debtor, whose 'orders' are looked at with fear and horror.

There are still other and more substantial remnants of the superstition about benefiting trade. We occasionally see praise bestowed on rich people for having launched forth into some act of extravagance—a tournament, or a great entertainment, which is called a boon to trade. We have already considered abstractly the question, How far the expenditure of the rich, left free to follow its natural course, is beneficial to the rest of the community. The leaning of the opinion there expressed is decidedly against this expenditure being so beneficial as that which, by being devoted to productive purposes, must be replaced with the usual profit, and thus leaves the wealth of the world increased instead of diminished. Reference was at the same time made to the principle, that what is saved is not kept out of expenditure—if it be not actively employed by the banker or other person with whom it is invested, it would not pay interest to its possessor.*

There is undoubtedly, however, a material difference between what is spent in the ordinary acceptation of the term, and what is devoted to productive purposes. In the latter case, whoever receives the money in his hands, be he speculator or workman, must restore something at least equal to it in value, if not more valuable. But spending does not involve this phenomenon in all its grades. Much of the money dispersed around him by an extravagant man is consumed in this or that stage; it very seldom leaves behind it value nearly equal to its amount. Here there is a palpable distinction to be kept in view, which it would be curious to see anatomised and driven to its ultimate principles.

It is possible that such an inquiry might show benefits con-

* See above, p. 70.

ferred on trade by unproductive expenditure, but it may safely be conjectured that more harm than good would arise by artificially swelling it so as to make it exceed productive expenditure. The tendency of all the good advice that people receive regarding their expenditure as individuals is in the direction of economy. If it be right to preach that men should spend money for the good of trade, economy ought to be dumb—it is a paltry household quality, that must sink before the philanthropic spirit of animating trade and labour by expenditure. We do not find, however, that any one dares thus to set the two virtues in antagonism against each other. When people speak of encouraging trade, they do so generally, and without reference to any antagonist principle; and if it were asked whether it were more consistent with duty, both public and private, to spend a sum which would be missed in the household for the benefit of trade, or to retain it for home purposes, it would be difficult to find any one prepared seriously to support the former line of expenditure. In fact, when expenditure for the benefit of trade comes to be considered along with other serious uses of the pecuniary means of a family, they never are deliberately weighed against each other, and the philanthropic motive remains forgotten until the head of the house grows rich.

It is not an unfair inference, from the facts which every one sees around him, that the principle of benefiting trade is never pleaded unless when people desire an excuse, either to themselves or to others, for being extravagant; and it may be held as a corollary, that trade is never assisted by such efforts until after it has righted itself, because the very extravagance which seeks such a justification, can only have its real justification in the pecuniary facilities arising from a sound state of the money market produced by successful trade. Sometimes the most prominent person who thus encourages trade is the wife of the manufacturer who finds the market rising and discounts easy. With a fraction of the money which her husband has made in shawl-making, she purchases from a retailer one of the identical shawls which have passed through his looms; and unless she happen to be put right about the ultimate destination of her money, walks forth with it as a badge of her services to trade.

One of the aspects which the spirit of encouraging trade often assumes, is the purchase of home produce instead of foreign; and one may thus see the wife of a merchant who imports several thousand pounds' worth a year of foreign produce, spending an occasional pound on thorough home manufacture, with the belief that she is doing an indefinite quantity of good to her countrymen. The simplest view of the effect upon our home producers of all purchases from foreigners, is to suppose that they are paid for in gold, and so to dismiss all entanglements about exchanges and

cross drawings. If we, the people of this country, purchase any quantity of goods whatever from any foreign country, and pay for them in gold, this is equivalent to our paying for them in our own manufactures or our mining and agricultural produce, and so we encourage our own producers. We are not a gold-producing country; and though we have obtained some small quantities of the precious metals in successful sea-fights, and the storming of Oriental forts, no one will pretend to say that the sums acquired in this manner would support a foreign trade. Where, then, do we get the gold which we send abroad for the commodities we import? *By exporting commodities, and not otherwise;* and so it is proved that those people who wish to encourage the home manufacture need not set any limits on their choice, but may with safe conscience purchase goods of undoubted foreign manufacture in the knowledge that they are such, without requiring the testimony of the retailer to their being 'genuine British.'

Upon the whole, it is believed that among the duties which the rich classes of society owe to the poorer, expenditure for the benefit of trade need not be included; and that this operation may with full propriety be left to take its natural course.

In a previous chapter we have called upon the working-classes, if they desire a precedent of the true method by which an order of men may raise their position, to look to the history of the middle-class for the past century. It would be a material addition to the merits of this body if it could be shown that they have given social encouragement to the advance upwards of those who are immediately beneath them, by holding out to them the hand of courtesy. It must be admitted that in this country there is a cold reserve on the part of all those who have a claim to come within the pale of the gentry towards all those without that pale, which appears to have increased just as other distinctions in rank have been obliterated. If we begin with the highest subject of the land, and trace society downwards, we shall find the grades but imperceptibly separated, and all the circles winding into each other, until we come down to the working-class, and there we find a wide distinct separation. It is as palpable between the last of the gentry class and the first of the working, as between the humblest guest who sits at a rich man's table, and the best-fed footman who stands behind his chair. We have elsewhere alluded to the artisan's unambitious nature—to his distaste for clean linen, good clothing, and the other comforts and elegancies which mark the gentleman, and might be afforded out of the skilful workman's wages often more easily than out of the poor gentleman's income. But it must also be remembered that in the present state of society, the half-pay lieutenant with 4s. 6d. a day, or the government clerk with a trifle more, would scorn to sit at table with the chaser of silver or the bookbinder, who, by reason of their great abilities and taste, may

be drawing an income of more than double the amount. Nor do the employers of workmen in general make any more advance towards an amalgamation. Many of those who are kind and considerate to their workpeople, are apt to approach them with a lofty condescension, which only serves to mark the more emphatically the social distinction.

There are proud spirits among these workmen; they see the marks of isolation even in acts of kindness, and it sours their spirit, helping them on to those discontents and hatreds which, when they burst forth, are no doubt injurious to the upper classes against whom they are directed, but fatal to themselves. These great severances of society make gulfs into which, like the gap of the Roman Forum, the precious creations of civilisation, skill, and industry have to be cast. Society is in its true and healthy state when all are pressing forward amicably together—not when it is divided into two sections, looking across at each other in hostile hatred. When Turgot saw the great people of France occupied with their pomps and frivolities, while the poor were engrossed with a sense of their miseries, he predicted that such an alienation of the two classes—such an absence of common grounds of sympathy and intercourse—must lead to convulsions. We know what followed. Matters are, it is true, very different at this time and in this country. The severed class lives by industry, and between those of the working-classes who have sense enough to know that order is essential to their welfare, and the higher orders, the supporters of the law and institutions of the country have the upper hand, and those who rise against them can only come under the horse's hoof. But forced conquests even over small minorities are evil things. They deposit a little leaven of mischief that leaveneth the great mass; it may not be with rebellion or treason, but certainly it is with qualities that are the reverse of peaceful, humanising, and civilising. The great employer can often see the symptoms of this spirit. When he meets his workman individually face to face, he comes the representative of all the social strength of his position, and the workman is humble and respectful. Let him meet the same man as part of a deputation about wages or hours, conscious of the immediate strength of numbers, he is insolent, turbulent, and tyrannical.

It would not detract one iota from the true dignity of the employing and professional classes, were they to take the first step towards conciliation, and make those proffers of amity which the workmen are too proud and surly to court. It could not injure the good esteem in which the professional classes stand, were some of the able workmen, whose skill produces works held in wonder and admiration by the most distant quarters of the world, admitted of their set, and entitled to mix with them on a principle of social equality.

There is another matter in which the upper classes have scarcely used their power with a fair reference to the claims of those below them—the emoluments of office. In the gradations necessary for securing adequate aptitude from public functionaries, the salaries of members of the working-classes are too often fixed on a scale which, as it is insufficient to secure zeal and energy, is not conducive to the public service.

The principle on which officials of the higher class are salaried is, that they shall have a sufficient pecuniary inducement to devote their time and talents to the duties of their office. They are thus not only placed in ease and comfort according to their condition in life, and, if they be prudent, beyond the worldly cares that press on people of uncertain income, but their remuneration is a temptation to them to aspire to the office, and to keep it when they have obtained it. With the humbler class of subordinates, on the other hand, the principle adopted is generally the most stringent economy. There are always people who will accept of the lowest certain income capable of sustaining life, in preference to the chances of free labour. Some departments of the public service—chiefly, with the great exception of the army, those which are under corporation management—are a great house of refuge for those who are so prepared to sell their labour for the minimum of subsistence, and thus the duty is economically performed. No man has reliance on the zeal or integrity of these men. It is well known that they have no future to look forward to in their occupation. They take it until a better opening appears, and are ready to shake themselves free of it whenever a sufficient motive presents itself. The only hold which the public possess over them, is the imperfect and clumsy control of discipline, which is totally inadequate to supply the place of respectability and conscientious responsibility. The public do not gain by the system. The multitude of thefts annually committed in the post-office department must be attributed to the meagre salaries of the letter-carriers, who, having no interest in the establishment, or zeal in the performance of their duties, yield to temptations which would be insufficient to overcome men to whom the situation formed a comfortable provision. In some towns, policemen—the guardians of the public peace and of private property—are paid at the rate of 9s. or 10s. a week, because men can be had at the price: their quality is not examined. The functions of the first officer of the law are of a very different character, in point both of their importance and of the skill they demand, from those of a night watchman; but perhaps even this distinction is rather too strongly-marked, when the salary of the one is £15,000 a year, and that of the other £25—the one being six hundred times as great as the other. So it may be a just as well as a noble thing, in a great nation like ours, to give an illustrious commander about £40,000

a year; but do we apply the same justice to all the gradations downwards, when the soldier who participated in his victories has but an income of £20 annually? The insufficiency with which our gallant sailors were remunerated gave rise to the gross and scandalous injustice of impressment. In the army we have not, as we once had, an actual conscription; but the remuneration and the prospects of rising are insufficient to prompt men of a high tone of mind to join its ranks. It brings together the refuse of society; and its sole sanction for supplying that military ardour and high sense of honour which poetry makes the attribute of the soldier, is in the despotic application of an iron discipline. The irksomeness of the chain—not relieved by long use, which reconciles us to most things—is testified by numerous desertions, and until the time of service was lately abbreviated, was still more terribly indicated by numerous suicides. In the payment of our common soldiers we take a false analogy from other services, which, however, is not permitted to influence the remuneration of our general officers. The same pay that in a rich country will only be accepted by the dregs of the population, may be a temptation to the middle or upper classes of a poor community. It was thus long considered a more economical system to hire bodies of stipendiaries from the petty German princes, who let out the services of their subjects, and increased their incomes by a profit in the transaction, than to induce British subjects to enlist. While a shilling a day is insufficient to secure bare respectability in this country, sixpence purchases a sort of aristocracy for the East India Company, whom it is considered so great a privilege to serve, that they have the choice among many applicants of the high-soldier cast for each vacancy. When we double to our home army the sum that is so efficacious in the golden East, we indolently suppose that we have done enough. But these things are not to be measured in coin—they ought to be accommodated to the habits of the people, and so accommodated, as rather to raise than depress their character.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DUTIES OF LANDED PROPERTY.

Feudalism—Its effect on the Relation of Landlord and Tenant—Landed Privileges—Game-Laws—Advantage of Landlords being Capitalists—Evil of Burdened Estates to the Community—Absenteeism and Residence—Large and Small Farming—Economical and Moral Condition of Small Tenants and Peasant Proprietors.

The traditions of the feudal period still hover so thickly round the relationship of agricultural landlord and tenant, that it seldom can be viewed as a mere contract, like the chartering of a ship or the hiring of a horse. It is a relationship, however, that possesses infinite varieties—from the obsequious owner of furnished apartments, who sometimes includes his own menial services in the accommodation which he is willing to extend to every one who can pay for it, up to the great territorial duke who knows his estates only geographically, has no more personal intercourse with his individual tenantry than a sovereign with his subjects, and has as little acquaintance with the personal rights and obligations to which he and they are mutually subjected. Whenever we rise beyond the class of house-speculators, who partake more of the character of the makers of a commodity for the market than of territorial chiefs, there is always a disposition to rate the landlord and the tenant as persons belonging to distinct spheres of life, and bearing to each other the relation of patron and client, or leader and follower. Nor is this traditional classification lost even when the landlord is a needy spendthrift and the tenant a wealthy yeoman, whose regularly paid rent is the main resource to which the owner of the soil has to look for the support of his household. Though receiving a benefit, the landowner is still allowed by the courtesy of society to be looked upon as the conferrer of a favour; and the time has scarcely yet gone by when even such a landlord would consider that he was entitled to dispose of the vote of his tenant, and to think for him on all public questions, whether political or religious.

There are some specialities in the law which tend to support this social distinction. Until very lately, the game-laws in England were not only a virtual privilege of the aristocracy, as they are at present, but the letter of the law limited the privilege of enjoying field-sports to landowners, and those who received a special qualification from them; a peculiarity which still subsists in Scotland. The reservation of a privilege to the landlord and

his landed neighbours, of nourishing animals which may, to any extent, injure the value of the farm, is a system which tends towards the tenants' serfdom. It exhibits the law and the practice of society uniting with each other to keep one of the parties to the contract ever dependant on, and at the mercy of, the other.

There are other privileges, almost necessary to the existence of landed property, which have a natural tendency to make the landlord's position more like that of a master than of an ordinary party to a contract. The law gives him the right to take possession of the tenant's effects, as a security for the payment of his rent, and affords him a preference over the other legal and equally just creditors. There are excellent reasons for this privilege, which is also enjoyed by menial servants. The engagement to the landlord is not a finished bargain, but continuous; and to give him no better recourse against his debtor than the person who has supplied goods, would be equivalent to compelling the person who had supplied goods to go on with his supplies, although the purchaser is bankrupt, and avowedly unable to pay.

We have already considered the privileges which the law ought to afford to property; we shall have occasion in some measure to notice the same subject in connection with the extent of the law's proper interference to correct or supersede the transactions of the private citizen. Our object in the meantime is to bestow a few words on the peculiar duties which those who are in the position of agricultural landlords may perform to the public.

However much moralists and political economists may write about the duties of the owner of the soil, no moral or political obligations will ever be a substitute to the tenant or society at large for proper obligatory laws. Whatever rights the tenant ought to possess—whatever social position he ought to hold—whatever demoralising or corrupting agencies he ought to be exempt from, it is not to the concessions of others, but to his own maintenance of his own rights and privileges, that he must look. He, like the workman, and every other member of society whose position we have had occasion to consider, must be what he makes himself. Landlords, like other men, will ever be more or less exacting, supercilious, careless, and tyrannical, if they have it in their own uncontrolled power to fix the position in which they are to stand towards their tenantry, and if there are not two sides to the contract of landlord and tenant. Newspapers and public opinion will every now and then exclaim against some conspicuous act of intolerance, oppression, or sordidness; but when the watcher's eye is removed, the process still continues; and while the injured parties cannot protect themselves, it will and must continue so long as selfishness and tyranny are parts of human nature.

When we, therefore, consider the landlord in the position which

he ought to hold—that of a mere party to a contract, not a distributor of benefits—the range of his duties is much narrowed. It may be said that his main duty, both to his tenants and society, and one that cannot but be acceptably fulfilled by himself when it is practicable, is to be rich. The difference between rich landlords and poor landlords to a country, unless the riches of the tenant compensate for the landlord's poverty, is just the difference between a rich soil and a barren. The soil requires capital for the development of its fruitfulness; and where the capital is wanting, the full produce will not be forthcoming. It is true that if it exist elsewhere, it will bring food into existence. For instance, if it be invested in cotton manufactures, they will be exported, and will purchase corn in America. But if it would have been cheaper to have purchased the corn at home—if the capital, had it been invested in land in this country, would have produced more, its non-investment is a loss to the community. When a corn-law compelled us to rear dear corn at home instead of enabling us to purchase it cheap by exporting manufactures, the injustice was done to the community of driving them to the dearer market; but if there are tracts of ground where corn could be produced cheaper than it could be imported, and capital is driven off that ground, the same sort of evil is committed. Here we see very distinctly one of the prominent mischiefs of entailed and burdened estates. A proprietor holding an estate on which he cannot himself lay out capital, and which he does not bring into the market that some capitalist may do so, is the dog watching over that manger which is useless to himself, and where he will not permit others to find food. Independently, therefore, of all questions between debtor and creditor, and of the facilities which the law ought to give to the tradesman to recover his just debt, the public at large have a great interest that there should be no encumbered estates; that landed property should be freely and rapidly attached for debt; and that, in short, there should be a free trade in this commodity, so that it may be open to the employment of capital in developing its resources. It is calculated that the landed property of England is burdened by debts and encumbrances to the extent of fifty, that of Scotland to the extent of sixty, and that of Ireland to the extent of seventy per cent.

Political economy has shown that, for the general pecuniary affairs of a nation, it is a matter of secondary moment whether a landlord reside on his estate or not. When his rents are remitted to him, the shape in which they actually pass abroad is the exportation of goods, to settle the balance with the country whose banking-house pays him the funds; and thus it performs the same function of giving employment in its own country, to which it is presumed that he would apply it. The transmission has the same

effect which we have already ascribed to foreign purchases: to be able to make it, the country must produce and export a corresponding quantity of commodities. If this view cannot be seen, or is not admitted when seen, it will not be so difficult to persuade people that the spending of the money, when it is made, is not of so much moment as the making of it by the farmer who pays his rent. It is in this step that the whole industrial operations of agricultural production are set in motion, and the industrious stimulus which the landlord can communicate in spending his wealth is small in comparison with it.

But if both or either of these views be considered as proved by political economy, the result must be to show that political economy does not contain all that we ought to know for a proper rule of conduct in such matters. To those who have approached nearest to the position of mere parties to a contract—to the capitalist farmers of England and Scotland, for instance—it will be a matter of the purest indifference, save for social intercourse, where their landlord lives. Their grain, and oxen, and sheep, will bring the market price whether he be on the spot or not; and as they do not deal in the wines, and silks, and jewellery which the landlord's family may consume, they have not even the same pecuniary interest in his presence which the shopkeepers of the nearest market town probably have. Of course if there are kindnesses or favours, acts of liberality, or aids to improved management, which the tenant can only obtain from a resident landlord, his presence will be so far an advantage; but this is a matter dependent on individual character or temper.

Let us, however, look to other parts of the country, and to landlords who have a tenantry of a totally different kind. They are not independent farmers, making their own speculations, and supporting their own industrial position in the world: they look up to the gentry with blind reverence—they require a landlord to be a guide and a teacher; and if they do not receive these services from him, they will take them from worse quarters. Political economy may teach us what it will, but the state of a people, and the influences that may be used towards them with good effect, must be kept in view when we discuss the simple question where a man ought to live. The uneducated human race must have organisers and leaders. In a town with its various social grades—in a rich agricultural country where the classes insensibly mingle into each other, from the great proprietor downwards—there is a sort of hierarchy in the very form of society that is sufficient to keep it in order, though a few members should be abstracted from it. Take away the principal proprietor, he is only missed at the hunt; there are justices of peace, subscribers to charitable funds, and gentlemen to attend to the roads and bridges, the administration of the poor-law, and

the local taxation, without him. In districts where there are but two classes—a poor dependent peasantry, and great proprietors, dropped here and there far apart—an estate without its owner is like a monarchy without its king, and is subjected to all the evils and calamities, from grasping and tyrannical underlings, which are said to be suffered when the crown of a paternal government rests on the head of a minor.

The people who are thus dependent on the presence of the landed gentry, have made little progress in true civilisation; nor will the presence of these, their natural leaders, in the general case, elevate them permanently in the social scale, or do more than preserve temporary order, heal minor social wounds, and mitigate existing misery. But if we descend far below the views of those who believe that the landlord has a full regenerating power over his people, even these small palliations are no light temporary mitigation of the burden of a poor, dependent, unambitious, unenterprising peasantry, on the general resources of the country whose misfortune it is to count them an integral part of its population. As in many other cases where social morality makes its distinctions, it may not be expedient that the law should interpose to compel the proprietor to reside on his estate. Such a law, by the importance which it would appear to attribute to his residence, would induce people to believe it capable of accomplishing ends far beyond the scope of its influence. But it is quite fair that public opinion should form its own judgments, and should decide that the place for the man who owns an Irish or a Highland estate, ought to be among the people who inhabit it, unless he have carefully and conscientiously, and at some sensible deduction from the yearly returns of the estate, made provision for a representative empowered to perform those functions which in general the landlord himself only can perform. It is possible that a hireling may to a certain extent accomplish these duties; and when the estates are unwieldy, and widely scattered, it may happen that a good organisation of agency is a better arrangement than an attempt to perform the functions of a resident proprietor. But the landowner who adopts this alternative will be expected to make great pecuniary sacrifices. He is not to appoint as agent the person who, like the Turkish governor of a province, will return the largest revenue; who will look to his master's interests, on which his own are made dependent, and not to those of the people. If it be permitted by the law, it may at least be forbidden by public opinion, that a proprietor in Connaught or Cnoidart should consider that he has as little to do with his tenantry as a proprietor in Middlesex or Mid-Lothian. The tenantry both in England and Lowland Scotland, as well as the other classes of the community, know the tenantry of Ireland and the Western Highlands as burdens, to whose support they

are often called on to contribute—sometimes in the shape of destitution funds, at other times in the shape of taxation, and ten million loans, to provide against starvation. In fact, the tribes which inhabit these districts may be collectively described as the poor relations of the empire—a burden to the rest of the population, and an impediment to their progress. 'How great a people we would be were we rid of the south of Ireland and the Highlands!' has been a frequent exclamation. It is hard to say what might have been, if marked original, physical, and national peculiarities had been other than what they are. There was a time when Celts were great leaders of men; and it is a dangerous philosophy to condemn races because the judgment is always made in favour of the person who judges, and against others. Let us hope for a better future to the Celtic tribes, who form an integral part of the population of the United Kingdom. In the meantime, what lies to our present purpose is simply to suggest that the industrious, energetic people of England and Scotland, who are often required to pay considerable sums for the Celtic population of Ireland and the Highlands, are entitled to hold it a sound principle, that the landed proprietors of these districts should be resident on their estates, and among the people who require them as leaders, because their presence there is generally beneficial to the community, however unpleasant it may be to themselves. Farther, as it is lawful, so also it is justifiable, to hold it as one of the duties of life, by the neglect of which a man should lose the good opinion of his fellow-creatures—that the Irish and Highland proprietor, unless his district have been cleared of the people, should reside among them; and that this residence should be considered in the social code a condition of ownership.* Where it would be mischievous to interfere in the form of legislation, it is often alike effective and advantageous to have the code of social opinions directed towards a line of conduct that tends to the general benefit of the community.

* Even in a cleared district, naturally devoted to sheep-farming, and where one may travel several miles between each habitation, we have seen the happy influence produced on the surrounding districts by the occasional residence of a considerate, humane, and energetic landlord. To find Highlanders seriously at work, at least in their own country, is a very rare phenomenon. We once had an opportunity, in the solitudes of Glen Quoich—part of the old Glengarry country—of beholding such a spectacle, most cheeringly in contrast with the listlessness seen in other places. A considerable number of men were here employed in bringing in land for plantation. The method in which the proprietor solved the problem of inducing the Highlanders to work was this:—He contracted for the work, the contractor agreeing to employ generally the people of the surrounding districts, whom he paid by the piece. That the people might not in despair maintain the impossibility of making a living at the rate of remuneration offered to them, a few hard-working railway navies were incorporated among them, who showed the sums that energetic industry might enable the people to make; and thus so many men, whose occupations would otherwise have made the nearest practical approach to sheer idleness, were induced to labour.

Nor should it be forgotten that such social rules are often more effective than acts of parliament.

It is one of the peculiarities which surround all questions about the reciprocal duties of landlords and tenants with a certain vague and unsatisfactory character, that we cannot find any security for the enforcement of the views that may be adopted as the best. We cannot find them in legislative enactments, for to do so would generally be an infringement on the freedom of property, or on some other free right. We cannot find them in the self-regulating laws of political economy; and they have not yet been satisfactorily brought into the terms even of any code of moral opinions. There is no department in which an inquirer more distinctly feels this sort of dubiety shedding its unsatisfactory influence around, and obscuring the path towards a distinct opinion, than in one which has lately received a considerable amount of attention—that of large and small farms. Scientific agriculture and political economy both maintain that the best size of farm is that which comes up to, but does not exceed, the extent which one man can manage; and that, where there is sufficient capital among tenants, all farms ought to come as near as they can be practically brought to that extent; because by such means a given area of land produces for the capital expended on it the greatest quantity of food. At the same time moralists, and those who have considered political economy as a matter of conjunct inquiry with the theory of human conduct, have reminded the world that the production even of food is but a means of human wellbeing; and that its quantity may be increased in such a manner as to disturb and displace other essential elements of happiness and comfort to mankind. In most other questions where political economy and morals are mixed, it is possible to see a clear path—at all events, to notice the fences or other indications of division which prevent vague wandering. In general, what is most profitable to individuals is most profitable to the community at large, unless it be profit dishonestly or detrimentally made, and then both the moral code and the law of the land condemn it; but in this matter of the size of farms we have no such distinct guide, unless we should at once adopt the principle of the agriculturists and political economists, that the best size of farm is that which produces most for the capital laid out on it. It is thus impossible to find at present a moral rule, and it is to be hoped that no one will attempt to find a legal rule, for the proper area of a farm, whether pastoral or arable.

It would be satisfactory, however, if some clear rule or principle could be established on this matter; for a general oscillation of opinions would be a cause of serious practical difficulties to individuals, and detriment to the public. If landlords are to be divided into a large-farm and a small-farm faction, tenant-farmers

will be subjected to great inconveniences, and even more serious evils. Arthur Young, the greatest agricultural authority of his age in England, was the champion of large farms, and the apostle of the large-farm system. It was as a practical adaptation of his doctrines that the great Highland clearings were effected, and that thousands of the descendants of the petty cottars among the mountains, who believed their tenure of their huts and grazing-grounds to be as secure to them and their descendants as anything in this world can be, were cast forth to become fishermen, or citizens, or emigrants across the Atlantic. Some newspaper paragraphs state that the owner of a great portion of the lands on which these clearings were effected, has adopted new views, and has resolved to put them in practice, by the subdivision of his sheep-farms. If this is the case, it shows how much it is to be desired that we should possess some authoritative solution, in a shape suited to practical application, of this question of the size of farms.

In the meantime, we are, from the imperfect information, and the equally imperfect opinions dispersed abroad, inclined to think that the habits of the people, their method of practically viewing agriculture along with the other forms of occupation open to them, the practices as to ownership of land which hereditary custom and existing law have created, and, in general, the peculiarities of the social state, will afford the best means, in each particular country or district, of fixing the proper extent of farms or other agricultural establishments. The adoption of a local and consuetudinary criterion such as this of course involves the rejection of any alteration infringing on the customs, and the moral rights arising out of such customs, in any particular district, whether the infringement be dictated by the wisdom of political economy or the tyranny of a landlord.

Thus security and uniformity, and the existence of laws founded upon the practice and customs of the people, readily creating, and effectively protecting, vested interests, seem to be the best boon which the reciprocal rights of landlord and tenant can receive from the legislature, or from the social habits of the country, whether with reference to political economy, or to the moral influence of the relations of landlord and tenant. Some classes of people will adapt themselves to large farming, others will adapt themselves to small. The average extent of farms in the county of Haddington is from three hundred to five hundred acres. If we converted the population of a Swiss canton, where nearly all the people are petty landholders, into a set of agriculturists operating on the same principle as the landlords and farmers of Haddington—making the chief person owner of the land, two or three of the intermediate in rank payers of rent, and the rest labourers under the direction of these farmers, combining to put

in force their views of the rotation of crops—they would perhaps all find it as difficult to accommodate themselves to the new system, as if its operations were to be conducted in the form of manufactories, mines, or railways, instead of agriculture. On the other hand, if we took the model of the distribution of a Swiss canton or a Belgic province, and revolutionised the proprietary and tenantry rights of an English or Scottish county, so as to make them a precise *fac-simile* of the foreign model, the productiveness of the land would certainly be very seriously reduced, and it could not be said that there would be to compensate this loss any immediate improvement in the content and the happiness of the people.

We shall thus perhaps find it the safest rule to protect that arrangement to which the customs of a people and the usages of agriculture adapt themselves. One of the misfortunes which have mainly strengthened the arguments against the large-farm system is, that in this great country provincial practices and customs have been overlooked, and compelled to bend to general rules founded on the practice of the richer and more civilised portions of the population. The whole of the discontents and miseries, the conflicts of opinion and the disorganisation of society, that have connected themselves with Irish and Highland clearings, have had their operative cause in a neglect of the customs of the Celtic people, so largely scattered over the surface of this empire. The Swiss laws were made by small proprietors, and arose out of their traditional practices and habits; and so they were accommodated to the creation and the protection of small consuetudinary rights. Our own laws have been made by rich men, who have looked to the practice of the advanced Saxon race, among whom property in large masses, and the joint arrangement of ownership and tenantry, had long been the rule. But the experience derived from the adjustment of land and its interests in Yorkshire or the Lothians should not have been made a rule for the Highlanders, whose state of society was as different and peculiar as if we had gone ten thousand miles away to find it. The Highland chief was looked upon not as the owner of the land, but as the patriarch of the people who dwelt upon it; and so little did the Celts understand the kind of pure feudal ownership by which English and Scottish estates have descended through a line of generations, that if the next heir were unfit to be their leader, they might select and appoint his uncle or his brother to be their chief. A person describing their state of society early in the last century, says—

'The chief exercises an arbitrary authority over his vassals, determines all differences and disputes that happen among them, and levies taxes upon extraordinary occasions—such as the marriage of a daughter, building a house, or some pretence for his

support and the honour of the name. And if any one should refuse to contribute to the best of his ability, he is sure of severe treatment; and if he persisted in his obstinacy, he would be cast out of the tribe by general consent. But instances of this kind have very rarely happened.

'This power of the chiefs is not supported by interest as they are landlords, but as lineally descended from the old patriarchs or fathers of the families; for they hold the same authority when they have lost their estates, as may appear from several, and particularly one, who commands in his clan, though at the same time they maintain him, having nothing left of his own.'*

At this time the number of clansmen who followed their banner was a matter of infinite importance to the chiefs, for it fixed their rank in the country, just as in later times the extent of his army might fix that of a petty German sovereign. But even when turbulence was suppressed, the dominion of law extended to the mountains, and the chief's military baton snatched from his grasp, it happened that there were still encouragements to keep the population of these districts up to a high level. When the Highland regiments were recruited, the gentry obtained rank in the army according to the number of recruits which their influence enabled them to raise. Subsequently, a temporary incidence of our finance system forced into production a manufacture peculiar to the Highlands. The high duties on barilla and salt gave the proprietors along the deep-indented coasts of the west an extensive interest in the manufacture of kelp: they made and spent large revenues arising from this incidental manufacture, and encouraged the population to expand on the spots where the operation was mainly conducted.

Looking at the people as thus unnaturally increased to serve the purposes of the landowners, we shall take occasion to show, from the spectacle that followed, the danger to the community of either permitting or justifying sudden revolutions in the method of employing landed property. The sheep-farming system was introduced, and the Highland gentry suddenly made the discovery that the rearing of sheep was more profitable than the rearing of men. They no sooner adopted the opinion, than they applied it to practice, and thousands of families were turned off, and hundreds of thousands of acres cleared. The petty cottars were of course very ill-fitted to accommodate themselves to other occupations, and thus they spread themselves over the rest of the country, became centres of pauperism in the large towns, and besides their own sufferings and privations, threw upon strangers a great part of the burden of their support, while the whole advantage of the change accrued to the landlord. M. Sismondi tells us

* Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland, 5th ed., vol. ii. pp. 4, 5.

that in any other part of the world but Britain, where wealth is the sole object of the care of the legislature, and the happiness of the people is neglected, the law would have adapted itself to the customary tenure of the mountain cottagers, and given them in reality the fixed rights which their own traditions taught them to believe that they possessed, but which the law, founded upon the customs and tenures of the other and wealthier parts of the country, sternly denied them. Had the cottagers possessed some fixed tenure, the clearings and the conversion from the crofter system to sheep husbandry might have been accomplished, but without the overwhelming suddenness that unfortunately characterised the change. The community would have reaped whatever prospective advantage it was to derive from an improved system of husbandry, while they would not have been burdened by the forced increase of pauperism; and the difference in the destination of the immediate advantages would have been, that they would not have been entirely reaped by the landlord, but would have been partly communicated to the tenant, in the shape of an inducement to resign his holding.

Thus if the mutual relation of landlord and tenant had been preserved with steadiness according to the usage of the district—if the cottars had been allowed to possess, either by law or by the preservative influence of public opinion, the claims which the long custom of the district had seemed to award to them—the calamities in question would not have happened. Neither small farming nor large farming is chargeable with them, but the sudden change from the one to the other, and the violent uprooting of a social system that had existed among a primitive people, and had been cherished by them for ages. If there had been an effective poor-law in Scotland, the dread of having to provide for them in destitution would have given the landlords a warmer interest in the destinies of their people: they might not have so recklessly permitted them to accumulate—they certainly would not have so recklessly driven them forth. It is believed that there is a considerable population which must yet be removed from the Highlands before agriculture becomes free to accomplish its full ends. The best protection to the public against these clearings being accomplished on the cruel and disorganising system which has been so often adopted, would be an extension of the pressure of the poor-law on the proprietors. But while it would not be now expedient materially to alter the law of Highland tenancy, public opinion, condemning such sudden territorial revolutions on the principles we have been endeavouring to explain, may do much to obviate them for the future.

It has, however, been said, and it is not denied, that at least large portions of these clearings were conducted with humane consideration to the tenants, and even with considerable sacrifices

of rights which the proprietors were entitled to exercise—a pleading which we fear exemplifies the proposition with which we set forth, that the personal favour of his landlord can ever be but a poor compensation to the tenant for rights legally enforcible, or at least supported by a strong public opinion: generosity seldom offers more than a small per centage of justice. If, on the other hand, the increase of the produce of the cleared districts could be a full justification of the treatment to which the inhabitants were subjected, it has been amply realised. However the cottier system may apply to the habits of the Celts, large farming was the proper vocation of the English and Lowland tenants who replaced them, and they have made vast improvements on the territory of which they have taken charge, bringing the land to a state of productiveness which deserves to be known and noticed in connection with the question of large and small farming.

The following account of the parish of Golspie, in the centre of the Sutherland clearings, is taken from the 'New Statistical Account of Scotland:'—

'It may with truth be affirmed that a simple account of the improvements in this parish must have the appearance of exaggeration, and that he only can appreciate them who had seen the state of the parish forty, or even thirty years ago, and compares that state with the present. Every farm, every building, every piece of road, presents an instance of the greatest improvement. * * *

'At that period the injurious system of subletting prevailed; and both the knowledge and the practice of farming were exceedingly defective. The place of Dunrobin excepted, there was neither draining, trenching, nor fallow, and very little green crop besides potatoes and a little peas. There were few fences, and these few bad. The plough, which was rudely constructed, had no part of it iron but the coulter, the sock, and the hook at the end of the beam. Four country *garrans*, or Highland ponies, were yoked to the plough abreast, and the driver walked in front of them *backwards*. There were few wheeled vehicles that deserved the name. Corn, fuel, &c. were carried in a kind of frame called *crubags*, fastened on horseback to a wooden saddle that rested on a straw mat. The public road was the only one, and that itself indifferent. The dwellings of the sub-tenants were wooden frames thatched with turf, and of these one end accommodated cattle, horses, and sometimes pigs. One end also of the turf-covering of these huts, saturated as it was with soot, was annually stripped off, and converted into manure. With the exception of the *mutch*, or cap and handkerchief of the women, and perhaps the men's neckcloths, their clothes consisted of coarse tartans, kilts, and blanket stuffs. The state of things is now very different. Farming is brought to the highest degree of

excellence that industry, skill, and expense can bring it to. Nor is it too much to say that the system of farming at present followed in this parish does not fall short of the best modes of farming in any part of the kingdom. The farmers have very good houses, with two public rooms; and they have their wheeled carriages for personal and family use. Subletting is abolished. The small tenants or cottars live in decent cottages, built with stone and lime, or clay, with glass windows; and their fare is correspondingly better. Tradesmen and ploughmen on Sundays wear good long coats of English manufacture, white shirts, hats, and silk handkerchiefs; and the females of the same class wear good cotton gowns, shawls, or scarfs, and many of them straw-bonnets. There are of all descriptions of road in the parish about forty miles—of which about twelve were made by the parliamentary commissioners; about eighteen partly at the expense of the proprietors, and partly by an assessment on the tenantry; and ten miles at the sole expense of the proprietors. In no county of Scotland was there ever in so short a time the same length of road made, as there has been within the last twenty years in the county of Sutherland. In former times, the internal communication was by mere paths, or tracks, and many parts of it were all but inaccessible. Now several hundred miles of good road intersect the county in every direction, and there is free and easy access to every part of it. These roads were made chiefly at the expense of the noble proprietors of this parish, and under the able management of James Loch, Esq. M.P., their commissioner.'*

When Sismondi looked around him to the comfort and happiness of his fellow-countrymen of Switzerland, each man sitting under his own vine and his own fig-tree, he saw likewise around him a body of petty proprietors, and he appealed to the world in favour of small holdings as a substantial element of happiness. He addressed himself particularly to the British nation; and as the happiness of mankind should be the great aim of legislation, he called upon our senators to abandon a system that piled up and protected wealth, for one that would aid the people in the acquisition of happiness. He desired them, above all other things, to abandon those employments, and transactions, and proprietary rights which produced manufactures, large farms, and great inequalities of fortune, and to model our systems according to those pristine usages which alike avoid great poverty and great wealth.† Without adopting all these views, which would simply be applying the paternal and corrective system of a small Swiss canton to a vast empire, many able writers have followed Sismondi in his partiality for peasant proprietors; and they now count on their side the powerful pen of Mr Mill. The question how far

* New Statistical Account of Scotland (Sutherlandshire), pp. 38, 44.
† See Études sur l'economie Politique, 1838.

encouragement should be given to the subdivision of land, and its cultivation in small plots, is so intimately connected with the present subject, that no excuse is necessary for the devotion of a few sentences to its consideration.

There is a general feeling that a proprietor must always be independent, however poor—that he is above the world, and may dictate to it, instead of being obliged to accept its terms. This is an idea often very wide of the reality. The petty proprietor is like the small shopkeeper: he has his produce to dispose of in the market—be it wine, olives, grain, or butcher-meat—and he must compete like other sellers for a preference. The labourer who lets out his labour to hire may be called a servant; but if his labour be worth as much in the market as the produce of a small holding—and there is no reason why it may not be worth more—the labourer will be as independent a man as the landowner. If the competition for land is so powerful as to induce people to hold it on such terms that it affords, after hard labour, the very scantiest living to the owner, he is surely not an object of any envy to the workman, who, without the land, can make an abundant and comfortable living for himself. Arthur Young said of France before the first Revolution—

'If you would see a district with as little distress in it as is consistent with the political system of the old government of France, you must assuredly go where there are no little properties at all. You must visit the great farms in Beauce, Picardy, part of Normandy, and Artois, and there you will find no more population than what is regularly employed and regularly paid; and if in such districts you should, contrary to this rule, meet with much distress, it is twenty to one but it is in a parish which has some commons which tempt the poor to have cattle—to have property—and in consequence misery. When you are engaged in this political tour, finish it by seeing England, and I will show you a set of peasants well-clothed, well-nourished, tolerably drunken from superfluity, well-lodged, and at their ease, and yet amongst them not one in a thousand has either land or cattle.'*

One of the great arguments in favour of peasant proprietorship is the great amount of labour it calls into existence. Mr Young, who is an opponent of the system, is often cited as making a concession in its favour, when he says that 'the magic of property turns sand into gold.' 'Give a man,' we are told, 'the secure possession of a bleak rock, and he will turn it into a garden—give him a nine years' lease of a garden, and he will convert it into a desert.' What is most conspicuous through all the authorities which Mr Mill and others have brought together in favour of peasant proprietors, is the intensity with which they labour the

* Travels in France, vol. i., p. 471.

ground. They pluck every weed, remove every stone, pulverise every clod, irrigate, trench, and drain with unwearied industry. In some of the flat valleys of Switzerland, the avidity with which every inch of level land is applied to productive purposes, is sometimes troublesome to the pedestrian, who cannot cross the country without the risk of treading on some valuable plant, and of feeling as if he were trespassing in a garden. 'If, for example,' says Mr Inglis, 'a path leads through or by the side of a field of grain, the corn is not, as in England, permitted to hang over the path, exposed to be pulled or trodden down by every passer-by; it is everywhere bounded by a fence, stakes are placed at intervals of about a yard, and about two or three feet from the ground, boughs of trees are passed longitudinally along. If you look into a field towards evening, where there are large beds of cauliflower or cabbage, you will find that every single plant has been watered.' Mr Howitt, in his 'Rural and Domestic Life of Germany,' says—'The peasants are not, as with us for the most part, totally cut off from property in the soil they cultivate, totally dependent on the labour afforded by others—they are themselves the proprietors. It is perhaps from this cause that they are probably the most industrious peasantry in the world. They labour busily, early and late, because they feel that they are labouring for themselves. * * * The German peasants work hard, but they have no actual want. * * * He [the peasant] is his own master; and he and every member of his family have the strongest motives to labour. You see the effect of this in the unremitting diligence which is beyond that of the whole world besides, and his economy, which is still greater. * * * It would astonish the English common people to see the intense labour with which the Germans earn their firewood. In the depth of frost and snow, go into any of their woods, and there you find them hacking up stumps, cutting off branches, and gathering, by all means which the official wood-police will allow, boughs, stakes, and pieces of wood, which they convey home with the most incredible toil and patience.'*

It cannot fail to be remarked that the great boasted peculiarity of peasant proprietorship, even in the accounts furnished by its admirers and supporters, is that it is a stimulus to labour. This is in itself a valuable quality of any social state, but it is also a necessary qualification of real labour that it be directed to a profitable purpose; and labour will be rendered valuable in itself, not by the time it occupies, or the apparent difficulties with which it combats, but by the extent to which it performs any services of which the community desires performance. The hardest endurance on the tread-mill is not in this sense labour; and the hardest exertions to make the surface of a rock yield

* Passages quoted in Mill's Principles of Political Economy, i.

grain, while there is tillable ground, or any other productive means of employing the labour, remaining neglected beside it, are not acceptable or commendable service. If we find in small isolated communities men thus labouring hard, and acquiring all the moral discipline that follows continued exertion—even if we should respect such a phenomenon when it happens to be exhibited, we cannot expect that large and intelligent countries will imitate the example, and waste their labour.

If we appeal to the working-classes in this country—and it is only by appealing to them that they can be prevailed on to adopt any change of habit on such matters as labour and occupancy—we do not hold out a very inviting prospect, when we recommend them to save money to be invested in land, in order that when they possess it, they may be induced and compelled to work so much the harder. Such an appeal would be simply calling on the working-classes to place their earnings in a bad investment; and they would only be following the example of the educated and richer classes if they avoided it, for these classes do not generally invest in land merely because it is land, unless the investment be otherwise beneficial. It will not be felt as a sensible improvement to the workman's condition that he is called a landlord, even though he should obtain the privilege for nothing, if he has still to labour as much as he previously laboured, and must fare worse: nor would any discreet adviser recommend him to take advantage of the opportunity so to raise his condition should it be offered to him. If the possession of a small holding, upon the mere condition of working it, would not be an advantageous speculation for the working-man of this country, still less would it be so if he had to pay a rent for it as a tenant, or had to pay what is the same as rent—interest for money secured on the land, and paid either to the person from whom he has nominally bought it, but to whom he is still due the purchase-money, or to a creditor to whom he ought to have transferred the land. That large estates should be burdened and deprived of the manifest advantage of having capitalist proprietors, has been already alluded to as an evil; but it is feared that a numerous peasant proprietary, with burdened possessions, is a still greater evil. There is reason to believe that peasant properties throughout the world are heavily burdened in security of debt. A writer of considerable popularity in France, who announces his belief that the elements of the regeneration of his country are to be found in an improved system of husbandry—that is, in a better system than the multitude of small proprietors, among whom France is now divided, have the means individually of introducing—and who proposes to accomplish an agricultural regeneration by 'association,' mentions the fact, that the landed property of France is hypothecated for debt to an amount beyond

one-third of its value,* and that the owners of the diminutive estates, produced by compulsory subdivision, are thus restricted in their ability to cultivate their holdings, by paying an annual sum to creditors which perhaps in other places might suffice for rent. In Mr Mill's favourite authorities we can see not only that peasant proprietors work hard, but that their holdings are often heavily burdened. Referring to, and quoting from, Gerold Meyer's Statistics, he says—'There exists a series of statistical accounts of the Swiss cantons, drawn up mostly with great care and intelligence, containing detailed information, of tolerably recent date, respecting the condition of the land and of the people. From these, the subdivision appears to be often so minute, that it can hardly be supposed not to be excessive; and the indebtedness of the proprietors in the flourishing canton of Zurich "borders," as the writer expresses it, "on the incredible;" so that "only the intensest industry, frugality, temperance, and complete freedom of commerce, enable them to stand their ground."'†

There is an element likely to deceive partial observers in the superior productiveness per acre of small over large holdings—when there *is* such a superiority, which is a feature so often vouched for that it must sometimes really exist. Mr Laing gives us this attractive description:—

'Compare what we see in the best districts farmed in large farms, with what we see in the best districts farmed in small farms; we see, and there is no blinking the fact, better crops on the ground in Flanders, East Friesland, Holstein—in short, in the whole line of the arable land of equal quality of the continent from the Sound to Calais—than we see on the line of British coast opposite to this line, and in the same latitudes, from the Firth of Forth all round to Dover. Minute labour on small portions of arable ground gives evidently, in equal soils and climate, a superior productiveness, where these small portions belong in property, as in Flanders, Holland, Friesland, and Ditmarsch in Holstein, to the farmer. It is not pretended by our agricultural writers that our large farmers, even in Berwickshire, Roxburghshire, or the Lothians, approach to the garden-like cultivation, attention to manures, drainage, and clean state of the land, or in productiveness, from a small space of soil not originally rich, which distinguish the small farmers of Flanders or their system. In the best-farmed parish of Scotland or England, more land is wasted in the corners and borders of the fields of large farms, in the roads through them—unnecessarily wide, because they are bad, and bad because they are wide—in neglected commons,

* Solution du Problème Social, par l'Association de l'Agriculture et des Capitaux, par J. A. Fabre.

† Principles of Political Economy, i. 307.

waste spots, useless belts and clumps of sorry trees, and such unproductive areas as would maintain the poor of the parish if they were all laid together and cultivated.' *

It is possible to apply too much labour to the land, and thus to buy its productiveness too dear. A forcing-frame is twice or thrice as productive as the same square area subject to ordinary cropping or gardening; but it does not follow that it would be advantageous to the community to spend so much labour and capital on production as would be necessary to procure it through the instrumentality of forcing-frames. An acre covered with glass will perhaps produce as much as five acres exposed to the atmosphere; but if it would cost as much labour or money to cultivate the single acre after this fashion, as to cultivate twenty acres in the ordinary manner, and the twenty acres are to be had, there will be no profit in the forcing system. To make the man who produces a blade of grass where no blade of grass has grown before eminently meritorious, he must find out the place where, and the manner in which, his blade is to grow cheapest. Labour spent in working up land, to make it give forth a small additional produce, when it might have been applied to other land with such efficacy as to effect a larger produce, is misspent. The man who first stated that a pin a day is a groat a year, should have informed people how many groats' worth of labour they will expend in collecting a pin a day: he evidently was not the author of the other embodiment of popular wisdom which describes a certain course of action as 'penny wise, and pound foolish.'

To produce food is the aim of agriculture; and, economically speaking, the people who obtain the largest quantity of food with the least expenditure of labour have made the best investment of their industry. In this island Mr Porter notices the curious fact, that the population employed in agriculture decreased, not only relatively, but absolutely, between 1831 and 1841. 'In 1831, the number of adult males employed in agriculture in Great Britain was 1,243,057 out of a population of 16,539,318; but in 1841, with our numbers increased to 18,720,394, the adult males so employed were only 1,207,989, or fewer than the preceding census by 35,068 persons.' In Ireland, the males above fifteen years of age employed in agriculture, according to the census of 1841, were 1,643,082. In Britain, the estimate was made at the age of twenty; and the number employed in agriculture above that age was, as already stated, 1,207,989. But the whole number of males of all ages employed in the production of food for the 18,720,394 of this island was 1,410,509, while the number above fifteen years old, employed in producing food for the 8,175,124, was 1,643,082. Thus

* Notes of a Traveller, p. 300.

in Britain, '251 persons raised the food necessary for themselves and 749 other persons, or 1000 persons employed in agricultural processes supplied the wants, as respects food, of 3984 persons, including themselves; one person thus raising all the food of home production consumed by four persons.' In Ireland, 'it required the labour of 662 persons to raise a supply for them and 338 others, or 1000 persons engaged in agricultural employment as farmers and labourers provided food for only 1511 persons, including themselves.' We would undoubtedly find that in France, where there are a million and a-quarter proprietors of land, none of whose estates exceed five acres, the proportion of the agricultural producers to the rest of the population is still greater.

In comparing the number of the Irish population employed in the production of food, with that of the British population so occupied, it is right perhaps to remember that Ireland exports food to this island; but a just allowance to this element in the computation would scarcely affect it to any perceptible extent. We have to remember at the same time that Britain is an importing country; and that, strictly, a portion of her manufacturers are employed in the production of the food of the people, by contributing to the exportation, which enables us to purchase foreign grain and other edible produce. But this only proves that we can produce more food by manufacturing enterprise than by the devotion of a greater amount of labour to agriculture; and thus that we expend as much labour in the tilling of our soil as we ought to expend, and that there is no enterprise in this department neglected which is free to be profitably applied to it.

It may be said that it is of no moment whether the proportion of the agricultural population be one to ten, or one to five, or one to three of the population at large, provided the same amount of population be fed; because, supposing, for instance, that there is a non-agricultural population of 1000 people to be fed, as the agriculturists who feed them will also support themselves by their exertion, it matters not whether the work of 100 or the work of 200 of these agriculturists accomplishes the object. To this our answer is, that we are entitled to presume that those who do not require to be busy in agriculture, will be busy in other things; and that if 100 instead of 200 agriculturists will suffice for the feeding of the population of 1000, it is to be presumed that the other hundred are working as manufacturers, or in some other productive capacity. Mr Thornton, in a work called a 'Plea for Peasant Proprietors,' has set forth a pleading in favour of the political economy of small farming with great zeal and ingenuity, and with an earnestness of self-conviction that worthily secures the reader's sympathy and attention. He produces much valu-

able and useful information as to the high moral cast of small owners of landed property throughout the world: it will be seen presently that we admit the general fact of the estimableness of these petty owners as a class. When he comes to statistics, however, he seems to rest entirely on those of the Channel Islands; and as the results which he brings out are remarkable, they deserve to be stated. He says—'It appears that in the two principal Channel Islands, the agricultural population is in the one twice, and in the other three times as dense as in Britain, there being in the latter country only one cultivator to twenty-two acres of cultivated land, while in Jersey there is one in eleven, and in Guernsey one in seven acres. Yet the agriculture of these islands maintains, besides cultivators, non-agricultural populations, respectively four and five times as dense as that of Britain. This difference does not arise from any superiority of soil or climate possessed by the Channel Islands; for the former is naturally rather poor, and the latter is not better than in the southern counties of England: it is owing entirely to the assiduous care of the farmers, and to the abundant use of manure.'—(P. 38.)

The statement of the density of the agricultural population and that of the non-agricultural population respectively fed by the industry of the former, would weigh little in the scales of political economy for the reason just stated. But Mr Thornton asserts that in Jersey, containing a population of 47,544, only 2392 people are engaged in agriculture, being one-nineteenth of the whole; and that in Guernsey the population is 26,649, and the number of cultivators 1494, or rather less than one-eighteenth of the whole. To show, however, that peasant proprietorship is capable of creating great improvements in the population of large empires, we would require a wider field of experimental induction than the Channel Islands. They afford examples of thousands, but we require principles applicable to millions. And it must be remembered that dependencies on great empires are not the safest examples for those empires, or for any other independent states. They are liable to be either oppressed or pampered, according to the many incidental oscillations to which great powers are subjected in their external relations; and as it is believed that there are other dependencies of the British empire which would have been more prosperous had they been left to their own conduct and fortune, there is much reason to believe that the Channel Islands have enjoyed all the advantages, and suffered scarcely any of the evils, of dependence on a powerful nation.

Mr Thornton says—'One thing which, by itself, might seem to prove that markets are better supplied by small than by large farms, is the fact that land, when divided among many occupiers, commonly pays a much higher rent than when united into one

extensive holding. Thirty shillings an acre would be thought in England a very fair rent for middling land; but in the Channel Islands, it is only very inferior land that would not let for at least £4, and in Switzerland the average rent seems to be £6 an acre.'—(P. 32.)

It is a peculiarity, however, which sometimes attends the commerce in land, especially that department of it which consists in letting and hiring, that it is estimated not by its value, or by its capacity of productiveness, but by the necessities of the tenant. The man who obtains the use of land believes that he has, and in reality to a certain extent has, something more than a mere instrument of production—he has something that gives spontaneous supplies. The hirer of a manufactory, of a horse, of a carriage, of a railway, gains nothing by it unless he work it. There is no land, at least none which small holders will pay rent for, that does not offer something capable of being consumed as food, though the labour or capital invested in it should be so small as to be merely nominal. The exemplification of this principle in practice is, that the persons who find themselves the least capable or disposed to expend energy or industry in making their livelihood, seek that method of making it which affords some return, however minute, for the smallest outlay of exertion. People of this class compete for land, feeling that if they do not obtain it, they lose their chance of subsistence. A population of this kind is a miserable and melancholy spectacle. Instead of making, and possessing what they make—they are like a ship's crew on short provisions, competing with each other for a share in a limited quantity. They do not believe in the efficacy of productive industry; they only believe in the efficacy of land. The misery in which they are often plunged arises not from excess of underpaid or misdirected industry, but from their falsely believing that they can evade the great universal doom of mankind to labour, by obtaining for their use a monopoly of a portion of the earth's surface. Such is the position of the unhappy cottars of Ireland. Their intense competition for land arises out of their conviction that there are no other resources for them; and while the industrious Saxon labours and is independent, the indolent Celt desires to have land that he may be spared labour; and holds by the tenure of his misery.

While the characteristics out of which this competition for land arises remain in existence—while millions endeavour to evade the great duty of mankind, to make their bread by the sweat of their brow, and have derived so little light from the civilisation and enterprise of this great empire, as still to believe that it is in the use of land, not in productive industry, that they must all look for the means of wellbeing—the social reformer will promulgate his ingenious plans of reorganisation in vain. The gentleman whom

we have already referred to, Mr Thornton, has devised a plan for making this weakness of the Irish people an instrument of their regeneration, by giving them holdings on the waste lands. He believes that in Ireland there are 1,425,000 acres improvable for tillage, and 2,330,000 improvable for pasture; and these districts he proposes to colonise with 200,000 Irish families, including a million of human beings, allowing eight acres to each family. He says of this land—

'Some of it may only require to be pared, burnt, and limed, but much is bog or moss, which requires to be thoroughly drained, and to have the subsoil mixed with the surface mould and with lime; but these, and all other preliminary operations, might be performed at very little expense by the persons for whose ultimate benefit they were designed. The proposed grantees are at present without employment, and unless some such measure as that under consideration be adopted, without any prospect of it. They are now, and they must continue for an indefinite period to be, supported at the public expense; and it would be much cheaper to keep them usefully engaged than to maintain them in idleness. It would therefore be good economy to take them forthwith into pay, and to employ them in draining and subsoiling the wastes selected for reclamation. After the completion of these preparatory operations, the next step would be to mark off districts suitable to the settlement of collections of families, which would vary in size according as the colonies were intended to constitute separate village communities, or to be united to communities previously existing. Each district should be divided into lots corresponding in number to the number of settlers, and the latter should be farther required to construct a cottage, according to an approved plan, on every lot. Every family should then be placed in possession of one of the cottage farms, and be made perpetual lessee, at a fixed rent, and on certain other conditions [more specifically described by the author in another part of his book], and having been furnished with tools, and some farming stock, should be instructed that, after the next harvest, they would have to provide for their support by their own industry.' *

There is a curious simplicity, apt to make scepticism shake its head, in this conclusion. That they will not learn to provide for their support by their own industry, is the very social disease from which these people have to be redeemed. All people, in all positions, and in all parts of the world, would be in a sound social state if they obeyed this condition of providing for their support by their own industry—the Irish cottars not less than the rest of their human brethren. That they should be transferred from one sphere, where they have failed to fulfil this con-

* Plea for Peasant Proprietors, p. 218.

dition, to another where they cannot live without fulfilling it, is not the kind of amelioration of their condition which these people will appreciate or desire. Mr Thornton's plan must, we fear, rest beside those other artificial means of removing large defects in society, which it is so much more pleasant to see on paper, unattempted, than to contemplate at the close of some disastrous experiment. It has never yet been found that by any artificial arrangement human beings could be transferred by the million from an unhealthy to a sound social state. We have had artificial reformations in Ireland, but they affected the land only, not the inhabitants. In large districts of the north, the original Celtic population were cleared off the land in a series of persecutions, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth down to that of Queen Anne. Subject, as Celts and Catholics, to every form of misgovernment and oppression, they were replaced by a race who sternly maintained their freedom, and nourished a proud independence which the laws were made to protect. Whether their high social position was attributable entirely to their own merits, or was owing solely to their exemption from the oppression which destroyed the spirit of the Celt, they were a superior race, and have covered with industrial wealth a land that might have been as miserable as the most famished districts of Ireland, if it had remained in possession of its original occupants. But while the land was thus improved, the original inhabitants, or such of them as were not slain, mingled, with their exasperations and discontents, among the other inhabitants of Ireland, and bequeathed to the legislature of the United Kingdom the animosities with which it has so long and so lately combated. It may seem invidious to compare Mr Thornton's humane projects with these plans of extermination, but they have a common feature in their artificial character. In the one case, there was forfeiture of land; and in the other, there is to be endowment of land; but in both, the artificial change was not extended to the minds and habits of the people. Who is to secure us, when Mr Thornton's plan is established, from these new cottagers on waste lands multiplying their race, and pressing as strongly as they now do on the means of subsistence? And who is to secure us against the million of people removed to these waste lands being replaced in a few years by another million rising up in the places they have left, asking for another allocation of waste lands?

Mr Thornton estimates the expense of putting his project into practice at £14,000,000, and says, 'At this low price, less than three years' purchase, the public would be relieved from the necessity of an annual payment of £5,000,000. The operation, viewed merely as a financial feat, would establish the reputation of the minister by whom it was achieved.' And he says farther on—'Besides, the expenditure on the waste lands is not to be

regarded as money irrecoverably sunk, but rather as a loan to the settlers, who should be required to pay interest upon it. Five per cent. upon £14,000,000 sterling, payable by 1,600,000 acres, would be something less than nine shillings an acre; a very moderate rent to be paid by the perpetual lessee of a farm with a substantial dwelling upon it.'—(Pp. 222-3.)

The £14,000,000 would truly be the 'low price' which Mr Thornton so complacently calls it, if it regenerated the Irish cottars, and made them like Wordsworth's peasantry of the lakes—'a perfect republic of shepherds and agriculturists, proprietors for the most part of the lands which they occupied and cultivated. The plough of each man was confined to the maintenance of his own family, or to the occasional accommodation of his neighbour. Two or three cows furnished each family with milk and cheese. The chapel was the only edifice that presided over these dwellings, the supreme head of this pure commonwealth; the members of which existed in the midst of a powerful empire, like an ideal society or an organised community, whose constitution had been imposed and regulated by the mountains which protected it.'

Such states of society are pleasant objects of contemplation, and might economically be bought with millions if they were to be had in the market. But Wordsworth tells us not that these people were artificially transferred from less happy abodes, but that their comfort and content, like the misery of the Irish, had been the creation of centuries; and 'many of these humble sons of the hills had a consciousness that the land which they walked over and tilled had for more than five hundred years been possessed by their name and blood.'

Mr Thornton's plan is not entirely novel. A system not unlike it was proposed in the year 1800 for the English poor, and, singularly enough, by Mr Arthur Young, the great opponent of small farming. In his 'Question of Scarcity Plainly Stated, and Remedies Considered,' he proposed so to allot the common pastures as 'to secure to every country labourer in the kingdom, that has three children and upwards, half an acre of land for potatoes, and grass enough to feed one or two cows;' and he observes that 'if each had his ample potato ground and a cow, the price of wheat would be of little more consequence to them than it is to their brethren in Ireland.' Like Mr Thornton, Mr Young considered that the expense of such an arrangement must dwindle into insignificance in comparison with the general welfare of the people, and 'the magnitude of the object should make us disregard any difficulties but such as are insuperable.'

The dangers which England has incurred from plans for the relief of the poor, which only approached too near to this in character, have taught us how fortunate the country has been in

escaping the practical application of such a project. The most obvious means for the alleviation of the condition of the idle and miserable that naturally presents itself is, to make them a gift of some portion of those outward elements of comfort and happiness which the industrious create for themselves. But it is in the creation of these things, not in their enjoyment or consumption, that they bless the earth; and we cannot, unfortunately, at the expense of our millions, make a gift to men of the industry and self-restraint, the energy and forethought, which create those models of peasant proprietors and small farmers to which it would be so desirable, were it practicable, to assimilate the Irish cottar.

CHAPTER XII.

POPULATION.

Productiveness and Population—Theory of Malthus—Defect in not making Allowance for Extended Industrial Productiveness—No Reason to presume that the Earth will be Over-Peopled by a Productive Race—Joint Increase of Capital and Population—Danger of the Principle that Human Calamities can be of Advantage to the Human Race—Evidence that Premature Deaths Increase rather than Diminish Population in Proportion to Subsistence—Pressure on all Society of the Miseries Occasioned by Disease and Early Death—A Population Reckless of Life always Surplus—Preservation of Life from Immediate Peril Anterior to the Solution of Economical Problems.

We commenced our inquiry with an examination of industry and production, in which a belief was expressed that there is no just foundation for the fear of the industrial progress of a people carrying them forward through the increase of population which an enlargement of productive energy naturally excites, to a state of circumstances in which a high degree of industry will yet be insufficient to supply the necessaries of life to the working-people. We have considered many of the social questions which more or less affect the industry and productiveness of a people, keeping in view not so much those conditions which tend to increase or decrease the numbers of the people themselves, as those which affect the elements of wealth and enjoyment at their disposal. As everything that affects the numbers among whom the riches of the people, existing or prospective, are dispersed, must, however, materially affect their condition as enjoyers of what they possess, the right time seems now to have come for some remarks on the principles of population, as later facts and inquiries have tended to develop them.

To laws of population of so simple a kind as the frequently-repeated principle, that a people must be limited in their number by the food to be consumed, there can be no possible objection. Some people will live on less than others, but it is impossible indefinitely to extend the number who can be supported on any given amount of nutriment. Those who have made the strongest applications of this principle to the actual progress of the human race have, however, attached to it a conditional supposition, the probability or improbability of which must have a material practical influence on the opinions we are entitled to form. Malthus, when he speaks of the supply of food, has in view entirely the produce of the country in which the people to whom he is applying

his principles live. He looks to the agricultural producers as the main object of consideration in questions as to population being in deficiency or dangerous excess; and the most consoling reflections he indulges in promise to be realities only 'while the springs of industry continue in vigour, and a sufficient part of that industry is directed to agriculture.'*

From the same fountain of opinions he naturally derived the view that the field of labour is limited; that there are in any country only a certain number of places to be filled in the employment market; and that to allow a greater number of men to come into existence, is something like rearing more draught cattle than your farm will employ and feed. He looks upon it as one of the arguments that may be used against his preventive check, that it may understock the market of labour; and he says, 'This must undoubtedly take place to a certain degree, but by no means to such a degree as to affect the wealth and prosperity of the country. The way in which we are going on at present, and the enormous increase in the price of provisions which seems to threaten us, will tend much more effectually to enable foreigners to undersell us in the markets of Europe, than the plan now proposed. If the population of this country were better proportioned to its food, the nominal price of labour might be lower than it is now, and yet be sufficient to maintain a wife and six children. But putting this subject of a market understocked with labour in the most unfavourable point of view, if the rich will not submit to a slight inconvenience, necessarily attendant on the attainment of what they profess to desire, they cannot really be in earnest in their professions. Their benevolence to the poor must be either childish play or hypocrisy; it must be either to amuse themselves, or to pacify the minds of the common people with a mere show of attention to their wants. To wish to better the condition of the poor, by enabling them to command a greater quantity of the necessaries and comforts of life, and then to complain of high wages, is the act of a silly boy, who gives away his cake, and then cries for it. A market overstocked with labour, and an ample remuneration to each labourer, are objects perfectly incompatible with each other. In the annals of the world they never existed together, and to couple them even in imagination betrays a gross ignorance of the principles of political economy.'—(II. 273.)

This would be very sound if the universal labour market of the world, where production stimulates production, and the opposite ends of the earth exchange their created riches with each other, were like an agricultural parish, where there is but one sort of labour, and ten men more or less make the difference between

* Essay on the Principle of Population, II. 274.

surplus and deficiency. We have here the old idea that wages and labour are a question between the rich and the poor: that the former may want so many labourers as they may want so many horses; and that when they are numerous, they will be cheap, and when they are few, they will be dear. Malthus benevolently wished them to be few that they might be dear, refusing to tolerate it as a just argument against his view that the commodity was thus made more costly to those who purchased it.

Though we should therefore start with the same principles as to the effective means of aiding or neutralising the natural increase of population, there must necessarily be, in our practical application of the principles, all the difference between the unlimited and the limited. When we speculate on labour and labourers, we speak of them as having a field before them to which we behold no limits, as we have been able to find no bounds to the productiveness of the human race. Instead of looking to the narrow bounds of our own island as affording the only means of feeding the people who live upon its surface, we keep in view the illimitable capacities of the people on the one hand, and the capacity, unlimited for all practical purposes of present consideration, of the globe on the other; to the workman with inexhaustible capacities, to the field with inexhaustible elements of production. It is evident that even the same principles of population must assume a very different practical aspect in connection with ulterior views of so different a character.

The primary positions of Malthus about an indefinite increase of mankind, or at least an increase beyond any that is known to have actually occurred, were it not for checks preventive and destructive, have an appearance of simplicity; but we have probably some secrets yet to learn as to the effect of advancing civilisation on the human species. We are told that if the world were left entirely free, with an unlimited sufficiency of food to any species of animal—to rabbits or hares, for instance—their numbers would increase with almost incalculable rapidity, and they would infest the whole globe. But it is difficult to believe that the fear of starvation, or of the possessions of the earth being multiplied among too great a number, is the practical restraint against civilised man increasing in numbers until he comes to the limits of subsistence, and is stopped by famine; and it may safely be believed that ethics and physiology have new instruction yet to communicate to the world on this subject.

But if we adopt the simple principle of the preventive check, and hold that the fear of want or of losing caste in society is the safe restraining motive from too early and too numerous marriages, our application of the principle would be in a more cheerful and less desponding spirit than that of the philosopher who believes that there is room in the world but for so many human

beings, and who calls upon his pupils to wait for vacancies before they introduce more. Instead of recommending celibacy, because none should marry who have not a fair prospect of being able to provide for a family—looking at the influence of industrial energy as unlimited, we would, on the other hand, make it our precept to man to look forward to marriage and the rearing of a family as the main temporal object of his journey through life; and to that end to produce and save, that he may fulfil the natural end of his being, in proper duty to those whom he may bring into the world, and in justice to the rest of his fellow-beings. To hold the principle that men should marry and increase their race before they have laid a satisfactory foundation for the support and sound education of a family, is just as irrational and demoralising as to maintain that justice, honesty, temperance, or any of the most urgent duties of life, may be dispensed with.

But it humbly appears to us that the monitor who approaches this subject from our point of view, and maintains that marriage is a prospect to which all may look forward who choose to perform the proper social conditions for its honest fulfilment, is able to give precepts which have more hope and substantial attractiveness than he whose views of the limits of industrial production, and consequently of the numbers of the human race, compel him to say, let only a few marry; for the resources of the human race are limited, and only the children of a few can be subsisted.

The precept to increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth, was intended to teach us to fill the vacant places in the world, and the vacant places in industry and utility, with useful human beings. To plead that it would justify the propagation of a race of starving wretches, whose numbers are liable to be curtailed by the horrible exigency of famine, is to place the precept in antagonism with the whole spirit of the Holy Book, and its inculcation of the duties of man to the rest of his species. The replenishment may be well interpreted along with another, and a narrower precept, which says, 'Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not—lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.'

It will be observed that, as a precept of practical application to human nature, the doctrine of the preventive check can have little efficacy. To tell the prudent, enterprising man that he ought not to marry until he can provide for a wife and children, is telling him precisely the principle by which his conduct is generally regulated. It is a doctrine which has implanted itself in his mind from all he has seen and learned, and which nothing but the most powerful temptation can prompt him to violate. But the application of the precept to *him* conveys hope. He is the very man likely to make himself one of the select few who may

safely follow the natural aim of their existence. On the other hand, go with the precept to the reckless, idle, improvident man —you do not offer it accompanied by hope—you tell him that in the narrow class who may enjoy the blessings of matrimony there is for him no room—indolent and unproductive as he is, celibacy for life is his duty and his doom. The precept of total abstinence is thus imposed on the member of society least able to comply with it. Idle and thoughtless as he is, the precept would come to him with more hope if it did not say that the number is limited, but proclaimed that a certain amount of dutiful exertion is necessary to qualify men for admission into the privileged estate, and that all who chose to perform this condition were so admissible.

The farther down we go in the scale of possession, the more hopeless do lessons of celibacy become. The man who has nothing of his own in this world to divide, is the person who, with the most utter recklessness, is prepared to admit another to participate with him in living on the means of his neighbours. 'Men,' says Mr Thornton, 'do not generally marry when, as a natural consequence, they must permanently sacrifice their position in society, and adopt a mode of life greatly inferior to that to which they have been accustomed. An Irish beggar, who, being already at the bottom of the social scale, cannot sink lower, and whose means of livelihood cannot well become more defective or precarious, runs no risk of this kind, and need not hesitate to take a wife from among the companions of his wretchedness, as soon as he is rich enough to pay the wedding fees, and to buy potatoes and whisky for the wedding feast.'* On this ground it has often been maintained that a competent poor-law ought to protect the population from ever becoming so thoroughly destitute as to be quite reckless of their numbers.

But if, on the one hand, the sound practical principle is not to be taken from the reckless poor, neither is it to be taken from the idle affluent. It is doubtless in the highest ranks that social checks on population are strongest, from the danger which the individual feels of becoming the head of a family that has sunk from its sphere. 'These dissuasives are so powerful among the higher classes, that, as has been well remarked, if the world were inhabited only by people of property, it would probably soon be depopulated by natural failure of the species.'†

But this is a restraint from which the world gains or loses little. It is not to prevent an offspring from coming into the world, who may be unable to produce a sufficient livelihood, that the check is exercised; but to prevent their children from degenerating from the unproductive rank in which they are born, and becoming

*Plea for Peasant Proprietors, p. 55. †Thornton on Over-Population, p. 119.

producers. The wealth to be enjoyed in idle rank is always limited—at all events, it is not increased by increasing the population who are to enjoy it; but a productive population are ever increasing the means of satisfying their enlarged numbers. As Cobbett observed, each mouth is born into the world with two hands. The restrictive rule of the nonproductive class is thus no precedent for the productive. A duke who has ten younger children, is the parent of so many people who are but half as rich as they would have been had the number been five; but the mechanic who is the parent of a like number of skilled workmen, whom he has been rich enough to educate and train, and whom he has lived to see grown to manhood, and making their own bread, has, by leaving offspring behind him, increased the enjoyable fund of the world's goods more than he has increased its consumers, instead of sending consumers to compete with each other and the rest of mankind for a share of what previously existed.

We have therefore no reason to presume that the earth will ever be over-peopled by human beings fulfilling the condition of industrial productiveness applicable to the wants of progress.

Both the theory of the inexhaustibility of industrial productiveness, and the facts which we see around us, prove that where the men of an existing generation have saved enough from past labour to start their offspring as skilled producers, and that offspring continues skilful, industrious, self-denying, and prudent, there is no over-population; and thus we find that there are conditions within the power of human fulfilment which may exempt us from professing to falsify the divine poet's exclamation, recalled by the Church of England to its people on occasions of solemn thanksgiving, 'Lo! children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh from the Lord.' We freely admit that our doctrine extends no new prospects to the handloom weaver, to the agricultural labourer at 7s. a week, and to the various other workers, whose simple, easy, and uniform occupations keep their emoluments near the starvation level, at least while they form a numerous body: if a large number of them were drafted into more skilled occupations, those who remain would be in better circumstances. The counsel of Malthusianism to this class is—as you belong to a poorly-paid class, do not marry. The practical embodiment of our principle, on the other hand, would be, that they should work harder and more skilfully, raise their class, and then fulfil the destiny of their nature. We need not say how utterly the Malthusian advice is practically disregarded by the unskilled classes of labourers, and how little influence it is ever calculated to have on the whole body who most need its corrective influence; since the powerlessness of their self-restraint to make them labour and save, is the very evil against

which they are told to find a remedy in another species of self-restraint. It will readily be said that the spirit of our own counsel, embodying as it does increased labour and continued self-restraint, has no greater chance of adoption. But it is not by the advice of one, or of a hundred, that we expect the vast dead mass of human inertness to be raised. We give voice rather to anticipations than to precepts. The removal of despondency, and the awakening of hope in those who augur ill of the future fate of mankind, is our main immediate object. For the increase of well-directed productive energy, which we demand, as a condition of satisfactory progress, we must look for an increase in knowledge and intelligence. Our field for the exertion of these faculties consists in the illimitable desires and wants which men still have to be supplied. Whatever views it may be necessary to hold centuries hence, we in the meantime repudiate, as tending to despondency, and to the paralysing of the future energies of mankind, the idea that there can be too much intelligence, too much skill, too much well-directed industry, and too many of the fruits of labour in the world. On the contrary, when intelligence, skill, and industry are largely increased, and when the world is fuller of industrial riches, we may then look around on a population that has increased with like celerity, and yet does not require to be characterised by the deadly and despairing epithet of 'surplus.'

It is another way of stating the same principle to say that population cannot increase too fast if capital increase at a greater ratio: in other words, there cannot be too large a population in comfortable circumstances. By capital we do not mean to express a preference for large fortunes, in the hands of individuals, and employed in manufacturing industry—though these have their proper influence and their proper services—but generally diffused wealth, from the possessions of the man of fortune down to those of the well-housed, well-clothed, and well-fed, because skilful and industrious, mechanic. We have spoken of capital as being whatever is saved from past labour to contribute to future. In this sense, whatever has been done by himself and his forefathers to facilitate his acquisition of a future livelihood, is the labourer's capital, aiding him far more materially in his productiveness than the large capital of his employer; and it is chiefly to this description of capital, as the more effective, that we refer when we say that population cannot increase too fast if capital increase at a greater ratio—if workers are saving from labour past to facilitate the future labours of themselves and their offspring, whether it be by imparting to them training and education, or in any of the other shapes in which people who are in good circumstances can help their children forward in the world.

In a country like our own, exhibiting the extremes of industry and idleness, we need not wander far in search of illustrations of

our principle. Ebenezer Elliot, when he draws the pleasing picture we have already quoted of the 'proud mechanic,' 'rich as a king, and less a slave,' tells us that it is a fair picture of the working-people of Sheffield, among whom, according to another authority, 'it is the custom of each family among the labouring population to occupy a separate dwelling, the rooms of which are furnished in a very comfortable manner; the floors are carpeted, and the tables are usually of mahogany; chests of drawers of the same material are commonly seen, and so in most cases is a clock also—the possession of which article of furniture has often been pointed out as the certain indication of prosperity and of personal respectability on the part of the working-man.'* 'It would be difficult,' continues Mr Porter, 'to account for this favourable peculiarity in the town of Sheffield, which in this respect offers a strong contrast to other manufacturing towns in the same county; but it is greatly to be desired that this peculiarity should be made to cease, through the growing desire of other communities to surround themselves with the like comfortable emblems of respectability.' We do not think there can be any difficulty in accounting for the favourable peculiarity. Sheffield is a town eminently of skilled labourers—where the workman is not a mere machine, pursuing some rotatory motion, but where, in the production of a countless variety of the most valued objects of commerce, ever varying and ever improving, he tasks the energies both of the head and of the hand.

Now let us see the decennial progress of the population of Sheffield. In 1801, the numbers were 45,755; in 1811, they were 53,231; in 1821, they were 65,275; in 1831, they were 91,692; and in 1841, they were 111,091. It is fair to presume that with the intervening increase, the population within the narrow compass of this town has trebled in half a century. This is not a surplus population; but we shall take another part of the country, where, over a district on which you may travel for hundreds of miles, the population is not above 300,000; where it has rather decreased than increased during the past half century; yet where it is surplus, because it is idle and unproductive—we mean the West Highlands, or the 'Relief Districts,' as they are now generally termed in the productive world.† The growth of every great

* Porter's Progress of the Nation, p. 533.

† The following picture of a Highland cottage may contrast with the vulgar comfort of Sheffield:—

'This day I have seen far more than realised all that reading or hearing had led me to conceive of the deep wretchedness and the extraordinary filthiness of Skye, and more than ever I had been led to conceive of any wretchedness or filthiness existing amongst any tribe of human beings. In company with Mr Lachland Macdonald, who is catechist in Duirinish, and well acquainted with the abodes of destitution, I visited a number of huts spread over the hills at a place called Roag (you will see the name in Black's excellent travelling map). There are plenty of these huts—by far too many—and plenty of human beings

town is a living illustration of the doctrine of increase without surplusage. Thus London, where two millions of people are crowded into a space not seven miles square, is less over-peopled than these western Highland districts, where 300,000 people are dispersed over an area a hundred and fifty times as large, and where the individuals have so much room upon the face of the earth, were space all that man required, that you may travel the whole length of London between house and house.

We must not be understood to convey, in what has gone before, any reproach on virtuous celibacy; and as to that rational postponement of marriage which Malthus recommends, until the parties see before them the prospect of a decent subsistence to themselves and their children—it is but the fulfilment of that condition which we have stated as indispensable to bring the union within the prospects in which a rational member of society may justly indulge. In the practical application of this rule to the working-classes, we must, however, remember that it is not economical for society to have many young orphans to provide for, and that the age when children come most suitably to those who have nothing more to give them but an industrial start in life, is the time when the parents are likely to live long enough to see them able to make their own bread.

Self-restraint, though it should assume the form of indefinite

inside of them. In all of them which I entered, the front division—that which has most benefit from the air—is occupied by the cow, and the apartment into which the mother and her family of five or six are huddled, is not an adjunct to the cow's byre by a side division, as I had seen before, but is back from it. The dung of these byres had been recently taken out. The process of removal, in some cases, was not by the use of spade or shovel, but of bowls and plates. But no farther than the outside of the door is the filth removed, and there it is spread about, as if it were the intention of the people that, except through filth, no access from without should be open, either for themselves or others, to their unhappy dwellings. I happened to arrive after a general emptying; but when the byre is at its fullest, with such a redoubt of filth in front, the little hole in which the human inhabitants are confined will, I should think, fairly bid defiance to Saxon invasion.

'It must not be thought that I have judged of Roag by a solitary case, or an insufficient number of instances; the case is universal. I visited nine or ten cottages, and all of them were in this condition. No breath of air can ever enter the place in which the mother and five, six, or seven young children are immured, until it has first passed through the cow's apartment, which, being nearest to the door, is the roomier, the lighter, and the airier of the two into which these wretched huts are divided. All this is at this moment to be seen by any one who will take the trouble to see it, within between four and five miles of the princely castle of Dunvegan. It is impossible to see it without being filled with melancholy; but it is also impossible to see it, and to know that within the memory of man it has always been the same, and neither better nor worse—for if it had ever been known to be either better or worse, there would be more hope of its removal—it is impossible to see and know this without being convinced that public subscriptions of the most unbounded liberality will never cure the wretchedness of this country, because that wretchedness is the fruit of no temporary calamity, but of the degradation, the deep ignorance, and the real barbarism of the people.'—*Letters on the Present Condition of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, reprinted from the Scotsman newspaper*, 1847, pp. 43, 44.

celibacy, is as different from illicit intercourse as virtue is from vice. But it is worthy of note that the profligacy, which the enemies of the Malthusian doctrines predict as likely to arise from prejudices against an indefinite increase of population, can never have economy to recommend it. Wherever we find promiscuous intercourse, we find the rich incurring ruinous expenses, and the poor in all the abject misery of vice and thoughtlessness. A preference for a vicious life can never hold a place as a doctrine and belief involving a principle of economy; and it can only find its impulse in the depraved propensities, not in the serious convictions of mankind. It is at the domestic hearth, not in the brothel, that we are to look for the prosperity of this world, as well as for the virtues that are to be elsewhere judged of. The same view may be taken of projects for limiting the population, fortunately but obscurely hinted at in our language, but unblushingly avowed in that of our French neighbours. Simply to examine them is contamination; and even if it could be shown that they would be effective in preventing a per centage of a destitute population that otherwise would be born, from coming into existence, it may fairly be said that the open discussion of the means would do more mischief to society than the limitation of the population would obviate.

While continued self-restraint is so infinitely better than resignation to vicious propensities, that the two do not come within the proper bounds of comparison, it is also greatly more commendable than the married life of persons who fail to perform the proper condition to their offspring and the world which that state demands. But the anchorite is not the same active benefactor of society with him who, having resolved, if it be practicable, to fulfil a main end of his being, sets himself resolutely to accomplish the preparatory condition, and does accomplish it. He who, himself producing more than he consumes, educates and starts forward in life a progeny who also continue to produce more than they consume, fulfils the true temporal end of his being, and has left the best testimony of his services to mankind.

The doctrines of Mr Malthus were received with an unpopularity which their main precept, at all events, did not deserve.* We seldom find that any doctrine, appearing to be conscientiously suggested and earnestly supported, encounters a continued and extensive train of popular opprobrium, unless it embraces, either in its essential or its collateral principles, some great fallacy. The dangerous practical effects of the fallacy are noticed

* 'These checks, however multiplied in the detail, are resolved into three distinct heads—vice, misery, and moral restraint. Far more insatiable and loathsome than the triple-mouthed dog at the gate of hell, this Cerberus stands at the portal of existence. . . . It (moral restraint) contradicts nature, reason, Scripture, and common sense, in order to build up a theory contrary to them all.'—*The Law of Population, by Michael Thomas Sadler*, i. 148, 318.

by the world, but its own peculiar character lies undeveloped or undetected; and the rage of the public is often directed against the sounder theory with which it is associated. We shall find that a very dangerous practical fallacy pervaded the views of Mr Malthus, from his failing to keep in view the illimitable productive energy of the human race—its unbounded capacity for making provision for increased numbers. Among his checks to population, he enumerates tyranny, war, plague, pestilence, and famine—all the grand calamities of our fallen race; and speaking of these as necessary agents for keeping the population down to the amount of sustenance at their disposal, he has given room for the doctrine, contradicted by everything else that we behold in the scheme of the universe—that human calamities may be profitable to the human race at large. It has hence been argued that his doctrines are a justification of recklessness, if not of absolute cruelty, and that they contain no motives to the respectable and well-provided-for portion of mankind, to make sacrifices for their suffering brethren, or indeed to alleviate their misfortunes; but rather justify the view that all calamities which decrease the number of human beings likely to participate in the limited produce of the world, are an advantage to those who remain, just as the death of so many of the crew of a vessel on short allowance is an advantage to the survivors.

Hence we frequently find a sort of philosophical fatalism, more cruel than the fatalism of barbarians, which, while it professes to support medical science, and the hospitals and dispensaries which supply the poor with its beneficent operations, yet holds that calamities productive of the death of the poor are no substantial loss to the community; and that, on the whole, while they have done their duty in trying to obviate the misfortune as it might have affected individuals, it has been rather a benefit than a loss to the world.

Malthus himself, with his truly benevolent mind, and his desire to do effective service to the human race, shows traces in his book of having keenly felt the social responsibility attending on promulgation of the doctrines from which such conclusions might be drawn. In the following remarkable passage, he anticipates the arguments that might possibly be used against him, founded on an exaggeration of his system; and describes the adversary as maintaining that it would justify men in encouraging, rather than in obviating, the calamities which tend to shorten human life. Yet he has but a poor defence to offer against the person who should so represent the tendency of his opinions. He can only hold that if we were to encourage one cause of the destruction of human life, we should merely leave another unoccupied—that if we were to set up a new executioner, we would only transfer to him the business of another. Though he does not furnish us

with arguments for the encouragement of causes destructive to human life, he leaves us sadly bare of arguments in favour of those measures which tend to obviate the calamities to which our race is liable. He says—

'It is an evident truth that whatever may be the rate of increase in the means of subsistence, the increase of population must be limited by it, at least after the food has once been divided into the smallest shares that will support life. All the children born beyond what would be required to keep up the population to this level must necessarily perish, unless room be made for them by the deaths of grown persons. It has appeared indeed clearly in the course of this work that in all old states the marriages and births depend principally upon the deaths, and that there is no encouragement to early unions so powerful as a great mortality. To act consistently, therefore, we should facilitate, instead of foolishly and vainly endeavouring to impede, the operations of nature in producing this mortality; and if we dread the too frequent visitation of the horrid form of famine, we should sedulously encourage the other forms of destruction which we compel nature to use. Instead of recommending cleanliness to the poor, we should encourage contrary habits. In our towns, we should make the streets narrower, crowd more people into the houses, and court the return of the plague. In the country, we should build our villages near stagnant pools, and particularly encourage settlements in all marshy and unwholesome situations. But above all, we should reprobate specific remedies for ravaging diseases, and those benevolent, but much mistaken men, who have thought they were doing a service to mankind by projecting schemes for the total extirpation of particular disorders. If by these and similar means the annual mortality were increased from 1 in 36 or 40, to 1 in 18 or 20, we might probably every one of us marry at the age of puberty, and yet few be absolutely starved.

'If, however, we all marry at this age, and yet still continue our exertions to impede the operations of nature, we may rest assured that all our efforts will be vain. Nature will not, nor cannot, be defeated in her purposes. The necessary mortality must come in some form or other; and the extirpation of one disease will only be the signal for the birth of another perhaps more fatal. We cannot lower the waters of misery by pressing them down in different places, which must necessarily make them rise somewhere else: the only way in which we can hope to effect our purpose is by drawing them off. To this course nature is constantly directing our attention by the chastisements which await a contrary conduct. These chastisements are more or less severe, in proportion to the degree in which her admonitions produce their intended effect. In this country at present these

admonitions are by no means entirely neglected. The preventive check to population prevails to a considerable degree, and her chastisements are in consequence moderate; but if we were all to marry at the age of puberty, they would be severe indeed. Political evils would probably be added to physical. A people goaded by constant distress, and visited by frequent returns of famine, could not be kept down by a cruel despotism. We should approach to the state of the people in Egypt or Abyssinia; and I would ask whether in that case it is probable that we should be more virtuous?

'Physicians have long remarked the great changes which take place in diseases; and that while some appear to yield to the efforts of human care and skill, others seem to become in proportion more malignant and fatal. Dr William Heberden published not long since some valuable observations on this subject deduced from the London bills of mortality. In his preface, speaking of these bills, he says—"The gradual changes they exhibit in particular diseases correspond to the alterations which in time are known to take place in the channels through which the great stream of mortality is constantly flowing." In the body of his work afterwards, speaking of some particular diseases, he observes with that candour which always distinguishes true science—"It is not easy to give a satisfactory reason for all the changes which may be observed to take place in the history of diseases. Nor is it any disgrace to physicians if their causes are often so gradual in their operation, or so subtile, as to elude investigation."

'I hope I shall not be accused of presumption in venturing to suggest that, under certain circumstances, such changes must take place, and perhaps without any alteration in those proximate causes which are usually looked to on these occasions. If this should appear to be true, it will not seem extraordinary that the most skilful and scientific physicians, whose business it is principally to investigate proximate causes, should sometimes search for these causes in vain.

'In a country which keeps its population at a certain standard, if the average number of marriages and births be given, it is evident that the average number of deaths will also be given; and, to use Dr Heberden's metaphor, the channels through which the great stream of mortality is constantly flowing will always convey off a given quantity. Now if we stop up any of these channels, it is most perfectly clear that the stream of mortality must run with greater force through some of the other channels—that is, if we eradicate some diseases, others will become proportionally more fatal. In this case the only distinguishable cause is the damming up a necessary outlet of mortality. Nature, in the attainment of her great purposes, seems always to seize

upon the weakest part. If this part be made strong by human skill, she seizes upon the next weakest part, and so on in succession; not, like a capricious deity, with an intention to sport with our sufferings, and constantly to defeat our labours, but like a kind, though sometimes severe instructor, with the intention of teaching us to make all parts strong, and to chase vice and misery from the earth.'*

Notwithstanding the concluding remark, which refers to the preventive check, it is impossible to avoid seeing that Malthus is here painfully struggling with the inference that diseases and other calamities should take their course, and are not to be effectively struggled with. We declare war not only against some of the dangerous applications which have been made of the opinions promulgated by Malthus, but also against the principle itself, which represents calamities and violent deaths as a means of reducing the population; and we maintain in opposition to this principle another, which may at first sight have the air of a paradox—that *whatever tends to shorten life, tends to increase the population of a country in comparison with its means of subsistence.*

The amount of taxation produced by a stringent poor-law is the clearest practical test of the calamities which affect not only the poor, who are of the class relieved, but the rich, who are of the class of relievers. If we find that any operative cause tends to increase the taxation for the relief of the poor, we may safely decide that it is not only a source of great misery to the poor themselves, but of sacrifices by the public at large; and if we can easily remove it, we may rest assured that while we mitigate great miseries in the one class of the community, we do no contemptible service to the other. The circumstances in which the necessity of sanitary reform was first brought under the notice of the government of this country are remarkable, and very instructive on this point. It was in the form of a representation by the Poor-Law Commissioners, that there existed many causes of disease and premature death, the removal of which would, at a comparatively small cost, greatly mitigate the amount annually imposed on the people of England in the shape of poor-rates.

We may exemplify this view by a very simple case:—A class of workmen, whose average age of marriage is twenty-five, and whose average age of death is forty-five, lapse into vices or other conditions injurious to health, which reduce their average vitality from forty-five to thirty-five; they then leave behind them widows, and children unable to make their bread; whereas if no noxious agencies had intervened to prevent them from living to the average age, their wives, whose ages are of the same average, would not generally be their survivors, and in that capacity bur-

* Principle of Population, II. 282-287.

densome on the community; and their children would be productive labourers, instead of being destitute orphans, looking to the pauper fund, or to the other charitable institutions of the country, for relief. If we suppose that in the case of orphans left unprovided for, the other classes of society resist the infliction of a tax in the shape of a poor-law, they will have to pay it in some other shape. The children become thieves and swindlers; and besides the contributions which they personally levy on society, require expenditure for the support of magistrates, policemen, prisons, and penal colonies. At the same time, wherever there is death, there will have been sickness, inability to work, and dependence on others. Thus it would be no solution of the difficulty if we protected the life of the productive father of a family, and left all others to their fate—finding, as they dropped off from society like rotten fruit, that they were idle, worthless, profligate, nuisances to society, and 'the world is well rid of them.' *The same causes which have produced disease and premature death have first made them burdens on society;* and its real relief would be in converting them into healthy, moral, self-supporting members.

It was on account of burdens thus arising that in 1838 the Poor-Law Commissioners reported on the advantage of sanitary regulations, as a means of reducing the pressure on the parochial funds, saying—'In general, all epidemics, and all infectious diseases, are attended with charges immediate and ultimate on the poor-rates. Labourers are suddenly thrown by infectious disease into a state of destitution, for which immediate relief must be given. In the case of death, the widow and the children are thrown as paupers on the parish. The amount of burdens thus produced is frequently so great as to render it good economy on the part of the administrators of the poor-laws to incur the charges for preventing the evils, where they are ascribable to physical causes, which there are no other means of removing.'*

But the principle goes much farther than any poor-law taxation can develop it. There is a natural duration for the life of man, at the termination of which the human machine, however carefully preserved, becomes exhausted, and falls into decay. It is the main object of all the adjuncts of civilisation to let the human being possess the full lease of vitality which the Deity has allotted to him. The most marked development of a high and general civilisation is the increase of average vitality, marking the successive triumphs made by science and virtue over the causes of premature destruction and decay, which are ever at work with man. If we may be permitted to point at an ideal perfection, which may be always more or less nearly approached by the united exertions of mankind, but is perhaps never destined to be reached, it would be

* Fourth Report of Poor-Law Commissioners, p. 94.

where every human being born into the world dies of old age. In any society where we find that the people are very distant from this ideal perfection, we may judge that their progress in civilisation has been proportionally small.

Wherever there is destruction of life, recklessness of deleterious agencies, or stolid indifference to death—there we shall certainly find vice, ignorance, indolence, and a surplus population pressing upon the means of subsistence. Wherever the population is kept down by famine, this is of course but another method of describing it as excessive. But where other causes of death and sickness are allowed to become prevalent, we may be assured that the people so improvident of the valuable property of life, are not performing that condition of making provision for themselves and their offspring, which we have mentioned as the proper concomitant of an increasing population. Causes of premature mortality always tell most conspicuously on the feeblest members of the human family—the young. To protect them against the many enemies of their existence with which the world teems, is the object of the deepest and most steady attention of affectionate parents. It would seem, indeed, as if the frailty and susceptibility of their natures were wisely designed for the purpose of stretching to their highest and noblest limits the self-restraint, the labour, and the pious care of mankind. But if we find that the strong appeals of affection are disregarded, and an extensive infant mortality fatally marks a general neglect of offspring, how shall we expect to find that the parents have performed the proper antecedent condition of the married state, by making provision for the welfare of their offspring? Malthus himself was much perplexed by the eloquent fact, that in China, and other places where infanticide was an admitted practice, there was still a great surplus population. Did he expect to find a consideration for the future wants of survivors among a people so deaf to the domestic affections, that a slight balance of expediency was a sufficient motive to them to put their offspring to death? We even find that infant mortality is generally accompanied by a sort of abnormal fecundity. Mr Chadwick, whose merit it has been to develop more fully than any other investigator the circumstances which show how strongly the whole human race is knit together by bonds of common interest, tells us that in districts subject to great ravages, 'the fact is observable, that where the mortality is the highest, the number of births are more than sufficient to replace the deaths, however numerous they may be.' It was remarked by M. Mallet, in connection with the accurate vital statistics of Geneva, where a system of registration has now existed for three centuries, that in the periods when there was most infant mortality, there was at the same time the greatest fecundity. Mr Chadwick finds in England, 'That in the lowest districts of Man-

chester, of 1000 children born, more than 570 will have died before they attain the fifth year of their age. In the lowest district of Leeds, the infant mortality is similar. This proportion of mortality M. Mallet designates as the case of a population but little advanced in civilisation, ravaged by epidemics—a population in which the "influences on the lower ages are murderous, but where the great mortality in infancy is compensated by a high degree of fecundity. It is the case of the population in many large towns, especially in past ages." But while in Manchester, where 1-28th of the whole population is annually swept away, the births registered amount to 1 in 26 of the population; in the county of Rutland, where the proportion of deaths is 1 in 52 of the population, the proportion of births, as shown by an average of three years, is only 1 to 33 of the population.'* A medical practitioner, who observed the condition of the poorest districts in Limerick, where of every hundred children born fifty-five died in infancy, noticed thus the specific operation of this phenomenon:—'I find that as the poor nurse their own children, there is in general an interval of about two years between the birth of one child and that of the next; but if the child dies early on the breast, this interval will be much shorter; and if this occurs often, there will be a certain number born, as it were, *for the purpose of dying:* and these being soon replaced, the same number may still be preserved, as if there had been few or no deaths, or only the ordinary number.'†

The preservation of life is the first object of our legal institutions. Remote causes of mortality, such as idleness or vice, must be considered as more or less controllable by the individuals of the population, and in reference to them, the main protection of life is found in the general instinct of self-preservation. But where there are distinct and immediate operative causes of death in existence, it is the duty of a government, as promptly as it can, to remove them, and to make all economical theories secondary and subsidiary to this first and main end. So we find that in the Irish famine of 1846, where the people were in actual starvation, and where the primary question was, whether about two millions of people should be permitted to die of famine, that a poor-law theory might be enforced, the ulterior doctrines of political economy were at once abandoned, ten millions of national funds were raised to meet the immediate exigency, and the lives of the great bulk of the people were saved. Had Ireland been a self-sustaining government, depending on its own resources, or had it been a member of some less wealthy community than the United Kingdom, the people must have perished, and lain in thousands unburied, as they do in the East at this day when any fatal famine prevails, and as they did in Europe of old when a like

* Sanitary Report, p. 179.
† Dr Griffen's Statement, Sanitary Report, p. 175.

calamity devastated a country. The British government did not entirely succeed in saving the lives of the Irish people in the famine of 1846; but in meeting as it did so huge and appalling a calamity, it showed the wonderful resources of a high industrial civilisation for combating with the calamities to which the human race is amenable. It would be a dreary task to enumerate those deadly famines of 'the good old times,' when people committed cannibalism even in 'merry England.' Our population was then small in comparison to its present extent; and if we might argue from the past of the future, there is no reason why it may not greatly increase, and yet the ravages of famine be ever, as it enlarges, a more distant contingency.

We have not thought it necessary to speculate on the ulterior results of an indefinite increase of population, or to ask what sort of a dwelling-place this earth may be to those who belong to it five centuries hence, when new sources of productiveness have been opened up, and new hundreds of millions may have been added to the population of the globe. Should we be assured that this will actually be the tenor of our race's future history, we may leave the new social questions that then arise to be looked at with the aid of the new lights they may bring with them. In our own day, there is no chance of material changes occurring with which our tastes and habits may not accommodate themselves. The people who observe the aggressive power of steam—the bustle of rising manufactures—the dispersal of travellers from our busy marts through the waste places of the globe—are sometimes overcome with a dread that solitude and reflection are to become obsolete, and the world will be one English manufacturing district, with its railways and tall chimneys. We have already noticed some of those features in which we find industrial progress more than correcting the injuries it thus produces, and providing the thinking and studious among men with new materials for reflective study.* He who admits occasional solitude to be a humaniser of mankind, should not regret that the steam-ship and the railway have laid it open to a larger number of his busy fellow-mortals. The world is not yet overcrowded; there is room for many more wanderers among the mountain solitudes, even of the centre of Europe, which the citizen of London can reach in two days.

There are some of the main materials of civilised life which we cannot well believe to be procurable, if we do not at the same time presume that there exist great solitary stretches of country in a state of nature, or in a state which the admirer of picturesque scenery will not easily distinguish from a state of nature. So long as we have timber, bark, cork, and all the various resinous substances, there must be corresponding forest districts. Furs, show-

* See above, p. 156.

ing no indication of becoming extinct as civilisation advances, predicate the existence of vast wildernesses, where man only enters to hunt or entrap the least domesticable of animals. There are many districts of country which, having been peopled by a pauperised and miserable race, whose presence was distressing to the wanderer, have been converted into solitudes by improvements, involving their adaptation to their best use—sheep-farming. It is worth while observing, as a contrast to some of these effects of utilitarian productiveness, that where there has been an occasional lapse into the pursuits of savage life in the midst of civilisation—where deer-forests have been established, and artificial solitudes have been created, in order that a few individuals may enjoy the amusement of acting the part of the original hunter tribes of the human race—there attempts have been made to shut out the civilised citizen from the enjoyment of solitude and natural scenery. Thus while the vulgar sheep-farmer, following, or at least said to follow, no higher motive than the wish to make money, and the ambition of improving stock, gives facilities for the artist, the botanist, the geologist, and the lover of 'pastoral melancholy' following their favourite pursuits, the professed restorer of the old gallant sports of the feudal aristocracy of former ages, labours diligently to exclude them from the mountain solitudes, and to keep them in the city streets and the dusty road.

CHAPTER XIII.

ARTIFICIAL SYSTEMS, SOCIALIST AND COMMUNAL.

A Contrast to the Positions Maintained in this Work—Freedom and Competition the Principles stated against them—Assistance to Nature in Preference to Attempts to Reconstruct Society—Though Suppressed, the Opinions not Extirpated—Advantage of Removing them by Argument and Demonstration—St Simon and the Older Developments—The Later and more Popular—The Experiments in Paris—Show that on the Removal of the Stimulus of Competition there is an Emulation towards Idleness—Thus without Competition there would be no Fund to Divide among the Working-Classes.

We approach the doctrines of the Socialists and the Communists in that spirit of pure hostility in which those who are free to declare their own opinions, and use their own arguments, discuss whatever they consider to be fraught with evil. If we permitted it to be supposed that after having made the inquiries, and adopted the views announced in the preceding chapters, we had then for the first time examined these systems, and scanned them with an impartial eye, we would be deceiving our readers. Having followed the inventions of these ingenious projectors from St Simon downwards, we have ever found, the more we examined their systems, the more reason to believe in their hollowness and fallacy; and as paradoxes teach men to reflect and examine, and argument and rhetoric, when employed in support of false propositions, tend to make the opposite truth only more clear and palpable, it may be admitted that the views contained in the preceding chapters were, if not suggested, certainly confirmed in the author's mind by the study of the various projects of the Socialists and Communists. Our reasons of diametrical opposition to this class of thinkers and projectors we embody in the following brief statements—setting forth our own views in a shape in which the reader will probably admit that they preserve a conformity with the opinions we have hitherto expressed:—

The *Communists* propose to organise society by artificial means: *we* propose to leave it to itself, only assisting nature.

They propose to regulate industry: *we* propose to leave it free, the law giving it no more aid than mere protection.

They propose that the produce of labour should be divided according to some arbitrary law of their own—in the most conspicuous of their systems, it is a law of equal partition: *we* propose that every man should enjoy according to what his industry produces to him.

They think they can take and divide the general fund produced by labour according to their own views of the best distribution of it: *we* believe that if such a fund is only to be permitted to come into existence subject to such a condition, it never will exist.

They believe that the fund producible by labour and enterprise is limited: *we* believe it to be as unlimited as the genius and energy of man on the one hand, and his wants and desires on the other.

They hold competition to be the cause of the calamities of the industrious orders, and desire to suppress it: *we* believe competition to be the soul of healthy industry; we maintain it to be the cause of the success of those members of the industrious classes who have been successful; we maintain that the want or deficiency of it is the cause of the poverty of those who are poor; and we hold that in its increase will be found the main instrument of the improvement of the condition of the humbler classes of society.

The doctrines of Communism in France have suffered an overwhelming confutation from the popular work of Thiers. It deserves to be remembered, however, that before the historian's work was published, these systems had been attacked in a powerful and argumentative pamphlet, full of thought and knowledge, by M. Leon Faucher; while it is worthy of notice that Faucher's essay, to which that of Thiers owes some obligations, appeared at the juncture of the apparent triumph of these strange opinions; at a time when no man could have said what M. Faucher did say without a strong and overpowering conviction that he was speaking the truth, and under circumstances indicative of dangers, to an extent which it would not be easy to estimate, incurred by the man who boldly condemned the idol of the day. Along with these pamphlets we have, by the favour of a friend who collected them in Paris, seen some others—the wild thoughts of the wild times which lasted from the flight of Louis-Philippe to the dictatorship of Cavaignac. Such times were perhaps not more favourable to the enunciation of sound political economy than molten lava might be for the cultivation of good grain. But these burning sparks are of the true metal of which the Social and Communist elements of the Revolution consisted; and cooled down as they now are, it may be hoped that they will be preserved, that the moral geologist of future ages may examine and analyse them.

It will perhaps be said that the cannon of Cavaignac have so effectively dispersed and crushed the authors of these doctrines, that to controvert the doctrines themselves is to attack an unoccupied post, which can only afford a nominal and barren victory; and that if there might have been apprehensions before the battle of Paris that it was possible for civilisation to be attacked

and overwhelmed by a horde of barbarians nourished in its own bosom, there are now no farther fears—the barbarians are dispersed, the enemy is crushed, men may again safely sow what they expect to reap, the future is safe, and none can see an enemy. Cannon, however, are not the best confuters of arguments, and wounds and mutilation often serve rather to embalm and preserve opinions than to extirpate them. We shall yet hear more of Communism and its fellow-creeds; and when we do so, it will be found that the pamphleteers have left behind them better preservatives against these dangerous influences than the soldier.

Although the French writers have so effectually confuted the principles of the Communists, meeting them and defeating them on their own ground, the subject is not without its interest and importance in this country. We require it to be viewed through our own particular national medium—to be measured by our own standard. Accordingly, we scarcely require, nor will our people generally patiently submit to read, an elaborate proof that property is a thing that ought to be tolerated; that people ought to be permitted to raise their position in the world by performing worthy and valuable services; that it is better to let parents bring up their children, than to commit them to a great national establishment, like a universal foundling-hospital; that they may be permitted to know their own children individually from the great herd of the children of the nation who are of the same age; and that so knowing their own children, they may be permitted to confer benefits upon them, and to make sacrifices for the purpose of improving their prospects in life.

It may seem unnecessary in this country to prove any of these things, which forms the main object of the eloquent pleading of Thiers. But there is a leaven of Communism among us, which ought to be suppressed by the proper engine for the extirpation of fallacies—reason. The persons among whom it lingers are generally people who, so far from sympathising with the wild projects of the French theorists, only require to know what these projects were, to make them abjure the few scattered sentiments of Communism which they entertain, and frankly own that they never would have harboured them had they known what these principles, when pushed to their conclusions, mean. In fact Communism is a thing that admits of no partial belief: we cannot say of it, as we say of many other beliefs, 'there is some truth at the bottom of it.' There is want of room for the growth of sound opinions in any bosom from which all vestiges of it have not been eradicated as a pernicious weed. Thus it is that though it has been vanquished both by arms and by argument, not to speak of the sad defeats it has received from experiment, it is a creed which it is still important to examine; and thus it is that the French theoretical enunciations, and practical experiences of the

system, are so eminently important as matter of inquiry and reflection in this country.

It is not our intention to offer an account of the several systems announced by St Simon, by his pupils Thierri and Rodriques, by Compte, Enfantin, Owen, Fourier, Blanc, and the countless less eminent manufacturers of plans for superseding nature, and supplying its impulses by art. The task of examining a Communist or Social system is always a precarious one; and it is almost invariably found that no one is capable of comprehending or describing it but its projector. There is something so minute and complex in these organising machines, that if a spring be slightly out of its place, or a wheel have a tooth more or less than it should have, the whole is declared to be unworkable, and more mischievous than useful. So Louis Blanc found that the great experiments in France failed, not because they followed his precepts too closely, which the rest of the world held to be the cause of their failure, but because there was some little matter of arrangement, perceptible to no one but himself, in which they did not precisely agree with his design. There are at the same time great discords among the various schools, which, fortunately coming but little in contact with them in a practical shape in this country, we speak of as Communist and Social, using the terms as almost convertible. Their followers maintain for them a wide separation; and the Socialists, who say they design merely to change the industrial relations of mankind, desire not to be confounded with those who would at the same time remodel the law of marriage, and alter the relation of parent and child. While philosophers and statesmen have their doubts about modified changes, and are nervously alive to every little practical difficulty in their way, the schemers of these great projects never have any doubt about the perfect success of their plans, provided that every part of their application be precisely carried out according to their directions; and there is still living in this country one sanguine old projector, who, through an almost innumerable succession of baffled projects, hopes on as fervently as ever; and after Harmony hall and the battle of Paris, is doubtless prepared at this moment to say, according to his old usage, that a few weeks will see his projects, in general and harmonious action throughout the civilised world. We often find the most enthusiastic supporters of the opinions and projects of other people, yielding to the influence of reason and experience—the fabricators of social systems seem never to abandon an implicit reliance on the perfection of their own handiwork.

Fifty years ago, St Simon was wakened every morning to his labours by the hopeful exclamation of his servant—'Arise, Sir Count, you have a great destiny to fulfil.' He had at one time so

far lost his reliance on his destiny that he attempted to commit suicide, but only succeeded in blowing out one of his eyes. He published in 1814 his work on the Reorganisation of European Society—a curious and bold project for a federation of the European states; and it was some ten years later that he announced his principle of 'universal association through the means of, and with a view to, the continually progressive amelioration of the moral, physical, and intellectual condition of the human race.'

There is, it must be admitted, some difference of character between the national workshops and such aspirations as the following:—

'Moses has promised mankind universal brotherhood; Jesus Christ has prepared it; St Simon reduces it to practice. At last the really universal church is to begin—the reign of Cæsar ends; a peaceful society takes place of the military one; from henceforth the universal church governs men's temporal affairs as it does their spiritual, the tribunal of outward law as of inward conscience. Science becomes holy, and industry holy; for they enable men to improve the lot of the poorest, and bring them near to God. Priests, scholars, workmen, behold the whole of society! The heads of the priest-class, the heads of the scholar-class, the heads of the working-class, behold the whole of the government! And all property is the property of the church, and every profession is a religious function—a step in the social hierarchy. To every one according to his capacity, to every capacity according to its works. The reign of God arrives on earth: all the prophecies are fulfilled.' *

There was, as such a passage indicates, something anti-republican and hierarchical in the whole tone of Saintsimonianism, as well as in the projects of Enfantin, and of Fourier, who proposed to distribute his workmen in phalanxes or large houses; and their systems received from Colonel Thompson's honest wrath the designation of 'the shallowest plot ever begotten of human love of power on human imbecility.' 'As if,' he continues, 'one great lesson which the experience of all ages had impressed upon mankind—the mighty moral which failure and misfortune in every direction have been whipping into the world since the creation, though it appears without ultimate success—was not that whoever has brains so unwashen as to give up the guidance of himself and his concerns to any man or collection of men—call it pope, papa, priest, parliament, or parish-officer, in the confidence that they, in their superior wisdom and prodigious virtue, are to do better for him than he can compass for himself—is as sure to be cheated as fatlings to be eaten; that he is a human porker, and the true and only prototype, so far as he can go to

* Doctrine de St Simon, p. 70.

make a multitude, for the brutal and insulting appellation it pleased a defender of abuses in the gone-by times to cast on the honest and suffering portion of his fellow-creatures.' *

When it came to the days of Louis Blanc, the project of tyranny assumed a republican aspect. Let us give the shortest sketch that can be given of that now celebrated man's projects in the words of his own 'conclusion,' or summary of his Organisation of Labour:—

'The government should be regarded as the supreme regulator of production, and invested with great strength.

'This task would consist even in availing itself of competition, that competition should be destroyed.

'The government should raise a loan, which might be applied to the foundation of *social factories* in the most important branches of the national industry.

'This foundation, requiring the investment of considerable funds, the number of original factories would be rigorously circumscribed: but by virtue of their very organisation, as will be seen in the sequel, they would be gifted with an immense power of expansion.

'The government being considered as the only founder of the *social factories* (*ateliers*), must also provide them with laws.

'All workmen giving guarantees of good conduct to be admitted to work in the social factories, as far as the original capital would provide instruments of labour.

'Although the false and anti-social education given to the present generation renders it difficult to find elsewhere than in a surplus of remuneration a motive of emulation and encouragement, the wages to be equal—an education entirely new, changing all ideas and customs.

'For the first year, following the establishment of social factories, the government to regulate the hierarchy of each man's functions. After the first year it would be different. The workmen having had time to appreciate one another, and all being equally interested, as will be seen in the success of the association, the hierarchy will proceed on the elective principle.

'Every year an account of the net profits to be made out, and divided into three portions. One to be equally divided amongst the members of the association. A second, in the first place, to the support of the old, the sick, and the infirm; secondly, to the alleviation of the crises weighing upon other branches of industry—all labour owing mutual support to its fellows. The third, lastly, to be devoted to the furnishing of instruments of labour to those desirous of joining the association, so that it might extend itself indefinitely.

* Exercises by Colonel Perronet Thompson. Vol. II. p. 42.

'Into each of these associations formed for trades, which can be exercised on a large scale, could be admitted those belonging to professions whose very nature compels those pursuing them to spread themselves and to localise. Thus each social factory might be composed of various trades grouped about one great centre, separate parts of the same whole, obeying the same laws, and participating in the same advantages.

'Each member of the social factory to be at liberty to dispose of his wages at his own convenience; though the evident economy, and incontestible excellence of living in community, could not fail to generate in the labour-association the voluntary association of wants and pleasures.

'Capitalists to be admitted into the association, and to receive interest for their capital, to be guaranteed by the budget; but not to participate in the profits, unless in the capacity of workmen.

'The social factory once established on these principles, the result is easily seen.

'In all capital industry—that, for example, of machinery, of cotton, or of printing—there would be a social factory, competing with private industry. Would the struggle be long? No; because the social factory would have the advantages over every individual workshop, which result from the economy of living in community, and of an organisation by which all the workmen, without exception, are interested in producing well and quickly. Would the struggle be subversive? No; because the government would be always at hand to deaden its effects, by preventing the produce of its workshops from descending to too low a level. At present, when an individual of great wealth enters the field with others less wealthy, the unequal contest can only prove disastrous, because an individual seeks only his personal interest; if he can sell at half the price of his rivals to ruin them, and remain master of the field of battle, he does it. But when in the place of this individual stands the ruling power itself, the question changes its complexion.

'The ruling power, such as we wish it, would it have any interest in overturning industry, in confusing all means of living? Would it not be, by its nature and position, the born protector even of those with whom it maintained a pious competition with the view to reforming society? Hence, between the industrial war which a great capitalist now declares against a little capitalist, and that of the government in our system against the individual, no comparison is possible. The former necessarily induces fraud, violence, and all the evils which iniquity carries in its train; the latter would be conducted without brutality, without stratagems, in a way simply to attain its end, the successive and pacific absorption of individual by social workshops. Thus instead of being like the great capitalist, at present the lord and

tyrant of the market, the government would be simply its regulators. It would avail itself of the weapons of competition, not for the sake of violently upsetting individual industry, which it would be above all interested in avoiding, but in order gradually to lead it to a composition. Soon, indeed, in every sphere of industry in which a social workshop should be established, workmen and capitalists would hasten to avail themselves of the advantages which it would present to its associates. After a certain period would be produced, without usurpation, without injustice, without irreparable disasters, the phenomenon which is now so deplorably brought about by force of tyranny for the profit of individual selfishness. A very rich capitalist can now, by aiming a great blow at his rivals, leave them dead upon the field, and monopolise a whole branch of industry. In our system, the state would by degrees render itself master of all industry, and instead of monopoly, the result of our success would be, competition defeated, and—*association*.'*

The head of a large manufacturing establishment being complimented on its well-organised state, and the amount of skill, vigilance, and exertion, necessary for its superintendence, smiled, and said—'Why, yes; I believe, upon the whole, I have nearly as much to do as a secretary of state.'

When the government becomes 'the supreme regulator of production,' we shall require to have nearly as many officers of state —at first appointed by the government, but afterwards elective— as there are master manufacturers, large farmers, extensive merchants, and considerable shipowners in the country. All these establishments are at present managed by contract—that is, by the profit which they bring, which, as we have already shown, is small in comparison with the other outlay.† We shall not inquire how far the proposed system of superintendence would be effective, nor express any indignation, however tempting might be the occasion, against a plan for establishing universal tyranny under the mask of elective republicanism, and plunder under the pretence of justice, promulgated by one who has the character of being among the most amiable and disinterested of men. Our fundamental objection to this and to every other of the attempts at interference with labour and capital, is a broad pecuniary argument which is applicable to all the theories, Social and Communist, in their first principles: it is, that *by abolishing competition, they abolish the fund out of which labour is to be paid.* Be the labourer's share of it just or not, it will no longer exist without competition than vegetation will exist without the sun.

Men have implanted in them a certain propensity which

* From the translation of the 'Organisation of Labour,' published by H. G. Clarke.

† See above, chap. vi.

prompts them to acquisition for the advantage of themselves and of their offspring. Socialism proposes to poison this propensity, believing it to be a bad one, by making the wages the same for the strong and the weak, for the skilful and the stupid. It is to find some other acting principle in man to supply the vacant place. It speaks generally of this acting principle under such terms as glory, community, and fraternity; but it has not yet succeeded in implanting in man that actual productive energy which competition provides. The head of the project tells us, that to the workman with a properly-constituted mind, working under his system, sloth should be what cowardice is to the soldier—a scandal that must overwhelm him with ignominy. But the effect of the substitution of motives is no longer a matter of speculation; it has been tried, and has occasioned as signal a failure as its most sanguine adversaries could have predicted. Thiers tells us of one adaptation of the idea:- 'The owner of a great engine factory lent for a time his works to his workmen, so that there was no capital to be sunk in the formation of an establishment, and he agreed to buy, at a stated price, the machines or parts of machines they might construct. This price has been augmented 17 per cent. on the average. The associated workmen had to govern themselves, to pay themselves, and share the profits among them.' There were some facilities in old arrangements for their successfully conducting the business; but we are told, as a general result, that 'There was a daily tumult in the workshop. 'Tis true the tumult was pretty general then, and was not less at the Luxembourg or the Hôtel de Ville than at the manufactories. The men took holidays whenever it pleased them to form part of this or that demonstration, which, however, only injured the workmen themselves, for the proprietor paid only for the work when done. But they did not work much when they were present; and the presidents charged with the maintenance of order and the supervision of the labour were changed two or three times a fortnight. The general president having no local supervision in the workshops, was subject to fewer variations of favour, being changed once only during the period of the association. Had they worked as before, they would have received a sum of 367,000 francs in these three months; but their returns were only 197,000 francs, although their prices were raised 17 per cent. The principal cause of this smaller production was not owing solely to the fewer number of days and hours they attended the workshop than before, but because, when present, they did not work with such activity.'*

There was another still more remarkable instance, in which the parties claimed credit for having adopted the precepts of

* The Rights of Property, &c. p. 172.

Louis Blanc in their spirit, and almost in their letter. The experiment proceeded under such favourable circumstances, that had it occurred in this country, one would have predicted that the very ambition of proving the soundness of a system to the world would have nerved the men with patient endurance sufficient to have made it successful. But patient labour is not a French virtue; and even the glory of supporting liberty and fraternity could not impart it to a band of patriotic Parisian tailors. The following account appears to have been written by one personally acquainted with the circumstances narrated by him:—

'The greatest experiment made by Louis Blanc was the organisation of tailors in the Hotel Clichy, which, for the purpose, was converted from a debtors' jail into a great national tailors' shop. This experiment began with peculiar advantages. The government made the buildings suitable for the purpose without rent or charge; furnished the capital, without interest, necessary to put it into immediate and full operation; and gave an order to commence with for *twenty-five thousand suits* for the National Guard, to be followed by more for the Garde Mobile, and then for the regular troops. The first step taken was to ascertain at what cost for workmanship the large tailors of Paris, who ordinarily employed the bulk of the workmen, and performed government contracts, would undertake the orders. Eleven francs for each dress was the contract price, including the profit of the master tailor, the remuneration for his workshop and tools, and for the interest of his capital. The government agreed to give the organised tailors at the Hôtel Clichy the same price. Fifteen hundred men were quickly got together, with an establishment of foremen, clerks, and cutters-out. It was agreed that inasmuch as the establishment possessed no capital to pay the workmen while the order was in course of completion, the government should advance every day, in anticipation of the ultimate payment, a sum equal to *two francs* (1s. 7d.) for each man in the establishment, as "subsistence money;" that when the contract was completed, the balance should be paid, and equally divided amongst the men. Such fair promises soon attracted a full shop; and when we visited the Hôtel Clichy, upwards of fifteen hundred men were at work, and apparently were not only steady, but industrious. The character of the work they were upon at the time, the urgency of the ragged Garde Mobile for their uniforms, formed an unusual incentive to exertion; the foreman told us that notwithstanding the law limiting the hours of labour to ten, the "*glory, love, and fraternity*" principle was so strong, that the tailors voluntarily worked twelve or thirteen hours a day, and the same even on Sundays: they seemed to forget the stimulus of the expected balance which each was to receive at the conclusion of the contract.

'What was the result? For some time many contradictory statements were put forward by the friends and opponents of the system. Louis Blanc looked upon it as the beginning of a new day for France. He had already arranged that as the tailors were the first to begin, the cabinetmakers should next be organised, and one by one all the trades of France. He forgot that he would not have an order for the cabinetmakers to furnish half the houses in Paris to begin with: this, in his estimation, was no difficulty. He had in view public warehouses for the sale of furniture; and although not a chair or table had been sold in the existing overstocked shops for two months, he had no doubt about customers. But the result of the experiment in the Hôtel Clichy has been fatal. The first order was completed: each man looked for his share of the gain. The riches of Communism, and the participation in the profits, dazzled the views of the fifteen hundred tailors, who had been content to receive 1s. 7d. per day as subsistence money for many weeks: no doubt every one in his own mind appropriated his share of the "*balance*;" for once he felt in his own person the combined pleasure of "master and man." The accounts were squared. Eleven francs per dress for so many dresses came to so much. The subsistence money at 1s. 7d. a day had to be deducted. The balance was to be divided as profit. Alas! it was a balance of loss, not of gain: subsistence money had been paid equal to rather more, when it came to be calculated, than sixteen francs for each dress, in place of eleven, at which the master tailor would have made a profit, paid his rent, the interest of his capital, and good wages to his men, in place of a daily pittance for bare subsistence. The disappointment was great when no balance was to be divided. The consternation and disturbance was greater when a large loss was to be discussed, for which no provision in the plans had been made. The customers—that is, the new *National Guard* and the *Garde Mobile*—were in a rage at the detention of their uniforms, and the whole attempt seems to have resulted in confusion and disappointment. Louis Blanc is not a match for the master tailors of Paris.'*

We scarcely think that the able author of this account has given full emphasis to the cause of the failure. The remuneration of French tailors will of course bear some relation to their value as workmen; and therefore when they are paid even by day's wages, each one has some pecuniary inducement to work well. The impetus with which they started at the Hôtel Clichy was insufficient as a substitute for this ever-present motive. Of every effort which he might be inclined to make, the individual tailor felt that the result would not come in the form of reward

* From 'The Economist,' 20th May 1848.

to himself, but would be spread over the whole fifteen hundred engaged in the contract; and the fraction of such a result was an insufficient stimulus to exertion. The natural gravitation, if we may so call it, of labour is towards idleness, unless there be an ever-present motive for exertion. In fact, *uniformity of payment excites a competition in idleness.* Where there are unequal salaries and uniform work, he has the best bargain who has the largest salary; but where there are equal salaries, and all work as they please, he has the best bargain who works least. A curious instance given in M. Faucher's little tract, already mentioned, vividly exemplifies this characteristic:—

'I have the honour of showing you a small practical example of the organisation of labour, which may be well considered in connection with the system set forth by M. Louis Blanc: "equality of wages;" emulation "by the point of honour in work."

'I am an ex-manufacturer of bottles. In this branch of industry the labourers are, and have been from the commencement, partners in the capital; for the wages are paid at so much the hundred bottles manufactured. Thus each depends on the fortunate or unfortunate chances of the melting of the matter to be turned into glass.

'At the opening of a *campagne*, the six master workmen and their assistants, having united among themselves, proposed to me that the wages should not be paid to each according to what he had produced, but according to the mass of bottles made, and the value divided into six parts, for each master blower and his assistants. I hastened to accept this community amongst the workmen; but willing to preserve emulation, the produce of each master workman was every day affixed in the workshop.

'I had then realised the two conditions of the proposition of M. Louis Blanc:—equality of wages, and the point of honour in work. It had even more of a personal interest for all the workmen to unite their efforts to expedite the work, in order to increase it, and consequently the rate of wages.

'At first the emulation was great enough: there was a struggle to discover the relative value of each workman. This once established, I found, first, the most skilful of the workmen resting themselves while the others laboured. To my complaints, I received for reply, "Don't trouble yourself; I will make as many bottles as the man who makes most." This position was quickly felt from step to step, and our observations soon received for reply from almost the worst of the workmen, "It is not me who will make fewest bottles and most refuse."

'The classification of workmen remained the same during all the *campagne*. The point of honour in work was thus satisfied, nevertheless; production was reduced by degrees, consequently wages were so also, in such a manner, that the eighth month of

the field presented a deficiency from the first of about twenty per cent.

'In the following *campagne*, I put aside the community; every labourer received the wages of his produce, and the result was strikingly different. The strongest workman hurried along with him all the others; the worst acquired thus by his efforts a value superior to what he originally possessed.

'Practice thus replies to M. Louis Blanc:—"The point of honour in work alone has for effect the taking of the incapable for the leader of a band." And the fortunate case is, when incapacity is not doubled by idleness.—EUMENES LODARD.'

The reason why the operative workman will not work solely for the advantage of his country, or of the human race at large—for glory, community, and fraternity—is one that makes him very justifiable—*he cannot*. He may do good to himself, or to his wife and children by hard work, but he can do no perceptible good to the community at large. He is told that if he and all the workmen in the world shall work with great zeal on the Socialist principle, which pays them all alike, they will raise the operative class. The working-classes are as open to noble sentiments and inducements as their neighbours. If it could be proved to any one respectable mechanic that by his own sole endeavours—by rising early, and going to bed late, and working with ardour and resolution at his laborious monotonous trade throughout the interval, he could save his country from ruin, or save his class from oppression, we doubt not that workmen would as readily submit to sacrifice themselves to this great service as scientific discoverers, generals, and statesmen; and that they would not be deficient in hero martyrs—in Winkelreads and Wallaces, in Washingtons, Hampdens, and Russells.

But men working with their hands are seldom placed in such a position; and they are no more prepared than other members of the community to exert themselves when they do not know how far their exertions will be effective. Every honest man makes himself responsible for what he himself does. No man can have a common conscience with his neighbour; and if the workman in the *atelier* works to the best of his ability, he not only loses the profit and the credit of his work, but he loses its absolute effectiveness, when a few out of some thousands or hundreds of thousands who have been associated with him have not been so energetic and conscientious as he. The position of the workman really exerting himself under such a principle, reminds one much of that of the French prophets who promised to raise a body in St Paul's churchyard. A great mob was present on the occasion; but with all the incantations of the prophets not a body would arise. They did not attribute the failure to any deficiency in their own supernatural powers: they suspected that in the mul-

titude who were looking on—amounting to about forty thousand—there was some unfaithful person; that is to say, some one who did not believe in their ability to work their miracle. A few unfaithful persons in an atelier will thus neutralise all the exertions of the faithful; and we suspect Louis Blanc, and all other projectors of a similar kind, will find themselves defeated by a greater or less supply of the unfaithful, who are not so sanguine of the success of their projects as to make any substantial sacrifices in their own persons for their attainment.

We think the instances we have alluded to are practical symptoms that the schemes which dispense with competition will be insufficient to provide the fund which their projectors promise to distribute. *Competition is the soul of production, and without production the wages of labour cannot exist.* Our artisans are the most productive in the world, and they are at the same time, and for the same reason, the richest. If our population should increase its riches, it would be by increasing its productiveness, through the acquisition of skill and the practice of industry by those who now possess neither: a new Britain of energetic production is capable of being created out of those parts of our population who are inert, and being so, are poor.

We suspect that Louis Blanc is one of the people who think there is a huge concealed fund in the profits of capital, capable of enriching workmen; but supposing this fund to be very large, which, in proportion to the wages of labour, we have shown that it is not, it remains to be discovered how it too could come into existence without competition. If workmen are to be privileged and limited, as they formerly were by our municipal laws, it is easy to understand how those within the pale of the privilege may be well off, and quite as easy to understand how those excluded from it must starve. But that there will be a general fund fit to supply the needs of all workmen produced otherwise than by competition, is a belief which Louis Blanc himself could not have well adopted if there be sincerity in his complaints against the competitive spirit of England. His great substantial grievance is, that we in England produce too much. He says:—

'To learn how far the want of foresight and folly of production can go, it is only requisite to consult the industrial and commercial history of England. Now we find English merchants exporting to Brazil—where ice is never seen—cargoes of skates; now sending from Manchester, in one week, to Rio de Janeiro, more merchandise than had been consumed there during the previous twenty years. Always production, exaggerating its resources and wasting its energies, without keeping any account of the possible means of consumption!

'Once more: to induce a nation to transfer to another the care of giving value to the elements of labour it possesses, is, by

degrees, to deprive it of its capital, and to impoverish it; consequently, to render it more and more incapable of consuming, since it can only consume what it is in a condition to pay for—general impoverishment of the countries she requires to consume her produce. Behold the vicious circle in which England has revolved for two centuries: behold the irremediable vice of her system. Thus (and we insist on this point of view, because it is of the highest importance) she is placed in the strange and almost unique situation in history of finding two causes of ruin equally active—the labour of the people and their idleness. If active, they create a competition she is not always able to subdue; if idle, they deprive her of consumers with which she cannot dispense.

'It is what has happened already upon a small scale, and must inevitably happen on a larger. What losses has not England endured from the sole fact of its productions having increased in a proportion which the objects of exchange could not attain? How many times has not England produced with anticipations whose extravagance the event too cruelly chastised? We shall not soon forget the grand crisis which followed the dénouement of the intrigues of England in the countries extending from Mexico to Paraguay. Scarcely had the news arrived in England that South America offered an open field to the adventurers of trade, than immediately all hearts beat with joy, and all heads were turned: it was a universal delirium. Never had production in England experienced such an excess of frenzy. To believe the speculators, it only required a few days and a few vessels to transport to Great Britain the immense treasures contained in America. So great was the confidence, that the banks hastened to cheapen money to the hopes of the first comer. And what resulted from this mighty turmoil? All had been calculated upon, except the existence of objects of exchange and the means of their transmission. America kept its gold, which could not be extracted from its mines. The country which had been ravaged by fire and corn, could neither give its indigo nor its cotton in exchange for the merchandise they brought. What millions and what tears this grand mystification cost England, the English well know, and Europe also!' *

Predominating over the somewhat unsatisfactory vagueness of these remarks, there is the one general complaint of our over-productiveness, whence it is to be inferred that an advantage of the ateliers will be, that they produce less. The one marked example of a false speculation—the consignment of skates to Brazil, if it

* Organisation of Labour, p. 70. The rage against competition is expressed with still more preposterous vehemence in a pamphlet—'Du Travail et de l'Organisation des Industries dans la Liberté, par Victor Luro, Avocat à la Cour d'Appel.'

ever really occurred, and was not a joke fabricated against our sanguine exporters to South America, has been so often cited as the sole flagrant instance of our merchants mistaking their business, and not knowing what they are about, that nothing can serve more to raise in one's opinion the discretion of our commercial classes, or show us how thoroughly competition produces the effect of dispersing the objects of human desire to the places where they are most appreciated and needed. We wonder how often a like blunder would have had to be recorded if our manufactures and merchandise were regulated by government officers or a select vestry, instead of the parties pecuniarily interested in their success?

As this class of thinkers profess to consider money a base inducement to exertion, might it not have been a more hopeful and less difficult project than that which they have promulgated—to persuade mankind to pocket the money they receive for their exertions, not esteeming it for its own sake, but viewing it as the form in which society acknowledges their services? There is more of this in the world than people sometimes believe. The large income of the man high in a profession is often an object of pride; not because it is so much money, but because it is the external honorary mark of the value of his services. Hence where there are other conspicuous indications of merit, its acknowledgment in this form is sometimes passed over with indifference. Society, however, cannot, after all, give more substantial testimony of its consciousness of services. It may often go wrong. A sprightly novel sells better than a great philosophical work—an opera dancer receives ten times the salary of a professor of metaphysics. Gil Blas acknowledged it as a fair vindication of the dancing-master's fee, that it was no more than double that of a teacher of philosophy; but yet the public at large are in the main the safest and most disinterested rewarders of merit, and it might be better to remedy their defects than entirely supersede them.

The workman, however, is precisely the man who cannot find any other nearly so effective criterion of his merit. His wages are a standing prize from society—a perpetual appreciation of his services, which he carries about with him wherever he goes. If it is removed from him, how is he to prove his services to his race—his duty to the principle of glory, love, and fraternity? If his fellow-workmen know his merits, they will not travel much farther; and the generous spirit of emulation, surely not unknown to Frenchmen, will be liable to decay in their bosoms.

CHAPTER XIV.

ARTIFICIAL SYSTEMS (CONTINUED).

Reference of the Socialists to Military Discipline and the Post-Office Service —Military Discipline Inapplicable to Productive Industry—Its Costliness of Management—Effect of Introducing its Severity throughout all the rest of Society—Slavery—Effect of Discipline in Undermining Individual Restraint—Case of the Pensioners.

There are two instances to which the organisers of labour refer as practical embodiments of their principle—the post-office and the army. In the words of the existing apostle of the system:—

'Imagine, for an instant, a state of things in which it were allowable for every one to undertake the conveyance of letters, and conceive the government stepping in suddenly, and saying, "To me, to me exclusively, give up the postal service!" What objections would arise! How could government ever undertake to deliver at the precise hour promised all that thirty-four millions of men could write every day, every moment of the day, to one another? And yet, a few unpunctualities apart, rather pertaining to the nature of the business than to any fault of the powers that be, with what marvellous precision are the duties of the post-office performed! Not to allude to our administrative order, and the wheel within wheel it has recourse to. Yet behold the regularity of this vast machine! It is that, in fact, the method of division and subdivision makes, as one may say, the most complicated mechanism work of itself. How to make workmen pull together should be declared impracticable in a land which saw, some twenty or thirty years ago, one man animate by his will, cause to live in his life, and keep pace with his march—a million of men! It is true the object was to destroy. But is it in the nature of things—in the will of the Deity—in the destiny of society—that to produce in union should be impossible, since to destroy in union is so easy? For the rest, objections as to difficulty of application are not here of serious consequence I repeat. We ask the state, with the prodigious resources of every kind it possesses, to do what we now see done by private individuals.'*

The military example we defer for more full discussion. Of the post-office service a great portion is performed by contract, which is competition—much more might be so performed; and at the time when a vigorous agitation produced a reform in our post-office system, private enterprise, although illegal, and subject to all the impediments of smuggling, was gradually usurping the busi-

* Organisation of Labour, p. 70.

ness of the transmission of letters. We shall hereafter have more to say on this service, as one which a government, if it honestly consult the convenience of the public, may appropriately take out of the hands of individuals, although there is no absolute reason why it should not be entirely accomplished by private contract, which is the form assumed by competition in operations which are to be but once performed, and in which rivalry would produce waste.

On the subject of a military organisation of labour, the following sentences have dropped in the columns of a newspaper from a writer whose style will be very readily recognised. It is singular that one who is almost ever the advocate of exertion and self-reliance should have proposed the application of government employment in Ireland, so soon after the country had only by great efforts shaken itself free of the terrible encumbrance which the loan works in that country appeared to have entailed on the empire:—

'The unemployed vagrant miscellaneous Irish, once dressed in proper red coats, and put under proper drill-sergeants, with strict military law above them, can be trained into soldiers, and will march to any quarter of the globe, and fight fiercely, and will keep step and *pas-de-charge*, and subdue the enemy for you like real soldiers—none better, I understand, or few, in this world. Here is a thing worth noting. The Irish had always from the first creation of them a talent for individual fighting; but it took several thousand years of effort before, on heat and pressure of clearest necessity, they could be taught to fight in this profitable military manner.

'Is organisation to fight the only organisation achievable by Irishmen under proper sergeants? There is the question. For example, the Irish have in all times shown, and do now show, an indisputable talent for spade-work, which, under slight modification, means all kinds of husbandry work. Men skilled in the business testify that with the spade there is no defter or tougher worker than the common Irishman at present—none who will live on humbler rations, and bring a greater quantity of efficient spade-work out of him, than the vagrant, unemployed, and, in fact, quite chaotic Irishman of this hour. Here he is as willing and able to dig as ever his ancestor was to do faction-fighting, or irregular multiform duel. But him, alas! no William of Ypres, or other sternly-benign drill-sergeant, has yet ranked into regiment, clothed in effectual woollen russet or drab, cotton moleskin, and bidden wisely, "Go thither—that way, not this, and dig swiftly (pay and rations await thee) for that object, not for this: that will profit thee and me; this will not; dig there, and thus!" Alas! no; he wanders inorganic; and his fate at present with nothing but "supply and demand" buzzing round him.

'Colonels of field-labour, as well as colonels of field-fighting, doubt it not, *can* be found, if you will search for them with dili-

gence; nay, I myself have seen some such: colonels, captains, lieutenants, down to the very sergeants and fifers of field-labour, can be got if you will honestly want them. Oh, in what abundance, and with what thrice-blessed results, could *they* be "supplied," if you did indeed with due intensity continue to "demand" them! Some regimenting of spade-work *can*, by honest life-and-death effort, long-continued on the part of governing men, be done, and even *must* be done. All nations—and I think our own foremost—will either get a beginning made towards doing it, or die in nameless anarchies before long.'

In fact, the supporters of all the various projects of Communism and Socialism with which the world has been favoured, when they are asked how society is to receive assurance that the proper duties are performed by each member of the social combination, and how the industrious are to protect themselves from losing their proper share in the common produce through the indolence of the idle, triumphantly point to this same military discipline, which shows itself to be sufficient for exacting all the duties incident to its own department. As this reference to actual experience has sometimes had an influence on practical minds much more powerful than appeals to 'fraternity' as against 'individuism,' it may be of service briefly to inquire how far this branch of experience has here been justly applied. Without discussing how far it would be an agreeable change, that every professional and labouring man, instead of being, as at present, responsible to himself for the profitable occupation of his time, should be sent to, and removed from, his day's labour by the proper officer—without inquiring how far it would be agreeable to the lawyer or the artisan to be marshalled to his place of business or his workshop by tuck of drum, and to be inspected during his operations by a sergeant or other officer, who is not an agent of the employer, seeing that the worker fulfils his bargain before he gets his pay, but a person vested with a military authority over him, to compel him to work then and there according to rule—without inquiring how far this change would be an agreeable or a beneficial one, let us just ask whether, because military discipline is effective in bringing out the services of the soldier, it would be equally effective in bringing out the services of the other citizens?

The soldier works, and so does the professional man, and the mechanic; but there is a material distinction in the character of his labour. He *works*, but he does not *produce;* and when in their most effective state, the tendency of his labours is towards destruction rather than production. Now there is this peculiarity in all labour, the result of which is production, that we can test the extent of the labour without seeing it palpably exercised before our eyes. We see a table or a watch, and we immediately decide that so much labour has been expended on it, satisfying

ourselves so fully on the point that we are ready to pay for that labour without any farther test of its extent—without ever knowing when, where, or by whom it was administered. Of the labours of the soldier in going through the daily discipline that keeps him in a state of effectiveness for service, we have no such test. The operation must have been seen in actual performance, otherwise we have no criterion for determining that it ever was performed. Now it fortunately happens that these operations are of a kind the efficacy of which is fully capable of being tested by inspection. When a watchmaker is cutting a wheel, or filing a spring, an inspector observing his motions, with those of many others similarly employed, would not be able to give a very satisfactory view of the success with which the co-operatives were accomplishing their respective duties, and would much prefer forming a judgment on their merits from the work done. But in military movements the motion of the body is everything—the work accomplished shows nothing. Then these motions are all uniform, and every man's peculiar action is tested by its conformity with that of his neighbours. The command is given, 'right face—march.' All perform the same evolution of an arc of a circle—all hold their arms in the same position—all make the same motions, first with the one foot, and then with the other. Those in charge of the movement do not see the individuals, but the aggregate; and if any one should fail in the performance of his proper part in the operation, it is then only that he would be individually observable, and he would be conspicuous as occasioning an exception to the general uniformity of the aggregate movement.

Now, if we look again to any productive trade—say to watchmaking—there would be probably no two men, working together for half an hour, whose respective success in their occupation could be tested by the simple uniformity of their motion. Handloom weaving comes perhaps nearer to a practicability of being appreciated by this test than any other productive operation, but it is probable that even in this case the employer would rather take the excellence of the fabric than the uniform swinging of the shuttle as a test of successful industry. There does not seem to be any known productive operation, even under the dominion of factory uniformity and systematic arrangement, in which the motions of several people engaged together ought to be for any length of time quite uniform. Nay, even in music, where there is a pre-arrangement and a certain harmonious organisation, if it may be so termed, of sound, it does not follow that the motions of those who have in unison to produce the same notes should be uniform in character. This distinction is said not to have been known to a celebrated military martinet, the colonel commanding a regiment of dragoons, who—happening one day to confront the band, observing to his horror that oboes and trumpets were pro-

truding at unequal lengths beyond the usual serrated line, and producing an unmilitary-looking irregularity—dashed forward in great wrath, and commanded the band to 'dress.'

The consequence of this distinction is, that if productive labourers were subjected to the test of military discipline, each individual would require to have all his separate motions watched; and the staff of officers employed in the universal discipline would require to be on a far more extensive scale than the proportion exhibited by our military establishment, by no means small, as we shall have occasion to see. Every individual bound to work would require to be subjected to special inspection, and the world would be nearly divided between overseers and workmen. Of course the higher branches of labour would require supervision as well as the lower, for every man must contribute to the services of the commonwealth according to his abilities; and his services are to be extracted, not by rewarding him for his productions, but by coercing him through the influence of discipline, to develop his fullest powers in the public service. The poet, the painter, and the inventor, therefore, are no more to be exempt from the superintendence of a competent officer than the reaper and the weaver. It will be difficult to perform some part of this task. The responsible officer who should report whether his full talent was honestly used by Corregio when he was painting the 'St Jerome,' or by Shakspeare when he was writing 'The Tempest,' or by Arkwright when he was inventing his spinning-machine, would not be easily found; but to carry out with uniformity a system by which the rewards and honours of successful exertion are to be superseded, and discipline alone is to supply their place in stimulating men to exertion, it will be necessary to carry the arrangement to its utmost latitude and to its most minute individual application.

This will be an expensive arrangement, at the least; and to have some faint idea of its costliness, let us look at the expense of military discipline. Passing over the Guards, and the higher-paid departments of the service, we come to an ordinary regiment of humble foot, and there, at a rough calculation, we find the usual complement of 739 privates thus officered:—

1 Colonel at £500 a year,	£500	0	0
1 Lieutenant-Colonel at £310, 5s.,	310	5	0
2 Majors at £292,	584	0	0
10 Captains at £213, 6s. 3d.,	2133	2	6
6 Senior Lieutenants at £136, 12s. 6d.,	819	15	0
6 Junior Lieutenants at £118, 12s. 6d.,	711	15	0
8 Ensigns at £95, 16s. 3d.,	766	10	0
Paymaster at £273, 15s.,	273	15	0
Adjutant at £155, 2s. 6d.,	155	2	6
Quarter-Master at £118, 12s. 6d.,	118	12	6
	£6372	17	6

We must besides these, as part of the military organisation, count the noncommissioned officers. Twelve sergeants at 1s. 10d. a day will add £401, 10s., and 24 corporals at 1s. 4d. a day will add £584: making in all £7358, 7s. 6d. It would be perhaps considered invidious to include the band. As it has been maintained that the enthusiasm which induces the soldier to go forward, cheerfully enduring the hardships, and encountering the dangers of war, is to descend upon the workman under the Communist system, it might be fair to expect that he should participate in the same stimulants; but it is perhaps anticipated that the grandeur and beauty of the new doctrine shall far more than supply the place of the fife and drum. The pay of the rank and file—739 men at 1s. 1d. per day, amounts to £14,610—not quite double that of the officers. But it would appear that the whole expense of this, the regulating department of our army, bears a still greater proportion to that of the working force. By a parliamentary return down to 31st March 1847, the estimates of the expense of the effective land troops in the British service (amounting to 139,105) for the year, in pay alone without other expenditure, was £2,877,112, 10s. Of this the sum paid to 123,100 rank and file was £1,817,183, 5s. 11d., leaving more than £1,000,000 as the expense of officering, or as, in commercial language, it would be termed, the expense of management.*

It is true that under the capitalist system, the master's profit is the gain he receives for organising and directing, as well as for the use of his capital; and sometimes it may happen that such profits are to an individual a considerable income; but we have already seen how far they are in the general case from approaching to such a proportion of the amount expended in wages.

Of course it is not meant that under the new organisation superintendents and inspectors are to be paid, if they are paid at all, at a higher rate than that of the workers whose efforts they direct, and over whose motions they hold the absolute control of military discipline. But it will hardly be denied that these directors and controllers must be taken from the more able and valuable members of the community, and that their employment in this manner will displace an amount of other service which may not unfairly be measured by something like the difference of remuneration of the higher and lower military grades.

It has to be noticed, however, before the full applicability of this parallel of industrial organisation with military discipline is exhausted, that the soldier is not so absolutely pure from pecuniary temptations, as the labourer acting under the influence of

* The items of this charge were, for 862 cavalry commissioned officers, £140,779, 15s.; for 5185 infantry commissioned officers, £664,297, 14s. 4d.; for 1097 cavalry noncommissioned officers, £31,747, 15s. 6d.; and for 8897 infantry noncommissioned officers, £223,103, 19s. 3d. The gross charge of the effective and non-effective land forces for the same year was £6,082,901.

fraternity, is supposed to be. During the time of active exertion, of danger, and fatigue, there have of old been such things as plunder; and even to the best-disciplined and most conscientious army, there is still such a thing as prize-money. It is to be suspected that in some cases more of the lounging thoughts of the captain and the lieutenant are bestowed on the probable majority and company, with their respective emoluments, than on the science of war, or the enthusiasm of the patriot. The sergeant's stripes, with the additional 9d. a day, are the inducements held out to steadiness, diligence, and courage in the ranks; and even in our own aristocratic service, it is never looked upon as entirely beyond the bounds of possibility that courage and ability, when regulated by good conduct, may some day endow the poor soldier with the commander's sword and lace epaulette.

It is perhaps not unfortunate that the example of military discipline has been so often adduced by the Communists and Socialists. It lets us see that they themselves cannot help sometimes being reminded of, though they abstain for obvious reasons from dwelling on, the only instrument by which their organisation can be to any extent effective—the grossest tyranny. It is quite possible to substitute to the workman another motive than reward, and that motive is fear. True this produces but an imperfect development of the human faculties; but it is not unproductive when applied to the poorer kinds of labour, as the history of our West India colonies can testify. Nay, the higher departments of industry have often been confided to slaves; and both in Greece and Rome this species of human commodity has been referred to as so many cabinet-makers, or sword-makers, or even copiers of manuscripts, just as we now refer to so many cobs, or draught-horses, or made hunters. Louis Blanc is not the first man who has proposed to substitute slavery to freedom, because the slave is not left to the mercy of chances: he is provided for by his master, and cannot be subjected to those risks of calamity which Louis Blanc thus depicts in his answer to Thiers:—

'Here, then, we have a vastly numerous class necessitated to produce more and more every day, and each day to consume less! It is useless to reply that the natural effect of competition is to increase consumption by cheapness: this is true within certain limits only—namely, those which separate the salaried from the non-salaried classes; but beyond their limits it is quite another thing. We must not forget that one effect of a cheap market is to reduce the amount of wages, and thus the labourer loses on the one hand what he would gain on the other. Our assertion, then, remains unrefuted. Now, without referring to the melancholy effect of such a result, what can be imagined more fatal, more ruinous or absurd, or more plainly contrary to all ideas of political economy? You say that the prosperity of nations lies in

the balance established between production and consumption; and here we have a system under which this truly monstrous phenomenon is produced—increase of the powers of production; corresponding decrease in the means of consumption!

'And when we denounce the feverish activity given to production, let not any use our own words against us by maintaining that in this case work cannot be wanting to those who ask for it. Such is the inveterate evil of the system, that even in the midst of this unrestricted production, the poor man has to run after employment, and often perishes on the road, exhausted by hunger and misery. Yes, production increases faster than consumption; and what is of still more fearful import, population increases faster than production.'

A picture not dissimilar was drawn by the patriotic Fletcher of Saltoun of the miseries of the Scottish working-classes before the Union, and the like remedy was proposed, but with the undisguised name of *slavery*.

Let us, however, suppose that the coercion of the state is not likely to be of so humiliating a character as that of private ownership, and glance for a moment at the moral effects produced on the citizen by military discipline.

Men living at freedom in a civilised and complicated system of society, are by no means reckless free agents. Their habits and propensities become insensibly moulded to an adaptation to the circumstances in which they are placed; and they are free agents bound down to a certain course of action by the unseen but irresistible chains of their own inclinations. Experience teaches us that if military discipline supplies a system of harder checks and restraints, it supersedes or neutralises those which may so arise out of man's natural position in society, to strengthen and increase gently and imperceptibly, as the root of the tree finds its way through the nutritious soil, avoiding any contest with the hard stone. Even with the high sense of personal respect which the position and functions of a military commander naturally cultivate, experience shows that officers in the army and navy, when they leave the restraints of the discipline and etiquette of service, find it difficult to submit to restraining rules. The reports of insolvency courts are a melancholy record of their imprudence; and such narratives as the following, taken from a legal report, are of too frequent occurrence:—'A B, a captain on the half-pay of the army, was opposed by Lyon and other creditors on the ground of his extravagance in having taken a residence on lease, with privilege of shooting, at a rent of £100, while his whole income was only £80 a year, and having lived there in an expensive style.'

But the restraints which still surround the gentleman class, who, as they have not been subjected to the strictest rules of

discipline, are partly amenable to other regulating principles, are lost when we come to the common soldier—the mere machine of war, to which external discipline supplies the part of the internal impulses of nature. Melancholy as the reckless extravagance of the working-man too often is, it is only to be met in full-blown perfection in the person of the pensioner. To the superannuated and the decrepit, the pittance allowed from the public purse—the small reward perhaps of great daring and hardship—is a preservative against destitution, which lifts the old soldier's soul above the recipients of ordinary charity. To him it cannot fail to be a blessing; but to the able-bodied working-man it too often communicates a curse. It was a curious and melancholy sight to notice a public office where a number of pensioners were paid on quarter-day. There are the veterans, penniless, impatient, and thirsty, casting side glances at the neighbouring dram-shop, which is silently preparing to swallow the secure prey. In the rear, a few women huddle together, with anxious faces—some that they may have a fair start for their share in the wreck, but by far the greater part, to the honour of the sex be it said, bent on the too often hopeless mission of endeavouring to secure a trifle for household necessities—something to appease the hungry grandchildren, or to restore the Sunday gown from the pawnbroker's shelf. One can see the character of the men in their different methods of proceeding to destruction. The straightforward, resolute man, who says to himself—

> 'Let them prate about decorum
> Wha hae characters to lose,'

sets his eye at once to the right direction, and walks straight to the nearest dram-shop, evidently impressed with the feeling that one inch of deviation from the straight path would be a culpable dereliction of a fixed principle. The hypocrite walks off, as if he knew not the locality of the temptation, but had quite different objects in view. He proceeds with his eyes fixed on some distant object, till, when he comes opposite the spot, he gives an involuntary glance around—the gilded sign attracts his attention, and as if by a sudden thought, he steps quickly aside, and enters the grave of good affections and self-esteem. Some there are who struggle past, a strong resolution working in their faces; but the fascination is too great, and after they have gone onward a few steps, it drags them back, if they have not perhaps overshot its influence so far as to come within the orbit of another planet, for these malign stars are thickly strewn.

The shape in which attention was first drawn to the effect of the payment of pensions, was in the complaints of the Poor-Law Commission of England about the amount of pauperism produced by the system. Thus while the nation was with one hand

affording her veteran warriors what she considered to be a solace for old age—an assistance to the frugal household—a probable means of training the old soldier's family—she found that with the other hand she had to supply the means of subsistence to those whom her bounty had converted into paupers. It was found that the pensioner was what is termed 'taken off his feet' by the payment of the pension; that he did not recover his steadiness and his industry until it was all spent; and that, besides the influence which periodical fits of hard drinking exercised in hurrying him towards the grave, the visible effect of the pension was just to cut off so many weeks from his annual amount of productive labour. A respectable employer made the following statement on the subject, taking his figurative language from his own profession:—

'It is easy to break the thread of continuous employment, but most hard to piece it again. I can say, from my own observation, that a pension is often a *pecuniary injury* to a man. I have myself dismissed from a valuable employment a pensioner whose services I was anxious to retain, and who never gave me any cause of complaint but at the time of receiving his quarterly payment. The man's loss in being rendered unfit for a superior situation was greater in the year than the amount of his pension.'

The assistant-overseer of All Saints, Newcastle, afforded this piece of curious information:—

'During the five years I was an inspector in the police establishment in this town, I never knew a pension-day pass over without our having a number of the recipients in custody for being drunk, &c. I have known some of them from the country picked up in the streets, totally incapable of giving any account of themselves; but on coming to their senses, they found that they had either lost or spent the whole of their money. One, in particular, I remember, when asked by the magistrates where he usually lodged when in town, very coolly replied, "Here, sir; for I always get drunk, and am brought here." I have frequently heard the magistrates regret that money given for a good purpose should be so squandered away. I had a police constable in my division with 1s. per day pension; he was very steady and attentive to his duty except at pension-time, when he was sure to be reported for being drunk, and absent without leave, and he was finally discharged. Another, in the employment of the corporation on the streets, who had 9d. per day, invariably got into the lock-up once or twice at pension-time. The latter of these frequently admitted to me that he received no benefit whatever from his pension.'

These little histories, though serious and solemn if we reflect on the great social evils they indicate, have in their circumstances

a slight tinge of the comic; but there are others in which tragic elements are mixed. Thus the relieving officer of St George's in the East had to state about the pensioners in his district:—

'Very recently one of them, who had a pension of 7s. a week, was found dead in his bed, having died in a state of destitution. He had received his quarter's pension only a few days before; but being of drunken and dissipated habits, he had spent it. He never applied for relief, and was starved. The coroner's jury returned a verdict, "Found dead in a destitute state."' What a fate for one who had perhaps helped to storm forts or to gain great victories—who had survived hardship, fatigue, and danger, to fall a sacrifice after all to the weakness of his nature! Alas! the iron discipline that had nerved and protected him against external enemies, had only rendered him an easier prey to the enemy within, and he fell a victim to his want of self-command. The dying veteran 'never applied for relief.' Perhaps a spark of the old spirit still burned within him, and he preferred death to the degradation of pauperism; but this spirit is too rare a virtue in the old soldier, and the same propensities that have mastered prudence have in the end undermined self-respect. Conscious of their own inability to manage their quarterly allowances, many of the pensioners sought relief against themselves by voluntarily surrendering their pensions to the guardians of the poor, and accepting relief; thus substituting the degrading sustenance of the pauper to the honourable reward of bravery and conduct. The master of the Limehouse Workhouse in the Stepney Union, mentioned an instance of a man who received £70 a year in navy pensions:—

'This man, from his utter incapacity to take care of his money when he gets it, is at this moment in the greatest possible distress. The Board of Guardians permitted the relieving-officer on one occasion to advance him 7s. a week for a quarter, attaching his pension for it. This was received of course duly; and he made application for the same course to be pursued for the following quarter, but it was refused, on the ground that he ought to take care of his money himself; but he fell into the same destitution, and the relieving-officer induced a tradesman in the neighbourhood to advance him 7s. a week, guaranteeing the payment of it himself; but as they could not legally detain his pension or attach it, it was more than half a year before this sum could be repaid the tradesman; and the man, as I stated before, is now suffering extremely from absolute want, because his pension is not yet due.'

The immediate evil to which the pensioners were thus subjected has, it is believed, been in a great measure obviated by the adoption of measures for paying them at much shorter intervals. But this is a mere alleviation of the evil, and the social

disease still exists. It is not easy for those who have been accustomed to the restraints which grow out of independent self-support, to comprehend how utterly this valuable quality is annihilated in those whose motions for every day are prearranged by other minds, whose conduct is regulated by the hard rule of external discipline, and whose wants are ministered to on system. The common soldier has never to calculate how his pay will clothe him for the year, or feed him for the day. The military disciplinarian has squared his income to his expenditure with the precision with which the manufacturer calculates the quantity of raw material sufficient to produce so many yards of a certain fabric; he has neither the anxieties nor the enjoyments of the independent labourer, receiving and spending his money. With the Life-Guards, who are by courtesy all gentlemen—who are chosen from a better class than the privates of the line, and receive considerably higher pay—it was believed that the experiment might be attempted of allowing them to receive part of their pay in the manner in which day-labourers receive their wages—by weekly payment; but the experiment failed in the manner described by a witness who had himself been a Life-Guardsman, but was fortunately possessed of abilities that enabled him to raise himself, and of firmness enough to resist the besetting temptations of his order:—

'When I was in the Life-Guards fourteen or sixteen years ago, there was a good deal of ill health prevalent among them. Before that time the men received part of their pay weekly—namely, seven shillings at the end of the week. With these seven shillings they had to provide the food which they required, except their dinners. The ration for dinner was three-quarters of a pound of uncooked meat, a pound of potatoes or vegetables, and a pound of bread. It was found, however, that many of the men spent the whole of the seven shillings in a single day in drink or dissipation. During the remainder of the week the men would be on what is called the *Crib-bite*—that is, living only on their dinner-rations. I knew many of the men who drooped under this system, partly from the excess of drinking or dissipation, and partly from the privations of the necessaries of life, and the work they had to undergo.' *

Of course in the new social system, in which we are to be all subjected to a species of military discipline, this will be looked to, and the organisation and its means of enforcement will be so complete and rigorous, that no man shall have seven shillings a week at his own absolute disposal to lead him into temptation. The world will be a collection of well-regulated mess-rooms, where skilful physicians shall attend to regulate the diatetics;

* Sanitary Report, 245.

and the tempting morsel that might occasion dyspepsia, or the over-exhilarating draught which might tempt to excess, will be removed from the trained feeder as remorselessly as the provender of Barataria.

But it will be naturally doubted by the sagacious whether it is within the compass of human power to establish over all mankind this sleepless universal discipline: one feels a natural inclination to substitute the word despotism; and it will be feared that the great wild beast—the human passions—may only be rendered more savage by the restraint, to be more destructive when the chain is broken. The history of Europe has lately, and of old too, shown that the most completely disciplined people are not the mildest and most rational of beings when they once break loose.

We have spoken of organisation as no new idea—the early history of almost every country retains vestiges of attempts to bring it into action. Interference with everything is, in fact, the natural tyrannical propensity of man dressed in a little brief authority, and not taught the restraints of civilisation, and the practical difficulties of government. The man in power thinks that none of his subjects can regulate anything so well as himself. Though their own personal interests may be concerned in the matter, yet he will direct it—will lay down rules, and impose penalties on those who infringe them. Thus there are few countries that have escaped, at some time or other, sumptuary laws prescribing the extent to which certain classes of the community should indulge in ornamental and luxurious dress, the regulation being generally founded on the supposition, that without the intervention of the wisdom of the legislator, the citizen would be quite incompetent to protect himself from extravagance and ruin. With the advancement of civilisation and liberty, with just laws and a responsible administration of them, governments find that they have sufficient occupation in keeping men free of collision with each other while they are all following their own ends, instead of dictating what ends they shall follow. Perhaps we may safely say that civilised man in this change pays a homage to the wisdom of the Deity which his barbarous ancestor has denied. Each withdrawal of interference is a symptom that the light of civilisation has enabled the human ruler to see his own weakness contrasted with the Divine goodness and strength. In every instance in which his own incapacity to regulate his fellows in the natural operations of life has been demonstrated to him, it has been by his seeing that the dangers he attempted to provide against were futile, because the Deity, by the natural passions and propensities implanted in mankind, had already provided the remedy, though the human vision was only capable of beholding the risk. It is thus that in almost every department of which

the human intellect takes cognisance, whether in the material or the immaterial world, the more man learns, he is the more emphatically taught how perfect is the machinery of the system in which he is placed; and that, in the words of the poet—

> 'All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
> That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
> Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame;
> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
> Lives through all life, extends to all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
> Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
> As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
> As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
> As the rapt seraph that adores and burns;
> To him no high, no low, no great, no small—
> He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.'

CHAPTER XV.

LIMITS OF THE FUNCTION OF THE STATE.

Though Attacking other Organising Systems, none to Offer in their Stead—Believed all to be Impracticable—Proper Function of the State to give Security, not to Dictate—Various Forms in which the State gives Security—Law of Private Rights and Obligations—Criminal Law—Difficulty of Reconciling Conflicting Securities—Law of Debtor and Creditor—Confidence the Great Object to be Secured.

The author of this little book has freely attacked the projects of other people. They are projects for organising the human race, and disciplining it into the proper management, each man of his own business and proper interests—projects not only for protecting each man against his neighbour, but dictating and measuring out what each man shall do, as well for his neighbours' sake as for his own—projects, to use the language of their promulgators (which perhaps does not, however, make them much clearer), for 'abolishing individuism and establishing Socialism,' 'the great want of the age, and the aim of all its tendencies.' While attacking these projects, he is bound to admit that he has none of his own to offer in their place. He believes that these schemes are all the mere efforts of men to arrange what the Deity has arranged already, and that if the natural organisation of the world ceased to perform its functions, human ability would be incompetent to supply its place. He can see no function that is left for man to perform in reference to the economical and social condition of his species, but that which he performs when he develops the resources of the physical world, or preserves organic life from premature decay—the function of *assisting nature.*

As in the preservation of the human body from disease, we do not take any of the component parts to pieces, and reconstruct them according to our own theories, but, on the other hand, we endeavour to preserve all the parts in their original integrity—so in the regulation of man's conduct towards man, we are not to attempt to reconstruct the natural principles of organisation implanted in human nature, but to preserve them in their integrity; and this we accomplish not by establishing organisation, but by establishing *security.* Whatever civilised legislation, disabused of the idea that it can reconstruct mankind, does, is directed towards the promotion of security. To this end we protect life; we protect the person and the reputation from injury; we protect opinion

from outrage; we protect prejudice even from outrage, if that protection itself be not an outrage; we protect labour; we protect property; we protect commerce, saving it from invasion or restriction; and finally, we protect general freedom of action, wherever it does not interfere with any of the other objects so protected.

Our main reason for advocating the doctrine of no further interference is the strong one of necessity: the interference cannot be effective, except to the production of that amount of temporary mischief which is always accomplished by attempting the impracticable. An interfering legislature drives men back upon those first principles of political economy which are as unchangeable as the tides and the seasons; and whatever is accomplished by exertion, or vigilance, or cruelty, in any one direction, is counteracted by the revulsion of nature in some other. Though Jack Cade, when he 'means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and put a new nape on it,' proclaims that 'in England there shall be seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny; the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops'—yet his friends would find that the halfpenny loaves and the ten-hooped cans were not more easily obtained than they had been; and that, for all practical purposes, he might as well have decided that at midwinter the sun should set at half-past six instead of half-past three. The French, who have tried all impossibilities, for the purpose, one would think, of teaching the rest of the world wisdom, have tried this also. Their Convention decreed that 100 francs in their paper assignats should be equal to 100 francs in gold; commerce defied the law by raising the price of articles ten times the nominal amount when paid in paper. Despotism tried to keep down the levelling waters in another direction; fixed prices were assigned to particular articles, with the guillotine to enforce them—but the articles disappeared from commerce. When a man has made a watch or a table, despotism can take it from him at its own price, or at none; but it cannot compel him to make more watches and tables, or to work at a remuneration less than what the community would be inclined to afford to him. French revolutionary despotism, however, did its best to replace by force the natural operation of trade: it punished every man who, having been a year in trade, resigned his occupation; it made an attempt to 'take stock' all through the country, that it might not be cheated. The baker, the butcher, the draper, the grocer—every man who made, or bought and sold commodities—was brought within the strictest regulations, which the guillotine was always at hand to enforce; but all in vain. One may form a faint conception of the mixed tyranny and anarchy of these regulating efforts from a curious fact mentioned by Thiers, showing the difficulty of enforcing in France regulations of the simplest and most reasonable character:—'The registration offices have

not yet succeeded in registering at what price any estate is sold—an estate, which is something so tangible and manifest! An estate is publicly and legally sold in France for 1,000,000 francs, or a house for 500, and yet the proper authorities cannot gain precise information of the stipulated sum. . . . And yet,' he continues, 'you pretend to know, that you may reduce to a fixed amount, the price for which all the tape and calico, all the shoes and hats, are sold in France.'* We have seen already how utterly unavailing has been with us the act of 1831 for the suppression of the truck system.† A later act, passed not for the purpose of regulating labour, but with the far more justifiable object of preserving public decency, prohibited the occupation of females in some of the departments of coal-mining; but it has been only partly effective, and this partial efficacy has been obtained for it not without a considerable struggle. Notwithstanding the stringency of our stamp laws, we all know how insufficiently the amount of stamps purchased in any year would represent the transactions declared by law to be subject to the duty, and how many sums of money are acknowledged, without the payment of the receipt-tax. The cost and difficulty of taking a census of the people once in ten years, might afford a lively idea of the difficulty of regulating all their transactions every year and every day.

Legislation professing to limit the hours of work, or the rate of remuneration, only deceives the working-classes. If they require to give twelve hours of their labour for their bread, an act of parliament cannot give them the same bread for ten hours. They must look to other remedies; and the main and most prominent one is the increase of their productive capacity by skill and intelligence, until the work of ten hours or of eight hours be worth what that of twelve has been. The policeman may seize, and the justice imprison, the man who is caught labouring during the eleventh hour, and his employer; but they can never compel the ten hours to be worth twelve.

Some oppressed trade is ever calling for relief from the legislature, and ever calling in vain. The deficiency its followers suffer under is a deficiency of effective productiveness; and until that defect is supplied—which it can only be by themselves—there is no fund out of which they can receive a better subsistence. The handloom weavers, to whom we have already referred at so much length,‡ have frequently occupied the attention of the legislature, and have been the object of the most elaborate inquiries. Far from thinking that their state and prospects did not deserve the attention it received, we do not think a more important object can appeal to the consideration of the government and of the legislature, and of every thinking man in the

* Rights of Property, p. 204. † See above, p. 151. ‡ See chaps. i. and ii.

country, than the state of any considerable body of the working-classes. When they are suffering, there is something wrong somewhere—in legislation, in opinion, or in morals, which it will be beneficial to put right; and, as we shall more fully consider in connection with emigration, there may be some alleviative application to those even who are afflicted with evils too old to be remedied. But if the working-classes ever believe, as they are too apt to do, that inquiries and reports, and an exhibition of interest by the legislature, will lead to measures for converting a bad trade into a good one, they will be wofully mistaken; and the inquiry that inspires such hopes had often been better let alone. In May 1848 the journeymen bakers of London appealed to the House of Commons, through Lord Robert Grosvenor, for a committee of inquiry into their state. The facts which they had to urge were monstrous, and almost incredible. Their champion, Dr Guy, said that the circumstances under which he took up their cause were these:—'Having for some years past turned my attention to the influence of employments upon health, I avail myself of my opportunity, as physician to one of our hospitals, of putting questions to the patients as to the nature of their occupations, their hours of work, their wages, and so forth; and I must confess that I was not a little surprised when one of my patients, who was a journeyman baker, told me that his usual hours of work were from eleven o'clock at night to seven o'clock the next evening, being just twenty hours. Such a statement seemed to me to require confirmation. It looked at first sight like a gross exaggeration. Accordingly, I put the same question to the next journeyman baker who presented himself, and received substantially the same answer. Both my informants, too, agreed in stating that such hours of work, a little more or a little less, were not mere exceptions to the rule, but the general custom of the trade.' *

The bakers of course desired a legislative remedy to follow on an inquiry; but parliament refused to grant the inquiry, and in so doing probably acted all the more humanely for the sufferers in the end. 'But though you failed in obtaining the committee,' says Dr Guy, 'you have every reason to congratulate yourselves that the attempt was made. You have obtained publicity: you have got a committee of the whole nation.' The very best service that this publicity can do to the journeymen bakers, is to make the trade an odious one, to which parents will unwillingly devote their children. The price of such labour and discomfort will then rise, and the consumers of hot morning rolls will have to pay more for their luxury. If the bakers can put themselves in a position to raise the market value of night-work, they will have

* Case of the Journeymen Bakers.

the remedy in their own hands. They have an example already before them: the compositors employed in printing the London morning papers receive a fourth part more wages than those employed in book-work. It is to be feared that the depressed condition of the journeymen bakers must be attributed to parents yielding to the temptation of getting their sons early provided for. In the bakehouse they receive a sufficiency of food at least from a very early age; and the improvident parent snatches at the advantage, unmindful of the misery to which he dooms his child.

We turn from labour to another frequent object of interference —landed property. We have recorded our objection to entails and other laws which artificially increase the size of estates*—we have the same objection to any law for subdividing landed property, or otherwise artificially producing its partition into small patches. As it will be with every other commodity, so it is with land—whatever removes it out of the free market, or sends it there only to be sold when it is of a particular size, or requires that it should only be possessed when it is of some regulated or established extent, interferes with its adaptability to commerce and to the wants of man, and thus injures its value to the community. If no person with £5000, which he is ready to invest in an estate can do so, either because the law has decreed that no estate shall be smaller than the value of £20,000, or shall be larger than the value of £1000; or even if it has decreed that the estate, however large it may be when it is purchased, shall not be equally large to the next generation—the landed property of the community is not so available to its citizens as it might be. It has been well said by Mr Mill, that, 'in an economical point of view, the best system of landed property is that in which land is most completely an object of commerce; passing readily from hand to hand when a buyer can be found, to whom it is worth while to offer a greater sum for the land than the value of the income drawn from it by its existing possessor.'†

Of the two forms of interference, perhaps that which either directly or indirectly forces subdivision is the more pernicious. In France, by the Code Napoleon, the estate belonging to a landed proprietor who leaves no settlement is equally divided among his children; and if one of them has died and left children of his own, his lot is divided among these grandchildren of the deceased. The owner is restricted in the power of altering this arrangement. If he have one child, he can only dispose of one-half of his estate; if he have two, of a third; if he have three or more, of a fourth.‡

In a country like our own, where a rich man may disinherit his children, and leave them helpless vagabonds, unless he be bound by an entail, such a law may appear to be iniquitous and preposterous;

* See above, p. 61. † Principles, book v. chap. ix. § 3.
‡ Cinque Codes, lib. iii. §§ 745, 913.

but it had its origin in a principle which has lingered with more or less steadiness about all the laws of all civilised nations, from the Romans downwards. Where these laws have not set apart certain portions of the estate which a father of a family cannot alienate from his children, they have at least raised many tough technical difficulties in the way of the enforcement of settlements removing a man's wealth beyond the limits of his own family. The Romans were not content with the most distinct announcement of the testator's intention to leave his wealth to some stranger whom he named—they required that the children should be specially disinherited; and the father was not permitted to overlook his offspring, but was required to proclaim to the world that he intended to exercise his privilege of depriving that offspring of the property which the law would otherwise assign to them. The common English superstition, that a father requires to bequeath something to his eldest son, and can only disinherit him by 'cutting him off with a shilling,' has its origin in a latent homage to the same principle; a principle leaving nothing to be inferred, but requiring that he who invaded the accepted custom and practice of his age or country, should do so in distinct expressed terms.

These legal and social impediments to the capacity of the owner of property to alienate it from his own family, represent a principle, both important and sound, although it is not easily applied to practice. It is clear that if it were as likely that a rich man, who had brought up his children in luxurious idleness, should bequeath his wealth to any of his other fellow-citizens as to his own offspring, a new source of calamity and distress would be added to those with which the world has to combat. A community have a title to demand, for the sake of the public welfare, that he who brings up his children in the midst of them, in affluence and luxury, shall not leave them, with their unproductive habits and costly tastes, to prey upon the rest of society, that he may gratify some irrational whim or unnatural animosity. While we see not only maintained in theory, but exemplified in hard practice, the principle that the property and industry of the country must support those whom calamity disqualifies for self-support, it is not too much for society to insist, that before a rich man's children require the assistance of the rest of the community, the wealth of him who has brought them into the world should be applied to their subsistence. It is difficult to maintain that a man of fortune is entitled to leave behind him a posterity who may, in any one of various shapes, apply for, and obtain the assistance of, their fellow-citizens, while he is entitled to dedicate to some capricious use the wealth that might have prevented them from sinking into destitution. But it must be admitted that it is very difficult practically to apply any system

for the preservation of wealth, whether in a movable or immovable form, equally divided among the descendants of the owner. Landed property is not the only investment that it is difficult to divide. Capital embarked in a manufactory or in ships—the value of a patent for an invention—the copyright of a book, a picture, or a statue—are all forms of property little susceptible of partition.

The general experience of the effect of restrictive limitations seems in the meantime to point to conventional habit and public opinion as the best means both of compelling and of enabling parents, in the disposal of their property, to do justice to their children and to the world. The examples of legal restrictions on this privilege, and of their effects, are not favourable to them. On the one side we have entails, which, framed with the view of making an estate the property to perpetuity of the descendants of its owner, have only had the effect of plunging all parties connected with them into difficulties, from the younger children, left portionless by a parent wallowing in wealth, to the extravagant heir, prohibited from relieving himself of the pressure of debt, by paying his creditors out of his own estate. On the other hand, the French system of forced partition seems to have been equally defective. Among the 32,000,000 of the population of France in 1835, the landed proprietors and their families were classed as amounting to 20,000,000. The return of proprietors charged to the land-tax in the same year, showed the absurd number of 10,896,682—a number more than the whole adult male population of the country could have amounted to, and one which, as the reader will see by the preceding enumeration, would make the number of proprietors considerably exceed that of one-half of the number of the proprietor families, so as to make the average number of a proprietor family less than two. This anomaly is accounted for by the amount representing not the number of landowners, but the number of estates; thus leaving it a palpable fact, that many of the landowners must have possessed spots of ground separated from each other, and dispersed at greater or less distances around the villages where their habitations are fixed. It requires only to be stated to be understood, that any system arbitrarily severing estates into fractions, reduces the productive value of the land. There has been in France a perpetual reuniting process in operation as to landed property; but on the first contemplation of such a system, we cannot help believing that when a well-conducted farm is severed into so many pieces, and the owners of the fragments have the privilege of either making a pecuniary arrangement to reunite them, or joining their fragments of property to fragments dispersed in other directions, whatever may be the ultimate arrangement adopted, the continuity of the cultivation of the farm has received a check,

from which artificial arrangements will not recover it. Land cannot be split, parcelled, and transferred like railway stock. If it be a great evil that it is accumulated from generation to generation, under a law which enables estates to increase, and prohibits them from decreasing, it appears to be a still greater evil that it should be subject, on the occasion of the death of every owner, to be divided into so many aliquot parts, however temporary the partition may be.

A family in the humbler classes of life would naturally separate themselves by choice, if they were not separated by training and education, into different trades and occupations, partly connected with agriculture, partly with other kinds of production. The French law requires that the peasant's children shall all start as peasants, whatever it may be suitable that they should afterwards become. It might be expedient, if the land is of the size fitted to make a good farm, that the eldest son should farm it, while the others become respectively manufacturers, builders, or shoemakers; but the French law tends to require all the sons to go through the ordeal of being farmers, whether they continue to pursue that profession or not. It is calculated that there are in France 1,243,200 proprietors of estates not exceeding five acres in extent, and of course totally unfit to feed a family, as it is calculated that in France it requires three acres to feed each individual. We require only to have this fact stated to show that there must be a great waste of what may be called landed power throughout that country. If there were a division of land in this country, and our busy citizens received patches here and there of about five acres, they would require to abandon their lucrative occupations in the towns, and cultivate these their estates, or else to leave each estate to such productive management as its small produce would afford. It is easy to believe that our farms of 500 acres would show a wofully decreased produce if they were thus respectively dispersed among 100 people. Nor can it be said that there is in France that free trade in land which will keep estates and farms at the size which capitalists will find most suitable for agricultural purposes. If a man should desire to buy up several small properties, with the view of making an estate sufficiently large to be cultivated with good profit, he is checked by remembering that in the next generation it must be partitioned into small holdings, and that he has no control over its subdivision. To obviate this palpable discouragement to systematic agriculture, some late French pamphleteers have vehemently supported the application of the principle of 'association' to agriculture—a principle which would only be an adaptation of our own joint-stock system. Notwithstanding the partial example of the Swiss dairy system, it is extremely difficult to aggregate a peasantry—whose interests, pursuits, and general habit of life, tend to isolation—and to induce

them to adopt united operations; and whether this project shall ever be effectively carried out, is one of the many undecided problems in the future destiny of France.

We have abundance of depreciatory remarks on the agriculture of France under the system of government and proprietary rights anterior to the first revolution. We have abundance of the same description of late years; and an impartial reader, not much versed in practical agricultural details, and not well able to test the accuracy of the precise statements made by agricultural critics, feels at a loss to decide whether, according to these accounts, the old system, which restrained landed property from such partitions as a free commerce would have occasioned, or the modern law, which creates partitions which a free commerce would not have created, is the more detrimental to agricultural production and the public interest.

But while the legislature ought not to dictate the shape and extent to which landed or any other property may be permitted to exist in the possession of any description of person, or may pass from hand to hand, the law ought always to protect and give efficacy to those forms of property, or of any other kind of right, which are created and supported by inveterate national custom. We have had already an opportunity of showing the dangerous and demoralising effect of the absence of any fixed right among the Celtic cottars of the Scottish Highlands. In the north of Ireland there is a species of consuetudinary property, called 'tenant right,' by which the tenant of a farm is entitled to receive purchase-money amounting to so many years' rent, on its being transferred to another tenant. The public in this island owe their knowledge of the existence of such a right solely to the huge folios containing the report of Lord Devon's commission. From them it appears that the consuetudinary right is upwards of two centuries old. It has been transmitted to the present holders by a long line of ancestors, or by previous holders, who have received from them an equivalent for it. The value of the right is estimated in the tenant's bankrupt estate, and no landlord can practically venture to abolish it; yet it maintains itself solely by the force of custom, and the law does not acknowledge its existence. The consequence of this neglect has been, that the practice has shown a tendency to spread into other districts where it had no legitimate origin. It should have been long assigned as a species of estate in the land, but the law refuses to acknowledge it as property. Being considered an adjunct of mere tenancy, one tenant thinks he ought to enjoy it as well as another; and so by caballing and bullying, and sometimes by outrage, landlords beyond the districts where it has existed as an old consuetudinary right for many generations have been compelled to concede it.

We have thus adduced some instances for the purpose of show-

ing that the main service which the law has to perform to commerce, industry, and property, is to impart security by affording protection; and that there are few circumstances in which it can regulate the nature or extent of transactions, contracts, or disposals of property, without danger. A very casual glance at the history of the law will show how much this has been felt in the practice of legislation. All efforts to regulate transactions have, like the actions of men working in the dark, been liable to violent revulsions; while all the alterations that have generally taken place in relation to legislation for security have been to change it in the direction of making it more effective; and as civilisation has made progress, the machinery for effecting security has been drawn tighter, while that for regulation has been gradually relaxed, and in a great measure revoked.

In Britain there have been laws against the exportation of wool and corn; against selling certain articles in more or less than certain quantities; against taking gold out of the country. As there have been laws against exportation, so there have been laws to encourage exportation and suppress importation. There have been statutes to prohibit foreign workmen from settling in the country, and to encourage foreign workmen to settle in the country. Thus the various shapes of interference pass before us on the statute-book like the squares on a check-board—some later statesman reversing whatever principle of interference a previous one has adopted, and no legislator fairly entitled to believe that he has done anything not to be overturned and counteracted, until we come to him who has in some happy moment swept from the statute-book the whole fabric of elaborate and contradictory interference which his predecessors have built up.

To such variations and revolutions we see that the laws for mere security without interference are not liable. Fortunately no statesman, and no political writer of any authority, has maintained that the protection which the law awards to property and labour should be withdrawn. No man with the slightest prospect of being listened to by many members of our community, would venture to suggest that the laws which give protection to buying and selling, and enforce the contract of sale, by compelling the purchaser to pay the stipulated price, and the seller to give delivery of the goods sold, should be abolished. The several contracts of letting and hiring, of loan, of security, of insurance, &c. are equally safe from legal convulsion. It may be deemed necessary to change the manner in which the law operates for the protection of these transactions, to alter the jurisdiction of a court, or amend a form of procedure; but that the laws which protect them should be altogether repealed, like those for the protection of the home producers of corn and cattle, or of native manufacturers, is not among the contingencies to which sane

men look forward. The only instance, indeed, in which the rule of security has been to any extent interfered with, has been for the purpose of giving assistance to some of the antiquated arrangements for interference. Thus when the usury laws, founded on an old superstition, prohibited the taking of interest exceeding 5 per cent., it was deemed a necessary means for enforcing the prohibition, that the law should not give protection to usurious loans; and thus, in this instance, a contract for the use of money, though the fair price only of that use at the time it was stipulated for, was refused protection. The refusal of legal protection being justly considered as equivalent to a heavy penalty, and having the economical merit of often being self-acting, is a plan frequently adopted for enforcing restrictive and prohibitive laws. But it has been invariably adopted as an exception, involving a penalty, and in a shape which shows that the constant and uniform policy of the law is to afford protection to bargains and commercial transactions—a uniformity of purpose which, as has been already remarked, is singularly at variance with the mutability of the laws which interfere with commerce by regulation and restriction.

The exceptional withdrawal of this legal protection is sometimes a useful negative remedy for the suppression of vice and for the protection of the public. It is always the policy of the law to refuse protection to contracts the fulfilment of which infers the commission of a crime. Thus the courts of law would not give effect to an arrangement between thieves or swindlers for the partition of their plunder. Where the object of any engagement is palpably vicious and demoralising, it is paralysed by the same withdrawal of protection; and thus the price of prostitution, or of the subversion of innocence, is not recoverable in the courts of law of any civilised community, according to the example which modern nations have derived from the law of the Romans. Many jurists believe that idle and useless contracts, not tending to increase production or properly distribute wealth, should also stand beyond the pale of the law's protection. Gambling debts are probably not enforceable by law in any country in Europe. Even the sums betted in the aristocratic occupation of horse-racing, sufficiently important in the eyes of many great men, are refused protection by the law, and must depend on the honour of those who become connected with transactions not always calculated to strengthen and improve their social virtues. In Scotland, the law long refused protection to wagers, and the English judges regretted that some technicalities had prevented the adoption of this negative principle by their own courts; but the defect was supplied in 1845.* The public safety has suggested some in-

* Acts 8 and 9 Vict., c. 109.

stances in which protection has been withheld. So it has been in all transactions with alien enemies, especially when they have related to the supply of warlike stores. It has been deemed prudent in this country to refuse any right of action on policies of insurance by any person on the life of another, unless where the party insuring has a positive interest in the other remaining alive. A creditor has an undeniable interest to insure his debtor's life to the extent of his debt: it is his interest that the debtor should live long enough to pay him, and the law allows him to protect himself against the opposite contingency by obtaining a policy of insurance. For the same reason a person who has an allowance from another, or who depends on him for subsistence, may legally insure his life. The reasons for discouraging insurances where there is no such interest are very obvious—their sanction might be a temptation to atrocious crimes.

It will readily be seen that the classes of transaction—of bargains between man and man—to which any well-regulated code of laws refuses its sanction, are narrow and exceptional. If we look at the general and natural train of the transactions which men find an inducement to hold with each other, we shall see that they are generally conducive not only to the advantage of the parties concerned, but to the good of mankind in general, or that at all events the good vastly preponderates over the evil.

But it is one of the conditions of the production of this beneficial effect that there should be freedom to transact, and that this freedom should belong to all the parties who come together, and should characterise each transaction from the beginning to the end. Many misapprehensions have originated from not looking at the question in this complete state, but from looking to the freedom of one person, or set of persons, as stamping the whole operation with the character of free trade. We may take at once the strongest and the best illustration of this distinction—slavery and the slave-trade. The law has long restrained the holding of a slave within the British dominion; and the British people, by an unexampled act of generosity, abolished the practice in all the territories of the crown. In the first view, this may present itself as a limitation and restriction of transactions. A man is prohibited from holding property of a particular kind—from dealing in a commodity which his more-favoured brother across the Atlantic is free to hold, and buy, and sell. But the law which refused to acknowledge a slave in the United Kingdom, was only a law without a restrictive and coercive department; and the alteration of the law in the colonies was the removal of a restriction—that strongest and most absolute of all commercial restrictions, which not only forbids a man from entering on this or that transaction, but converts him, so far as the law can, into a mere commodity, the object only of the contracts and engagements of other

men, with no acknowledged existence or legal capacity to enter into any engagements in his own person, to buy or sell, to let or hire. By such a law the whole freedom and the whole power is given to one side—all is taken away from the other; and the prohibition of slavery or the slave-trade is the protection of free trade, not an infringement of it.

The instrumentality by which that united freedom and protection which it is the function of the state to afford, is put in operation is the whole code of the civil and criminal law—the law for the protection of rights and the enforcement of obligations. The great and too-well experienced difficulties with which it has to contend, arise whenever one sort of protection comes into conflict with another. It was formerly a crime punishable with death to steal anything above the value of twelvepence 'in a booth or tent, in a market or fair, in the day-time or in the night, by violence or breaking the same; the owner or some of his family being therein.'* Or 'perversely and maliciously to cut down or destroy the powdyke in the fens of Norfolk and Ely.'† Here there was exhibited a zeal even unto slaying for the protection of property, but not much for the protection of life, or for the preservation of the feelings of the people from outrage, and of the integrity of witnesses and jurymen from being violated. Such violent laws, by invading other securities, counteracted their own principal end. In the succinct words of Bentham, the punishment of death, so profusely awarded by our ancestors, is liable to three objections:—'1*st*, It makes perjury appear meritorious, by founding it on humanity; 2*d*, It produces contempt for the laws, by rendering it notorious that they are not executed; 3*d*, It renders convictions arbitrary and pardons necessary.'‡ With barbarous nations punishment is generally vengeance; but civilisation teaches us that the prevention of crime is the sole proper object of punishment, and that when it passes beyond what is necessary to this object, its infliction is itself a crime. It has taught us also that the criminal is a human being, and that it is our duty to use all means which offer a hope of redeeming him from the misery and degradation of vice.

The department of the ordinary law of rights and obligations, in which there is the greatest difficulty in adjusting the bounds of protection, is the law of debtor and creditor.

It is not the policy of the laws of any civilised community to inflict direct punishment on the citizen for extravagance or imprudence, unless it be accompanied by palpable fraud. In leaving the unfortunate debtor, however, subject to those remedies which his creditors are entitled to adopt for their own safety and advantage, it has often been found that, thus thrown on the

* Blackstone, iv. 241. † Ib. 245. ‡ Works, i. 450.

mercy of injured and exasperated men, he has been subjected to more severe punishment than the criminal law inflicts on great offenders. Under the old system of imprisonment for debt, the captivity incurred by the mere thoughtless exercise of a too sanguine temperament frequently lasted during all the days of a long life. The legislature, when it had afforded the creditor so potent a remedy, thought it had done enough, and refused to impart to him direct facilities for paying himself out of the debtor's estate. Thus while imprisonment for debt was at its most rigorous height, the law of England refused to let real or landed property be attached for simple contract debts. The creditor could only hope to get access to the estate by the coercive influence of the prison, and many a landed proprietor spent the larger half of his life amid the putrescence, physical and moral, of the old jails; satisfied that, by this sacrifice of character, liberty, and refined comfort, he was successfully protecting his estate from the just claims of his creditors. Persons of this class were not fair objects of compassion. Their imprisonment was self-imposed. They had but to give up their property, and their persons were free. But those who had no property to resign were frequently, through the vindictive wrath of their creditors, subjected to inflictions against which nothing afforded them any protection. These tyrannical privileges were far from exercising a beneficial influence in favour of credit. The terrible powers put into his hands made the tradesman more reckless. He looked for payment, not to the property of the individual he dealt with, but to this power over his person. But ineffective vengeance often exhausted itself. The penniless debtor was not made more able to meet his obligations by being immured within the walls of a prison, and mixed with an idle and dissolute community; and too often, when the costly vengeance of the duped tradesman had exhausted itself, he regretted that he had not looked more to the means of his customer than to his power of arbitrary persecution.

The tendency of alterations of the law in all parts of the United Kingdom, has lately been to render the remedies against the debtor's means more rapid, cheap, and efficacious, and to reduce to a corresponding extent the despotic machinery which the old law put in his power. The speculative tradesman, who takes large profits and gives long credits, dislikes this alteration; for it drives him to look more to the character and sufficiency of his customer, than to his own power of future intimidation and coercion. His dealings lay with thoughtless, and often unprincipled men, with 'good connections,' whom he left untroubled for years, depending on the influence which the scandal and the horrors of imprisonment might have in extracting payment from their relations, or otherwise driving the spendthrifts, by shifts

and expedients, to 'raise the wind.' The restriction of this coercive power, joined with facilitations for obtaining payment from their debtors' funds, was intended to make it the interest of dealers to avoid bad customers; and being thus restricted to the class who are likely to make prompt payment, they are deprived of the excuses and facilities for overcharge which gave a portion of them a strong interest in the system of imprisonment.

So far as the late alterations of the law have practically succeeded in developing the principles on which they were based, where imprisonment is still permitted, it is subject to judicial restraints, which apply it either as a punishment or a remedy. It acts in the former capacity when the culpable recklessness or the fraud of the insolvent debtor is a reason for delaying his discharge. It acts in its other capacity when it is used as a means of coercing the debtor to develop resources which he is suspected of concealing, or to make over funds which the law is unable directly to attach. When the guilty and the innocent were indiscriminately herded together, a strict discipline appeared in the aspect of an addition to tyranny already too great; luxuries and relaxations were allowed, which of course were most accessible to the guilty detainers of the funds of their creditors, and least accessible to the humble victims of misfortune. Thus the debtors' prison exhibited the extremes of abject misery and wild excess; and despair and revelry lay down together. Since the law has been changed, and at least its spirit prescribes that the prison shall only contain persons more or less guilty, it has been considered fair to extend the regulations applicable to criminal prisoners, in so far as they exclude the means of luxury and excess from the prison door to those confined for debt. While the debtor either conceals property which ought to be available to his creditors, or refuses to perform some act which may put them in possession of his estate, he is not an object of pity if he should be deprived of the sensual indulgences to which his class are so calamitously addicted.

The laws of bankruptcy and insolvency have two objects:—The first is, to distribute at once the whole available property of the debtor among his creditors; the second is, to release the debtor from claims which, if allowed to press upon him all his days, might subject him to a life-long slavery—an existence without hope. The system is a sort of general equitable adjustment of the interests of all parties; and the main difficulty to be overcome is, to reconcile the just claims of the creditors or the public with mercy to the debtor. If the latter remain liable all his days to the ceaseless attacks of his creditors, he may not only be subjected to a punishment which he has not deserved, but he becomes unnerved and soddened. Of whatever exertion he undertakes, others reap the reward. The next to universal influence

of this is, that he ceases to exert himself, that society loses a productive member, and the creditors gain nothing. It is thus sometimes the best arrangement for all parties, that whatever can be realised should be distributed at once among the creditors, and that the debtor should start free, to shape for himself a new course of life, should fortune and his own energies favour him.

Now it is clear, from the beginning of this subject, that there are two classes of men who are placed in very different positions, and who ought to be differently dealt with. The commercial man, whose undertakings have been unsuccessful, is generally the victim of miscalculation or calamitous accident. The market to which he brought his goods is overstocked—his banker has been obliged to refuse his usual and expected discounts—his correspondents have failed, or his ships have been lost at sea—such are among the common average causes of commercial bankruptcy. But in general the professional man, the landed proprietor, or the annuitant, who incurs a mass of debt so far beyond the compass of his probable means, that he requires to compound with his creditors, has selected his style of living and scale of expenditure with culpable recklessness, if he has not even deliberately chosen to indulge himself in vanities and luxuries for which he knows that he can never pay, at the cost of the tradesmen whom he has induced to supply them. There are exceptions of course to both classes: the merchant's embarrassments are sometimes produced by recklessness and profligacy, either in his personal expenditure or his speculations; the misfortunes of the private debtor are sometimes caused by unforeseen calamities, or the treachery or recklessness of others. But in the general case it may be said that bankruptcy is an occasional incident of commercial enterprise, which no forethought or integrity can entirely obviate; while it is only in a very few cases that the man who is not engaged in speculations could not protect himself from insolvency.

Thus, in abstract justice, there is a difference between the moral culpability of the two classes of insolvents; and there ought to be, and is, a corresponding difference in the law applicable to them. The main feature of this difference is, that when the commercial trader's property is realised and divided among his creditors, he is not only released of all immediate pursuit by them, but is finally discharged of all his debts, and may begin the world a new man, clear of his former obligations. The aim, however, of the arrangements by which insolvent debtors are discharged, has not been, or at least ought not to be, an absolute release from all existing pecuniary obligations, but protection against personal responsibility for them and immediate pursuit. There are some incidental points of difference favouring this distinction between the two classes of cases. The persons with whom the mer-

chant conducts his transactions are to a certain extent accessories to their speculative and uncertain character. They give him credit, which in his case does not mean merely that they are to be paid at periodical intervals—the principle on which it is supposed that retail dealers send accounts to their customers—but that the payment is to take place when funds are realised by the speculation. On this principle the wholesale importer gives his bill to the shipper at so long time as will enable him to secure payment from the retailer, who in his turn gives his bill at so long time as will probably put him in funds from his retail trade. Neither party is relieved from the debt though the speculation should prove disastrous to him; but the very character of the arrangements shows that the seller expects his payment to be to a certain extent contingent on the purchaser being paid in his turn; and he knows very well that if in many instances the purchaser find a course of speculations unsuccessful, he will cease to be paid.

Now it will readily be felt that a creditor of this class, who is to a certain extent a participator in the speculations of his debtor, should not be entitled when they fail to claim his pound of flesh, and render him a damaged and useless man for life, without hope of restoration. The creditor in such circumstances, in fact, knows that he runs a certain degree of risk; and in every wholesale house there is an understood deduction from profits in the shape of bad debts—an element which in some classes of trade is of so uniform a character, that, if the business be well conducted, its proportion may be pretty accurately anticipated. The persons who supply wine, and boots, and clothes, are in a different position. These articles are to be consumed for the benefit of the purchaser—not to be resold. They are the objects of no speculation. If the purchaser is unable to pay for them, he ought not to have bought them, and he must be prepared for a rigorous exaction of the debt he has incurred. If he could, when he thought fit, obtain an absolute discharge, by taking advantage of a system of bankrupt law, he might thus clear himself of all his obligations, just before he succeeds to an estate, and the unpaid creditor might see him revelling in idle luxury. It is thus clear that the reasons on which it has been thought expedient that the commercial speculator, if he has deeply involved himself without dishonesty or very culpable recklessness, should be discharged, and allowed to start anew, do not apply to such a case as this. Hence we see reasons for the policy of completely absolving the commercial man from his obligations, while the ordinary debtor, if he should be fortunate enough to secure available property, still remains liable for them.

The laws of debtor and creditor will not have fulfilled their proper function if they require to be often practically enforced.

One of the chief essential elements in all commerce is *confidence*. In treating with uncivilised, or, as they are sometimes termed, unsophisticated communities, the civilised trader's first and main annoyance is invariably the short-sighted dishonesty of the people. It is chiefly in a high stage of civilisation that the trader knows the full breadth and depth of the principle that honesty is the best policy. A strict and rapid administration of justice is necessary to the protection of this commercial confidence; but it may safely be pronounced that where the practical interference of the law is appealed to for the enforcement of a large proportion of the engagements undertaken by the citizens of a state, *there* there can be little commercial freedom and enterprise. To understand how far confidence must be an element in the successful trade of any community, let us suppose the extreme case of a town where no retail seller of any commodity would be likely to be paid for any article bought in his shop without raising an action against each purchaser: it is evident that the retail trade in such a place would be much restricted. But we see more or less of the virtue of mutual confidence in retail dealings all over the world—it is where the same sense of security is exhibited in large transactions, that commercial confidence can be said to have properly taken root; and the larger the speculations which merchants are ready to conclude with speed and confidence, the higher has this beneficial spirit risen. Thus we have an instance of a very high class of commercial confidence in the large manufactories in this country: the manufacturer's seal or stamp is placed on the package of the commodity, and it passes from hand to hand, from country to country, uninspected and unopened, each receiver and transferer believing it to contain what the proper marks indicate. Many instances might be adduced to illustrate the wonderful economical advantage of commercial confidence. Among the simplest and most obvious is that of a person receiving payment in Scottish one pound notes, who, after having counted the pieces of paper in his hand, would probably be quite unable to tell whether they were all the notes of one bank, or each from a different bank. Having counted them, doubled them up, and nodded his head, he has absolved his original debtor, and taken obligations from the bankers, one or more, who have issued the notes put in a bundle in his pocket-book—and yet he cannot tell the name of any one of the individuals who are thus made his debtors—he does not know their position in society—he does not even know the designations of the establishments from which the notes have issued, though, if he be a good man of business, he will probably make a tolerably accurate guess, when he remembers the district whence his creditor has come, and his business connections, or the bank with which he deals.

Perhaps, however, the most striking instances of the effect of

commercial confidence are to be found where people from the countries where such confidence is established come in contact with communities less civilised, in which there may be abundance of simplicity, but no reliance—where the peasant never suspects his neighbour, because he never trusts him. The first impulse of such a people is not suspicion—the peasant believes that the man who takes his sheep intends to pay for it on the spot—the innkeeper affording wine is equally sanguine. But offer to either of them, instead of the current coin of his district, a Bank of England note, and see how blank he will look. It was thus that in the Peninsular war the peasants treated the bills by the commissaries of the British army. Knowing that paper obligations by their own government and aristocracy were of little value in the money market, they presumed those of half hostile strangers to be worth still less. The consequence was that these bills—drawn on the British government, and as certain of being paid as any certainty can exist in human affairs—were bought up by speculators acquainted with their value for trifling sums.

The next stage of an intercourse between a community where confidence is well established, and a semi-barbarous people, generally takes the opposite extreme, of a silly confidence where there is reliance without knowledge; and the less the natural reliance of the people of the country on each other, the more blindly have they been often known to confide in the obligations of the stranger, as if their very form guaranteed fulfilment, and removed them from the sphere of the knaveries to which they are in other shapes so well inured. Thus among the people of the Indian peninsula, where forgery is looked upon as a venial offence, yet the reliance on English paper money has been so complete and unhesitating, that it must have been an easy means of fraud, Sir Alexander Burnes complained that he was treated as a sort of walking bank, and perpetually appealed to to issue his drafts or notes, which were unhesitatingly received as cash, and prized as a means of easily embodying and conveying property. 'We perceive,' says the author of 'The Commerce, Money, and Banking of India,' 'that in the Calcutta price-currents the rates of Scotch bank bills are regularly quoted. We have one of these bills now before us, of the Royal Bank, for £500, with no less than fourteen indorsements, and which had travelled over all India.'

CHAPTER XVI.

EDUCATION.

Considered in an Economic Sense—Intelligence Necessary to Develop Unlimited Productiveness—The Means of Meeting the Argument of those who Maintain that the Workman is Limited to the Work found for Him—A Practical Education Distinguished from a Smattering of High Learning—Good Soil for Education in the Industrious English Labourer—Excesses of Uneducated Workers from Want of a Better Stimulus—Effects on the Working-Classes of the Reproach that High Wages are Spent in Liquor—Safety of Society Dependent on Intelligence—Railways and Navigation—Intelligence to Save the Masses from being the Tools of Charlatans—Knowledge as Capital—Children have Forfeited no Privileges, and may be justly Instructed at the Public Cost—The Schoolmaster Superseding the Policeman—Industrial Training.

One of the main objects of this essay is to convince its readers of the fruitfulness of human industry and energy. We desire the removal of those conventional opinions which limit labour and its rewards to something prearranged by a settled classification over which the workers themselves have no control; which treat the industrial productiveness of the human race as the supply for a limited market; which make the advantageous positions of life privileges preassigned and limited to a fortunate few, instead of being the produce of the exertions which achieve them; which consider the unskilled and impoverished workmen as merely the persons who have got the worst seats in the theatre of life with its limited accommodation, and as incapable of obtaining a better position without displacing others; which finally look upon the improvement of the human faculties with stolid despair as a commodity not wanted, since there is already only too much of it in the world. In all these limitations and partitions we look as so many barriers placed by habit and prejudice in the way of the expansibility of the energies of the human race, and we wish to see them removed.

We will not perhaps avoid the answer, that the barriers are substantial, not imaginary; that a great part of the human race are an inert mass, waiting to be stirred from outward appliances; that the millions, totally ignorant of their own strength, if they can be said to have strength, wait to be dictated to by the employer who desires their labour, and offers a reward—which may perhaps be the market value of their services when the employer is partitioning out with his fellow-capitalists the sums they can respectively afford for the amount of bone and muscle, called labour, falling to the share of each—but which is to the labourer him-

self merely an arbitrary allowance, which it is sometimes at the will of his employer to withhold, and sometimes in his own power to take by violence. From the same quarter we may be told that to speak of the labouring-classes themselves as if they could benefit their lot, and as if they had the command of their own powers, is as preposterous as to speak of the riches of the mine being capable of developing themselves without the aid of the engineer. We shall be reminded that the very phraseology in which we talk of the working-classes—calling them 'the mass of the people,' the 'great body of the people,' the 'bulk of society'—indicate an inert body, not acting from within, but the mere dead, quiescent, physical element, which mind can excavate, divide, and mould to its own purposes—the excavator only dreading the danger of being overwhelmed and crushed by its inanimate weight. We shall be told that these terms are not merely ideal and figurative, that they express a reality, which is—the utter helplessness of the working-man to make his own position in this world, and to accomplish any other destiny than that in which he is placed. We are then asked, why preach the illimitability of human productiveness—the vast empire of intelligent and skilled labour—the enlarging destinies of industrious man, to those who stand all day in the market-place waiting till they are hired, and must take the penny, either for the twelfth hour, or for the burden and heat of the day, as their employers may dictate?

Well, then, if all this be true, let us take the obvious remedy, and so far as we can, *throw light into this dark mass, that it may be able to shake off the despotism of ignorance.*

What are generally called the higher aims of education—the imparting to men whose destined walk in life is science, literature, art, the learned professions, or scholarly leisure, the substantial knowledge on which their intellects are to work or dream—do not come within the scope of our present object. For the wealthy, and for a few of the ambitious who are not wealthy, acquiring the high education by which eminence may be achieved, there are abundant materials in this country. It may be a question whether they should be enlarged, or whether their present bulk is as great as need be desired, provided it were subject to a different distribution and management—with all these questions, vital and momentous in themselves, which are connected with the education and opportunities of the highly-cultivated and expanded intellects of society, we do not venture to interfere. We have been considering heretofore the great bulk of the people, and the material elements of wellbeing which they produce and enjoy; and it is only in its operations on this broad and substantial, if not dignified field, that we now propose to bestow a few words on the great question of education.

When we speak of industrial productiveness as not restrained by any definite limits, we understand at the same time that intelligence is leading forth and developing its powers. The productiveness of human beings without intelligence is miserably limited. In connection with mere handwork we have all grades of intelligence—from that of the great inventor who has found the method of setting a million of people to work in a new fashion, downwards through the apt employer who adapts the new source of production, the superintendent who is capable of seeing to the efficacy of its details, and the intelligent mechanic apt at managing the more complex operations, till we come to the man who has only intelligence enough to turn from some other trade of routine to a like function in connection with the new operation which has succeeded it. Throughout the whole process, what the new source of production has to combat with in its way downwards, is want of intelligence—want of a capacity in the bulk of the people to see new ways of service and emolument opening to them, and a necessity that the higher intelligence of the more enlightened agents in the opening of the new source of production, should not only perform their own function in discovery and organisation, but exert themselves in dragging the ignorant to their task, and showing them how it is to be executed.

The whole mass of the labour market is thus pervaded by two elements—intelligence, which plans, or discovers, and works; brute force, which only works in the physical acceptation of the term, and cannot even do that without aid from intelligence. We have chosen manufacturing industry as a symbol and illustration of this operation of intelligence. But it is not there alone that it is exhibited—it pervades the whole industrial field. If labour is wanted in one country, and not in another—if it is wanted in one occupation, and not in another—it is often the intelligence of others that discovers for the mere hand-labourer where, and in what pursuit, he may find employment. He feels himself led by an irresistible destiny to the place or to the occupation where he is to labour, as liquids find their level, or are propelled through a forcing-pump. He is himself powerless and unconscious: he neither knows the causes nor the effects of his acts, but he acts on under the blind dominion of an external intelligence.

How much more effective to good ends this intelligence would be if it were internal; how much more valuable the hand-labourer would be to himself and the whole human race if, instead of being blindly led here to do the simplest drudgery connected with the working of a new manufacturing invention, there to do some like drudgery in connection with a new public work, he should be able himself to speculate on and consider labour and its rewards, should be able to say of something in connection with a manufacturing process, 'that will be soon superseded by

machinery; if I am to work at it, I must take care to keep my hand free to try something else;' or should be able to see that the railway works, for which he is paid high wages, are not likely to be of long continuance; or to observe that by spending a few shillings of passage money, he may pass from a place where labour is producing a shilling a day, to a place where it produces five shillings.

We will be told that if the workman be made intelligent, he will do something better than hand-labour. By all means let him, if he find it more to his profit. We believe that the productiveness of labour will no more be injured by the light of knowledge, than the productiveness of the fields by the light of the sun; but rather that each is in its sphere a necessary agent of increase. If some of the labours of a higher intelligence should be less of a monopoly than they are just now, we should not regret the event as a calamity; but in the meantime we think it is far from being likely to occur. The world's profit from high endeavour is not in the emoluments it gains, but in the substantial services it performs. The openings through which the exertions of a widened intelligence will be developed, will, we believe, rather be in the performance of new services to the world, than in a competition with the present followers of old accepted pursuits. But if it should take in some respects this shape, and some monopolies of skill and capacity should be infringed, we cannot regret such an event. Justice will be the more completely established—merit will be the more accurately rewarded. It is not by such results that we are likely to see the pyramid of society set on its apex, and uselessness rewarded at the expense of effective exertion. If in such a state of society, where men are crowding on faster and faster with increasing zeal of exertion, and intellects becoming sharpened, there should be some who shake their heads, and give up the competition as vain and hopeless—what will it be but the exemplification, on a small scale, of what we now see exemplified on a large? The persons who so give up the contest will hold the place of the unskilled, unproductive members of society—will be like the handloom weavers and the hedgers and ditchers of the present day. But in a society raised a general step above our own in intelligence, there would probably be this difference in the humblest class of workers, that they would be fewer in number, and therefore less miserable than at present.

'A little learning is a dangerous thing;' not a cause perhaps of any danger other than of a critical kind, in the exposure of the person who uses it to the derision of the profoundly learned. But this 'little learning,' which, whether dangerous or not, is sometimes useless, is not a convertible term with a plain education, where the faculties are disciplined fully up to the point to which

the memory is stored. We look here solely to what is useful; and learning, in the common sense of the term, is useful only to a few, though it may be ornamental and pleasurable to many. The possession of Greek scholarship, so valuable to those whose pursuits are in the learned professions, or who desire to distinguish themselves in literature—so rich in noble study to the well-educated gentleman—would consume in its pursuit more time and labour than the mechanic or the ordinary man of business ought to devote to it. It has been well observed that the person who goes forth into the world with a smattering of high learning and high science, but without any acquired profession or trade by which he can make his bread, is among the most helpless of human creatures, and that the time and attention devoted to these acquirements would have been more suitably bestowed on the humblest mechanical pursuit. But this is not the true solid form of popular education. *It should be complete so far as it goes*, and then it will not be liable to the reproach of being 'a little learning.' There should be no attempt to unite the antipodes, of the grossest practical ignorance with a tinge of the highest class of knowledge. When tracing our circle of knowledge round the child of the humblest orders, whose ultimate destination may probably be hand labour, we should not commence with old times and foreign lands, lest we may never be able to fill up the space between his narrow experience and these distant objects, so as to enable him to grasp his knowledge, and transfer it from his memory to his understanding. Beginning close at hand, the area should gradually widen: if, in the end, it should include a great circle of knowledge, it is well; but if it do not, it will be complete so far as it extends. The child need not be told of Alexander the Great and Tamerlane, of the laws of the Medes and Persians, of Lycurgus and Solon, until he knows something about the parish in which he lives, the way in which it is governed, and the commodities it produces. We sometimes find children who can repeat a great deal about the Jordan, the Nile, and ancient Egypt, but who know nothing about the Thames and London. It is when it proceeds on from the pupil's local position as a centre, that knowledge can be applied to the useful purposes of life. It is then only actual and adaptable—not a mere object of unsatisfactory remembrance, but an instrument of practical application to the duties of life.

It may deeply interest the scholar to know that there has been discovered some new possible clue to the language of the ancient Phœnicians, or a Greek interpretation of the arrow-headed inscriptions of Babylon or Persepolis. But to the son of the poor ignorant agricultural labourer, it is of more importance to know, by the reading of newspapers and books of statistics, that there is a new manufacture which he is quite capable of prac-

tising, at which he may make half-a-crown or three shillings a day; and to have political economy enough to show him that the pursuit which his parents have followed from time immemorial is wretched because it is easy and overstocked. The knowledge thus acquired will be employed not in putting men above their business, but in enabling them to find their proper business—the greatest discovery which the working-classes have to make for themselves. Such an education would be sowing in mankind, now 'a wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot,' new powers of production, capable of supplying wants which we are ever feeling and declaring; for instead of man already possessing all the services he requires of his race, the new productions for which he has a market ready, were they brought into existence, are as unlimited as his desires.

Connected with the new means of occupation which an increased intelligence in the working-classes would enable them to discover for themselves, is the standing complaint of successful projectors, that they have had the greatest difficulties to combat with in the stupidity and incapacity of the persons they have had to employ, and in their inveterate prejudice against doing anything that happens to be beyond their old accustomed line of occupation. The directions which a little intelligence would enable the workers clearly to understand, and fully to practise, often appear, if they be out of the usual nomenclature of their trade, to be as unintelligible to them as to the lower animals. In a country like this, full of ardent, enterprising spirits, perpetually developing new shapes of enterprise, the difficulty of imparting to others a little of their own promptitude of thought and intellectual resources, is a heavy interruption to progress, and leaves the elements of much wealth undeveloped. Mr Mill happily says:—

'The effects of the increased knowledge of a community in increasing its wealth, need the less illustration, as they have become familiar to the uneducated, from such conspicuous instances as railways and steamships. A thing not yet perhaps so well understood and recognised, is the economical value of the general diffusion of intelligence among the people. The number of persons fitted to direct and superintend any industrial enterprise, or even to execute any process which cannot be reduced almost to an affair of memory and routine, is always far short of the demand; as is evident from the enormous difference between the salaries paid to such persons, and the wages of ordinary labour. The deficiency of practical good sense, which renders the labouring-class, in this and many other countries, such bad calculators—which makes, for instance, their domestic economy so improvident, lax, and irregular—must disqualify them for any but a low grade of intelligent labour, and render their industry far less productive than with equal energy it

otherwise might be. The importance, even in this limited aspect, of popular education, is well worthy of the attention of politicians, especially in England; since competent observers, accustomed to employ labourers of various nations, testify that in the workmen of other countries they often find great intelligence wholly apart from instruction; but that, if an English labourer is anything but a hewer of wood and drawer of water, he is indebted to education, though often to self-education, for it.'*

It is to the English labourer, with his fine physical development, and his general willingness to labour earnestly and steadily, that knowledge would be of most avail—it would be sowing the good seed in rich ground. In Scotland, where there is less systematic industry than in England, the education dispersed through the humbler classes is much greater; and though this education partakes rather too much of the character of 'a little learning,' it has this effect, that wherever there are new fields of industry opened, we find Scotsmen excelling their English neighbours, and holding situations with which they cannot be trusted, although they, on the other hand, more punctually and accurately perform the systematic duties of old established pursuits. From this we infer that even the imperfect education received by the Scotsman would greatly improve the value of the Englishman, and that a still more appropriate education would go far to improve the value of both.

A gentleman who, in his establishment in Switzerland, had opportunities of employing and observing workmen from almost all parts of Europe, was asked this question:—'Skilful workmen in England being often distinguished for their debauched habits, it has been supposed that their habits of excess were only the manifestations of the spirit to which their superiority as workmen was attributable, and that any refinement produced by education would be injurious to them as workmen rather than otherwise: is such an opinion conformable to the opinions derivable from your own experience or observation?'

The answer is:—'My own experience, and my conversation with mechanics in different parts of Europe, lead me to an entirely opposite conclusion. In the present state of manufactures, where so much is done by machinery and tools, and so little is done by mere brute labour (and that little is diminishing), mental superiority, system, order, and punctuality, and good conduct—qualities all developed and promoted by education—are becoming of the highest consequence. There are now, I consider, few enlightened manufacturers who will dissent from the opinion, that the workshops peopled with the greatest

* Principles of Political Economy, book i. chap. vii. § 5.

ber of educated and well-informed workmen, will turn out the greatest quantity of the best work in the best manner.' *

Mr Escher's remarks lead us from the effect of intelligence in increasing productive skill, to the moral influence which, when accompanied with proper training, it must exercise over the workman's character, and to the advantages reaped chiefly by himself, but in a great measure by society at large, through its influence in saving its possessor from the grosser vices.

Mr Escher being asked to give his opinion of Scotsmen, said—'We find that they get on much better on the continent than the English, which I ascribe to their better education, which renders it easier to them to adapt themselves to circumstances, and especially in getting on better with their fellow-workmen, and all the people with whom they come in contact. Knowing their own language grammatically, they have comparatively good facility in acquiring foreign languages. They have a great taste for reading, and always endeavour to advance themselves in respectable society, which makes them careful of their conduct, and eager to acquire such knowledge as may render themselves acceptable to better classes.' †

Scotsmen are not held to be remarkable for their too great sobriety; but perhaps it would be found that both their intelligence and their drunkenness are sometimes overrated. The same statistical inquirers who have found that the consumption of whisky in Scotland is two gallons and a-half a head, estimate the consumption in France of wine (not including brandy) at ten gallons a head. Weak as ordinary French wines are, it would not require a great amount of miscellaneous liquors to bring the estimate up to the strength of Scottish consumption. But it may be much questioned if the drinking is in Scotland among the small number of the working-classes who are educated; for, after all, the number is not great. In one part of his statement, Mr Escher gives a contrast between an educated Scotsman and an uneducated Englishman—both by his account sober men:—

'With regard to the English, I may say that the educated workmen are the only ones who save money out of their very large wages. By education I may say that I throughout mean not merely instruction in the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but better general mental development: the acquisition of better tastes, and of mental amusements, and enjoyments which are cheaper, whilst they are more refined. The most educated of our British workmen is a Scotch engineer, a single man, who has a salary of £3 a week, or £150 per year, of which he spends about one-half. He lives in very respectable lodgings; he is always well-

* Evidence of Mr Albert G. Escher, of the firm of Escher, Wyss, and Company, of Zurich—in Reports on the Training of Pauper Children (1841), p. 5.

† The same, p. 4.

dressed, he frequents reading-rooms, he subscribes to a circulating library, purchases mathematical instruments, studies German, and has every rational enjoyment. We have an English workman, a single man, also of the same standing, who has the same wages—also a very orderly and sober person. But as his education does not open to him the sources of mental enjoyment, he spends his evenings and Sundays in wine-houses, because he cannot find other sources of amusement which presuppose a better education, and he spends his whole pay, or one-half more than the other. The extra expenditure of the workman of lower education of £75 a year, arises entirely, as far as I can judge, from inferior arrangement, and the comparatively higher cost of the more sensual enjoyment in the wine-house.'

There is a world of instruction in this little sketch on the possible services of education in redeeming the workman from the tavern. This man was sober by constitution, yet he felt himself constrained to spend his evenings in the wine-house; there alone could he find food for the energetic susceptibilities of his nature. We have often felt that there is something pathetic in a temperance procession, with its banners and its music—it is the effort of ignorant men, who cannot enjoy the rich and delightful excitement of intellectual pursuits—of divine philosophy—

> 'Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute;
> And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets
> Where no crude surfeit reigns.'

These men are trying to find some factitious excitement to fill up the void felt in fleeing from the fascinations of the tavern. Compared with those who have the substantial blessings of education, they are like the monastic anchorites when compared with the Howards, the L'Epees, and the Wilberforces. Resigning the pomps and vanities of the world, the ascetics strove to fill the vacancies of its departed excitements with all manner of artificial substitutes in vain; while those who, in a more benevolent spirit, had resigned the same pomps and vanities to throw the whole force of their energetic natures into the work of human beneficence, led happier lives, and bequeathed greater resources to their fellow-men.

It is a great standing reproach against the mere uneducated hand-workers among our people, that high wages, however well deserved by their exertions, do them more harm than good, as the difference between their amount and the smallest sum usually gained by the rest of the class is spent in sensual indulgence. We have been obliged to regret that skilled labourers are by no means exempt from this failing; but where the labourer's value consists entirely in the exertion of muscular strength, this characteristic is so conspicuous as to be scarcely ever absent. There is hence a

perpetual effort on the part of the more enlightened members of society to keep down the pecuniary rewards of mere hand labour and muscular strength—an effort which is appreciated as an injustice, and resented accordingly by its Herculean objects, who feel themselves the slaves of civilisation, and unable, with all their unwieldy strength, to extricate themselves from the toils which the wise cunning of feeble men has set round them, and which their masters are ever strengthening and tightening. We have here one of the evil sources of class animosities—brute force at war with intelligence, and the latter requiring, however unwillingly, to bind its formidable enemy to terms which it would itself reject, arguing that to treat it more liberally, is just to set a wild beast loose upon the world. The large body of railway navies, to whose condition we have already had frequent occasion to refer,* belong to the class whose usual wages are often susceptible of being doubled or tripled when there are special drafts upon their power of sustaining muscular exertion. If we estimate the average wages received by the 240,301 labourers employed in the construction of railways in 1846, at 16s. a week, or £40 a year, the sum available to them as wages will be found to amount to £10,260,360. The distiller, the brewer, the tobacconist, all felt the influence of this fund—it made trade brisk; but we question much if the savings' bank, the schoolmaster, or the bookseller received any considerable proportion of its amount. Taken sometimes from the agricultural districts, where they received but a shilling a day, their wages were raised to two, three, and four shillings; but the increased fund was scarcely ever devoted to any other purposes but immediate sensual gratification. Among the most remarkable of the mere bodily labourers in the kingdom are the coal-whippers of the port of London, whose function it is to lift and throw upwards heavy masses of coal with great rapidity. They are liable to alternate periods of idleness, and of the most intense physical exertion, and to corresponding varieties of remuneration. But whether they be in receipt of large wages or of small, their social position is ever the same—on the debatable land between pauperism and self-support. The master of the Limehouse Workhouse, of the Stepney Union, who was examined about the habits of this class in 1840, anterior to the introduction of a legislative measure relating to them, stated the result of an investigation into forty cases of coal-whippers, of whom twenty-two were in receipt of, while the others were applicants for, parochial relief. It was found that their average wages amounted to 18s. 10d. a week; but so widely did their remuneration fluctuate, that 'there were instances in which they had earned 20s. a day,' yet they all required relief. 'In fact,' said the master of the workhouse, 'they have not the means

* See pp. 105, 147.

possessed by other labourers of pawning anything. I question whether you could find as much furniture in any one of their houses as you could pawn for half-a-crown.' 'Not even,' asks the questioner, 'in those cases where they are earning a guinea a day?' 'No—they are all alike destitute; and their families look as dirty and as filthy, and are as ill-governed, and their houses are as destitute of furniture, as those who earn the smaller sums; there is no difference: and in case of sickness they come at once upon the parish, unless they sometimes assist each other a little: but, however, they have no certain means at all but the parish.' A relieving-officer, of the same district, is asked—'In respect to those trammels which it is described that the coal-whippers are in, what is the consequence as to their household? How do you find, when you visit those cases, that their houses are provided?' The answer is—'I would rather sleep in my coal-hole than in one of their hovels. I went into six houses yesterday; each house contains four rooms, and in some of those houses there were thirty souls. In the least house there were seventeen.' Of their children, the boys are described as being trained 'to go about the coast to pick up coals, and rope, and such things—and are not nice as to what they pick up;' and 'the girls, while infants of seven years of age, are turned out into the streets with fruit, and all sorts of things: when they arrive at the age of fourteen, go to stay-stitching; then they sit in-doors at home with their mother, until the age of fifteen and sixteen, when they generally become prostitutes.'

With the increase of the great powers which science has set in motion, the safety of the people requires that there should be increased knowledge in those who have the practical control over them. To the high science that creates and sets in motion these powerful combinations, there should be a balance in the modifiedly-intellectual attainments of those who have to attend on them, that they may not be instruments of destruction let loose upon society without controlling checks. A recent horrible disaster displayed in the master and crew of a steamboat such gross ignorance of the laws of vitality, that they thought human beings did not require to breathe fresh air, and that 150 people could live in the hold of a vessel battened down as closely as a sealed bottle. Captain Alderley Sleigh, who had served both in the royal and the merchant navy, says of educated seamen—'I have always found the educated seamen the most capable of performing their duty, no matter what that duty might be, whether it were a duty of danger or one of skill, provided their acquired knowledge be regulated by discipline, and directed by corresponding intelligence on the part of the officer; insomuch that were I fitting out a vessel myself, I should always, as I have hitherto done, prefer the educated men, because I should get the greater amount of work from them, and

get it better done, and because I should have the most confidence in their fidelity. In short, I would rather work a vessel of 600 tons, say, with eighteen men, provided they were educated, than twenty-five uneducated; I am now speaking of the mere amount of work to be got from the men, without reference to their morality or general good conduct. But of course the intelligent and moral conduct of the men will be found also to have its pecuniary value in respect to the safety of the vessel. For example: if an illiterate seaman be on the watch, and be placed to look out for land, he will have little or no regard emanating from principle to the consequences of his negligence, and will, without making an effort of mental rectitude, indulge himself in sleep; on the contrary, the educated man will be moved by the sense of character, perhaps also by a perception of what is dependent on his performance of duty, and will be true to it without the necessity of watching him. It is not to be said the uneducated man is so far ignorant as not to see the danger. He does see it; he can hardly fail to be aware of what must be the consequences to his own person; but either from insensibility to moral character, or from some obtuseness arising out of ignorance, he does not care for it—he indulges himself carelessly: with him the mate has to be constantly on the watch, and to be a driving taskmaster. The educated man does his duty with less labour of overlooking and driving: an ignorant man in doing his work, even if the fate of the ship depends on its correctness, will most frequently do it so as will save himself trouble, it being sufficient for him if it makes an appearance to the eye whatever it may be in reality.' And descending to particular instances, he says—'I once sailed from London with ninety persons (in 1835) in a steam-vessel which was highly insured, commanded by a man whose thorough ignorance and habitual drunkenness were such, that I was called upon by the officers and crew, for the safety of the vessel and lives, to take the command out of his hands, which I did. When he got on shore he cut his throat in a fit of *delirium tremens*. The man's character must have become known to the owners of it, had it been their interest to make any inquiry upon the subject. I once came home from Portugal in a brig of 200 tons, when the second mate was the only one on board who knew navigation, the master being perfectly ignorant of that science; the result of which was, that in a run of five or six days, with a fair wind, we made Cape Clear instead of the Land's End, being bound to London from Cape Finisterre. Seeing the evident danger of such ignorance, I was compelled to interfere to control the vessel. Such instances are constant and notorious, from the circumstance of *examination* being neglected, and qualification being considered unnecessary in the merchant service.'*

* Papers read before the Statistical Society of Manchester, &c. pp. 22-24.

Applying this class of experimental facts to railways, Mr Chadwick says—'If it be a shocking thing to intrust a ship and the lives of passengers and seamen to an ill-informed captain, how much worse would it be to intrust them to a common seaman! And yet a locomotive engine may require as much intelligence and discretion as a ship; and this engine, with the lives of some two hundred or more of passengers, is intrusted to the discretion of a common labourer, destitute of the knowledge of the principles on which the action of such engines depends, in general not carefully instructed and trained in the management of the engine which he guides, even for ordinary occasions; and if anything unusual or extraordinary happens, he is as much at a loss as the most ignorant, for the want of training, and the knowledge of the principles which would best prepare him to meet all contingencies. Those, however, who have not been trained or educated in early life, have commonly a slowness of perception and action, such as described by Captain Sleigh, and an apathy even to visible danger to themselves, which after-education does not cure. Scientific, or such technical instruction as would be required to be efficient, must be imparted to minds of a better order. An influential director of an important line of railway, thought it a sufficient answer to some observations I made to him in objection to the practice of employing common labourers as engine-drivers, that the company gave them very high wages—as much as two pounds a week. High wages, with such a class of men, only increases the danger; for it generally leads to an increase of drinking, as it appeared on the investigation of one case; for the men had doubled their allowances of porter, which, without producing visible inebriety, must produce a comparative torpor of the faculties.'*

Mr Fairbairn, a celebrated engineer in Manchester, says—'Legislative enactments have been passed recommending remedies and inflicting penalties; but so long as men are careless of their own lives, and ignorant and careless of the consequences to others, there is little or no hope of improvement in regard to a better and more efficient management of steam-boilers, which contain within themselves, under proper control, the elements of a vast utility; but guided by ignorance, and abandoned to the effects of a blazing furnace, they become the agents of a destructive force that leaves impressions too painful to contemplate. Familiarity with any sort of danger leads to callousness and neglect of due caution; and it is to be regretted that the general state of education in this country does not directly tend to the improvement of the engineer and his assistants. It is my confirmed opinion (now that the country is covered with steam and steam-engines) that the engineers, stokers, and firemen should be persons of some

* Papers as above, p. 25.

education. They should at least be conversant with the common rules of arithmetic, and should receive instructions in the more simple laws of physics; and, above all, they should be men of *sober habits and exemplary moral conduct.* In addition to these qualifications, they should be made acquainted with the properties of steam and the steam-engine, and should on no account be employed when found deficient in these acquirements. In the present state of intelligence amongst that class of men, we can scarcely hope for much improvement.'*

Among the advantages of intelligence, we must include such a knowledge of the real extent of the power of the state, and of the power of the rich, as will prevent the other members of society from forming false estimates of the influence possessed by rulers and rich men over their lot. The thoroughly ignorant man believes that the livelihood of the working-classes comes to them by consent of the government or of the rich, and that it depends upon their will whether it be great or small. Here we find the materials with which Communism has dealt, as we also find the materials with which the inventors of quack medicines have dealt; and the quacks of both grades will continue to find their prey in this wild region until it is cultivated.

No one can be astonished at any effects of popular delusion—no, not even at the battle of Paris—if he contemplate a set of circumstances like the following:—On the one side, poverty and misery, arising out of the prostration of trade, allied to gross ignorance and the love of idleness: on the other hand, members of the educated classes—eminent, gifted, learned—elevated to the rank of governors, from the chair of authority telling these people that they shall all be taken by the hand, and raised to comfort and moderate affluence, without being subjected to the harassing labours and anxieties to which they have heretofore been devoted. Being told, as the French were by their Provisional Government, 'that it is time to put an end to the long and iniquitous sufferings of the labourers,' and 'that the people ought to be guaranteed, without the slightest delay, the legitimate fruits of their labour,' was it unnatural that the men to whom work was presented in such a fashion should cry, 'Let us live working or die fighting?' Was it for them to have a doubt of the power of the hero of a revolution, of the governor of a great nation, to fulfil his promise, or to ask where the funds to be divided were to come from? While we are in the midst of ignorance, we are in the midst of great elements of power, capable of being stirred by impulses on which we cannot calculate, and the strength of which we can never measure by those which affect the educated and the reflective.

* Papers as above, p. 26.

In connection with the subject of Capital, we have endeavoured to show how great a proportion of virtually effective capital consists not in the large fortunes of wealthy men, but in the possession of something reserved from past to assist future labour, by the humbler classes of society. Skill and intelligence are the best developments of this species of capital, which would thus be diffused co-extensively with the spread of education. It is one of the checks against artificial means of raising the position of adults by charitable intervention—or by in any other manner performing for them the services they ought to perform for themselves—that their degradation and misery are in a great measure of their own creation; that they ought to be visited with the natural punishment of their own vices and follies; and that the efforts of society to relieve them only create more poverty than they relieve, by removing, along with the sting of idleness and vice, the incentives to exertion and virtue. This principle hovers like an incubus over all attempts to relieve the misery of adults, or to add to their happiness by external efforts; and the genius of man has been often in vain exercised in attempts to accompany the relief of the poor with conditions sufficient to neutralise its demoralising influence.

There can be no such influence exercised by gratuitous education, at least on the persons who receive it. Children have committed no crime against society, have abused no gifts, have earned no punishment, and have forfeited no privileges. It is not *their* fault that they are steeped in abject misery, and turned ragged into the streets to beg or steal for their drunken parents. One and all, from the young prince downwards, they are brought naked into the world, to be invested with whatever the kindness, or forethought, or good fortune of those who have entered the world before them, may endow them with. One and all, they are entitled to the enjoyment of whatever good gifts may be offered to them, whether it be given through the affectionate duty of parents, or the kindness of strangers, or the charitable regulations of the state; and no one can say that the beggar's brat, who is taken off the street, and educated and trained, is less entitled to that privilege than the young heir is entitled to succeed to his ancestral domains. By heedlessly throwing the good gifts of the world to the prodigal, the idle, the vicious, we do a positive injury to the laborious and sober fulfillers of their social duties; but this argument cannot apply to children, to whom individuals or the state may freely afford whatever advantages they think fit, without exciting counteracting influences. Nor should it be forgotten that the gift of education is one that, instead of corrupting and deteriorating, fortifies and capacitates the citizen for the fulfilment of his social duties. The man brought up in ignorance, looking back to the early days

of helplessness and impressibility, when he was entirely in the hands of others, to be moulded as they pleased—and when, instead of being cast out a wreck upon society, he might have been reared as a useful and valuable citizen—may justly complain of the parents who brought him into the world, for having thus failed to afford him the means of encountering its difficulties. But if these parents have themselves had no better fate—and the calamitous history of barbarism goes back generation behind generation—it would not be extravagant if the wretched man next blamed the priest and the Levite, who passed over on the other side, and, at a time when he might have been redeemed from his peril and his misery, and set upright in society, left him to perish on the dark road.

We must not entirely forget, however, that education is the primary duty of parents; and that relieving them of its fulfilment may have, in a certain modified sense, the same effect on their moral character with the gratuitous supply to them of any other just object of attainment, which they ought to provide by their own industry. There will be room here for a practical line being drawn and preserved; neither the state, nor well-disposed individuals, gratuitously offering the privilege of education to families where there is any rational hope that parents will fulfil their duty. It has indeed been well held that a compulsory enforcement of the duty in such circumstances, whether accomplished by the taxation of parents able to devote funds to the education of their children, or in some other form, would be but the enforcement of an obligation which the parents owe to other people, and which the law should compel them to fulfil.

As to the utterly abandoned and reckless, they have shown too surely by their general conduct, that nothing of so distantly prospective a character as the education of their children can have much influence on their habits. They are subject entirely to the tyranny of the present. Offer them food and luxuries at the moment, they will throw down the mattock or the spade, and be idle till the cravings of hunger require them to resume their work or to beg. The training up of their children in labour and self-restraint is a vision that has no charms for them—they will sacrifice nothing for its attainment themselves—they will lose none of their slender stock of motives for exertion if others should take it in hand. If they had any desire for the future of their offspring, it might possibly be to see them wallowing in vicious luxury, relieved from all social restraints and moral or religious influences.

To those who are not brought up in nature's moral school—a well-ordered family—education at the cost of the public must essentially embrace moral training. But it would be difficult, until schemes of general education become practically developed, to

lay down the bounds of the schoolmaster's usefulness. Already there are glimmerings of the idea not only that he may, by training a more virtuous people, reduce the burden of the administration of justice, but that he may altogether supersede the judge when dealing with the young. The difference between vice in its infancy and in its maturity, is as great as between the sapling and the gnarled oak. With gentle and kind pressure we can bend the one in the right way; but to fashion the other, we must cut and blast, split, rend, and hack. It is a terrible thing to apply to the child the harsh discipline invented for the hardened criminal; and perhaps posterity will wonder that such a thing was ever done. We are in the meantime even more reckless of our juvenile than of our adult offenders. When a man has qualified himself by a high degree of iniquity, the question whether he is to have the afflictive reward of a still higher, is adjudged with all the pomp of legal science, and the aids for constitutional protection. The far more important duty of deciding, by a first imprisonment, whether a child is destined to belong to the ranks of crime, is left to the unpaid and untaught magistracy: the country-gentlemen justices — the respectable shopkeeper and corporation magistrates—who, as a reward for having successfully bought and sold, are to be permitted to dispose of the dearest interests of their fellow-beings, by the process aptly termed 'summary conviction.' The recklessness with which they thus devastate society is frightful. 'Ten days' imprisonment' to the child is looked upon as a question of measurement with seven years' transportation to the man. The proportions numerically are about 1 to 250; and such, it is deemed, ought to be the respective amounts of deliberation and skill bestowed on them. But should it not be remembered, that so sure as in the poet's sense the child is the father of the man, and the oak lies folded in the acorn, is the seven years' transportation, with all its intervening horrors, shut up in the ten days' imprisonment? Opposite to the record of the imprisonment of a boy of twelve years old, in the jail of Edinburgh, 'for pulling some beans at the top of a field near Newhaven,' the late chief magistrate of that city entered this startling comment:—'An offence of which, when I was a boy, I was more than once guilty; and if the same judgment had been meted to me, I might have been ruined for life.' The schoolmaster will be able to deal with such propensities, if not with full corrective effect, at least more aptly than the police-officer and the magistrate.

Addressing ourselves still to education as an economical question—as a means of making mankind more valuable—it should be a part of every system of education for the children of the poor, to afford them training in some skilled labour, so that their understanding may be opened to the knowledge of its value, and that

their other faculties may be awakened to the capacity of its exercise. The area of education, which ought to be complete, however limited, is deficient in its main and central part if it want a training to some practical operation. The man of fortune may be a scholar, and nothing more; but he who has to gain his daily bread must produce: and so the centre round which the knowledge of the physician, the lawyer, the artist, and the author, encircle themselves, is practical skill. Mr Frederick Hill was the first to draw the attention of the public to the utility of industrial training in skilled labour; and the English Poor-Law Commissioners first tested its efficacy as a system. It was applied at the model school at Norwood to the most obdurate human materials —the young vagabonds of the metropolis—and with eminent success. Dr Kay Shuttleworth describes in this manner the principle of operation:—

'The great object to be kept in view, in regulating any school for the instruction of the children of the labouring-class, is the rearing of intelligent and hardy working-men, whose character and habits may afford the largest amount of security to the property and order of the community. Not only has the training of the children of labourers hitherto been defective, both in the methods of instruction pursued, and because it has been confined within the most meagre limits, but because it has failed to inculcate the great practical lesson (for those whose sole dependence for their living is on the labour of their hands), by early habituating them to patient and skilful industry.

'An orphan or deserted child, educated from infancy to the age of twelve or fourteen in a workhouse, if taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, is generally unfitted for earning his livelihood by labour. Under such a system he would never have been set to work. He would therefore have acquired no skill; he would be effeminate; and, what is worse, the practical lesson in industry which he would have acquired had he been so fortunate as to live beneath the roof of a frugal and industrious father, would be wanting.

'In mingling various kinds of industrial instruction with the plan of training pursued in the model school, it is not proposed to prepare the children for some particular trade or art, so as to supersede the necessity for further instruction: it is chiefly intended that the practical lesson, that they are destined to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brows, shall be inculcated; to teach them the use of various tools, so that they may be enabled to increase the comfort of their own households by the skill which they have acquired, or to obtain a greater reward for their labour by superior usefulness.'*

* Reports on the Training of Pauper Children, p. 33.

In reducing these principles to practice, we are told that 'several of the workhouses are supplied with carpenters' tools and rough boards. The boys make their wheelbarrows, erect any small outhouses that may be required, fit up their tool-houses, make the desks, forms, and fit up the closets of the school, and do any other rough carpenters' work which may be required in the establishment. They are thus prepared to do any work of a similar description which might be required in ordinary farm-service. A husbandman who could weather-board a barn would be preferred by a farmer, and would probably obtain superior wages. The premises selected by the Children's Friend Society for their Industrial School at Hackney-Wick, were, when first occupied, in an almost ruinous condition. The dilapidations have been repaired, the breaches have been filled up, the roofs restored, and the woodwork renewed almost solely by the labour of the boys. When I visited the school, they were engaged in erecting a new building. The children have thus acquired a knowledge of the way to make mortar, to set a brick, to saw and plane a piece of wood, to drive a nail in a workmanlike manner; all which skill cannot fail to be useful to them as farm-servants, or in repairing dilapidations in their own cottages, or enabling them to make a bench to sit on. In a large establishment, coopers', cabinet, and other descriptions of woodwork might be introduced, and the produce of the boys' labour would be by no means inconsiderable, if a skilful artisan were employed to teach them.' *

The true economy of the world is to make the human being productive. It seemed a cheaper arrangement under the old poor-law system to occupy the pauper children in picking down old ropes, sorting wool, and other occupations which were but a step above idleness—opened up no vista of improvement or possible progress—raised no hopes, and excited no emulation to excel—but saw the pauper child at eve no further advanced than in the morning, and at the end of the year no further advanced than at its beginning. When such were their occupations, the great difficulty of the parochial authorities was the disposal in life of this their useless progeny; and though tempted by the bribe of an apprentice-fee, the handloom-weaver carried them off the workhouse premises, they became in after-life too well-known to the relieving-officer as perpetual hoverers in the vicinity of pauperism. Of the effects of the training system we are told—'In the first place, we diminish the period of residence in the workhouse two years; next, the apprentice-fee and expenses are saved; next, the children obtain superior situations: they seldom return even temporarily to a state of dependence; they have a strong conviction that they will certainly retain an independent

* Reports, &c. p. 58.

spirit and position in after-life; so that, instead of rearing a race of paupers, we are now rearing a race of independent workmen and servants. I do not know how to express my opinion sufficiently strong respecting the pernicious effects of apprenticeships of pauper children with premiums and without previous training. The children were almost invariably taken by those who had no need of their services, but to whom the premium was a temptation; and they were frequently driven into the streets, and compelled to follow vicious courses. Frequently persons come to apply for children at the Limehouse Training School. I immediately tell them we give no premium: that readily disposes of scores of applications; and those who persist in the application are respectable individuals, who have real need of the services of a well-trained and well-conducted child. It was only the other day that the captain of a ship came to the school to ask for a boy: I told him that we had no boy old enough to go to sea. He said, "I have seen a little boy at sea scarcely higher than a coil of rope, who has been trained in this school, and he conducts himself so well, and is so active and useful, that I am determined to have a boy like him, if I can obtain one; and he told me there is a boy about his age in the house who would suit him." I did not recommend the captain to take any boy from the school; but I have no doubt that the influence of this little boy, and of other boys in similar situations, will procure us a constant demand for the services of the children.'*

It is of eminent importance that the child should be early initiated into a practical sense of the power of skill over external objects; and one of the strongest protections against the inertness which limits men to pauperising occupations, will be found in the early consciousness of power, developed by the exercise of skill, however trifling. Of a school where the children were chiefly employed in printing, Mr Hill tells us—'We were much pleased by the scene of life and bustle among the little printers. No lolling and yawning, no wistful looks at the slow-moving hands of the clock; the signs of cheerful industry were visible in every face, were apparent in the quick motion of every limb. The last time we called at the school happened to be on a holiday afternoon, but no stillness of the printing-office notified the term of relaxation. The busy hand of the compositor was moving to and fro as usual, and the pressman was tugging at his screw-bar with as much energy as ever. On inquiry, we found that the boys engaged were a class of volunteers, who, incredible as it may appear at Eton or Winchester, preferred passing their holiday at work to spending it at play.'†

The writer of this volume has had some experience of skilled

* Reports, &c. p. 170.

† National Education—Its Present State and Prospects, i. 21.

training in the 'United Industrial Schools' of Edinburgh, and it corresponds with Mr Hill's description even down to the last fact. Fifteen of the boys were under training as tailors; but one day visiting the school at a play-hour, he found forty-five boys squatted on the school-room floor mending their tattered garments, under the instruction of those who had been trained to this particular craft. One of the earliest results of the training system in these schools was, that the boys clothed themselves substantially with the work of their own hands, made benches and chairs, mended defects in the edifice, and whitewashed and papered it. The old house, in which a hundred children are congregated, is busy as an ant-hill; and the extreme competitive keenness and eager energy displayed by the little workmen, could only be accounted for by remembering that into the channel of productive labour had been directed those sharpened faculties and ardent energies which the necessity of living by dishonesty and vagrancy had begun to awaken within them.

It is perhaps almost a superfluous task to plead generally for the benefits of education; it would be difficult to find individuals hardy enough to advocate the blessings of ignorance. Those who insist that in a national system religious education should be united with secular, pay a high, though unconscious compliment to the efficacy of the latter. They look upon it as so powerful an instrument, that they desire to secure its services for the propagation of their own particular creed; and they feel it to be a boon so valuable, that they think they may accomplish this conjunction if they effectively struggle against an education scheme being conceded on any other condition. It is almost needless to say that the concession of such a power would be a modified intolerance to other creeds, the professors of which are equally sincere, and equally convinced of the soundness of their own belief. The government educator ought not to be a propagator of doctrines either in religion or politics. Hence, in whatever form the schoolmaster is to be brought into existence at the public expense, he certainly ought not to come in the character of a hired official, dependent on the minister of the day, and the propagator of the opinions of the party in power. It should be essential to the character of the education which is to be provided for by the taxation of people of various beliefs in religion, as well as in other inferior objects of dispute, that no man should be bound to pay for the propagation of opinions which he holds to be false. The form, then, in which the funds, whether collected by national or district machinery, should be applied to their legitimate purpose of instruction, should be such as will leave the machinery to be the transparent medium of inculcating admitted truths, and should give no man an opportunity of furthering the interests of his own creed, or of his own politics, or of any other

opinion which either disinterested zeal, or self-interested ambition, may prompt him to advocate.

On the teeming subject of the best method of applying a system of national education, it would not be expedient here to enlarge, and it is an arena now sufficiently occupied by the best champions of such great questions—the newspaper press. It is our object here rather to avoid than court questions of practical politics, although the economical and social influences of which it is the object of this volume to treat, cannot always be pursued without touching on some considerable and strong controversies.

CHAPTER XVII.

ASSISTING AND PRECAUTIONARY FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE.

Currency—How the Fixing of it Aids Free Trade—Comparison with Weights and Measures—No Liberty in Giving Individuals the Means of Affecting the Interests of Others by Changing the Currency—Conveyance—Railways and the Government—The Post-Office—Sanitary Regulations—Effect of Some Neglects in Reducing the People from Civilisation to Barbarism—An Extension of the Principle of Protection—Application to Existing State of Towns and to the Future—Regulations for the Public Safety against Dangerous Operations—Principle of Pecuniary Responsibility.

There are many sound and necessary operations of a government which, having the appearance of restriction and interference, tend in the end to freedom and security. It is a frequent remark by the friends of an unrestricted currency, that there should be a free trade in money as well as in other merchandise. The most important mistakes sometimes arise from a misapplication of terms; and a little inquiry will probably show that free trade, as applied to the buying and selling of commodities, and the same term as applied to the making of a currency, are totally different things, the grounds on which the one is founded affording no support to the other.

In the first place, so far as trade, or mere buying and selling, is concerned, there really is freedom of trade in a currency. The only currency which possesses a value in exchange without any fictitious means being used to support it, consists of the precious metals. No one who possesses so much of this commodity will ever fail of a market for it. It forces a free trade for itself. It is, in fact, its universal marketability that has caused it to be the great instrument of exchange all over the world. Governments have made efforts to suppress freedom of trade in this commodity, but have failed. In this, the natural self-adapting currency, there always will, and must be, free trade. The question for consideration is, whether a factitious currency, the value and availability of which depend on the sanction of the law, should also be made free; or, in other words, whether any individual who chooses to issue engraved paper, calling it worth so many sovereigns in bullion, shall be entitled to compel the public to take it at the value he sets on it. Undoubtedly, it is overstating the case to say that, strictly speaking, any of the supporters of an inconvertible currency go thus far. They would not have a law that every person who engraves one pound upon a piece of paper, and

signs his name to it, should be entitled thereby to satisfy his butcher and baker. It would be necessary to have the preliminary forms of a banking establishment being created, and this would of course put impediments in the way, and materially limit the extent of the operation. Neither, perhaps, is it maintained that people shall be bound to sell for the banker's notes, if they prefer keeping their commodities unsold, or insist on only dealing for metallic money. But it is undoubtedly intended that such paper shall be a legal tender—that is to say, that when any bargain simply infers a payment in money, the obligation shall be sufficiently fulfilled by a transfer of bank-notes. It thus virtually comes to this, that under any extensive system of inconvertible paper currency, an indefinite number of persons, acting as bankers, are to be allowed to issue their notes to such effect that the public are bound to take them as money. We shall consider the question whether this would or would not be conducive to free trade.

Where men are assembled together with conflicting rights and interests, freedom of action does not arise from merely letting them alone: the area for free action must be artificially cleared, and kept clear. Thus a common would not be very free to the inhabitants of a village if any one who pleased could keep a dangerous bull on it; and the high road would not be very open to the legitimate use of the community at large if any person could use it as he pleased, and render it impassable by penning his sheep, depositing his corn, or heaping his manure upon its surface. There are always some operations that must be restrained and fixed, in order that others may have full liberty. People are compelled by the law to perform their contracts, just that mankind may thus be free to make contracts.

Now it undoubtedly tends to freedom in buying and selling that the medium of exchange should be fixed, and that he who tells, say, for instance, the price of his commodity, should be able to specify a certain sum of money, instead of indicating the specific objects of value which he will readily take in exchange. But if money is one thing to-day, and another to-morrow—if a pound becomes worth only three-fourths on Saturday of what it was worth on Monday—buying and selling will be subjected to inconveniences that must tend seriously to interrupt freedom of trade. Brevity, simplicity, and rapidity, are the wheels of commerce. In a country like this, where property is secure, and the currency for immediate purposes pretty well fixed, the rapidity and certainty with which the largest transactions are accomplished, is marvellous to those accustomed to poor communities and small trading operations. A sale of some manufactured commodity or agricultural produce will be accomplished on the Exchange in three minutes, and the essentials of the bargain will be contained in

three or four lines of writing. But this facility is mainly founded on the circumstance that each party knows what is meant by a hundred or a thousand pounds. If this were uncertain—if the currency were perpetually fluctuating—if there were several classes of bank-notes all in circulation, of which some are worth more than others, explanations and provisions would have to be introduced, which would render the bargain more like a deed of entail, with its reservations and substitutions, than a simple mercantile contract. If the currency were variable from time to time, it would be necessary to fix some separate standard. Perhaps this standard might be gold, and then it might be settled that the price to be paid shall be £1000 if gold is worth £3, 17s. per ounce in currency; that it shall be £1040 should gold be worth £4 an ounce. Or suppose the value of grain be taken as a criterion—then it might be stipulated that the price is £1000 if grain be 50s. a quarter at the time of payment, but £1100 if it be 55s. a quarter. Or if there were various notes in circulation variously estimated, it might be settled that the amount shall be so much if paid in the notes of one banker, and so much more if in those of another. The inconvenience of this is obvious, and it is one literally felt in some of the small contiguous states in the centre of Europe, where each government prides itself on having its own currency, and where the change you have received on paying for breakfast will not be taken at the place whither you have walked to dinner.

Considering the advantages of a fixed currency apart from the wider questions connected with monetary fluctuations, this is the same class of inconveniences that is obviated by the various laborious efforts made by governments to have uniform weights and measures. The inveteracy of local usage, and the prejudices of small dealers, always dreading some injury to their personal interests from any change conducive to the public wellbeing, has been the great bar to extended uniformity in this department of economy. Napoleon, who preferred brilliant and astounding achievements to those minuter efforts of government which tend to strew the path of life with quiet blessings, thought these impediments so formidable, that he wondered how legislators could grapple with them for the accomplishment of so small an object, and called it 'tormenting nations about trifles.' Though these lurking and stubborn prejudices often stand in the way of uniformity of weights and measures, yet we have no school of philosophers coming forth to support free trade in this department, and to maintain that people shall not only be entitled to sell at what price, and in what quantity, and to what persons they please, but also that, when they speak of a stone, or a pound weight, or of a gallon measure, they may put what interpretation they please upon these words. The reason of this is very obvious: there is

no class of men who could make a profitable speculation by the adoption of such doctrines, but there is a large class who would make fortunes by what is called a free currency.

In fact, the inconvenience of making arrangements in pecuniary bargains for the probable shifting of the currency is so great, that even through such a series of revolutions as we have had in this country, it has not been thought worth while to attempt it. Within the first thirteen years of the present century, the value of Bank of England notes, then the legal currency of the country, had fallen so far that the difference between their price and that of gold was 29 per cent.; so that any person who, in 1800, lent £100, was repaid with £77, 10s.' worth of bank paper, and so lost £22, 10s. Thus if the fluctuations of our currency have not produced the impediments to free trade to which we have made allusion, they have produced injustice. Under a free currency, it would be difficult to say how far this injustice may be carried. If I agree to import tea, and to sell it for £100, the freedom which allows any set of men, for their own profit, to make this £100 worth only £75, is to me a gross injustice. The character of this injustice will seem still more flagrant if the very man who buys the tea from me is the person who, as a banker, makes the depreciated currency, and profits by my loss. So also, if I have lent a man £1000 some years ago, and in the meantime the currency is so depreciated that the £1000 with which he can repay me will only be worth as much as £750 was worth at the time when he borrowed the money, here too would be a gross injustice. Yet at this moment many of the very men to whom the effect would just be that it would enable them to pay their debts with a composition of 75 per cent., are clamouring for an unrestricted currency.

It is thus pretty apparent that a free trade in buying and selling, and a free trade in the creating of money, are not one and the same thing, and are not defensible by the same arguments. In fact, they are the antagonists of each other. The most valuable preparation for free trade is the fixing of the medium through which it is carried on. The essential preliminary to enabling a man to charge his own price—which is the main element of freedom of trade—is that he should be able to state the price in definite and distinct terms. The trader is not literally free to name his own price if he live in a community where the government or any individuals may at any time alter the real value of the price he has fixed, and make it one day worth so much, another worth something greater or less. If the government does not fix a standard of value, it would be fair that it should interpose and settle the just amount to be paid in connection with each transaction concluded under a varying currency. If it will not keep the £100 for which I agree to sell my tea uniform, it

would be fair to desire that at the time when the settlement comes, it should fix and award to me a sum amounting to as much real value in money *then* as £100 was worth at the time of the sale. It may be conjectured that the government would find such operations still more complex, costly, and unsatisfactory than a previous fixing of the currency—an operation, indeed, of which few statesmen deny the justice and utility, although many of them feel its difficulty.

We come now to the consideration of another department in which government may availably and serviceably interpose.

So long as conveyance from place to place can be conducted without territorial operations, it should be a matter of perfect free trade, in which every one who pleases, and has sufficient capital, may embark; but whenever, for the advantage of the intercourse between distant places, part of the intermediate country has to be subjected to regulations, or to be appropriated, government necessarily interferes. On the sea—

> 'Creation's common, which no human power
> Can parcel or enclose'—

every one is free to launch his vessel, and pass whither he pleases —or at least he ought to be so. While roads are left to be a matter of local arrangement by each parish or each town, which is equivalent to their fulfilling the purposes of a road very imperfectly, the interference of the general government is proportionably small. Mr Macaulay, in noticing the wretchedness of the English roads in the seventeenth century, and the miseries of travelling, says, 'One chief cause of the badness of the roads seems to have been the defective state of the law. Every parish was bound to repair the highways which passed through it. The peasantry were forced to give their gratuitous labour six days in the year. If this was not sufficient, hired labour was employed, and the expense was met by a parochial rate. That a route connecting two great towns, which have a large and thriving trade, with each other, should be maintained at the cost of the rural population scattered between them, is obviously unjust; and this injustice was peculiarly glaring in the case of the great North Road, which traversed very poor and thinly-inhabited districts, and joined very rich and populous districts.'*

Hence the turnpike system was devised; and all who travelled on the road were, along with the road itself, subjected to a wider authority than that of the parish, while everything that related to the transit of persons or property was regulated on wider principles.

The railway system demanded a still stronger and more comprehensive interference. It was not only necessary that the

* History of England, i. 376.

central government of the country should dispossess individuals of their property for the public accommodation, but it was necessary that some body—whether emanating from the general government, or independent of it—should possess an empire or government within the sphere of these new operations. Thus every railway company has become a little republic with its own laws and institutions; and instead of dealing with the public in the commercial sense of the term, it dictates to and governs the public whenever they come within its own sphere of action—unless in so far as it is restricted by the limitation of its powers.

It is evident that to speak of corporations thus privileged, as if they were bodies of people merely empowered to manage their own business in their own way, is an abuse of terms likely to lead to gross despotism were it admitted in practice. The privileges which a railway company have received, by their receiving the command of a line of territory for their peculiar purpose, which no one can obtain except from the legislature, invest them with a monopoly of the conveyance between place and place which totally excludes the operation of free trade—even were it for the economy of the public that two lines laid down beside each other should be allowed to compete for public preference, like two stage-coaches on a road.

We thus see that of necessity railway operations are government operations, and that while the lines remain in the possession of the companies, these bodies are acting with government powers, derived from the central authority of the empire. The public cannot help observing and feeling that these corporations, thus set as rulers over them within a certain sphere, have only one avowed and admitted object—that of making money. It is true that this object must be a motive strongly binding them to the faithful performance of some services to the public; and that in this respect they have not yet all seen their true interest. It is not in general sufficient for the success of the railway that it should establish an absolute monopoly, and supersede the old conveyances: it must hold out in cheapness, expedition, and other facilities, temptations capable of inducing people to travel who otherwise would have remained at home. Thus it is probable that these bodies will soon learn that high fares defeat their purpose; that almost absolute punctuality is an essential rule; that it is not safe to argue that, as they have the entire monopoly of traffic, travellers will require to inform themselves of the times of departure and arrival of the trains, and therefore they need not take any trouble to make the public acquainted with their motions; and finally, they will learn the good policy of civility and attention. But though their pecuniary position affords these minor inducements to good conduct, the public have already felt that the endowment, with powers so extensive, of bodies having no avowed or actual object

but that of making money, admits of dangerous abuse; and it has been wisely thought that the power retained by the central government in relation to the system should have been greater than it has been.

The conveyance of letters by post has been referred to as one of the instances in which governments have superseded, and with good effect, individual enterprise and competition. Governments have had many motives for keeping the post-office service in their own hands. It admits of being applied with great power at particular junctures to state purposes; and it has been often used as an instrument of oppression and inquisitorial tyranny: it has held out great temptations as a source of revenue, and has thus been the means of inflicting heavy burdens on the community, and interrupting services that could have otherwise been easily fulfilled by private adventurers. But when these abuses are remedied, and the government performs its functions as effectively and as cheaply as a private company would do, it may be well that the profits of the undertaking should go to the nation at large. So far, however, is this service from being incompatible with competition, that its best and most effective operations have often been anticipated by individual adventurers. Thus in the reign of Charles II., the first post-office for the delivery of letters in the central districts of London, was established by William Dockwray, a private citizen; and about a century later, the same service was performed for Edinburgh by Peter Williamson, the celebrated adventurer. It is needless to say how far Mr Hill, had he been a great capitalist, and had a subject been free to compete with the crown for the conveyance of letters, would in 1838 have underbid and excelled the government.

Competition in a service which requires to be but once done, is conducted in a different manner from competition in buying and selling, where the offerers present their respective commodities, and one man buys from one shop, another from another. The public, in offering the post-office service for competition, would not wait to see what competitor delivered letters cheapest or best, but would ask beforehand who would undertake the whole service on the lowest and best terms. Thus when a house is to be built, or a line of rails laid down, though the keenest competition be awakened, it is not represented by several houses being built, and offered for acceptance, or several lines being laid down; but respectively in several offers being made, in which each offerer endeavours to outbid his fellows.

Sanitary regulations, as a matter for the direction of the government of a country, form a peculiar feature of this age, which owes its prominence to the exertions of one man. It has never been doubted that there should be some interference to protect the public from noxious influences, caused by culpable carelessness

or by perniciously-directed self-interest. But the full philosophy of the preservation of the health of people accumulated in large masses had not been investigated; and among small local efforts, often founded on mistake, and seldom rigidly followed up even to the extent to which the subject was understood, but little was known of what mankind endured from evils capable of being prevented or remedied. The advance of science on this subject has suggested a quantity of operations, which appear to be interferences with personal inclination, or even with personal liberty of action; and as they are thus to some appearance at variance with the principle of avoiding restrictions on the conduct of individuals, their character and justification call for some explanation.

We commenced this essay by endeavouring to show that when man has once started in the race of civilisation and productive industry, he must perform the conditions of his position if he would partake of its benefits, or avoid the most appalling miseries. The farther he has left behind him the rude indolence of the savage, the better will he be adapted to hold his place in the civilised crowd in which he mingles. But to leave him free thus to act, we must remove from him, as far as we practically can, all inducements to lapse into the barbarous indolence which is the savage's natural condition. The savage is covered with filth and vermin—he lies basking in the sun, with all the venomous insects that frequent the heated air stinging him, or the cold freezing his limbs, instead of building, from the abundant materials around him, an edifice to shelter him from the extremities of heat or cold; he eats his food, reeking from recent slaughter, uncooked; he provides for no future, and is content if he appease his momentary appetites. Everything that surrounds the civilised man, on the contrary, bears marks of industry and effort; and it is by himself, or others for him, sustaining this industry and effort, that he keeps his place in the march of civilisation. *But the propensities of the original savage still exist, and will develop themselves if circumstances tend to nourish them.* It is a marked illustration of this truth, that those tribes whose position on the globe requires them to do most for themselves, and to leave least to nature, are farthest removed from the chances of lapsing into barbarism. Wherever great care is necessary to preserve life and its primitive comforts, there is a strong protection against barbarism; and thus the Dutch, who have made the very soil on which they live, and who require to be perpetually pumping out the surplus waters to protect themselves from being swamped, have more of the material comforts of industrial progress than perhaps any other nation in the world.

Sanitary legislation requires the removal of those physical elements which tempt the human being back to barbarism, by imperfectly supplying to him, on easy conditions, the adjuncts of

civilisation. Our race, capable as it is of the highest attainments, is also singularly susceptible to the effect of external circumstances tending to degrade and barbarise; and these it is often necessary to remove, that the wings may be purified to soar upwards. Mr Walker, a sagacious police magistrate of London—the author of the 'Eccentric'—remarked, that if the Strand were lined with empty casks, they would all be inhabited in a week by people who would bring up a cask-living race to succeed them. Care is taken, under all tolerably well-prepared police acts, to prevent deserted edifices in towns from being accessible to vagrants. In the laying out of a new street, the cellars beneath it being constructed earlier, often by some years, than the houses to which they are attached, it is considered necessary to build up their entrances. That may seem a harsh law which deprives the poor of what the rich do not need; but every facility to such indiscriminate shelter, superseding efforts that should be made for obtaining decent accommodation, are only so many inducements dragging the lowest class of the population a step lower down.

Facilities given for desultory and disgusting occupations, make a degraded order of human beings. It was discovered in a late investigation before a police magistrate that the perambulation and search of the common sewers, for whatever money or saleable trifles might find their way into them, was a regular London trade. In any large town, with ill-regulated cleansing arrangements, it is not difficult to find victims of such contaminating influences in the cinder-sifters, who, unknown at other periods, flit past like dingy, dirty shadows in the dusk,

> 'And from their musty jaws
> Breathe foul contagious darkness in the air.'

From the bad cleansing arrangements of Paris, the persons following this grovelling profession, called chiffonniers, have formed a large proportion of the dangerous classes of that turbulent city; and indeed it will ever be found that where the laws and customs conduce to the breeding of a race of city savages in the centre of a high civilisation, society will witness the worst horrors, and be liable to the wildest convulsions. A singular instance of the malign and dangerous influence of these people occurred in 1834. When France was visited with cholera, the authorities of the metropolis made arrangements for the removal of the refuse and impurities from the several houses, without their being spread forth on the street for the convenience of the chiffonniers. This interference with their interest caused one of the most formidable Parisian outbreaks—almost a revolution. The carts to be applied to the new system were seized and shattered, and the workmen put to flight, while thousands of savages rushed through the streets, uttering furious cries against the physicians as poisoners of the

people, and against all the other usual objects of an insane mob's wrath. The prefect of police reported—'My agents could not be at all points at once to oppose the fury of those crowds of men with naked arms, and haggard figures, and sinister looks, who are never seen at ordinary times, and who seemed on this day to have arisen out of the earth. Wishing to judge myself of the foundation of the alarming reports that were brought to me, I went out alone and on foot. I had great difficulty in getting through these dense masses, scarcely covered with filthy rags; no description could convey their hideous aspect, or the sensation of terror which the hoarse and ferocious cries created. Although I am not easily moved, I at one time feared for the safety of Paris.'*

The individuals following these degraded occupations have their peculiar tastes and habits. For the simple wholesome food of the respectable humbler classes they have little relish. It is possible to pamper the appetite to a partiality for corruption—a cultivation which the appreciators of game, in what is called its fit state, can easily comprehend. When it transpired on a late occasion that it was necessary to abandon bone-picking as an occupation in a workhouse, because the paupers gnawed the bones, a strong popular clamour arose against the starvation supposed to be indicated by a craving after what is generally abhorred; but in reality the restriction was necessary to prevent the paupers not from ministering to their subsistence, but from indulging a depraved and degraded appetite. A person who appears to have studied their motions, gives this account of the chiffonnier class in England, where their habits form the most complete contrast to those of the inhabitants of the country in general, and afford a striking instance of the extent to which the people of a highly-civilised community may be corrupted by coming in contact with inducements to barbarism:—

'The bone-pickers are the dirtiest of all the inmates of our workhouse: I have seen them take a bone from a dung-heap, and gnaw it while reeking hot with the fermentation of decay. Bones from which the meat had been cut raw, and which had still thin strips of flesh adhering to them, they scraped carefully with their knives, and put the bits, no matter how befouled with dirt, into a wallet or pocket appropriated to the purpose. They have told me that whether in broth or grilled, they were the most savoury dish that could be imagined. I have not observed that these creatures were savage, but they were thoroughly debased. Often hardly human in appearance, they had neither human tastes nor sympathies, nor even human sensations; for they revelled in the filth which is grateful to dogs and other lower animals, and which to our apprehension is redolent only of nausea and abomination.'†

* Sanitary Report, p. 94. † Evidence cited in Sanitary Report, p. 95.

It is clear that petty local warfares with such classes and their practices would be tyrannical, probably without being effective. If we desire to extinguish the degradation, we must suppress its elements. If the dust-heap is laid down before the door, there would be cruelty, besides difficulty, in preventing any class of the wayfarers of the town, by police penalties, from rummaging through it; but if these accumulations of filth had never been permitted to exist, their absence could have been a hardship to no one. Since certain classes of edifices are known to communicate degrading habits to those who dwell in them, it becomes on the same principle a necessary precaution to prevent such dwellings from coming into existence. No one denies that where human beings crowd near to each other, there must be certain restrictions imposed on individual freedom of operation, otherwise every man would be practically the sort of enemy of the rest of his species, which Hobbes has supposed him to be, for the purpose of building the theory of his 'Leviathan.' One man digs a draw-well where he chooses, and knowing where it is himself, leaves it unfenced. Another, instead of building a high wall to protect his garden or field from invasion, sets man-traps and spring-guns in it, and is content with the protection which their terror inspires around, not deeming it a material objection to his arrangement that a few innocent persons, ignorant of the existence of his property, and of his method of protecting it, should fall victims to his precautions. He wishes to make use of a furnace, and having a worthless edifice, which he will readily sacrifice, he kindles it there, not heeding that there is but a slight partition between it and the house where his neighbour's infants are sleeping. He is making additions to his house, and he deposits the bricks, stones, and mortar in the street, leaving those who are going home after nightfall, and desire to preserve their lives and limbs, to find out for themselves whether there are such interruptions in their way.

Such acts, by which individuals are liable to do mischief to others, are profusely condemned in police regulations; and it is but carrying out the principle to prevent people from raising edifices, or doing other acts liable to injure the public health, although, if there were a counteraction of the rule, we could not, as we can in the case of the palpably dangerous proceedings which we have been describing, point to the evil done as the specific, undeniable effect of the infraction of the rule. If an individual digs a well, and a child is found drowned in it next morning, we know whose misconduct has caused the mischief, and who has been the victim. If a person stop the course of a sewer in a crowded neighbourhood, and use its contents in the manufacture of manure, abundance of previous facts, coupled with the revelations of medical science, will show us that if fever or cholera prevail around the spot, they will have been caused by the manufacture; and

although we cannot here so specifically point out immediate victims of the operation, yet there is sufficient proof of its mischievous nature to justify the law in prohibiting it from being undertaken by any man for his personal aggrandisement or profit.

It is scarcely a step beyond this to prohibit the building of houses in such a manner that, whether by their juxtaposition or their own internal structure, they will be detrimental to the health, and will shorten the lives of those who come to dwell in them. In a previous part of this volume* we have endeavoured to describe the helplessness of the working-man, whose lot being cast in a large city, desires to find in it a dwelling suitable to good habits of cleanliness, separation, and ventilation, and yet can find none. The individual is as powerless to deal with the want of these advantages throughout the whole district in which alone he can afford to live, as he is to deal with the want of sewerage, or the absence of legal protection in the form of just laws and a competent police force.

Building regulations are by no means a novelty. The Romans, who had much knowledge about the proper organisation of cities, although their literature has failed to preserve many vestiges of it, had edile officers of high authority, whose jurisdiction over the structure of edifices was supreme. Almost every town in Britain possesses some species of regulation as to streets and buildings; and when more distinct rules are followed, their chief novelty will be in their being regulated by great scientific knowledge, instead of being adapted to local prejudices or interests.

There are no doubt more serious difficulties to be overcome in the application of sanitary regulations to existing edifices, and to the confirmed habits of communities—an additional reason for their more careful adaptation to the future, in order that vested rights, and habits not easily altered, may be prevented from arising. If the poorest class have never found ash-heaps on the streets to be rummaged, or unoccupied ruins to live in, they are fortunate in never having been subjected to such deteriorating influence; but if they have found the temptation in their wanderings through the streets, and have yielded to it, and associated it with their habits, its removal may be felt as a hardship. Some bold attempts have, however, been successfully made to amend the habits of the lowest classes of people by measures exemplifying the precept of Knox, to pull down the nests, that the rooks may flee away. Among the other features of the degradation and misery of a large class in Liverpool, the circumstance that above 30,000 people lived in cellars became distressingly conspicuous. With some relaxations, chiefly intended to meet the effect of the inroads of Irish poor caused by the famine,

* See p. 166.

certain classes of these dwellings were condemned, and prohibited from being used as human habitations. It is said that this measure has, along with the other sanitary improvements of Liverpool, been followed by a conspicuous decrease of the mortality of the population: it need scarcely be said that as the preservation of life is the end of all sanitary arrangements, the relative number of deaths must ever be the most sensitive measure of their efficacy.

There must necessarily be some very difficult interests to be accommodated, and nice operations to be undergone, in reducing our old towns under sanitary rule; but their future purification and civilisation depend in some considerable measure on the enlightened energy with which this object is pursued. In many of the manufacturing districts, the working-people's huts have been built of frail and destructible materials; and when spreading out before the eye, mile after mile, with their brick walls, tiled roofs, and unpaved intervening lanes, they have more of the temporary aspect of an encampment than the permanent impression of a city. Yet frail as these edifices are, there will be multitudinous permanent interests connected with them, and with the right to the ground on which they stand, which must be consulted if any alteration is to be made on their character, structure, and juxtaposition. Our old towns, especially when, as in Scotland, they are built of stone, present still greater difficulties. In them multitudes of poor people are often to be found crowded into large buildings perforated by perpendicular streets, which, like thickly-filled hospitals, are partitioned into multitudinous stone wards, storey above storey. These houses, built to answer peculiar purposes for the higher classes of society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, now serve nearly the same purposes to the lowest and most dangerous order of the population. Their architects had to keep in view an object more immediately important to their employers than ventilation, light, or good accommodation; and this object was, to make the dwelling subservient to its owner's protection—it might be against foreign enemies, it might be against home marauders, and it might be against the law of the land. They now perform in many respects the same sort of service to those city Ishmaelites who are surrounded by one comprehensive enemy in the institutions of their country. So long as there are cities of refuge like these remains of old grandeur and strength, to which marauders can flee, so long will the rich not only be liable to the invasions of disease and pauperism, but to predatory crimes, and all the evils of a dangerous neighbourhood. These fortresses of offence and evil have already been in many instances levelled to make room for railway and harbour works. The health, moral and physical, of the community would seem not to be less worthy of the sacrifice. A police

force, and the administration of criminal justice, form one class of preservatives against the evils which the better classes suffer from the vicinity of the depraved and poor; education is a greater and a stronger preservative; but among the arrangements which will produce the greatest immediate and palpable good, when compared with its cost to the community, we shall probably find sanitary regulations.

On a principle somewhat similar to that which gives occasion for sanitary regulations, we may rest the protection of the people from the risk of physical injury and accidental violent death. That any one who may find it for his interest to do acts liable to occasion death or injury—as, for instance, to drive a cab furiously through a street for a high bribe from an impatient man; or, for the sake of pecuniary saving, to heat a steam-boiler beside a crowded thoroughfare until it burst—should be prevented from doing so by legal prohibitions or punishments, is a simple view of this class of laws. But they require to go still farther, and to protect the individual against perils which he would himself have no objection to encounter. The gambling spirit pervades society, and often induces those who never approached the gaming-table to play with the highest stakes—life and health. Where the individual alone runs the risk—where the quantity of liquor he drinks, or the steeple-chases he rides, may be the source of danger—the law cannot well interfere; but it is sometimes able effectively to interpose when some individual publicly holds out an invitation to many others to risk life or health. Thus it has been found necessary for the law in this country to take cognisance over steam-ships, railways, and manufactories, in so far as the safety of the public, and of the working-people employed in these several means of occupation, is concerned. In a steam-ship, as to which it is pronounced by scientific authority that it has in it the elements of decay, and that in some one of its voyages it will sink, people will travel to the last, each man gambling with his life, and trusting that if there be a catastrophe, as he believes there will, he will not be the victim. Though, however, the calamity be doubtful to the individual, *it is sure to the public.* A government, aided by scientific information, can tell that if a certain number of steam-ships in a given state of decrepitude be permitted to ply, there will be a certain number of deaths; and as the two phenomena stand to the public in the position of cause and effect, the cause ought to be suppressed.

Since the railway system, setting in motion powers so docile to scientific control, but so terrible when they break loose, the public attention has been actively directed to the means of avoiding accident and saving life in public conveyances. A law inherited by European nations in general from the Romans, has sought the best protection in pecuniary responsibility. It may seem a

frightfully selfish characteristic of a man, especially a man well educated and rich, that pecuniary responsibility will make him cautious, while the safety of the lives of his fellow-creatures will not. But there is a curious and a valuable principle of human nature involved in this apparently selfish characteristic. While there is no pecuniary responsibility falling on the owner of the vehicle, it becomes the passenger's business to look after his own life—the owner has no concern with it. But let the owner of the vehicle be subjected to a penalty for every person killed in it, it then becomes *his* business to look after the safety of his passengers, as much as it is his business to look after the safety of his fares. There was perhaps neither cruelty nor selfishness previously—there was but a neglect of a path of usefulness that by an acute and disinterested mind might have been discovered and trodden. We find this curious notice of the effect of pecuniary interest in a set of documents of which we have made frequent use in this volume:—

'The principle of pecuniary responsibility is self-acting. It dispenses with agencies of inspection, and *à priori* regulations; it reaches where they could not reach, and renders arbitrary and troublesome interferences unnecessary—it is awake and active when authority and public attention, and benevolence and humanity, are asleep or powerless. A surgeon who had served on board transport ships, described to me the toils of his service during long voyages—his sleeplessness on stormy nights—his vigilance for the change of the watch—his getting out of his hammock to see that the poor wearied sailors, whom he could not trust to themselves, took off their wet clothes before they turned in. On complimenting him on his sentiments of active benevolence, he frankly owned that he was only entitled to the praise of vigilance to his own interests: the sailors were included in his contract—it was that which kept his thoughts intent on the means of preserving their health, as well as saving his own trouble in merely treating illness when it occurred, which is ordinarily considered the surgeon's sole duty beyond giving *general* directions for the preservation of health. The principle of pecuniary responsibility has been applied in the case of the shipment of pauper emigrants, and all the reports of its practical working have been most satisfactory. For every unavoidable and fatal casualty, it has secured for these cases "at least one sincere mourner."'*

It will be found, however, that the principle of the pecuniary responsibility of railway companies for the safety of their passengers is not of easy adjustment. We have by the same accident two men killed: one of them is a gambler and drunkard

* Papers read before the Statistical Society of Manchester.

—a burden on some immediate relation, a disgrace to his family, and a nuisance to all who know him; the other has just begun a career promising fame and emolument to himself, a good provision to a rising family, and utility to the world at large. Are the two lives capable of being compared with each other in value? Yet it would not be a safe precedent that the worthlessness of the owner should make the life of any man a matter to be carelessly dealt with. Even among people respected and valued there might be difficulties in so adjusting a pecuniary penalty as always to punish the one party for carelessness, and never to give the other a temptation to run risks—for the great fact of suicide joins with the propensity to gamble with life already referred to, to show that individuals are not always to be acquitted of culpably trifling with their own safety. Suppose that a father of a family receiving a large professional income, has his life insured to a high amount, and is killed by a railway collision. Is the amount of his insurance, which the assuring company have had to pay on account of the misconduct of the railway officers, to be overlooked in estimating the pecuniary extent of his loss to his family? or should not the insurance company be entitled to participate in the fund recovered, since its own loss from the misconduct of the company can be so distinctly measured?

CHAPTER XVIII.

PAUPERISM AND POOR-LAW.

Mendicancy—Different Nature in Industrious and Idle Communities—In a State of War with Industry—History of Outcast Classes—Inquiry into the Belief that if the Monasteries had Remained, Poor-Rates would have been Less—Such Institutions Incapable of Performing the Complex Services of Pauper Management—War against Vagrancy and Pauperism in England—The Poor-Laws—Universal Right to Relief and Labour Test—Ireland and Scotland—The Defects in the Old System in the Three Kingdoms—Demoralising Profusion in England—Demoralising Penury in Scotland—Necessity of a System being Adopted in an Advanced Stage of Society—Evils of Promiscuous Charity—Imposture as a Trade.

We have heretofore, in connection with the duties of the state, considered those which are of a precautionary, civilising, and organising character. In this and the next chapter we shall have some remarks on the remedies applicable to the damaged portion of the population.

In all stages of society, besides the necessitous from unforeseen calamity, or inability to work, there will be voluntary paupers preying on the credulity, the compassion, the carelessness, or the prejudices of the rest of the community. The phenomenon is a large and fully-developed element in human nature—it may be modified, or neutralised, but it will probably never cease to exist. It is to be found in all stages of society, from the peer's younger son, who importunes his great connections and his wealthy friends for gifts which he falsely calls loans, in preference to gaining a livelihood by decent industry, down to the filthy mendicant on the street, to which the same honourable gentleman sometimes tosses a trifle with an air of immeasurable superiority. It has sometimes been an object of dispute whether the propensity has its origin in pride or humility. Some have maintained that its votaries are people haunted by a hallucination that in some form or other they are the creditors, or the licensed taxers of the rest of mankind, entitled to levy a certain income on the drudging and producing part of their race, who are under a corresponding obligation to part with their gains—an obligation not always performed quite to the satisfaction of the other party. The majority of thinkers on this subject, however, rather incline to the supposition, that nothing but a depraved humility—a total prostration of that honest pride which is far from being inconsistent with the true humility of the Gospel—could ever permit human nature, fallen as it is, to degrade itself down to the level

of him who, without physical or moral incapacity to obtain the bread of honest industry, takes a portion from the food for which his neighbour works, and manages to make the hard-worked man work a little longer, that he may have all the benefits of industry without its drawbacks.

The mendicant order has many superficial distinctions in different classes of society in the same country, but it has more real and radical distinctions in different countries and ages of the world. Among an Oriental people, all comparatively indolent, surrounded by few of the creations of enterprising industry, and accustomed to derive their frugal means of sustenance and enjoyment with ease from the prolific earth, the class who do nothing will naturally be less distinct from those who make the bread of both, than in nations farther north, of hardier make, more dependent on the produce of their industry, and richer in its fruits. Hence it is in rich, industrious, populous countries, such as our own, that the distinction is greatest; and in these there is a sort of ceaseless warfare between the two classes—those who work and have, and those who would have without working. It is perhaps in Holland, where the value of industry has been better tested than in almost any other part of the world—where the very soil itself is manufactured, and the people, like Tantalus, steeped in water which they cannot taste, have to manufacture or import the simplest beverages—that the distinction has been for the longest time established, and consequently pauper management has received the earliest attention. It thus happens that in the indolent countries nearer the sun, the individual is allowed quietly to take up his position as one of the consuming, and not of the producing classes, few being inclined to meddle with him or question the propriety of his choice; while at the other end of the scale there is so hearty a war against the able non-producer, that even *he* has in some measure to work, by setting his ingenuity to deceive his enemy, and to profit by his simplicity or carelessness. In fact, at best he only operates a sort of compromise, having sometimes an amount of exertion to undergo in the art of deception, which the honest man would consider a far more severe labour than the fair industry on which he lives.

Horace uses 'mendici,' from which our term 'mendicant' is derived, as, along with actors and singers, expressive of the class to which a profuse and hospitable man extended his sympathies. By a fatal political economy, a number of the citizens were made virtually partial paupers by participating in national distributions of food; but among the Romans, who were essentially a high-spirited people, it seems probable that the mendicant, as with us, had to exercise the ingenuity of the impostor. The history of mendicity during the dark ages has assumed an important position in the annals of the world, by the sanctity it acquired as being

associated with religious ordinances and observances, an alliance which it has an aptitude to form in all ages sufficiently barbarous to honour the occupation, or to overlook the detriment that religion must suffer by the degradation of its ministers. Without entering on this large subject, however, it may be interesting to notice in passing, that the ecclesiastical history of that age has bequeathed to us, in a curious fashion, a very expressive and common word in our language—that of 'beggar.' The secular followers of the third rule of St Francis were called in France 'Beguins;' and by the Germans 'Beguards' or 'Beghards,' a term which, in their language having so much in common with our own, expressed the character of men who besought with importunity. The expression was intended to apply to the intensity and ardour of their prayers; but probably the petitions of the brethren to their fellow-mortals had been associated with their title, and had been the means of transferring it to the mendicants of this country. Thus some of the most magnificent of the monastic institutions of Europe—those who have seen the 'Beguinage' of Ghent will not easily forget it—had a common nomenclature with the tattered solicitors of charity on our streets.

Pauperism and brigandism, like every other interest, gain power from combination and concentration; and thus ecclesiastical institutions, besides the mendicancy they directly and systematically encouraged, gave opportunities for quantities of the depraved classes assembling under the protection of the sanctuaries, which they were entitled to keep free of violation by the law. The laws against small offenders, and even against debtors, were savage and exterminating; but while one hand was uplifted to strike, the other opened a door of escape. So it ever seems to be with laws too severe; a sort of misgiving prompts those who make or execute them to afford facilities for neutralising their virulence, so that some are doubly punished to make up for the loss of victims in those who escape. It was part of the general system by which the church stood in warlike array against the feudal aristocracy, that there should be these asylums where the hunted serf might flee, and the avenger's feet could not tread. Some of them sunk into oblivion with the decay of ferocious manners; but others in great cities, becoming on a large scale the fortresses of all the ruffianism around, were conspicuous objects throughout Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

That able antiquarian novelist, Victor Hugo, gives in his 'Nôtre Dame' this picture of such a spot in Paris:—'The poor poet cast his eyes around him. He was truly in that redoubtable court of miracles, where never honest man had penetrated at like hour; magic circle, where the officers of the court, and the bailiffs of the provostship who ventured in, disappeared in

morsels; city of robbers; hideous wart on the face of Paris; common sewer, whence escaped every morning, and returned to stagnate every night, that stream of vice, of beggary, of vagabondism always overflowing in the streets of capitals; monstrous hive, where entered in the evening with their prey all the hornets of the social order; hospital of deceit, where the Bohemian, the degraded priest, the debauched scholar, the idle vagabonds of all nations—Spaniards, Italians, Germans—and of all religions—Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, idolators—covered with painted wounds, beggars by day, transformed themselves into brigands by night; an immense robing-room, in short, where dressed and undressed themselves at this time all the actors in that eternal comedy, that robbery, prostitution, and murder played upon the streets of Paris.

'It was a large, irregular, and ill-paved square, as all the squares of Paris then were. Fires sparkled here and there, around which swarmed strange groups. All went, came, clamoured. You heard shrill laughter, the squalling of children, the voice of women. The hands, the heads of this crowd, black upon a bright background, displayed a thousand strange effects. Sometimes over the ground, where trembled the light of the fire, blended with vast indefinite shadows, you might see a dog pass which resembled a man, or a man who looked like a dog. The boundaries of races and of species appeared to be effaced in this city as in a Pandemonium: men, women, animals—age, sex, health, disease—all seemed to be in common among this people—all went together, mingled, confounded, confused; each participated in all.

'The meagre and shifting light of the fire allowed Gringoire to perceive through his confusion, all around the immense square, a hideous framework of old houses, the fronts of which—worm-eaten, shrivelled, stunted, each pierced with one or two lighted dormer windows—seemed to him in the shade, as if they were the enormous heads of old women ranged in a circle, monstrous and grim, who looked on the nocturnal meeting of witches with winking eyes.

'It was as a new world, unknown, unheard of, deformed, reptile, swarming, fantastic.'

Some of these sanctuaries, whether of ecclesiastical origin, or connected, as they sometimes were, with the residence of royalty, existed on so extensive a scale, and struck their roots so deeply, that they lived far into advancing civilisation, presenting, in the midst of our great towns, with their accumulating wealth and growing municipal organisation, a nest of outlaws, to which the ministers of justice dared not enter; and forming, in the midst of civilisation, a more truly savage community than the Red Indians or the Bushmen, somewhat after the manner in which those small, but fierce wild beasts called rats colonise themselves

in the centre of crowded towns, and defy the art of man to extirpate them. Among these were the Savoy and the Mint in London —places where the empire of law is but of recent foundation, and the chosen arenas of horrors and brutalities which have afforded serviceable materials for the pages of the novelist.

It has been frequently said that the destruction of the monastic institutions by Henry VIII. has been the cause of pauperism and the source of all misery among the people, from the Reformation downwards. It is not easy to vindicate that sweeping act of confiscation, at least as it affected the individuals who really suffered at the time, when we remember the flagitious motives that suggested it, and the base purposes to which the confiscated wealth was applied. But it is not more easy to see how pauperism would have been less, or poor-rates smaller, had the monasteries been permitted to exist. There is a peculiarity about the application of funds truly for the relief of poverty and distress, which lies at the root of all poor-law legislation, and is the main fact to be kept in view in connection with it. It is this—that *if the fund be derived from any other source than by the taxation or voluntary contribution of individuals still retaining some control over it, it is not used for the relief of poverty or distress, but for other purposes.* As naturally as water finds its level, all funds not under the control of parties who have contributed them, fall into the shape of private property, employed for private purposes. Even under the English system of parochial relief, when magistrates were authorised to award it out of funds not contributed or collected by themselves, and for the abuse of which they were not responsible, paupers, instead of receiving relief merely to protect them from starvation, became a species of public pensioners, having a vested right in their annual incomes. There are many millions' worth of property still invested in what are called charitable foundations, the existence of which does not reduce, while their abolition would not increase, the poor-rates to any perceptible and noticeable extent. If the individuals who are reduced to be the objects of charitable relief, would be content to receive it while they need it, and would resign the boon so soon as zealous exertions have enabled them to find a more creditable means of subsistence, the administration of the fund for the relief of the poor would be an easy task, and might be intrusted to any man, lay or ecclesiastical. But this is so far from being the character of those who cluster round the fountains of charitable distribution, that they will take everything that comes within their reach; and the administrators are beset by clamours, intreaties, threats, frauds, and lamentations, in which only the greatest skill and patience, backed by responsibility or self-interest, can enable them to direct the stream of charity into the real channel of immitigable destitution. This operation requires a skill, an energy,

an unceasing vigilance, which irresponsible men will never develop, and which it is difficult to find even in a hired poor-law official, with the ratepayers jealously watching every movement from below, and a central board ever checking from above. Would the ecclesiastics, little conversant with the world—directing their labours, when they did labour, chiefly to comments on the fathers and the illumination of missals—have, unchecked and irresponsible, performed this arduous and endless duty?

That they would have been liberal with the funds at their disposal, may be granted; but to whom would they have given them? To those who lived within the domain of the abbey, being there by chance, or induced to migrate thither by the fame of the brotherhood's munificence--to those who bore the name of some founder or endower of a chapel or shrine—to those who made certain pilgrimages—to those who were otherwise zealous in the faith. But we never would have had a rigid inquiry into the condition of the disabled, or the labour test applied to the able-bodied. Now if you relieve those, and those only, who cannot by any possible and practicable means otherwise sustain themselves, you perform the proper functions of a poor-law: but if you give a certain annual income to Widow Jenkins because her name is Jenkins, and she has asked for it—or to Mike Hobler because he lives in the Abbey Grange, and because he too has asked for it—you merely endow these two people with so much property or revenue, putting them in the same position as if their respective parents had bequeathed them annuities of equal amount. You cannot be certified that you have by one farthing reduced the poor-rates by this operation, for you have not satisfied yourself of the question whether these people would really have been necessary objects of relief. If the monks had still been in possession of their revenues, such, we may well depend on it, would have been the character of their munificence; and with all their giving, the poor-rates would not have been reduced, if they had not even been augmented, under a system which would go far to sap the motives to honest industry and independence of spirit, by rewarding indolence, and rendering incapacity meritorious.

It might naturally be expected that the greater the industry, energy, and intrepidity of the great bulk of the people, the more intense would be their dislike of those drones in the hive who obstruct the economy of its movements, scandalise its fair character, and form cancerous spots, having a propensity to spread disease throughout the sound and wholesome portions of the system. As population thickened, and energetic industry became more essential, the people in general of this country set themselves in hostile array against the mendicant classes. From even a very early period, however, the authorities made sanguinary war against the non-producers, in the form of a series of the most

ferocious enactments which legislation ever produced. Yet the champions of industry and order were met by a sort of passive resistance, as obstinate as their own aggressions, and far more successful, since vagrancy exists to a wide extent at this day; a glaring testimony of the failure of all attempts to suppress it, from the arbitrary laws of Henry VIII. down to the workhouse-test of the new poor-law. It is possible that the mixture of races in our population might in some measure account for this remarkable phenomenon, of a people the most industrious and orderly in the world continuing a ceaseless and unsuccessful struggle with qualities the very opposite of their own, developed in the very heart of their empire. If two races share between them the same spot on the earth's surface, and the one be by nature prompt, industrious, and energetic, while the other is indolent and procrastinating, there must be ceaseless war between them; and this war will naturally exhibit the characteristics of England's controversy with her vagrants—impatient active hostility on the one side, enduring stubborn inertion on the other.

From the reign of Richard II. towards the conclusion of the fourteenth century, to that of Henry VIII. in the sixteenth, a series of severe acts were passed for the repression of vagrancy. In the latter king's reign, the community were visited by the great influx of mendicants caused by the suppression of the religious houses; not that the suppression made them mendicants, but the religious fraternities, when in vital operation, having taught them that trade, they continued to pursue it though the monastic system was suppressed. It was at this time that the penal enactments were brought to the climax of severity, with the view doubtless of achieving a corresponding success.

By an act of the twenty-second of Henry VIII. (1530), persons begging without license, or beyond the limits of their license, were to be whipped, or sent to the stocks for three days and three nights, there to be fed only on bread and water. Five years afterwards, the celebrated act of the twenty-seventh of Henry VIII. (chap. 25) was passed, in which the person called a 'ruffler,' or a 'valiant beggar,' was treated as a great criminal. His first punishment was like that of the former act—whipping; but if he persisted in following his occupation, the upper part of the gristle of his right ear was to be cut off. If he still persisted, notwithstanding these emphatic warnings, he was to be put to death as a felon. This was at the same time the statute which first enforced a local provision for the disabled poor. It was doubtless deemed by the framer of this statute, as by many later legislators on the poor-law, that now the true remedy for pauperism had been found; and that the real objects of compassion being provided for, and thus the proper ends of charity satisfied, the impostors would be extinguished by the harsh laws made against them.

But people could not be found to punish mendicancy as they would punish murder, and the measure became ineffective. An act was passed in the first year of the youthful monarch Edward VI., in which there is much wailing on account of so wholesome a statute as that of Henry VIII. being neutralised, partly by the foolish pity and mercy of those who should have put in force so goodly a law, and partly from the long-accustomed idleness and perverse natures of the sturdy beggars themselves. The penalties are then so far altered, that when the vagabond was brought before a justice he was to be branded on the breast with the letter V; and he was to be assigned as a slave for two years to the person presenting him, 'his executors and assigns,' who were to give him bread and water or 'small drink,' and refuse meat, and to set him to work by beating, chaining, or otherwise. If he absented himself for fourteen days during the two years of slavery, he was to be branded with the letter S on the forehead or cheek, and to be adjudged a slave for life. If he made his escape a second time, he was to be judged a felon—such was the mitigating act. If severity is equivalent to sincerity, it might certainly stand as an expressive monument of the national hatred of idleness. There is a wearisome monotony of ineffective threats in the many vagrancy acts which, from this time onwards, frequent the statute-book. One act, however, passed in 1597 (39 Elizabeth, ch. 4), is curious in affording an inventory of the different classes of vagrants—some having their exact parallels at the present day, while others are a type of an utterly different state of society—it includes 'All persons calling themselves scholars going about begging: all seafaring men pretending losses of their ships or goods on the sea going about the country begging: all idle persons going about in any country, either begging or using any subtle craft or unlawful games or plays, or feigning themselves to have knowledge in physiognomy, palmistry, or other like crafty science, or pretending that they can tell destinies, fortunes, or such other like fantastical imaginations: all persons that be or utter themselves to be proctors, procurers, patent-gatherers, or collectors for gaols, prisons, or hospitals: all fencers, bear-wards, common players of interludes, and minstrels wandering abroad (other than players of interludes belonging to any baron of this realm, or any other honourable personage of greater degree to be authorised to play, under the hand or seal of arms of such baron or personage): all jugglers, tinkers, pedlars, and petty chapmen wandering abroad: all wandering persons and common labourers, being persons able in body, using loytering, and refusing to work for such reasonable wages as is taxed or commonly given in such parts where such persons do or shall happen to dwell or abide, not having living otherwise to maintain themselves: all persons delivered out of gaols that beg for their fees, or otherwise do travel begging: all such persons as shall

wander abroad begging, pretending losses by fire, or otherwise: and all such persons not being felons, wandering and pretending themselves to be Egyptians, or wandering in the habit, form, or attire of counterfeit Egyptians.'

Among the punishments assigned by this act, the offender was to 'be stripped naked, from the middle upward, and shall be openly whipped until his or her body be bloody;' and this savage chastisement was to be inflicted by the special advice of the clergyman of the parish. The act contains elaborate provisions for forcing the vagabonds back to their original parishes; and thus forms an early development of that system of settlement which still characterises the English poor-law.

The approaches towards compulsory taxation for sums to be distributed by proper officers, were gentle and cautious. The statute of 5 and 6 Edward VI. (chap. 2) recapitulates its predecessors in the penal department applicable to vagabonds, but professes at the same time to see that maimed, sore, aged, and impotent persons shall be relieved and cured, and habitations provided for them by the devotion of good people of that city, town, or village where they were born, or have dwelt three years. The arrangements for accomplishing this were the appointment yearly, in Whitsun week, by the head officers of towns, and the ministers and churchwardens of parishes, of collectors of alms, whose function it was on the ensuing Sunday, at church, gently to ask 'every man and woman' what they of their charity will give weekly towards the relief of the poor, and write the same in a book: here was the rate-book in its infancy. The sums so entered were to be distributed after such sort that the more impotent may have the more help, and such as can get part of their living the less, and by the direction of the collectors be put on such labour as they be able to do. If any one able to further this charitable work, obstinately and frowardly refused to give, or discouraged others, the minister and churchwardens were gently to exhort him; and if their persuasions were insufficient, the bishop was to send for him, and offer more authoritative persuasives.

Thus the legislature, the bishop, the clergyman of the parish, the churchwardens, and the collectors, all united together in gently asking and persuading; but all to no purpose, since the means of coercion were wanting, and legislative persuasions are scarcely so effectual as those which rise at each man's hearth. To make the arrangement effective, some more stringent methods were necessary; and so we gradually find the state, like the mendicant in Gil Blas, presenting a blunderbuss as an aid to its exhortations. By the 5th of Elizabeth (chap. 3), if any person, of his froward, wilful mind, continue to resist episcopal exhortations, the bishop shall bind him over to appear at the next sessions. The

justices are there to charitably and gently persuade and move him; and if he will not be persuaded and moved, the justices or the churchwardens are to tax him at their good discretion. If he refuse to be so taxed, he is to be committed to jail until he pay the tax imposed on him and the arrears.

At length, in 1601, when the principle of taxation had been established as the proper means of obtaining the necessary funds, but neither severity nor persuasion was sufficient to suppress vagrancy and promiscuous begging, the important principle of the labour test was established. It was enacted that not only the aged and infirm, but the able-bodied workmen, should have relief; but they were to be entitled to it only in the shape of remuneration for labour. The act (43 Elizabeth, c. 2) says that order shall be taken 'for setting to work the children of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain their children: and also for setting to work all such persons, married or unmarried, having no means to maintain them, and use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by: and also to raise weekly, or otherwise, a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other ware and stuff to set the poor on work, and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them being poor, and not able to work, and also for the putting out of such children to be apprentices.'

Here the labour test descended to children, who were only to be relieved in the shape of being converted from unproductive to productive members of society. The principle of the measure, as it became further developed in practice, was this—that every person, whether able to work or not, is entitled to relief, but that the able-bodied shall not receive relief on any other condition than that of giving to the public, labour in exchange for it; and that the labour and the relief shall be so adjusted to each other, that the workman shall not be tempted to desert the ordinary voluntary labour market and seek parochial support. Of all controlling and corrective principles in the administration of pauper relief, this has been found by practical men to be the most valuable. It has often been remarked, that whenever the poor-law system—either from compassion towards individuals in distress, or in pursuit of some other general theory—deviated from the labour test of the act of Elizabeth, the most ruinous consequences to the independence of the working-classes, and to the general safety of society, were sure to follow; and that these calamities could only be corrected by the restoration of the test. But the practical adjustment of so difficult a social operation as the administration of relief, is not solved by the discovery of a sound principle. No principle is in such matters self-acting—it is at best but the point to which the helmsman must steer, using in the meantime both his strength

and his skill to obviate the influences of tides and winds, and sometimes tacking to the right and to the left, that, by diverging, he may achieve his aim.

Notwithstanding even the great practical utility of this principle, as it has been developed in England, it stands forth at this moment as a warning to all legislators, to watch the practical bearing of every principle, and to be ready to abandon any theory that proves insufficient for its purpose. The labour test has suited England, but it does not follow that in the same form at least it will suit England's neighbours. In the year 1846, the government of this country encountered one of the most lively alarms that a government has ever experienced, by finding that hundreds of thousands of workmen in Ireland preferred the labour test to the necessary culture of the fields. The calamitous consequences which this phenomenon seemed to point to were only averted by remarkable firmness and sagacity; but it left statesmen impressed with a lesson of caution, which would teach them to hesitate before they adapted, unaltered, to the other island of the United Kingdom, the system they had found so efficacious at home. In fact, the drama of the national workshops bade fair to have exhibited its first performance in this empire. The *English* workman cursed the restraints, the sordidness, the degradation of parish work and pay, and left it when he could, in those feelings of scorn and hatred which it was the legislature's policy to cultivate towards it. The Irish Celt indolently adopted the public works as a provision for life, which, though poor, exempted him from the vicissitudes of voluntary labour, and promised to be uniform and secure. It is remarkable that the Highland Relief Board, having in their hands a large surplus fund to be applied to public purposes at the conclusion of the last famine, felt the same difficulty. They adopted the labour test; but labour offered by a charitable relief board, instead of being unpopular, was coveted; the workmen appearing to consider that it invested them with some of the pomp and circumstance of public officers.

Extending our notice of the history of Legislation in Pauperism to the other parts of the empire, we find the first traces of war with the vagrant classes of Ireland, in a full transference of the English act of Henry VIII. to that country.* It is difficult to persuade English legislators that the acts which they think fit to pass for their own country are not the best for all the world. Ireland was at that time, in its social character, so different from England, that a poet of the period, desirous to characterise the extreme barbarism of the Muscovites, spoke of them as having no more civilisation than the wild Irish, or, as they were gene-

* Irish Act, 33 Henry VIII., c. 15.

rally called in state documents, 'His Majesty's Irish rebels.'* There could be no better evidence of the haughty carelessness with which the conqueror used the conquered, than the extension to this people of a set of regulations most intimately affecting the personal position and the rights of every inhabitant of the island, which, if they were prepared with any practical eye to their applicability, were intended to serve the purposes of a widely distinct state of society. In some later Irish acts, we find in the nomenclature adopted, such as 'cosherers,' 'rapparees,' &c.† an attempt to adapt the legislation to the circumstances of the people, in order that they might probably be led to the consoling supposition that 'their tyrants then were still at least their countrymen.'

In the reigns of King William and Queen Anne a string of acts was passed, containing provisions which have a startling aspect to the modern newspaper reader when associated with the peculiar nomenclature employed in them. Thus there was enacted in 1707 a statute 'for the more effectual suppressing tories, robbers, and rapparees, and for preventing persons becoming tories, or resorting to them.' These persons are picturesquely described as 'all loose, idle vagrants, and such as pretend to be Irish gentlemen, and will not work or betake themselves to any honest trade or livelihood, but wander about demanding victuals, and coshering from house to house among their fosterers, followers, and others, and also loose persons of infamous lives and characters.' The punishment assigned to them is imprisonment and transportation; and the act declares war against another curious class of offenders, who are described as persons who 'have made a trade of obtaining robbery-money from the country, pretending to have been robbed, whereas they never were robbed, or were not robbed of near the value and sum they allege.'

In Scotland, which was an independent country with its own legislature, the war against mendicancy and vagabondism was marked from the beginning by peculiarities of national manners. In the Highlands, and all along the mountain region of the border, there were men whose occupation would at the present day be called theft or robbery, who yet were not ashamed of it, and knew no humiliation but that of being defeated or made

* Letters addressed by George Tuberville to Dancie, Spenser, and Parker. In Hakluyt's Voyages—

'The manners are so Turkie-like, the men so full of guile,
The women wanton, temples stuft with idols that defile
The seats that sacred ought to be, the customes are so quaint,
As if I would describe the whole, I fear my pen would faint.
In summe I say I never saw a prince that so did raigne,
Nor people so beset with saints, yet all but vile and vaine.
Wild *Irish* are as civil as the *Russies* in their kinde,
Hard choice which is the best of both, ech bloody, rude, and blinde.'

† See Irish Act, 10 and 11, C. 1, c. 16.

prisoner. Throughout the whole country there was a sort of rough-handed vagabondism, descending from the noble to the mendicant. The laws have thus a peculiar complexion, quite different from those of England, while at the same time they are sometimes evidently, in form, imitations or adaptations of the English statutes. But their leading peculiarity is, that while in England vagabondism is attacked as an attribute of pauperism, in Scotland it is sometimes mixed up with rank and power. Thus the earliest statute for the protection of the public against persons potently demanding hospitality, evidently applies to the followers of men of rank. It bears date in 1424, and is to this effect, 'that no man of whatever estate, degree, or condition he be of, riding or ganging in the country, lead or have mare persons with him nor may suffice him, or to his estate, for whom he will make ready payment.' In the same parliament an act was passed against 'sorners or companies overlyand the king's lieges,' which specially applies to people on horseback as well as on foot. Towards the end of the acts of the same parliament there is another which really refers to mendicants according to our modern notions of the order. It divides them into two classes. Those under fourteen or above fourscore are not affected by the act; but those who are between these two ages may not beg, unless they have a token from the authorities. The most characteristic, however, of all these enactments is one passed during the reign of James II., and in the year 1440. It is here given in full, only so far modernised as to render it intelligible to the ordinary English reader, who will be struck by its curious intermixture of the attributes of aristocracy and mendicancy—the horses and hounds in conjunction with the beggars:—

'It is statute and ordained for the away-putting of sorners, overlayers, and masterful beggars, with horse, hounds, or other goods, that all officers, both sheriffs, barons, aldermen, bailies, as well within the burgh as outwith, take an inquisition at ilk court which they hold of the foresaid things; and gif any sik be founden, that their horse, hounds, and other goods be eschait to the king, and their person put in the king's ward, till the king have said his will to them. And also that the said sheriff, bailies, and officers inquire at ilk court gif there be ony that makes them fools, or are bards, and other such-lik runners about. And gif ony sik be founden, that they be put in the king's ward, or in his irons, for their trespass, as long as they have any goods of their own to live upon; and fra they have not to live upon, that their ears be nailed to the trone, or to ane other tree, and their ear cutted off, and banished the country. And if thereafter they be found again, that they be hanged.'

This was as emphatic as legislation could be, but as incompetent, as mere authoritative words always are, to combat with

national propensities and confirmed habits. In 1579 we find the legislature again launching its unavailing thunders, and enacting scourging and burning in the ear for the first offence, and death to the obstinate sinner. In the act of that year the vagabond classes are described as—

'All idle persons ganging about in any county of this realm, using subtle, crafty, and unlawful plays—as juglary, fast-and-loose, and such others; the idle people calling themselves Egyptians, or any other that faigns them to have knowledge of charming, prophecy, or other abused sciences, whereby they persuade the people that they can tell their weirds, deaths, and fortunes, and such other phantastical imaginations; and all persons being stark in body, and able to work, alleging them to have been harried or burnt in some far part of the realm, or alleging them to be banished for slaughter or other wicked deeds; and others neither having lands nor masters, nor using any lawful merchandise, craft, nor occupation, whereby they can win their living, and can give no reckoning how they lawfully get their living; and all minstrels, sangsters, and tale-tellers, not avowed in special service by some of the lords of parliament, or great burghs, or by the head burghs and cities for their common minstrels; all common labourers, being persons able in body, and fleeing labour; all counterfeiters of licenses to beg, using the same, knowing them to be counterfeited; all vagabond scholars of the universities of St Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, not licensed by the rector and dean of faculty of the university to ask alms;* all shipmen and mariners alleging themselves to be ship-broken, without they have sufficient testimonials.'

It may be held as a type of the utter hopelessness of the war against this miscellaneous class, and indeed of the feebleness of the whole penal code, that one of the pleas on which vagabonds sought or demanded charity was, that of being banished from some other part of the kingdom for some great crime.

This enumeration would almost appear to have formed a precedent for the statute of Elizabeth, and indeed the act made a pretty close approach to the English poor-law system of the period. The settlement principle was adopted, and the impotent poor were required to throw themselves on the parishes in which they were born, or those in which they had lived for seven years. Hospitals were sanctioned for those whose age and infirmities made them the immediate objects of parochial relief; and arrangements were made for the collection of funds, which, like the early English enactments, made the closest approach towards taxation, without

* This provision has been sometimes talked of as a peculiar reproach to the Scottish universities. Those who have done so have overlooked the provision about 'persons calling them scholars' in the act of Queen Elizabeth, as well as the whole state and system of the continental universities.

actual coercion. The Scottish poor-law was subsequently altered in detail in the reign of William III. It never embodied the labour test, for it never made any provision for the able-bodied under any circumstances. Until the introduction of compulsory taxation at a comparatively late period, the general practice was, that the funds originally at the disposal of each parish for its poor are the sums collected at the church doors, or through other arrangements for concentrating voluntary donations, and the produce of some parochial fees. In a country with a weak executive, the people of turbulent character, and part of them devoted to predatory habits, the elements of vagrancy and mendicancy were naturally deep-rooted; and a spirited writer of the epoch of the revolution gives the following description of the state of vagrancy in Scotland at that time. The picture is perhaps exaggerated when applied to a population which must have been much below a million, but it cannot be utterly inaccurate:—

'There are at this day in Scotland (besides a great many poor families very meanly provided for by the church boxes, with others, who, by living upon bad food, fall into various diseases) 200,000 people begging from door to door. These are not only no way advantageous, but a very grievous burden to so poor a country. And though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly, by reason of this present great distress, yet in all times there have been about 100,000 of these vagabonds, who have lived without any regard or subjection either to the lawes of the land or even those of God and nature—fathers incestuously accompanying with their own daughters, the son with the mother, and the brother with the sister. No magistrate could ever discover or be informed which way one in a hundred of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptised. Many murders have been discovered among them; and they are not only a most unspeakable oppression to poor tenants (who, if they give not bread or some kind of provision to perhaps forty of such villains in one day, are sure to be insulted by them), but they rob many poor people who live in houses distant from any neighbourhood. In years of plenty many thousands of them meet together in the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days; and at country-weddings, markets, burials, and other the like public occasions, they are to be seen, both men and women, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together.'*

We may learn from this, and from King's statement, that in 1696 there were 1,330,000 beggars in England, that the vagrancy and mendicancy of the present day are not new horrors arising out of civilisation and the manufacturing system, but have been only too fully exemplified in former days.

* Political Works of Fletcher of Saltoun, pp. 100, 101.

When the systems in the three countries were lately the subject of investigation and amendment, there was in Ireland no legal provision for the poor, there was in Scotland a provision little better than none, and there was in England a profuse demoralising system, which many people conceived to be worse than none. The abuses, indeed, of the English poor-law prompted many people to hold that there should be no legal provision for the poor, and to maintain that the salvation of Scotland consisted in keeping down the fund of pauper relief to its almost nominal level. Still if there was much mendicancy under the profuse distribution of England, there was still more in Ireland and Scotland; and it began to be perceived in the latter country, that whatever may be the effect of profusion, a system which does not profess to support the destitute, but only to give them occasional and trifling aids, was not beneficial, as it allowed a large class of the population to lapse into the careless degraded habits of those who have nothing to lose.* It was seen at the same time that the system, in its professed thrift, afforded no means of disciplining the persons among whom the paltry sums collected were dispersed, in the manner in which all recipients of pauper relief ought to be disciplined, in order that it may be seen that the fund distributed goes to reduce, and not to foster, pauperism.

As to the abuses which called for correction in England, a volume might easily be devoted to them; and within the narrow space here available, it is impossible to afford them a specific description. Their main features were, that in the workhouses they nourished a race of privileged paupers, who lived there in idleness and luxury. The parish authorities tried to guard the gate against new-comers, so that the really wretched often remained unrelieved, while the inmates, living luxuriously and idly, formed a sort of pauper aristocracy with their privileges and immunities. Outside the poor-house spread a still more terrible social disease in the 'allowance system,' and other means for supplementing the labourer's wages, up to what was considered a sufficient sum—a system which, by undermining competition, and withdrawing the inducements to exertion, made only a too near practical approach to the views of the Socialists, and justified the fears of those who believed that, like the Roman Empire, Britain was gradually converting the working-classes into a set of stipendiaries on the general bounty of the state, who, while degenerating into unproductive idleness, would swallow up all the fruits of the intelligence and exertion of the rest of the community. Opposite to these circumstances stood the conviction, that in a civilised, rich, complex community, there ought to be a guarantee against the poor starving to death so long as the property of the

* See above, p. 207. This point was elaborately developed in Dr Alison's valuable pamphlets on the Relief of the Poor in Scotland.

rich remained. The nature of the change which was effected by the new law cannot be better or more briefly explained than in the words of Mr Mill:—

'By a collection of facts, experimentally ascertained in parishes scattered throughout England, it was shown that the guarantee of support could be freed from its injurious effects upon the minds and habits of the people; if the relief, though ample in point of necessaries, was accompanied with conditions which they disliked, consisting of some restraints on their freedom, and the privation of certain indulgences. Under this proviso it may be regarded as irrevocably established, that the fate of no member of the community need be abandoned to chance; that society can, and therefore ought, to insure every individual belonging to it against the extreme of want; that the condition even of those on the lowest step of the social ladder needs not be one of physical suffering or the dread of it, but only of restricted indulgence and forced rigidity of discipline.'*

In all arrangements for taking charge of the damaged portion of society, the expense of the machinery is a trifle in comparison with what its imperfections may occasion; and hence the effectiveness of the arrangements is of infinitely greater importance than their cost. As the object of all pauper relief is to save life and mitigate destitution without relaxing industry or withdrawing the motives for forethought, it is clear that any defect of arrangement which made the industrious man idle, or the provident man careless, would be far more calamitous than the payment of an additional salaried officer, or of the expense necessary to elicit some statistical returns, or to engage the services of some man of skill or science. This is not understood by parochial and other local authorities, who naturally, and in the conscientious discharge of their functions according to their knowledge, see no duty before them above that of exercising humanity at the cheapest possible rate. Hence in pauper management, in the industrial training of young people, in the teaching charity schools, and in other like occupations, it is generally deemed that as but for the intervention of charity the service rendered would not have been done at all, doing it cheaply, and with the coarsest instruments, is better than omitting it. Some able men are disposed to question whether, in the case of many evils for which society professes to find remedies, it would not be better to leave nature to work her own cure than to use these coarse instruments, whose agency is always artificial, and always has a greater tendency, than the operations of highly-trained and cultivated minds, to depend on the influence of absolute rules and coercive obedience to them. But at all events, if the consequence of employing

* Principles of Pol. Econ. i. 430.

such instruments is, that the destitution, or the other social evils which it is their function to remedy, are not mitigated, it is readily credible that the effect of leaving them unremedied is far more costly to society than the payment of skilfully-adapted remedies.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that corporate and local management is a feature in this country's institutions deservedly entitled to encouragement rather than discountenance; and the conducting of all the business of the country through a central system tends to unfit men for practical liberty, and to unteach them their duties to society. The proper medium appears to be adopted when local management is retained, while a central-guidance system attends all local operations, affording appropriate skill where it is needed, preserving a rational uniformity of operation, preventing the interests of the public at large from suffering in the collisions of separate and antagonist local authorities, administering council, and checking stretches or abuses of power for selfish, tyrannical, or irrational ends.

In glancing at the very difficult subject of voluntary charity, it may be well to keep in view one vast difference between it and a legislative provision. The grossest mistakes in the application of promiscuous charity produce individually but a slight effect, and this effect is liable to be immediately checked by the counteraction it produces. But errors in the principle of a legislative provision have the most alarming and demoralising influence on society, and can scarcely be checked without a revolution. The sixpence which, destined for the relief of a deserving object, finds its way to the gin-shop, perhaps teaches the giver a lesson, and makes him more cautious next time. But if the legislature, by some miscalculation, has allowed the great stream of national pauper relief to flow into a wrong channel—if it has been sent to certain privileged families who have not the qualification of helpless destitution—if it has made an addition to the able-bodied labourer's means only to tempt and enable him to live in idleness—if it has become a fund on which several hundreds of thousands of petty tradesmen and proprietors throughout the country have established the practice of creating profitable jobs—then the evil is truly alarming, and he will be a bold statesman that attempts to change the current. The poor are made a great party in the state. They embody the violent and profligate dregs of society, rendered more reckless by the abuses of the law—they embody, too, the large body of the working-classes, whose self-relying industry has been so sapped by the evil system, that they really believe the removal of its protection is sentence of starvation against them. Along with these, the parties primarily concerned, are embodied the vast army of jobbers who have profited by the old system, and a host of unscrupulous politicians, to whom

a cause, strong in profligate numbers, and capable of being associated with humanity, is too tempting a political engine to be neglected.

When evils like these are the consequence of miscalculations, no one can wonder that practical statesmen always approach questions about a poor-law with circumspection and timidity. In a small and simple state of society indeed—such, for instance, as the Channel Islands—the voluntary system will generally be found sufficient for the whole purposes of pauper relief; and in almost any circumstances it is better than a vicious poor-law. But in a state of society so advanced and complicated as our own, it is necessary to endeavour at least, to solve the problem of a sound poor-law; and it will be best applied by adopting no wide theories, unless they be founded on a full induction of facts, and by watching with a jealous and suspicious precision the practical working of every branch of the system, so that vested rights be not created in abuses.

Voluntary charity has defects which would render it completely incapable of supplying the place of a well-regulated poor-law in a country like Britain. In the first place, it cannot be measured to its end. He who tosses sixpence or a halfpenny to a beggar, knows not whether it be the first coin which the beggar has received that day, or the tenth, or the twentieth. He does not know whether he is relieving pressing want or contributing to affluence—and no one would perhaps maintain that beggars should draw large incomes. In the second place, it is a barrier to amendment of condition. The beggar's stock in trade is his closeness to utter starvation; and saving money, or surrounding himself with decent and visible comforts, would be his ruin. Edie Ochiltree sagaciously asks, Who would give him halfpence if they saw him possessed of a gold piece?

But the third and main evil of promiscuous mendicancy is, that it educates, nourishes, and rewards *imposture*. In a rich and humane country, a large fund goes into the begging market, for which there are active competitors; and begging becomes a trade. Like every other trade, it will be pursued with various abilities; and the ablest, not the poorest, will be the most successful. Thus the fund destined to relieve destitution and ameliorate misery, goes to nourish the vitiated appetites of the most depraved, and despicable, and heartless of the species. Hardened themselves, and utterly selfish, it is their study to find and pursue all the known avenues to the sympathy and generosity of mankind. In nothing have they better shown their sagacity than in the employment of children as a means of reaching the warmest corner of the human heart. The parent who has left at home his comfortable little ones, can ill resist the appeal of the abject innocents huddled together in the slimy street corner, to avoid

the drifting sleet; but if he be acquainted with the world of imposture, he replaces the selected coin, remembering that instead of relieving the undeserved misery of infancy, it goes to feed the vices of maturity, and to encourage a sort of infant slave-trade, in which money is made out of the miseries of persecuted children.

Next to the quantity of knavery in the world, perhaps the most wonderful phenomenon is the quantity of simplicity on which it acts. One may often observe mendicants lounging on a broad pavement, surrounded with inscriptions exquisitely written by themselves with various-coloured chalks. The exhibition of talent thus reduced to destitution is touching; and many a rough mechanic drops in the hat of the poverty-stricken genius as he passes a trifle from the shilling or eighteenpence a day won by his hard labour. In an investigation lately made in Manchester of the earnings of the various classes of impostors, these men were rated at 7s. 6d. a day. In fact, as the simple mechanic might know if he reflected, it requires very considerable talent to pursue this trade; and the man who follows it does so because he thus obtains more than he would gain by devoting his abilities to productive industry—or at least he obtains it with more ease, content in the degradation that saves him from labour. On the whole, if there be classes of society more criminal, there are none more thoroughly worthy of being scorned and despised, than impostor-mendicants. They intercept the charity that is intended for the truly destitute, and apply it to feed their own sensual appetites; they make profit out of the most obdurate cruelty to the most helpless and innocent of the human race; and they degrade themselves into something worse than slaves, not driven to do so by necessity, but tempted by greed.

The pure impostor-mendicant is in a great measure a produce of advanced civilisation. The same deep dissimulation and its accompanying degradation were not necessary to the mendicants of early times, who, whatever the law said, were to the people often a species of tolerated class, not always professing to be in abject want, but seeking a customary bounty which it pleased the people so to distribute. Hence a certain respectability even surrounded the vagrant mendicant of earlier days. We have a picture, in the following ballad of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, of the beggar of that period—a man making war against the laws and the county justices, but supported by the general customs of society. Its independent honesty of tone would appear very startling in the mouth of a whining impostor of the present day:—

'I am a poor man, God knows,
And all my neighbours can tell
I want both money and clothes,
And yet I live wondrous well.

I have a contented mind,
And a heart to bear out all,
Though fortune (being unkind)
Hath given me substance small.

Then hang up sorrow and care,
It never shall make me rue;
What though my back goes bare,
I me ragged, and torne, and true.

I scorn to live by the shift,
Or by any sinister dealing;
I'll flatter no man for a gift,
Nor will I get money by stealing.

I'll be no knight of the post,
To sell my soule for a bribe;
Though all my fortunes be crost,
Yet I scorn the cheaters' tribe.

Then hang up sorrow and care,
It never shall make me rue;
What though my cloak be threadbare,
I me ragged, and torne, and true.'*

We have the latest type of the privileged mendicant in Edie Ochiltree, 'that brings the news and country cracks frae ae farmsteading to anither, and gingerbread to the lassies, and helps the lads to mend their fiddles, and the gudewives to clout their pans, and plaits rush-swords and grenadier caps for the weans, and busks the laird's flees, and has skill o' cow-ills and horse-ills, and kens mair auld sangs and tales than a' the barony besides, and gars ilka body laugh wherever he comes.'

In the present age, society has decided against this species of respectable beggar as a person entitled to be supported at the public expense. The rules under which the possessions of the world are divided are too clearly defined to permit of his holding a share in the allotment. The participators are grouped into three classes—those who have, by the usages of society, property; those who make money by their industry; and those who obtain pauper relief to keep them from starvation. In this classification there is no room for begging as a profession, unless when it is sometimes tolerated in individuals by relations and acquaintance. The occupation is one which the busy public decline to encourage, and which it would be difficult to show good reasons for supporting. Hence the only admitted excuse for begging is the extremity of destitution—the likelihood of death by starvation being the immediate fate of the petitioner, unless he be relieved—and hence the necessity of those who adopt begging as a profession, adding to it the criminal art of imposture.

That the imposture system has existed in full vigour, and with

* Book of Roxburgh Ballads.

steady uniformity, in this country for upwards of half a century, we may infer by comparing our knowledge of the present day with the following picturesque account printed by Captain Grose in 1792:—

'That begging is a trade and a very beneficial* one, is well known; and it is said that the community is under the regular government of a king or superior, who appoints to every one a particular district or walk, which walks are farmed out to inferior brethren at certain daily sums. It is also reported that beggars impose tasks on their children or servants, assigning them the harvest of particular streets, estimating each at a certain produce, for the amount of which they are bound to account under the penalty of a severe beating. A remarkable instance of this I learned from a person of credit, who overheard a beggar saying to a girl, whilst giving him some money, "What is this for? Ha'n't you all about Bedford and Bloomsbury Squares? I am sure, hussey, if Russel Square alone was well begged, it would produce double this sum."

'In this community natural defects or bodily misfortunes are reckoned advantages and pre-eminences. A man who has lost one leg yields the *pas* to him who wants both, and he who has neither legs nor arms is nearly at the head of his profession, very extraordinary deficiencies excepted—an instance of which was given in a sailor, who had but one eye, one leg, and no arms. This man asking in marriage the daughter of a celebrated blind man, was answered by her father, that he thanked him for the honour intended, which he should have accepted, had not his daughter received some overtures from one who crawled with his hinder-parts in a porridge-pot.

'It seems a fixed principle in beggars never to do a day's work on any account, and rather to run away from a job half completed than finish it to receive the stipulated hire.

'I remember an old justice that lived in a village in the vicinity of London, who, from his knowledge of this principle, long contrived to have his fore-court and garden weeded gratis by itinerant beggars. As he had a handsome house near the road, it naturally drew the attention of the mumping fraternity. On their application for charity, he constantly asked them the usual question, "Why don't you work?" to which the usual reply was always made, "So I would, God bless your worship, if I could get employment." On this, musing a while, as if inclined by charity, he would set them to weed his court or garden, furnishing them with a hoe and wheelbarrow, and promising them a shilling when their job was completed. To work, then, they would go, with much seeming gratitude and alacrity. The justice stayed by them,

* Meaning lucrative.

or visited them from time to time, till they had performed two-thirds of their task; he then retired to a private corner or place of espial, in order to prevent them stealing his tools, and there waited for what constantly happened the moment he disappeared, which was the elopement of his workman, who, rather than complete the unfinished third of his work, chose to give up what he had done.

'This method, with scarce one disappointment, the old justice long practised; till at length his fame having gone forth among the mendicant tribe, he was troubled with no more applications for charity.'*

This account, published in 1792, has a striking generic resemblance to the following passage from an article in the 'Times' of 6th January 1849:—

'A charitable visitor at the houses of the poor found a woman in a state of frantic misery with a dying child in her arms. He endeavoured to comfort her by pointing out the sufferings of the little patient, and the mercy which would be shown in that release from its pains which was clearly impending. "Oh dear, sir," shrieked the inconsolable parent, "when she's gone *I'll have to pay 9d. a day for another*, and she costing me nothing!"

'We have no doubt of the painful accuracy with which this blessing was estimated at the very moment of its loss; and it is to be observed that it discloses a clear gain of £13, 2s. per annum over the very highest of Swift's calculations. It appears that in the "begging profession," to which we have lately had occasion to refer, the attendance of a child is an almost indispensable adjunct to a thriving trade, and that the little wretches are let out at so much *per diem* to those impoverished or unfortunate members of the profession who are either unprovided with such instruments of business, or may have been compelled by pressure to dispose of them. We may here suggest that the specified charge of 9d. per day may be usefully comprised in the data from which the ordinary returns of the profession in question have been computed, and it would be rather interesting to ascertain whether the charge varies at all with the age, or whether any allowance is made in cases where a quantity is taken. Our readers may have perhaps observed travelling groups of beggars wearing all the semblance of an ejected family, with seven or eight children at the least, disposed in sizes one under the other. For aught we know, this may be the establishment of some overbearing capitalist, who may have introduced into the profession of mendicancy those destructive principles of greed which, in less mysterious trades, have lately been visited with such severe reprobation.

Seriously, we bid our readers just think for a moment to what

* Grose's Olio, pp. 34-36.

a pass things must have come, and how completely the practice must have been developed into a system, before we could have heard of such facts as are thus occasionally disclosed. How must street-begging have been organized and cultivated before warehouses could have been established for the sale and hire of impostors' dresses, and before children could be procurable by the day or week at a tariff which could only have been fixed by the suggestions of reciprocal experience! Few persons now doubt that the begging profession is highly lucrative, nor have we any reason to believe that its practice is shrouded in any very impenetrable secrecy. An instance has lately come to our own knowledge in which a suitor for the favours of a respectable Abigail recommended his cause by avowing himself a "mendicant;" adding, and we doubt not with perfect truth, that his gains well enabled him to support the position which he proposed to assume.'

They must, however, be much deceived who believe that the pauper mendicant enjoys in his gains an enviable lot—a lot to be coveted by the least fortunate pursuers of self-sustaining industry, or even by the slenderly-supported victims of honest poverty. The eternal laws of nature, which tell man to perform his duties to society and himself—to labour for good purposes, and restrain his self-indulgent propensities—are not to be outraged in vain. If the lives of impostor mendicants were written, we would find, beyond any doubt, that they all lived miserably, and that few of them, having pursued the profession from early youth, arrived even at the middle age of man. The appearances necessary to excite compassion cannot be produced without often creating the corresponding realities. No one can appear constantly miserable without often being actually miserable. Disease and attenuation, to be correctly feigned, must be partially at least endured. However great may be his gains, the impostor, while in public he plies his trade, must dispense not only with all luxuries and comforts, but with part of the necessaries of life. If he be subject to rheumatism, or a disease of the lungs, he must stand in his accustomed corner, with his half-bare feet in the mud, saturated in wet, or covered with snow; if he have a wound or a sore, he must keep it open—when it closes, the hearts of his dupes close with it. To the independent and industrious nothing seems so foolish as mendicancy, when the sufferings and the rewards are balanced against each other. There is something not easily comprehensible in the constitutions of the people who can endure such miseries—who can endure tortures not much lighter than those which have secured the crown of martyrdom, rather than perform the functions of the independent labourer; and perhaps physiology has information still to divulge before this matter becomes clear to our comprehension.

The unskilled and impoverished occupations to which we have so often referred, are evidently great nurseries of mendicancy. To him who cannot make decent bread by the work on which he is engaged, mendicancy always presents itself as the natural alternative. Other occupations seem difficult—this always appears to be easy, for the only qualification for it is misery. True it taxes a perfidious ingenuity; but hypocrisy is its main element, and this is but too easily acquired by the man who has consented to sacrifice the respectability of honest independence.

In an article on Vagrancy in the 'Edinburgh Review' of October 1842, a list is given of the earnings of several families of agricultural labourers by vagrancy, showing the lamentable fact, that having resigned the wages of labour at 7s. a week, they were earning respectively the wages of vagrancy at from 20s. to 35s. a week. The writer having provided his statistical information, thus characterises the extent and nature of the evil:—

'There live, then, in the midst and about all the English population, a distinct population, fearful in numbers, constantly and rapidly increasing, having a language, manners, and custom of its own—living, in nine cases out of ten, in a course of life the most immoral and profligate; and yet so living, and so increasing in spite of the laws, in spite of the municipal arrangements of the last few years, so favourable to their detection and punishment; in spite of the new poor-law arrangements; and in spite of the general feeling that the poor-rates and the unions ought to provide for all real cases of destitution and misery. This population has its signs, its free-masonry, its terms of art, its correspondence, its halting-houses, its barns still open, and even well strawed by farmers and country gentlemen; its public-houses; its well-known and even recognised lodging-houses; and its manifold plans to extract or extort, to win or to scold, out of its reluctant or deceived victims, sums amounting, we are inclined to believe, to not less than £1,375,000, being one-third of the total amount of poor-rates.'*

When the Vicar of Wakefield found his daughters in their finery, 'their hair plastered up with pomatum, their faces patched to taste, their trains bundled up into a heap behind, and rustling at every motion,' he gave them a lecture, concluding with the observation, 'I do not know whether this flouncing and shredding is becoming even in the rich, if we consider, upon a moderate calculation, that the nakedness of the indigent world may be clothed from the trimmings of the vain.' This idea seems to have taken fast hold of Goldsmith's mind, for in 'She Stoops to Conquer' he makes Mr Hardcastle say, 'I could never teach the fools of this age that the indigent world could be clothed out of

* Ed. Rev. lxxv. 480.

the trimmings of the vain.' It would have been a cruel and miserable creed had he taught it to them. The human race is endowed with the spirit to acquire and enjoy. Every one who reflects on the matter must be conscious that it is in this spirit, well-directed, that we are to find the elements of social improvement and elevation; and that it is where a rational indulgence in comforts and elegancies is superseded by brutish and sensual appetites, and where the desire to hold wealth and station yields to that of immediate indulgence, that the race is most surely degraded. It would, in the face of this order of nature, be a cheerless doctrine to believe that every elegancy and comfort with which the industrious, sagacious man surrounds himself, is something taken away from the miserable victims of poverty—that what he spends upon his books, his pictures, his statues, and his gardens, might have saved the lives of his starving fellow-creatures who are dying with want around him. It may easily be imagined that, haunted by such thoughts, the kind-hearted essayist sometimes felt uneasy in the gay bloom of his peach-coloured coat; and to such rude notions of the way of dealing with human misery, we may perhaps attribute that sensitive reaction with which the cry of the trained street beggar distracted his moments of social enjoyment. On particular occasions, and in certain ways, we have elsewhere found that a small portion of the superfluous wealth of the rich may do important services in mitigating the calamities or promoting the restoration of the victims of misfortune. But if it were acted on as a general rule that all superfluous wealth should be distributed among the poor, it would in the first place be found that the operation created as much destitution as it relieved; and it would in the second be found that the inducement to men of industry and enterprise to accumulate wealth had been destroyed, and that no more superfluous wealth would be likely to come into existence to assist in relieving future destitution.

CHAPTER XIX.

EMIGRATION.

Advantage of having Enterprising People dispersed through the World—Voluntary Emigration Self-Regulating, and Presumed to be Profitable—Removal of Indolent People from Adventitious Aid a Promoter of Exertion—Emigration may in the General Case be Calculated as Advantageous to those Voluntarily Adopting it—Considered as a National Measure—Would it Decrease Population, and do so Serviceably?—Utility as a Resource for Damaged Classes of the People—Impolicy of Holding it out as a General Law to the Working-Classes—Prospects of the British Empire.

It is of great moment to an enterprising and industrious people, like those of the British Empire, that there should be in other parts of the world nations of a like character, to respond to their productive energy, and supply it with the impulse of a commercial exchange. We produce, not only that we may keep, but that we may obtain; and we can obtain only through the industry of others. The existence, in whatever part of the globe, of the well-directed industry by which the elements of this exchange are produced, makes the difference between dealing with a flourishing and with an indolent community. The declared value of our exports to the United States are about £7,000,000—in 1846 they were £6,830,460, and in the previous year they had exceeded the £7,000,000. To British India, under our own sceptre, and with a population said to amount to above 130,000,000, while that of the United States is 17,000,000, our exports average £6,500,000. Had America been still the domain of the Red Indians, it is probable that the utmost extent of our trade with that vast territory would not have reached £1,000,000. Such is the difference in the extent to which, owing to the influence of circumstances connected with the peopling of a part of the earth's surface, we have produced by our industry, that we might buy what America had to give us. We see the same phenomenon, in the places peopled from this country, which are still in the position of colonial dependencies of the British Empire. British America consumes about £3,500,000 worth of exports according to declared value, and Australia about £1,500,000.

It will not materially affect the interests of the parent nation whether the new settlement be under its authority or independent. It is quite possible to subject dependencies to obligations to which independent communities are not liable, and the parent state may choose to confer on its dependency privi-

leges which it refuses to other nations. But the gain appearing to arise from such exemptions and privileges will be entirely nominal. It will appear to be a gain, because it is a relaxation of a restriction still binding upon others. Whether foreign nations be of our own race or not, and whether they be dependent on us or not, are questions of no moment in the absolute value of our commerce with them—their energy and activity are the qualities that will make them valuable to us. We know that these are qualities eminently possessed by our own citizens; and therefore it is a common belief among us that the more thickly the same race is spread over the world, the better will it be for the commercial success of the empire.

The country that has most of the objects we desire to offer to us, is the most valuable to us in a commercial sense. Unless it were for the purpose of possessing other things, we would not create and part with the effects which constitute our manufacturing exports. If we get gold for them, there can be no objection to receiving the precious metal any more than, as we have already stated, to sending it abroad to pay for imports. Partly it may become a desired commodity, but chiefly it will be the means of drawing to us other commodities in the hands of some productive people. Thus, in whatever form our foreign commerce may present itself, its life consists in our finding productive industry somewhere abroad. The facts we have referred to show us that for their numbers the descendants from our own parent stock are, economically speaking, the most valuable to us as reciprocal traders. So far, therefore, as this race can be spread over the world without any direct evil to this empire, it is for our interest that they should inherit the earth: and wherever this interest can be followed without injury to other interests, and with humanity and justice to the aborigines, it is every man's duty to aid in its pursuit.

Should it be maintained, that if the same people who have emigrated, and been productive, had remained in this empire, they would have been probably equally productive, and would have tended as much to our wealth, exchanging what they brought into existence with the commodities of their other fellow-citizens, just as they now do, with the sole difference that a broad ocean, instead of so many miles of road or railway, lies between them—we answer that this is quite possible in individual cases, but it is not likely to be true of the whole class of emigrants—the millions and their descendants—for in getting possession of fresh lands, they have got a powerful instrument of productiveness, which they would not have obtained had they remained at home. To test the question, whether those who have wandered across the Atlantic or to the antipodes, have had any general advantage above what they would have obtained in this country, let us sup-

pose so much of the productive land of the United Kingdom sunk in the sea, or forced out of productive use. It is quite possible that without it many individuals might have been as rich as they are: the loss of an expected or enjoyed estate often prompts a man to make exertions which raise his position in life far higher than it would have been had he reposed on his acres. But land which produces consumable articles is a great available instrument of riches. This instrument would have been lost—and it may be questioned if, on the whole, any impulses occasioned by the loss would have been strong enough to have enabled the people to neutralise or redeem it.

We may apply this general deduction to individual practice. If two men start together in life in this country, and one of them goes to Australia and obtains a good allotment of land, it does not absolutely follow that he will make a larger fortune, or be in any way more valuable to his country or the world than his companion; but he certainly, in his allotment, possesses an available instrument of productiveness which the other has not. That other may in the meantime have made himself a very valuable member of society: he may have invented some great labour-saving machine—may have reared up monuments of art or of literature —may have made himself so much more important and useful than the emigrant, that they scarcely admit of being gravely compared with each other. Yet the emigrant might have been still poorer and more insignificant had he remained at home.

Thus to the community at large, emigration and the culture of distant lands are instruments for the improvement of their lot which they ought not to lose sight of. To all economical ends emigration is the same as an extension of the home territory—is indeed the same as an extension of its valuable and productive parts. If there is free productive land to be had in Canada, and one can be landed there as easily as he can go to Shetland or to St Kilda, the land is an estate as valuable to the emigrant as if it were situated in one of these islands forming an immediate limb of the British Empire.

We are here speaking of the individual emigrant, not of emigration as an arrangement conducted at the public expense, and applicable to the population generally, or any considerable portion of it. As a means of advancement and enrichment, then, it will lie with every man who looks at his means and prospects, his energies and qualifications, to consider whether he ought to adopt it or not. If he adopt it in circumstances in which he would not have so well established himself in life had he remained at home, he will have done well both for himself and the rest of the world. But it does not follow that the possession of an advantageous allotment, which he must cultivate with his own hands, will be to every man the best lot in life. There are many emi-

nent men in various walks of life who would have sacrificed a vast fund of public usefulness had they taken sheep-walks in Australia, and probably would not have been so rich as they are.

The voluntary emigrant often too readily finds that he has bitterly mistaken his proper chances in life. A fresh colony almost always infers a combat with many difficulties of a peculiar kind, not easily compatible with the habits nourished by civilisation; and to meet these difficulties, the imprudent exile often carries with him the feebleness of purpose, the indolence, and the luxurious habits which have disabled him from rising at home. It is often a gratification to the relations of people of this class to reflect that the exile is 10,000 miles distant from their purses. We have in such reflections a hint of one of the chief incidental advantages of emigration. Strong as are the claims on the energies of him who would keep up with the conditions of a high productive civilisation as we have already attempted to describe them,* yet where this is effectively accomplished by others, and there is a great mass of floating riches, there will be many who, on account of this very energy in others, take no thought of the morrow, and indolently repose on their chances. A great portion of the advantage of emigration is found in its applying the hard discipline of necessity to such individuals. They leave behind them the carpets and cushions of rich civilisation, and the earth will be to them what they make it. There are no droppings of superfluous wealth to be picked up; the composition of begging letters is, like many other accomplishments, quite useless; and drudgery or starvation stares man immediately in the face. Thus it is that those who return from distant colonies often mention the marvels they have witnessed as to the changed position of young men who had lived at home in easy indolence, but are there pursuing occupations so humble, that in the society of the old country they would have professed themselves ready to meet death rather than such degradation. They are found keeping sheep, training horses, teaming, and portering. At home, the rich relation or old friend would have from time to time aided the hopeless youth as he sunk from one stage of idle degradation to another; but in the colony, the rough, but regenerating alternative of labour is placed before him whenever his first purse becomes exhausted. The same operation is at work with the humbler class of emigrants. There is no parish pay-table or destitution relief-fund in the fresh colony. An idle population cannot there indolently resign themselves to the chances of an ill-planted field of potatoes, leaving it to the energetic and industrious department of the population to make for them that provision against accidents and calamities which they have failed to make for themselves. This is one of the

* See p. 21.

reasons why, as we shall presently see, emigration at the public cost may be a serviceable means of disposing of a damaged portion of the population.

Thus if we find that the individual often mistakes his prospects when he adopts emigration as a means of fleeing from the miseries of his native country, this very mistake is often advantageous to the community, and finally advantageous to himself, in releasing him from the degenerating influence of enervating habits, and compelling him to become an independent producer. Whether or not it be fortunate in every case, where men left to themselves adopt emigration as their choice in life, they will in this, as in all other cases where man is a free agent, have in the average chosen that course which is most beneficial to themselves as individuals, and is consequently most beneficial to the community of which they form a part. We cannot look around us without seeing men whom it would be a calamity to the home country to be without —whose high cultivated minds fit them to reap and store up the fruits of civilisation—whose refined energies are best suited to the higher labours of a complex state of society, and would be unworthily wasted in the emigrant's rude contest with the primeval earth. Nor, on the other hand, can we contemplate the world without seeing many gone astray, and lost in the mazes of society at home, for whom a better fate might have been expected had they been removed from the stays, the protections, the to them effeminating influences of friends, associates, and kindred. Men who are educated for the higher functions of advanced society should remember that what the emigrant proceeds abroad to obtain, is not the long-built-up framework of man's civilisation, but the bare sod, with its first fruits; and that he can have no need of aid from high intellectual cultivation, and cannot afford to reward it. In the descriptive terms of Mr Carlyle, 'call him, if you will, an American backwoodsman, who had to fell unpenetrated forests, and battle with innumerable wolves, and did not entirely forbear strong liquor, rioting, and even theft; whom nevertheless the peaceful sower will follow, and as he cuts the boundless harvest, bless.' The painter, the sculptor, the author, are all useless attendants of the first swarm alighting on a new field of enterprise, where no one looks above the earth. The practical engineer will be wanted before them; but even *he* must wait till the earth has been appropriated, till there is culture and capital seeking other outlets than mere investment in land.

Thus stands emigration as a measure to be adopted by individuals on their own resources—as an arrangement to be recommended and aided by their friends and relations. When we come, however, to look at the removal of the inhabitants of the country at the public expense as a remedy for social evils, there are other circumstances to be considered. If we are to believe that

all increase of the population at home is a calamity, and to hold that the best service we can perform is to remove as many people every year as the number of births exceeds the number of deaths, without consideration as to the nature of the classes removed, or that of the classes left behind, we shall adopt a system sufficiently simple in appearance—it is merely the removal of 'the surplus population'—but complex and costly in practice. Though our colonies possess a population exceeding five millions, it will be found that those who annually leave the shores of the United Kingdom to settle out of Europe—some of them of course to inhabit the United States—amount to a comparatively small number. It is true that the late famine in Ireland, and the commercial depression throughout the kingdom, have produced a temporary enlargement of the list of exiles. In 1847, the emigrants from the United Kingdom amounted to 258,000, of whom 85,000 sailed in Irish vessels, and 134,000, consisting chiefly of Irish people, embarked at Liverpool.* But the general stream of emigration, though it may be increasing, flows in a smaller channel. The emigration from the United Kingdom for the twenty-one years from 1825 to 1845 inclusive, amounted to 1,349,476, making an average of 64,260 a year. The highest amount reached in any one of these years was 128,344 in 1842; and the next largest number was in the preceding year, 118,592. This was a period of great distress at home; and the revival of trade is immediately marked by the smaller number who sought refuge in emigration in 1843, being 57,212.† It deserves to be noticed, however, that only the superior facilities for removal in later times appear to have made this a ready resource in years of pressure; for in 1825 and 1826 respectively, embracing a period of much commercial disaster, the numbers were 14,891, and 20,900.

While the number who emigrated in the twenty-one years mentioned above was 1,349,476, in the twenty years between 1821 and 1841, the population of the United Kingdom increased from 21,282,966 to 27,019,558—a difference of 5,736,592. Thus, notwithstanding the great costliness, and the other serious considerations attending on our emigration system, there were more than three thousand added to the population for every thousand who went to seek the fortune of the colonist. It does not follow that if these people had not emigrated they would have been just so many added to the increased population of the United Kingdom; nor does it follow, for the reasons which we have endeavoured already to state,‡ that if such an increase really had taken place, the population would be individually poorer than it is.

* Report Select Committee of House of Lords on Emigration from Ireland, (1848). Q 439, 1929.

† Appendix to the Sixth Annual Report of the Land and Emigration Commissioners, 1846.

Absolutely to decrease population, emigration would require to be conducted on a very potent scale. Counting the increase of our population at, in round numbers, 1000 a day, no man could with any safety assure us that if 1000 people were conveyed out of the United Kingdom daily, the population would preserve its present level. Indeed, if we believe the calculations of some economists, who say that population left free doubles itself in twenty-five years, it would be necessary, if the aim of emigration were merely to keep down the numbers by the proportion removed, to export upwards of 1,000,000 in a year—or nearly as many in one year as we have heretofore sent abroad on an average period of twenty years.

Not admitting that an increase of population must necessarily infer a decrease in individual wealth and wellbeing, we do not admit that every arrangement for removing a part of the population, even if it should really be to such an extent as to decrease it, necessarily leaves those who remain richer. As we have already said, it may safely be considered that of the emigrants from this country, a portion having voluntarily removed themselves at their own expense, must be presumed to have sought the place where they could most advantageously pursue their fortunes; and the others, removed at the public expense, would not have been so removed if they had been productive members of the community. This is a fair general view of the position of our emigrants; and it introduces us to the true principle of emigration at the public expense, which is not to keep down the general population, but *to remove the damaged portions of the people.* Sometimes the moral disease to which the remedy is to be applied affects classes of society—as, for instance, the handloom weavers; sometimes it affects the races inhabiting particular districts of country—as, for instance, the destitution districts of the Scottish Highlands, and some parts of Ireland. The object of emigration being in such circumstances made a state operation, should be, that the damaged population being removed, care may be taken to prevent those who follow them from lapsing into a similar condition. We have in the north of Ireland abundant evidence of the effect of clearing away from whole districts a barbarous, indolent, unproductive population, and planting industrious, well-principled men in their stead. The method in which the Irish were treated is not to be imitated; and as they were left to beg or starve in the vicinity of their old territories, instead of being kindly led to distant lands, where a new course of life might be opened to them, so they and their descendants have, in turbulence and mendicancy, continued to cause greater evils and calamities to the empire than can ever be balanced against the good done by planting a valuable colony in their deserted lands.

We have expressed our opinion of the necessity that the off-

spring expected to fulfil the laborious conditions of civilised life should start with some of the advantages of past labour conferred on them by their parents, to facilitate their future exertions. It is the want of this that mainly deteriorates a class down to the level of being burdens on the community, which it gladly exports from its shores. Wherever emigrants, sent forth at the public expense, may prudently and profitably be placed, there must be some produce immediately or with little toil obtainable from the ground, or those who have begun to inhabit the waste must urgently desire assistance to enable them to take advantage of the resources of the country. Thus does the fresh earth provide the new settlers with those facilities for starting on a career of productive usefulness which the improvidence and indolence of their parents has denied to them at home.

We fear, however, that the body of people who can, as emigrants, be placed in so favourable a condition in a new country, must always be limited; and that there are thus on the one hand bounds to the number who can be exported from the parent state, and on the other a limitation of the number who can find sustenance on the new lands. Dense multitudinous bodies set down at the antipodes, would require as much of the produce of past labour to support comfort and even existence, as they require at home. To express this principle shortly:—emigrants establishing themselves in considerable bodies must possess a corresponding amount of capital. The individual squatter in the forest wilderness, who lives on the fruit of his rifle till the corn grows on his clearing, may require little more capital than the price of his rifle and his axe. He may become a rich man in the end—perhaps the value which an increasing population imparts to his clearing may make him a great territorial lord—but his early life must be something like that of Robinson Crusoe. The absence of neighbours and competitors has enabled him to live. If a thousand, or even perhaps if a hundred individuals had been set down in the same forest, each with nothing but his rifle and his hatchet, the greater part of them would speedily have starved to death. Thus the objects of emigration are not entirely accomplished when the ship is freighted with a hundred human beings, and they have been landed safe on some distant territory. On whatever primeval shore they are disembarked without capital, they will find themselves as helpless and desolate as a town in the old country containing the same number of inhabitants from which all the fruits of previous industry—the money, the fruitfulness of the neighbouring fields, the houses, the merchandise—have disappeared as if by magic or the shiftings of a pantomime, leaving the inhabitants standing helpless on the barren earth. New facilities for emigration, of which we do not now dream, may perhaps be opened up; but with our present knowledge and

practice, it would appear that the larger the masses conveyed from the country, the smaller are the benefits which each derives from emigration, and the nearer are the emigrants, as a body, brought to the position which they occupied at home.

One may be prepared to acknowledge the advantages derivable from a carefully-adjusted system of emigration, without desiring to see a large portion of the population brought up for the purpose of being exported to distant regions of the globe. Emigration holds out visions all too flattering to the uneducated, to whom it appears to offer the pleasures of vagrancy along with the rewards of patient industry. This class overlook the toil and hardship that they do not palpably behold, and contemplate only the visible results, forgetting the multitudes abroad who, after having undergone great hardships and exertions, are as poor as themselves, or poorer. They count the prizes, and forget the blanks, at the antipodes or in the new world. So at this moment the greedy adventurer sees the beaten gold on the goldsmith's counter, and forgetting the Atlantic voyage, the long journey through wilds devastated as if they were the trail of an army, the battle for food among adventurers suddenly congregated from all the world, the difficulty of pursuing an art he has not been trained to, and the multitudinous chances of utter failure, sets forth for California. Nor are these all the chances that the adventurer in this practical caricature of the emigrant fever overlooks. He forgets that if the dreams of the adventurers resolve themselves into substantial gold, the real harvest will be reaped by the patient and laborious men who stay at home, producing what gold is only valuable as the means of purchasing. To this country, the great mart of industry, the gold of California must find its way; and in the end, the sagacious manufacturer or merchant, whom the brilliant vision has not tempted into perils, will be the gainer by an access of bullion which will give all the trading stimulus attending a progressive artificial depreciation of the currency, without producing the same amount of oscillation and uncertainty.

For such reasons as we have just stated, we cannot help believing that it is pernicious to treat emigration as the great aim of life to the working-classes. It holds out to them what only a very small proportion can accomplish without calamities; while those who *can* accomplish it, in doing so may not necessarily be adopting the best means of pushing their fortune. We should remember that the old country is not yet 'used up;' that for the millions yet to come there are millions of paths towards success and usefulness yet unexplored. We are a great people; and if Providence continue to smile upon us, may yet be a greater. There are just now powerful reasons for indulging in high hopes of the future destinies of the British Empire. It

is not because upon the dominions of our sovereign the sun never sets; not because we are marching forward to the dominion of the East; not because we have achieved Agincourt and Blenheim, Trafalgar and Waterloo — but because *the great heart of the people is sound.* Scattered in corners of our social system are blots and defects: here fanaticism predominates, there infidelity; in one section lingers a love of despotism, another still festers with anarchical and disorganising opinions. Here we have bloated wealth, there abject poverty; and unnatural speculative excitement sometimes oscillates with prostration and despondency. But firmly built and deeply founded, the great fabric of our social system stands secure enough to baffle corrupting influences within—strong enough to resist the revolutionary storm without. Its strength has been well tried. Scarcely recovered from a year of famine and over-speculation, it has undergone the ordeal of a year of revolutions, by which every great state within the circle of European civilisation has been shaken from its foundations. Through these terrible ordeals the British Empire has passed unscathed and unweakened, to stand before the world in all the stern dignity of assailed and conquering strength. It supplies us with the best elements of high hope in the future, to find that no misfortunes and no terrors have driven our citizens away from the victories gained by enlightened commercial opinions on the legislative battle-ground; to see that the calamities with which Providence has visited us have, in rational calmness and discretion, been viewed as evils having their own inscrutable causes, quite uninfluenced by legislative changes in our commercial system, which, notwithstanding these attendant misfortunes, are still admitted by our people to be in their own nature calculated to increase our wealth and happiness. It is one of the mysterious coincidences of history, that in France the great measure of internal free trade in corn was followed, like our measure of national free trade, by a calamitous famine. But the people nourished under the despotism of the Bourbons, unable to see the future blessings of a good law through temporary evils, rose in tumults which drove the great and good minister, who had the cause of the people warmly at heart, from power, and began that train of troubles of which the horrors of the first revolution were a continuation. With us the temporary calamity has been patiently and courageously borne: the future is looked forward to with triumphant hope.

We believe that there are great destinies still in store for us if we be true to ourselves; if the people continue to love progress without anarchy, and the governors do not mistake the love of order for a submissive indifference to liberty and progress; if a self-dependent energy animate all orders of the community, and

each class does its own part in the great battle of life, instead of indolently leaning on its neighbours. Already do we behold symptoms of our empire rising like some vast cathedral dome above the other nations of the earth. Where all are shrinking in supineness or reeling in revolution, the steady industry, the firm honesty, and the vast realised wealth of our community, will acquire for it an influence which victories and conquests can never gain—the influence of quiet strength which overawes without exasperating, and rules without subduing. We are naturally a peaceful people, directing our energies to the increase of the world's blessings rather than to pillage, to the preservation of life rather than to destruction, and to the freedom of all men rather than to the slavery even of our enemies. Here will be our true strength—a foundation for empire firmer than that ever laid by an Alexander, a Cæsar, or a Napoleon. The empire made by subjugation has a mine sprung beneath it—diplomatic combinations are shaken apart by every revolutionary breath—but the influence of a vast and quiet superiority of power cannot thus be broken; and we believe the day will come, and is not far distant, when the huge strength of Britain will be the guarantee of the peace of the world, and a power that voluntarily seeks no cause of quarrel will, by its overwhelming influence, diffuse a peaceful awe throughout the rest of mankind.

THE END.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY W. & R. CHAMBERS.