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With James Holts
Kind regards

THE
SOCIAL SCIENCE
AND
ORGANIZATION OF LABOR

The Organization of Labor.

LABORING-CAPITALISTS, NOT CAPITALIST AND LABORER.

LECTURES
ON
SOCIAL SCIENCE
AND THE
ORGANIZATION OF LABOR:

BY JAMES HOLE.

"MAN, IN HIS HIGHEST DEVELOPMENT, IS AN ABSOLUTE
UNITY OF POWERS, AND A PERFECT SOCIETY SHOULD
BE THE REFLEX OF HIS NATURE."—F. R. LEES.

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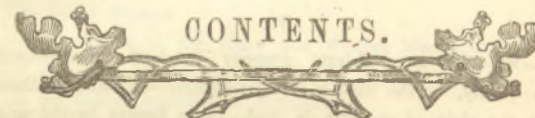
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INTRODUCTION.

CURIOUS fact about Socialism is, that while almost every body is *afraid to be thought* a socialist, there are few to whom the epithet does not really belong. Wherever there is an attempt to introduce the laws of justice and kindness into social relations,—wherever it is endeavored to render society more *fitted* to the wants and nature of man,—wherever wisdom and love preside over the politics and economics of mankind,—*there* is Socialism. In truth, Socialism is no chimera lately started by a few theorizers; it is a fact founded on the social necessities of human nature. Whenever and wherever Society steps in to preserve the existence, to protect the rights, and to promote the happiness of its members, *there* is a manifestation of Socialism. It is as little to be confounded with the theories on the subject, as actual government with paper 'Constitutions,' as houses with architecture, or speech with grammar. Practice precedes art, and art science—that is, men learn to *do* certain things, long before they know either the art or the philosophy of them. There never was a time when men did not seek to promote their social as a part of their individual welfare. The extent, nature, means, and objects of social action may have been as diverse as the different stages of

civilization thro' which men have passed; but whatever was its character, it constituted the measure of the existing Socialism.

For any community to perform its functions as a society, without some bond of *mutual dependence*—some relationship of common welfare—appears an impossibility. Even the Feudal system, arbitrary as it seems to us, contained strong social-elements. If the connection did not permit the Vassal freedom, it secured him nearly as much as he was capable of conceiving, and certainly gave a greater guarantee against absolute want than is at present possessed by the 'Independent laborer.' The Guilds and Corporations of former days were Associations, the rules and regulations of which (tho in many cases oppressive) curtailed the domination of capital, prevented the evils of gluts, and in many ways limited the influence of competition. The rise of the Commercial-system, the growth of towns, and the progress of machinery, broke up Feudalism, and rendered the system of Trade-corporations powerless. Individualism was introduced to such an extent into almost every department of industry, that but for counter-acting agencies, society must rapidly have degenerated into one universal scramble. Old restrictions becoming relaxed, it was found needful to introduce compensations to the Laborer in the shape of Poor-laws, and laws to regulate the conditions between employer and employed. In latter days, with the growth of large capitals and competition, the checks became more numerous. The Legislature was compelled to step in to protect the laboring classes. Laws for the regulation of Factories and Mines, Truck-acts, and similar invasions of *laissez-faire*-ism, have been constantly enacted, while small Soup-and-blanket societies have been established to alleviate a fraction of the miseries begotten of that system. It was no dreamy theory that occasioned these interferences,—for the theory, such as it is, was all on the other side. It was no power possessed by the working classes. It was no deep interest on the part of the upper classes in the welfare of the lower. It was the simple but stern necessities of the case. Not to have made them would have involved the destruction of large bodies of the working classes, and in all likelihood a contest between capital and labor not less terrible than was exhibited in the first French Revolution.

Practical Socialism is also seen in the efforts to secure purer air and better drainage in our towns, and to confer on the people what is equally necessary to social and mental health—the blessing

of National Education. With an inconsistency quite amusing, and which shows that the heart is better than the head, we find Free-traders who desert their darling doctrine to help on this great cause. Even the Voluntary, tho repudiating government help, does not like to leave the poor to 'rely on their individual efforts,' but gets up a charitable association for diffusing the benefits of education. On all sides there are movements, the object of which is to elevate the masses of society,—true exemplifications of Socialism, originated and supported by men who fear the term itself as they fear the pest.

The reason that such ameliorations of the condition of human society are not generally recognized as Socialism, is attributable rather to its own advocates than to any thing else. All the social reformer was bound to do, was to show that the ends of the society were more likely to be attained by concord than by conflict, by combination than by isolation. He was by no means bound to improvise the future, to cut up mankind to pattern, and initiate society into some Owenian Parallelogram or Fourieristic Paradise. The *form* may be safely left to time, the *doctrine* is to be established as soon as possible,—that is, it must be shown that it is not absurd, self-contradictory, or at war with the inherent tendencies of human nature.

However useful and agreeable social speculations may be in themselves, they lose their interest and utility alike, when, instead of rallying men around the common standard of Association, they merely part its friends into sects, which like those in religion, the nearer they approach, the more heartily they oppose each other. The evil is the greater, when, in the perfecting of systems, the *practical application* of them is overlooked. With not a shilling of associated capital to divide, the principle on which it *might, could, would, and should* be divided, has absorbed no small portion of attention. While the pauper shivers in his rags, and beggar and thief ply their vocation, —while the workman is crushed beneath the wheels of the English Juggernaut,—his wife drawn from the domestic hearth to toil in the factory, and his child left to grow up in ignorance,—it is surely not right in the social reformer to confine all his studies to the constructing of patent Systems of Metaphysics and paper Phalansteries.

Far wiser would it be, and a far speedier method of realizing all that is valuable in Association, to help forward those reforms which are called for either by their pressing necessity, or the sanction they have already obtained from public opinion. Among these may be

enumerated National Education, the formation of Free-Public Libraries, and the employment of paupers in productive labor. National Education is one of the first necessities, and has already made so much progress that it must speedily take its place among our social institutions. The extensive powers possessed by Town-councils and Boards of Guardians are only not exercised, because public opinion wants informing and arousing. Reform has been so long identified in the popular mind with removal of taxation, that to propose a rate for the most beneficent social objects, is almost sure to arouse the indignation of the pseudo-Reformers, and those whom they injuriously mislead.

The opinions of the working classes might be much enlightened on the topics essential to their interests, by the agency of an extensive staff of Public Lecturers. To excite an interest in the Great Exhibition, which had the luck, over and above its own merits, to receive the sanction of a prince, lecturers were sent into all parts of the country. This agency might be employed to diffuse just views of sanitary matters, of Benefit and Life-assurance Societies, and of many other social questions.

Compared with the proportions of the population imbued with the sentiments and views of Socialism, the numbers in any way connected with Working Associations, Mechanics Institutes, Co-operative-stores, Flour-mills, Freehold-land societies, and the like, form a small minority. Yet these contain the germ of those magnificent organizations which the world will one day witness. Enlarge and multiply these small associations, and combine them with each other. Growth is the law of Association, as of all Progress and Life—the imperfect preceding the highly developed. It is not the part of wise men to *wait* for the realization of large schemes, but to seize present opportunities and make the most of them. Each of these various movements is (often unconsciously to its promoters) working out the parts of a grand problem the solution of which can *only* be arrived at experimentally.

The principle of Association, or co-operation, is susceptible of every degree of application, from the simplest assistance which two men agree to render each other, up to the highest and most refined combinations. There is no such thing as a perfected System of Association into which society has but to jump, and from which it shall at once reap all the advantages. The degree of association of

which men are capable, depends on the height of moral and intellectual cultivation to which they may have attained. Try to unite the more advanced principles of co-operation with men in a low degree of culture, and you will fail. As reasonably might one expect a nation of savages to co-operate in making laws or any refined social arrangements. They are obliged to resign themselves to the control of an individual mind. Hence autocracy is the best government for barbarous people. As men reach a higher culture, they require and obtain more liberal institutions. This principle, if fully understood, would tend to reconcile many discordant interests, and demonstrate the folly of agitation for extreme liberal opinions on the one hand, and extreme conservative ones on the other. Facts and experience are the demand, the reasonable demand, of the stubborn world. Fact must precede all sound theories and systems. Take, for example, the progress of railway communication. What an immense amount of knowledge now exists upon the subject! Every department, even the minutest, has been studied and tried by repeated experiments and calculations. Not an exigency arises, but ingenuity is racked to supply it. As soon as difficulties occur, they are obviated. But all this vast amount of knowledge could not have existed anterior to the construction of a railway. It was the emergency which developed the resources. No conclave of philosophers and engineers could have pre-arranged the railway system. The utmost they could do, would be to examine the fundamental principles,—to take as much care as possible that nothing entered into the first experiment which might mislead them: and the duty of society was not to stand gaping incredulously at the labors of the discoverers and inventors, still less to oppose them, but to lend its sympathy and aid as far as the object might reasonably appear to deserve it. In the same manner the principle of Association must pass thro' many phases, before its full value, and the right extent of its application, will become developed. Association in production, and Association in consumption, will doubtless exist as separate applications of the principle for some time. As practice develops the advantages of the system and exposes its weak points, the former will become increased, the latter remedied, until the principle has been carried to the greatest extent to which it can subserve human happiness.

One of the many ways in which the development of the associative principle might be materially assisted, would be by experiments made

under the sanction of government, with Pauper colonies. Another would be by the formation of a National Union of Associations, managed by a Central Committee, having at first no control over the internal arrangements of any society, but confining itself to the task of collecting and diffusing the actual experience of all the associations in Great Britain, and any others it might find expedient to notice. Such a Union would possess the following advantages.

1. By the publication of an annual report, it might make the general community acquainted with the actual results of the local associations. It might also obtain important statistical information. Each body of working men wishing to co-operate, has to learn from its own failures and successes; whereas they might thus avail themselves of the experience, and avoid the defects, of the existing associations. A number of working men wishing to form a co-operative store, would be greatly helped by a knowledge of the rules, calculations, and method of doing business, already in successful operation. The laws relating to Joint Stock, Benefit, and Friendly Societies are not of easy access, but might thus easily be made so, and the opinion of the Central Committee would be useful in points of difficulty. When it was desirable to obtain the repeal, alteration, or enactment of laws relating to Associations, the central-body would be much more powerful than the isolated associations.

2. The National Union of Associations might employ agents to diffuse that information orally which they embodied annually in their reports. The agents might visit every town and village, and encourage the formation of associations where the means existed. The agents would also be useful in promoting a closer connection between Local societies and the Central Committee. Ultimately the Central Committee might become the medium for effecting *exchanges* between the various societies. It would be capable of giving an aim, a leading tendency of direction, to Working men's associations, which they do not now possess. The associations hitherto formed are deficient in the power of *expansion*. The Co-operative flour-mill remains a flour-mill, and if a Co-operative store is wanted, new machinery is needed. A very little wisdom could combine these, with the School, the Mechanics Institute, and the Associated Home, into *one* grand Association. Such a plan would doubtless promote the greater extension of Associations, as it is found to do in the various Unions of Mechanics Institutes.

In what forms the Associative power of society will finally manifest itself, it is neither possible nor necessary to predict. We need not lose ourselves in speculating for the future. In social as in individual progress, it is ever the wisest to do efficiently the duty that lies nearest. Effort and Experience will alone accomplish true social reform. Let us but be in earnest, and 'work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.'



SOCIAL SCIENCE.

LECTURE I.—'LAISSEZ-FAIRE.'

MOST of the actions which man performs, affect, more or less intimately, his fellow men. In some respects society resembles a mass of fluid, which we cannot increase or diminish by a single drop, without altering the relations of the whole. Society, in controlling and regulating the action of its members by means of rulers and laws, expresses this necessity of rendering the actions of each conformable to the interests of the whole.

One very important portion of the actions of each man, consists of those which are directed to the Production, Distribution, and Consumption of wealth. In that earliest state of society when the land from which each one supplies his wants is unlimited, and when each man also caters for himself, society can hardly be said to have commenced. In such a state every individual will look simply after his own interests, uncaring of, as uncared for by, his fellows. As soon, however, as population so increases as to necessitate subdivision of employments and consequently exchanges, other principles come into action. Laws are framed to regulate the occupancy of land, etc. The interest of the individual ceases to be the sole controlling element, that of society enters into the transaction, and laws are formed for the purpose of ensuring at once the rights of the Individual and the interests of Society.

Such was in fact the procedure of mankind, and such to a great extent it continues to be, notwithstanding certain modern theories. Nevertheless, the progress of population, the increased power of multiplying wealth, the clearer perception of the rights and duties of human beings, have introduced new problems into the art of governing society. The result of these causes, to the mass of the people, has been, gradually to isolate them from that intimate relationship with their employers which prevailed in former times. The principle of supply and demand has been extended from commodities to men. These have obtained thereby more liberty, but less bread. They find, that in parting with the thralldom of Feudalism, they have taken on that of Capital; that slavery has ceased in name but survived in fact. They behold enormous wealth arising around them, created by their toil, which they are nevertheless not permitted to share. While warehouses are glutted with corn and cloth, the laborers are pining with hunger and perishing with cold. They see the means of present subsistence precarious, and the future of old age they dare not reflect upon. They see that pestilence, and war, which thin their numbers, are looked upon as blessings. And did they not possess the knowledge that God is good, and has sent enough for all his creatures, they might be tempted to enquire—why they were called into being?

They turn to man, to the governors and guides of society; they say, 'Make

such arrangements that we may work and eat. Organize society, organize labor, so that these monstrous contrasts and sufferings shall cease.' The legislators meet them with the reply: 'A new science has burst upon the world,—a science called Political Economy,—by which we have discovered that it is not our business to meddle with the relations of Capital and Labor. Every body should take care of his own interest. The true province of government is to *do nothing*, or 'do as little as possible.'

Whatever merit this principle may possess, the credit is entirely due to political economists. Whatever skill was needed to discover that the contending passions and interests of a multitude of individuals are better than a wisely adjusted and well regulated society,—whatever acuteness was required to perceive a distinction between killing a man at once with a bludgeon, and slowly murdering himself or infant with a machine,—or which can recognize higher wisdom in hanging a man for a crime the result of his ignorance, than in building a school to remove it,—belongs to the professors of pure political economy, and to them exclusively. The not yet accepted theory whereon these and many similar conclusions are based, teaches that a most important class of actions,—important not merely to the individual, otherwise no question could arise, but important in their influence on every other human being,—ought notwithstanding to be exempt from all other control than that of their performer! You will readily perceive that we allude to the *laissez faire*, or 'let-alone,' doctrine. Since Adam Smith, and especially of late years, it has been extensively promulgated. It owes its name (if I remember rightly) to the circumstance of Henry IV of France asking some merchants what he could do to encourage their trade. They, knowing perhaps how injurious royal protection mostly had been, replied *Laissez-faire*—'let us alone'—and the term has since been used to designate the principle of non-interference on the part of society, or government as its representative, in any of the economical relations of men.

The truth or falsehood of the *laissez-faire* doctrine involves the most important consequences. Already it is put forward as the plea to oppose all interference on the part of the ruling power, not only with commerce, but also with the limitation of the hours of labor, relief of the poor, national education, and sanatory reform. In short, it is opposed to every regulation which would alter the *actual* relations of capital and labor; and when we consider how multiplied and how influential on happiness those relations are, the question becomes one of the most interesting and important that can be presented to us. The great question of Protection on the one hand and Association on the other,—the first a declining, the last a rising theory,—are both involved in it; and if the *laissez-faire* principle be true, then the foundations of both these doctrines must be false.

It appears to me, that the 'let-alone' doctrine,—the doctrine that society, *as such*, has nothing whatever to do with the economical interests of its members, but should leave each individual to pursue what seems best to him,—arises from that common tendency of the mind, in recoiling from one evil, to plunge into another diametrically opposite. 'Extremes meet,' says the proverb; and the mischiefs resulting from over-governing, or rather *mis-governing*, have made men hail the doctrine of 'no-governing' as a remedy or relief. The temporary success of the principle is but the natural re-action in the minds of the governed against

evils which ignorance or tyranny has too often inflicted on mankind. The legislator has frequently forgot the public interest in his own; he has administered his office not as a trust confided to him by others, but as the instrument of his private ambition or emolument. At the period when modern political economy arose in this country this was especially the case. The remains of feudal institutions were not all banished. The spirit of selfish aggrandizement on the part of the aristocracy remained in all its vigor, and the rights not only of the laborer, but of the now rising middle-class, were recklessly infringed. Backed by the mechanical inventions of the last and present century, which gave them wealth, and by the progress of intelligence, these classes became strong enough to overturn much of the aristocratic legislation which had so long prevailed. It was easy to demonstrate the inexpediency and the injustice of much of the prohibitive system. Some, perhaps many, prohibitions might have been intended originally for the benefit of all, but lapse of time, or the growth of population, had rendered them highly detrimental to the interests of commerce. Of course, any science of wealth which should spring up at such an epoch, would become the exponent of the prevalent views. In this light we regard the political economy of Adam Smith and his followers. It is little more than a protest against the evils of partial legislation. It professes to be the science of wealth, and if it were so, its conclusions would be an important part of a true science of society. Logically, it amounts to this:—'Selfish and short sighted control is unjust; *therefore* all control, even that of wisdom and benevolence, is inexpedient! Many tyrants are better than few; *therefore* the best protection against the selfishness of one, or of a few, is to give *every body's selfishness* a fair and equal chance. The opposing forces will nullify each other, and create a social calm.'

The advocates of the system have mistaken *destruction* for *construction*. They insist loudly on each man's interest, and consequently are always advocates of man's *rights*, as a social being—never of his *duties*. Having no perception of the grand truth of Association as a uniting principle of man's rights and duties, the political economists have never investigated *possible*, but only *actual* arrangements. Association, even at so late a period as the time of Adam Smith, was almost unknown. It is true that Plato and More had dreamed about it, but Commercial Association, to any thing like the extent it has since been carried, was unknown. Even now the important part it has got to play in the destiny of man, is appreciated but in the slightest degree.

In speaking of political economy, we refer to it in the sense of the Science of Exchanges, or as Dr. Whately has learnedly expressed it, *Catallactics*. It is to this portion of the science we particularly wish to call attention in the present lecture. It is assumed by Whately and the Economists, that the principles which regulate exchanges do not properly come under human jurisdiction. They believe that man's Economical interests are subject to certain 'Natural laws,' analogous to those that govern the external universe, and which are proved, by their harmonious working, to proceed from the same divine wisdom. In an introductory lecture to Political Economy Dr. Whately thus speaks:

I wish, for my own part, there were no such thing as Political Economy. I mean not now the mere name of the study, but I wish there had never been any necessity for directing our attention to the study itself. If men had always been secured in person and



property, and left at full liberty to employ both as they saw fit, and had merely been precluded from unjust interference with each other,—had the most perfect freedom of intercourse between all mankind been always allowed,—had there never been any wars nor (which in that case would have been easily avoided) any taxation,—then, the every exchange that took place would have been one of the phenomena of which Political Economy takes cognizance, all would have proceeded so smoothly, that probably no attention would ever have been called to the subject. The transactions of society would have been like the play of the lungs, the contractions of the muscles, and the circulation of the blood in a healthy person, who scarcely knows that these functions exist.—(Lect. iii. p. 85.)

As an illustration of this harmonious operation, he selects an instance. After remarking that few persons possess Patriotism and Philanthropy, and still fewer the necessary Wisdom, to attempt to provide for the wants of a community of men, he takes the case of London, and proposes the problem of supplying London with food. The problem thus stated, is difficult enough, as he proceeds to observe:—

Let any one consider this problem in all its bearings,—reflecting on the enormous and fluctuating number of persons to be fed,—the immense quantity, and the variety of the provisions to be furnished,—the importance of a convenient distribution of them, and the necessity of husbanding them discreetly,—and then let him reflect on the anxious toil which such a task would impose on a board of the most experienced and intelligent commissaries; who, after all, would be able to discharge their offices but very inadequately.

Yet this object is accomplished (FAR BETTER THAN IT COULD BE BY ANY EFFORT OF HUMAN WISDOM) thro' the agency of men who think, each, of nothing beyond his own immediate interest,—who, with that object in view, perform their respective parts, with cheerful zeal,—and, combine, unconsciously, to employ the wisest means for effecting an object, the vastness of which it would bewilder them to contemplate.

The selection of London in proof that the unconscious working of 'the natural laws' of wealth, are vastly superior to any *arrangements* of wisdom and benevolence, shows how much the influence of personal comfort, and a preconceived theory, can impair the perception of the strongest minds. If indeed the population of London is completely and constantly fed, and *if* this is effected by the wisest means,—then any attempt to amend its state, would equal the superfluous folly of 'gilding refined gold.' That the people of London, or the major part of them, do somehow or other get fed, is true,—but that this is done in the *best* and *wisest* manner would be a pure assumption, were it not a downright falsehood. The real fact is, that in this large 'wen'—this sponge which sucks up so much of the wealth of the nation—there are tens of thousands who scarcely know from whence the next day's subsistence shall come,—multiplied thousands who lie upon beds inferior to those which the farmer gives to his cattle,—and a thousand at least, who, night after night, have no shelter whatever! So 'wisely' are they supplied with the means of subsistence, that vast numbers have no resource save prostitution and plunder. So 'excellently' do the natural laws adjust the material relations of man, that while the productive laborers there,—the very sinews of society,—are perpetually kept at the verge of starvation, those who *produce* no wealth,—whose occupation is subordinate, and who in great part might be advantageously dispensed with in the social machinery,—to say nothing of an immense army of tricksters and stock-and-share-gamblers,—appropriate the lion's share. Perhaps not one fourth of its vast population are *usefully* employed; it produces not a tithe of what it consumes, but, like the

sands in which some rivers are absorbed and lost, it sucks up the wealth of the provinces, rendering a comparatively small service in return. If, as the learned doctor supposes, a band of commissaries had to provide for the material wants of two millions of people, we question whether they *could* make so great a bungle of it as in the actual case. The genuine wants of the deserving man are left unsupplied, while the *un-*'natural law' ministers to the factitious ones of the undeserving. Even the Instructor of youth,—the builder of the next generation, almost the arbiter of its destinies,—is worse treated than the flunkey who lets down the steps of my lady's carriage. The artist, the poet, the discoverer, and the inventor, who add so much to the mental and material wealth of the world, often live in poverty and neglect, while a beautiful singer or dancer realizes £20,000 to £30,000 per year, and is almost *fêted* to death.

As the mode in which society produces and distributes its material commodities exerts an important influence on its moral state, it is not surprising that in London frauds innumerable should be continually committed,—that no sun should rise which does not witness the commission of crimes which show that the very core of society is corrupted,—that no minute of time should elapse which does not carry with it the breath of some being prematurely cut off by violence, starvation, or disease. Here *might* and *right* are the most opposite states in the world, and society resembles 'one universe of dust' where chaos reigns supreme.

The 'let-alone' policy is best defended by stating the principles upon which it is founded.

Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of the society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage, naturally, or rather necessarily, leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society.—(*Adam Smith*)

It is an admitted principle in the science of morals, as well as of Political Economy, that by far the largest proportion of the human race have a much clearer view of what is conducive to their own interests, than it is possible for any other man, or select number of men, to have; and consequently that it is sound policy to allow each individual to follow the bent of his inclinations, and to engage in any branch of industry he thinks proper.—(*McCulloch*.)

As far as we know, no proof has ever been tendered of the concluding proposition of each of these citations, other than the quotations themselves contain;—the '*necessarily*' of Adam Smith, and the '*consequently*' of McCulloch, in addition to the demerit of being untrue, are purely gratuitous assumptions. Nevertheless, they are accepted as axiomatic truth by all advocates of *laissez faire*. Nor do they permit them to remain latent and inactive principles. Acting in accordance with them, they resist the attempt to regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth, as being beyond the province of society, *as such*. Anything like an attempt to realize wise or equitable arrangements, is something within the regions of Atlantis or Utopia. Actual opposition of individual interests is announced to be favorable to the progress of society, on the ground that each man's desire to transcend his neighbor, stimulates him to increased exertion. In the exchange of commodities, moral considerations are excluded, or at least deemed unnecessary; so likewise is any proportioning of the two elements of production and consumption to each other. The 'higgling of the market,' or

the competition of supply and demand, is acknowledged as the sole regulator,—the *natural* and *divine* law! The economists believe that those departments of industry most needed by man, thro' the temptations of higher wages or profits than the average, 'naturally' and 'best' cause labor and capital to be invested therein (on the principle *ubi mellis, ubi musca*, 'where there is honey, there will be flies'), and thus tend to keep the supply and demand on a par. On the other side, when too much labor and capital are invested in any department, then wages and profits fall, and thus drive people out, which again tends to proportion the supply to the demand, and thus keep things at a level. Under this system society is like water, ever *tending* to find its level, providing that it be 'let alone'. It is not needed to legislate for society in order to promote the welfare of the individual. All that is needed is, to leave each man free to follow his interests in his own way; and hence, as he will both know them best, and have the greatest reason for securing them, the interests of Society, which is made up of the parts, will be secured at the same time.

Now this would be a plausible theory enough, and if it were true; would indeed supersede all other laws whatever. In temporal affairs there are but two interests concerned—that of *myself* and that of my *neighbor*; and if by my regarding my own interests alone, and my neighbor doing the same, both interests were attained, the object for which all human, and most divine, laws are given, would be secured. All other principles are, in that event, unnecessary. With the Caliph Omar, one might say, 'If they agree therewith they are useless, if they disagree therewith they are false.' Instead of reiterating 'Do unto others as you would be done unto,'—'Love thy neighbor as thyself,'—and similar obsolete commands, we might be taught—'Do thyself as much good as possible, and rest assured that what thou doest, will be best for thy neighbor.'

As a philosophical theory it is especially remarkable. Legislation—the art of government—is reduced to the simplest matter possible. All the ponderous tomes written on the subject,—all the lessons of history,—are contained in one simple maxim—*Laissez Faire*, do nothing, or next to nothing! The highest law is to have no law, and the world goes by itself. The saying of Count Oxenstein to his son, *Quam parva sapientia regitur mundus*—'with how little wisdom the world is governed'—contains not only a fact but a principle, and political science becomes the philosophical exponent of the maxim—'Each man for himself, and God for us all.'

On the supposition that men were either machines or angels, the theory might stand: if there were no powerful, and ever varying, disturbing causes, such as the fluctuation of nature, the ignorance, selfishness, and passions of men: or if men possessed intelligence sufficient to know all the wants of the race, power sufficient to supply them, and benevolence sufficient to disclaim any advantage inconsistent with the welfare of their brethren: but on any other conditions the hypothesis is unsound. To our apprehension there is the same fallacy in it which Whately points out in the word *tendency*, which sometimes means the existence of a cause which, if operating unimpeded, *would* produce a certain result, and sometimes the existence of such a state of things that that result *may be expected to take place*. So the theory of the economists *would* be true, if no extensive

counteracting causes prevented, but they overlook these, and assume that what *would* be, necessarily *is*.

One might have thought that, as the theory just explained was so satisfactory to the writers who announced it, they were at least bound to notice some of the glaring discrepancies between actual facts and so beautiful a system. It is true they affirm that political economy never has had a fair trial of its principles, and we apprehend the entire let-alone portion of it never will; but surely the system of letting every man follow his own interests in his own way has been tried to an extent quite enough to enable us to test its merits. No doubt various unjust or injudicious restrictions have existed on the production and consumption of wealth, and which were made to benefit one portion of the community at the cost of the other, and we readily allow for such disturbances of the economical laws. We shall show, however, that there are other disturbances besides those made by Kings or Lords for their own behoof,—disturbances the effects of which political economy not only does not help us to get rid of, but scarcely notices as yet,—possessing force in themselves sufficient to completely nullify the claims of the 'let-alone' system.

One of the greatest of these disturbing causes is the variations which nature makes in the seasons, and which causes the same amount of capital and labor in different years to return very different amounts of raw produce. One season may be crowned with abundance, while in the next there may be dearth or famine. Charles Lamb records that roast pig was a Chinese discovery, accidentally made by the burning down of a house, and for many years it was deemed essential to burn down houses in order to attain that delicate edible, being in fact not roast pig, but burnt-house-pig. 'Even thus,' says the *Westminster Review*, quoting the above tale, do we in England talk of 'mummy wheat' 3,000 years old, and yet capable of germination. We have not yet asked ourselves the question, whether the 'mummy' be essential, or whether the wheat might not be preserved 3,000 years without the 'mummy.'

The thought which naturally arises is, if wheat will keep 3,000 years, why have we famine? Why all the faces of a nation turn with anxious looks to the aspect of the weather as the corn is ripening? Why should newspapers notice every shower? or why should a thing so proverbially uncertain as the weather become a thread whereon the comfort, almost the existence, of millions must depend? The answer is easy: we have got a theory; some of us have written books; and, like Dr. Sangrado, tho a nation perish for it, we will maintain our doctrine.

It may safely be affirmed that the wants of men, for lengthened periods, are very equable. Variations in consumption are neither extensive nor rapid. In general we eat but one dinner at once, and wear but one suit of clothes at a time, and therefore sudden fluctuations in the consumption of the great staple articles of human commerce, never or rarely occur.

Now, if the let-alone system be a sound one, the production of food, say corn, should proceed at as equable a rate as the consumption. If it proceed faster there is a glut, if slower a famine; and in either case the direst evils result. But the variations in consumption are quite insignificant when compared with the fluctuations in production. The obvious dictate of common sense would be, to store up the surplus in good harvests in order to meet the scarcity of bad ones. That

which the lowest instinct does for the bee, the boasted cultivation of modern times has not yet done for man; in fact, under the competitive system, it is impossible to be done. For to whom should this task be entrusted,—to the government? Under the present system that would be unfair to the private trader; it would disarrange all his calculations, and lead to numberless abuses. To the private individual? But who can be expected to have so much public spirit as to keep a stock on hand to meet the contingencies of a bad harvest, one, two, or three years hence, and not only lose all the profit derivable from the use of his capital in the interim, but, should the next harvest prove abundant, be compelled to dispose of his store at a loss. His individual interest, therefore, demands a scarcity, and prudence will not allow him to keep a greater stock than is likely to be called for by the *present* demand of the market. Every step in production beyond this, approximates his business to that of a speculator and gambler.

Under the system of Competition any unusual productiveness of nature becomes a curse to the producer. The corn fields double their return, human stomachs do not double their capacity; and hence when nature has been very bountiful, the competition in corn lowers prices so much below the costs of production that ruin stares the farmer in the face. In such cases, remarks Mr. McCulloch, "the occupiers of poor land are involved in the greatest difficulties; a number of them are driven in consequence from their employments; and a smaller supply of corn being brought to market, prices are elevated so as to yield the customary rate of profit, and no more to the cultivators of the poorest soils that are still continued under tillage." Of course the farmer, in order to secure himself from the calamity of plenty, and acting in accordance with the principles of political economy, puts less land under cultivation. But how fare the Public? The following year, perhaps, the harvest is not abundant, but deficient: prices rise: there is not enough of corn to supply every body's need. The affluent and those in comfortable circumstances can buy even at the advanced prices. The poor go without, or subsist on garbage. But on whom falls the loss? No foresight can prevent a bad harvest, yet see how the let-alone principle works when it occurs! Having prevented any surplus for meeting the evil, it is doubly unjust by causing the loss to fall, not on the farmer or landlord, but principally on the working classes.

It certainly does not fall upon the farmer. Facts prove that a dearth is his greatest gain, a plentiful harvest his greatest loss.

In his work on prices Mr. Tooke^a quotes this statement from Arthur Young:—

The price of wheat for the twelve months from May 1795 to April 1796, has been, on an average, in England and Wales, 10s. 7d. per bushel, and that of barley 4s. 9d. Now the price for twelve years, ending, 1794, was for wheat 5s. 10d., and for barley 3s. 3d. For the year above described, therefore, the price has exceeded that average 4s. 9d. per bushel for wheat, and 1s. 6d. for barley. Let us suppose the annual consumption of wheat to be 8,701,875 quarters; and that of barley 10,545,000 quarters; and, further, that the deficiency of the crop on the average of the two years, so far as they affect the period in question, has amounted in wheat to one fifth; and that the barley has, on an average of the two crops, being a medium: in this case there would have been consumed—

^a p. 186, vol. 1.

Of wheat 6,961,500 qrs., the extra price on which, at 4s. 9d. the bushel, 38s. the quarter, is	£13,226,849.
Of barley, 10,545,000 qrs. at 1s. 6d. per bushel, or 12s. per quarter	£6,327,000.
	£19,553,849.

If, therefore, these data are just, and they are ventured merely as approximate calculations, the farmers have received, in these two articles alone, nearly £20,000,000 sterling beyond the deficiency of the crop, supposing the deficiency to be one fifth, which is a very great one, and without adding a word on the price of meat, or any other article.^b

To the working man the item of bread is most important. It is his staple consumption; frequently a fourth, a third, and even half of his wages, is spent in this one article. Whatever this commodity costs beyond its due rate, he must deduct in some other item, and this will generally be in clothes. His diminished demand for clothes diminishes the manufacturer's need for his services; and thus he pays the loss twice over,—once in the increased price of bread, and once in diminished employment. The manufacturer also suffers, but not in the same proportion; he pays more for his bread and he loses some profit on his capital, but in the one case it is like taking a bucket full of water from the sea, while in the other it is like taking it from a nearly dried up well.

But the real scarcity is not half the evil. There is an artificial scarcity still more dreadful, resulting, not from the niggardliness of nature, but from the cupidity of man. The threatened scarcity brings the Speculators into the market, who buy up the corn in the hope of selling it at an exorbitant profit. The misfortunes of their fellow men become to them a mine of wealth, and human feeling and common sense are alike outraged in beholding granaries filled with rotting corn, while the people are famishing for bread.

What is the defence set up for such men by the Political Economist? for, on the principle of the identity of public and private interests, he is bound to defend them. The defence is certainly ingenious, if not sound. The plea is, that the advanced prices tend to economize the consumption at the time when it is most desirable that consumption should be diminished. The utility of regrators and forestallers (i. e. Speculators) is, say they, much like the effect of Joseph's foresight when in Egypt, which caused the superabundance of one period to be stored up for the famine of the succeeding period; or to the conduct of a provident sea-captain, who, finding the supply of biscuit or water falling short, curtails the daily allowance, in order that the stock may last to the end of the voyage, rather than, by continuing the full ration, run the risk of the crew perishing before the termination of the voyage.

Unfortunately, however, as the competitive principle *caused* the famine, or at least prevented that accumulation of grain which would have removed it, so now it does little or nothing beyond transferring the scarcity from all classes in order to concentrate it upon the poor. The speculators do not know of the scarcity till it arrives, and then their transactions increase instead of diminishing the evil. As human greed is greatest while winning, the corn is held as long as possible, in the hope that prices may get a *little* higher. Generally a panic sets in, and

^b Vol. xxvi. p. 469.

all rush to sell. The grain has been kept until it is a living mass of filth, and in this state is thrown on the market precisely when it was not needed. It was held back when there was a scarcity, it is offered when there is none. A few men retire with fortunes, secured by two or three 'lucky specs,' while many others are bankrupt. The wealthy have paid dear for their corn, and the poor have been deprived of it altogether. And all because we trust the business of providing food to the self-interest of individual Josephs, instead of allowing a wise prudence and social foresight to provide for the interest of the whole by storing up the superfluity of good seasons against the deficiency of bad ones. It is folly to exclaim against speculators or forestallers, or, as a certain noble lord proposed, to hang up fifty of them as a warning to the rest. Such people attack the symptoms only, and do not touch the disease. A man who buys up corn, or other commodity, in a time of scarcity, has a perfect right to do so, so long as every man has but to see after his own interest. Not until we have reversed the maxim, and seek the interest of each in the interest of all, will this scandal to common sense and morality be removed.

We have cited but one commodity, the most important one of corn, but the same evils, tho in a less degree, result from variations in other crops. In cotton we had a deficient supply in 1847, and hundreds of mills were consequently kept on short time, or standing, for the manufacturers feared to pay the then prices, lest a plentiful season might reduce the price before they had disposed of the high priced cotton goods. As in corn so in cotton, gambling greater than ever the *rouge et noir* table exhibited, took place. The mercantile pulse became as sensitive as the electrical needles which communicated the quotations, because a single speculation might make or lose a fortune.

This theory of competition, however, is not only subject to the fatal defect of leaving mankind exposed to the fluctuations of the seasons, and all the distressing consequences, but is, besides, constantly liable to other impediments to its successful working, each of them productive of the greatest evils, and each of them inevitable. They may be thus briefly considered:—

1st. The evils which arise from the ignorance of the producer as to the extent of the market for the commodities he intends to produce.

2ndly. Those which arise from the destruction of income, thro the desire of self-aggrandizement.

3rdly. The deterioration of production.

4thly. The multiplication of capital faster than profitable modes of employing it open out.

5thly. Credit.

The *first* of these evils, is one which is felt to be so great, that an eminent economist proposed that statistical tables should be prepared for agriculture, similar to, or better than, those which exist for manufactures. It is obvious that, so long as the market is as extensive as the nation or the world, no individual can pretend to suit his investment to the actual wants of mankind; he *must* be working in the dark. The capitalist builds a cotton mill, the agriculturist rents a farm, the shopkeeper opens a shop, the youth becomes a lawyer, a doctor, a soldier, and in no instance is there any consideration as to whether more cottons, corn, distributors, lawyers or doctors, are really *wanted*,—or whether the capital

and labor about to be invested in one department, would not be better employed in some other. With increase of wealth exchanges have become multiplied, and so many persons are now interposed between the producer and consumer, that the very existence of the one may be unknown to the other. If the extent of the market is unknown to the producer, he may be helping to increase the intensity of a glut.—And he must know the past, the present, and the future,—nay, what his competitors, a thousand miles off, are doing,—if he would not do that which may ruin himself or his neighbor. But even if the producer knew the desirable proportion of commodities, if the most minute statistics were accumulated, we should scarcely be a step nearer reaching it on the competitive basis. For tho a man might feel convinced that the market was quite full, and that no new capital could be invested in a certain department without lowering profit, he would not, by any consideration of this kind, be deterred from attempting to obtain a share of the existing market, tho he might feel certain of displacing some one else. If it were explained to him, he would merely reply—'My predecessors have no exclusive monopoly of the market; it is each one for himself, and if profits are reduced, so much the better for the public.' Of course he enters the market, and with others, produces a glut, reduces profits, wastes the capital or labor invested, bankrupts himself or others, and, in the words of the adage, 'destroys the goose which lays the golden eggs.'

Whatever capital is unwisely employed is so much loss to the community. All *random* production which creates investments of capital in channels wherein it is not wanted, is of this description. Suppose a Railway connects two towns, and it was proposed to make another, would not every one oppose it, on the ground that all the capital invested in one of the lines would thereby be wasted? In this instance it would satisfy none but the shallowest reasoners, to tell them that the competition of the two would reduce the price of transit. The case is the same with two gas, or water, companies. But what is true of two railways, is true of two tradesmen. If more tradesmen have their capital invested in any business than is adequate to the actual need for their service, the loss to the public is the same in kind as that caused by the creation of a supernumerary railway.

This vast waste of capital is especially observable in the too rapid multiplication of the 'commercial' class. In accordance with the theory of self-interest, this conclusion is opposed to that of the economists.

Adam Smith, quoted by McCulloch, observes:—

"The prejudices of some political writers against shopkeepers and tradesmen are altogether without foundation. So far is it from being necessary, either to tax them, or to restrict their numbers, that they can never be multiplied so as to hurt the public interests. The quantity of grocery goods, for example, which can be sold in a particular town, is limited by the demand of that town and its neighborhood. The capital, therefore, which can be advantageously employed in the grocery trade, cannot exceed the capital required to purchase and retail these goods. If this capital is divided between two grocers, their competition will obviously tend to make both of them sell cheaper than if it were in the hands of one only; and if it were divided among twenty, their competition would be just so much the greater, and the chance of their combining together in order to raise the price just so much the less. Their competition might, perhaps, ruin some of themselves; but to take

care of this is the business of the parties concerned, and it may safely be trusted to their discretion. It can never hurt either the consumer or the producer; on the contrary, it must tend to make the retailers both sell cheaper and buy dearer, than if the whole trade was monopolized by one or two persons. Some of them, perhaps, may occasionally decoy a weak customer to buy what he has no occasion for. This evil is, however, of too little importance to deserve the public attention, nor would it necessarily be prevented by restricting their number."

In the first place we demur to the assertion, that the quantity of capital invested in grocery goods, must be proportioned to the wants of the purchasers. There is nothing to prevent a new investment of capital in the distribution of groceries, altho there is already an adequate investment. In such a case it is not true that an individual investing capital in a business already full, injures no one but himself. For he injures all other persons in the same trade by reducing their rate of profit, thus lessening their means of consumption and power of accumulation. Secondly, he taxes the public; for if, in the case supposed, ten persons distributed the commodities actually demanded, and another enters into competition with them, since the public will not consume any more, the actual cost of distribution must be increased to the extent of the support of the new distributor. In this country the waste of capital in distribution is enormous. Commodities pass thro' the hands of three or four traders before reaching the consumer, and the cost of distribution is thus materially enhanced. The distribution too is effected in the costliest manner. Under the present arrangements, the application of large capital and the division of labor, such as exist in the departments of production, cannot take place. If twenty shop-keepers instead of two, or one, have each to keep a stock, ten or twenty times the capital needed must be lying idle, all which might have been employed in production. The capital invested in buildings, fittings up, etc. is also lost. The time wasted in waiting for customers is another loss. If any one inspects the process of distribution as conducted in our large towns, and would add these items together, and if, on the other hand, he reflect how many persons, and how much capital, employed on rational principles instead of the chance competitive system, could produce the same total result, he will come to a very different conclusion from that of Adam Smith. Whatever capital and labor is expended in wholesale and retail commerce beyond the smallest amount requisite to effect the distribution of the commodities, may be considered as so much productive power withdrawn from the community. It is so much deducted from the comforts which every person might enjoy, and therefore it is not true, in this instance, that the contest of individual interests is the most advantageous to society.

The competing supply and demand principle is objectionable, *secondly*, on the ground that it diminishes income, and materially destroys that which creates income. The large and the small capitalists have to sell their productions in the same market. Each is anxious to obtain a larger portion of the market, but the greater one can afford to sell at a lower per centage than the other. To enable the latter to maintain his ground, he again re-acts upon his laborers, and all from whom he purchases commodities, and thus the income of every producer is reduced to its lowest limit. The process and result are thus stated by Sismondi.

"If the farmer can he doubles and redoubles his harvests, and calculates that he shall sell them by disposing of them at rather a lower price than other producers. To lower the price, he begins by endeavoring to diminish the income of those who compete with him in production, by giving less rent to the proprietor, less interest to those who have lent him money, less wages to his laborers, less taxes to government. By taking more corn to market than he could sell he necessarily produces this effect, for the price of corn becomes lower, all farmers make the same complaints to the proprietor, to the capitalist, to the laborer, to the government; rents diminish, interest becomes lower, wages are reduced.

"He re-acts at the same time on all other farmers. If his methods of cultivation are better, he can, with the same labor and the same advances, produce a greater quantity of food, and gain at the price which others lose. Thus he continues to enrich himself whilst others are ruined. Then he wishes to take the farms of others with his own, and he finds capitalists who will facilitate his doing this; the trouble of inspection will not be doubled, tho his undertaking is doubled; it answers better to get 4 per cent. on £20,000, than 5 per cent. on £10,000. Small farmers disappear, and nothing is seen but cultivation on a large scale.

"Thus all incomes arising from land are diminished by this exaggerated production. The proprietor consents to lower his rent, the capitalist is content with 4, instead of 5 per cent interest, the farmer with 4 instead of 5 per cent profit, the laborer with 1s. a day wages instead of 2s. All are, however, consumers of commodities, and joined together they form themselves the great mass of consumers. The diminution of income will to every one of them be followed by a diminution of consumption, in quantity or quality, the poor will give up meat for bread alone, or bread for potatoes. The effect on the rich will be more complicated: in consequence of the diminution of income, more capital will be required to live, more land to obtain the same rent, more money must be lent to get the same interest, larger farms to get as much profit; and as the rich pay great attention to keeping up their families, and not to make improvident marriages, the number of old rich families will decrease, as it does every generation, and consequently inheritances will be more considerable. As a result of this, the consumption of the rich class, taken in a mass will diminish, not only in proportion to the diminution of income, but also by the diminution of the number of persons. This double action is very apparent in England, tho the number of roads open to fortune maintain probably a greater number of opulent families there than elsewhere. The total number of landed proprietors has been sensibly diminished, that of farmers has perhaps diminished still more. The quantity of corn, meat, and beer consumed must have diminished also; as to the day laborers, they are gone back again from meat to bread, from bread to potatoes; their consumption has diminished in quantity and quality."

But the economists reply, This makes commodities cheap, which is but another name for plentiful. Granted that it makes them cheap, but it destroys the purchasing power, and if corn or calicoes can find no buyers, tho they are all as cheap as air, it avails nothing. It is but to repeat the same fallacy which misleads them on the question of machinery. They tell us that a machine cheapens commodities, but forget that its application often destroys the very income that should

^c Sismondi, on the Income of the Community.

purchase them, and but for which they cannot continue to be created. When competition has reduced profits from 10 per cent to 5 per cent, or wages from 40s. to 20s., the purchasing powers of capitalists and of laborers are reduced by one half; but it is equally clear that the power of others to sell is diminished in the same ratio, and also that the power of saving or accumulating capital for additional production is lessened. In whatever department capital has been largely invested the results speedily manifest themselves. The rate of profit becomes reduced to a living profit, and the smaller capitalists are driven out of the trade, often at a ruinous loss. After our Leviathan manufacturers have destroyed the smaller fry, they then compete with one another. Frequently they keep their mills running merely to pay wages, sometimes from humanity, sometimes from the hope of a revival in trade, sometimes because there is no chance of disposing of their property except at a ruinous loss.

A third consequence of intense competition, is the production of inferior commodities, thro' a desire of each one to monopolize the market. Now it is the interest of the public (i. e. the consumer) that commodities should be as good as possible. Even in reference to cost, the difference of real value is out of all proportion to the expense of production, i. e. to make *good* coats, houses, shoes, etc., is ultimately much cheaper than to make bad ones. But the problem we have to solve, as producers, is to give the least possible value for value. What is the consequence of this struggle between the really identical, but now opposed, interest of consumer and producer? A system of secret fraud and deception, surpassing in magnitude the open frauds which employ the judges and fill the newspapers. In a lecture delivered by F. E. Calvert, of Manchester, on adulteration in food, he enumerates the principal articles of food, bread, sugar, tea, arrowroot, tapioca, meal, cocoa, honey, vinegar, beer, all of which were considerably adulterated. The Messrs. Chambers, remarking on the same subject, observe:—

"Some late circumstances transpiring thro' the newspapers, or thro' judicial investigation, are calculated to give rise to very serious reflections. First, we have an ultra cheap system of transit on the river Thames, producing an explosion by which many lives are sacrificed. Then we find the linen-draper meeting to denounce a system long carried on by the makers of thread and tape, whereby it happens that a reel of one of these articles labelled as containing a hundred yards—warranted to do so—yields only ninety or eighty-eight yards, or perhaps deficient as much as 25 per cent. Think of a poor woman who makes a meagre livelihood by dealing in tape and threads, who unwittingly retails these reels in yards to different consumers, on an understanding that they each contain a hundred, while they are short of that amount by more than the value of her supposed profits! Oh, shame of shames! Next a member of a respectable grain firm at Glasgow is sentenced to four months imprisonment and a fine, for selling a large quantity of oatmeal to the Highland Destitution Committee, adulterated with an inferior stuff called thirds, which is not oatmeal at all; this being described in the defence as a practice of the trade! Taking these but as chance liftings of a veil which conceals much more to the like purpose, it must be owned that they create a very painful feeling regarding the state of commercial conscientiousness amongst us; it would appear as if men were driven by competition to adopt dishonest expedients for the purpose of attaining business, and making that business profitable. The days of reality seem to be past, and those of delusion and imposture come in."

As competition increases, the evil grows worse and worse. Many of us know that a coat or gown of the last generation was a very different thing for durability to those of to-day. Instead of houses which should last for ages, and clothes which endure for years, we deal in lath and plaster, and shoddy. We increase our flour with beans, our loaves with potatoes, and to cheat our neighbor into the belief that an inferior commodity is a superior one, we use almost as much labor as would make it such.

"Consider for example," says Thomas Carlyle, "that great Hat seven-feet high, which now perambulates London streets; which my friend Sauerteig regarded, justly, as one of our English notabilities; 'the topmost point as yet,' said he—'would it were your culminating and returning point—to which English Puffery has been observed to reach!'—The hatter in the Strand of London, instead of making better felt-hats than another, mounts a huge lath-and-plaster Hat, seven-feet high, upon wheels, sends a man to drive it thro' the streets; hoping to be saved thereby. He has not attempted to *make* better hats, as he was appointed by the Universe to do, and as, with this ingenuity of his, he could very probably have done; but his whole industry is turned to persuade us that he has made such! He too knows that the Quack has become God. Laugh not at him, O reader; or do not laugh only. He has ceased to be comic; he is fast becoming tragic. To me this all-deafening blast of Puffery, of poor Falsehood grown necessitous, of poor Heart-Atheism fallen now into Enchanted Workhouses, sounds too surely like a Doom's blast! I have to say to myself in old dialect: 'God's blessing is not written on all this!' Unless perhaps the Universe be a chimera;—some old totally deranged eight-day clock—dead as brass; which the Maker, if there ever was any Maker, has long ceased to meddle with!"

And how, indeed, can it be otherwise? If A sells at the lowest price which will enable him to live, and B comes to divide the profit with him, he cannot do this unless he undersells A. To effect this he must puff, he must put in plate glass and gilding, he must deduct pence, nibble every little advantage, grab every mite of discount; he must take here a little and there a little, he must put up lying advertisements about selling one third cheaper than his neighbor, he must have young men trained to tempt, by every winning way, the cash out of the customers, and at the peril of his bread not to let them depart without purchasing. These, and a thousand things besides, varying of course with the nature of the business, are the extreme developments of the principle of Competition, and in crease or diminish with the greater or less intensity of its action. Such considerations will tend to modify our views of the cheapness of the competitive principle. Could the labor, the capital, the mis-directed intellect, the feelings wastefully expended in various ways in the life-and-death struggle in which each man is engaged,—be rightly directed and applied, it is certain that the advantages of wealth, and an amount of comfort, might be possessed by every human being, as much beyond our present advantages, as those which a section of society now enjoy are beyond those of previous ages. We have the material power, we lack but the constructive wisdom. Under our 'let alone' system, the very causes which should give every one boundless material advantages, are turning into sources of the most intense misery.

The *fourth* evil is that of capital accumulating faster than it can find profitable investment, causing what Economists call 'a glut'. As the power of multiply-

ing wealth has increased, the evil of gluts has also increased. It is not that there is too much capital to be employed on right principles. Like the soil of Ireland, which remains in a state of nature while millions have died for want of that food which it would have returned to their labor, so England, plethoric of wealth, has often wasted in injurious over production that fund which would have sheltered the houseless, clothed the naked, and educated the ignorant. The experience of this country has amply proved that it is quite possible to have a large amount of capital seeking profitable investment, and at the same time an immense number of the people pauperized, and the remainder reduced to a state where subsistence borders on starvation. The fact of a glut of commodities frequently occurring, is too well known to be denied. But the occurrence of gluts is a most inconvenient obstacle to the success of the supply and demand theory. By nothing less than a most complete begging of the question has any semblance of consistency been maintained. One Economist writes thus:—

“The supply of markets is a very speculative business, and is often conducted with more zeal than discretion. When a particular trade is supposed to be more prosperous than others, capitalists rush into it in order to secure high profits; and in this country the abundance of capital, the perfection of our machinery, and the skill of our workmen, enable them to produce with extraordinary facility. Over-production in that particular trade is the consequence, and all engaged in it suffer from the depreciation in the value of their goods; but if, instead of rushing into the favorite trade, they had distributed their enterprises more widely, their own interests and that of the community would have been promoted. When a ship is wrecked, if all the crew precipitate themselves into one boat they swamp it; but if they wait until all the boats are lowered, and apportion their number to the size of each, they may all reach the shore in safety. And so it is in trade: one trade may easily be glutted, while there is room in other trades for all the capital and industry that need employment.”^d

The parallel of the ship and boat unfortunately differs from the difficulty it is proposed to meet in these important circumstances, that one never knows when the ship is sinking till it is too late,—that one never knows how many passengers want saving, nor where the boats are by which the people are to be saved. Whatever the political economists of the ‘let-alone’ school have yet said as to the remedies for gluts, seems but to mock the evil. That we may not be thought to misrepresent them, we will quote their own words, and, for a sample, use the language of McCulloch. Suppose a manufacturer who has brought too many cottons into the market, suffering the consequences, and that he visits the Professor of the science of wealth, in order to ask ‘What’s to be done?’

Professor. State your complaint.

Manufacturer. I am a manufacturer of cotton goods, and have a large capital, employing many hundred hands, engaged in the business. Owing however to so many persons being engaged in trade, the supply of goods is greater than the demand, and I cannot, therefore, realize the costs of production, let alone the fair profits of capital.

Professor. “The cause of the glut is obvious; it consists not in over-production, but

in the production of cottons which were not wanted, instead of broad cloths (or some other article) which were wanted. Let this error be rectified, and the glut will disappear.”^e

Manufacturer. Very true, but then my machinery is constructed to make cotton, not cloth; my workpeople are also trained to the same business, and are neither sufficiently educated to turn their hands to another business, nor have they funds to sustain them while they learn it.

Professor. The laws of Political Economy are inflexible. You must divert your capital, at whatever loss, from a business in which capital is superabundant to one in which it is deficient.

Manufacturer. And my hands? If I do not find work for them I shall have to support them as paupers. Besides they have done nothing amiss. It is not their fault that I chose to invest capital in the cotton manufacture, rather than some other branch.

Professor. Their labor is subject to the same law as your capital—supply and demand. Sound Political Economy forbids you to support them as paupers. They must restrict their numbers to the demand. They must find another outlet for their services, for, as Mr. Malthus justly expresses it, at nature’s feast there is no room for them.

Manufacturer. And supposing I can sell my machinery, (which by the way is an absurd supposition, because if it is of no use to me, it is of no use to any one else,) how am I to know in what branch to invest the proceeds?

Professor. That in which profits are highest, since that is a sign that more capital may be invested therein with advantage.

Manufacturer. But others will be tempted likewise to invest in that branch, so that we shall soon have a glut in that likewise.

Professor. “An universal glut of commodities is impossible. Every excess in one class must be balanced by an equal deficiency in some other. It is not the increased, but the *wrong application*, of productive power, the improper adaptation of means to ends, that is in every specific case the cause of gluts.”^f

Manufacturer. That is, if commodities that are wanted are made, there will be a demand for them; certainly this is like proving that the earth is round, because it is a globe. My dear professor, I called for a remedy; you give me, instead, a description of the disease. Good day, Sir.

Professor. How difficult it is to make people understand the principles of Political Economy! I did not invent the science, I but discover and apply principles already in action.

True, we would say, Oh professor! but then, when you see such results to arise out of your beloved ‘let-alone’ system, might it not be worth while enquiring, if arrangements guided by intelligence, and founded on benevolence, could not develop better results than this system of antagonism and chance? There is at least a presumption in favor of the thought.

Closely linked to the previous evil, is the *fifth*, resulting from the credit system, for the power to multiply gluts is very materially increased thereby. Under a system of individual competition, a credit system is unavoidable, because it enables those who are not disposed to employ capital themselves, to lend it to those who will. It should be remembered, however, that credit does not create capital, but only facilitates its advantageous employment. No evil could arise from credit, provided it never exceeded the actual amount of capital, or at least

^d Knight’s Political Dictionary. Art. Demand and supply.

^e McCulloch, Part 2, Sec. 4, p. 189.

^f McCulloch, p. 19.

none that would not equally arise from the misappropriation of the same amount of capital.

And now for our 'let-alone' theory. Does the system of each man looking after his own interests, prove itself to be, in practice, for the interests of society? Certainly if past experience is to be our guide, the power of credit has been most injurious. We do not of course refer to that minor system of credit which subsists between the small tradesman and his customer (tho many evils have occurred to society thereby), but to that system of credit by which trade has been transformed into speculation, and the desk has fulfilled the office of the gambling table. If, under the competitive arrangement, the loss fell on the transgressor, there would not be such serious ground of complaint; but while the success of the trading gambler, whose transactions are built on fictitious capital, is all his own, his failure brings ruin to multitudes of innocent victims. If fortunate, two or three transactions bring him a competency. But should some rival snatch the chance before him, or the full-blown-bubble collapse before he can withdraw his winnings, he drags down in his fall a crowd of small tradesmen and operatives.

The falsity of the 'let-alone' theory is manifested by the fact, that in the important mercantile engine of credit, we do not and dare not trust it. By currency laws, which confer monopolies on certain people to issue notes, and by bankruptcy laws, we do every thing in our power to restrain the abuse of credit. If we had faith in the principle of private interests looking best after themselves, why not trust them here, in purely private transactions? Simply because, so far as they have been tried, they have proved a dead failure. Look at the American banks. America tried the 'let-alone' system. There was a national bank till 1836, but others enjoyed the privilege of banking, and what was the result? Why, 195 banks, between 1811 and 1830, became bankrupt. But when the charter of the national bank expired, *i. e.* when monopoly ceased entirely, and we had full, free, and fair competition, 200 banks arose to supply its place, and by May 1837 the whole 713 banks in the Union stopt payment! In 1839 another suspension took place. Out of 850 banks, excluding branches, 343 entirely suspended, 62 suspended in part, 56 failed or were discontinued, and 498 did not suspend. Here was *laissez-faire* with a vengeance! Thousands of happy homes blighted, and tens of thousands of innocent persons ruined, while our own operatives were, by the same event, driven to the verge of starvation. Now, if the self-interest principle which lies at the basis of Political Economy be true,—an economist should have thus addressed them. "My friends, these are but the *immediate* consequences of over speculation, had you rightly looked after your interests this would not have happened. Enterprize must not be restrained because you have suffered, there can be no monopoly of money or credit, therefore you must get out of your difficulties as best you can, and learn better next time." But society in this instance, as in every instance where it sees the origin of the evil, threw *laissez-faire* overboard, and the legislature, both of this country and the States, interferes with private enterprize and private credit, and prevents that 'laudable desire of every body doing the best he can for himself' from playing any more such pranks. The bank charter act of 1844 (a direct invasion of the 'let-alone' principle), by restricting the issues of banks to certain limits, clipped the wings of speculation. Had the English banks enjoyed the power of

issuing notes to any extent during the Railway mania of 1846, there is no telling how far 'the laudable desire' of some people to better their condition, might have carried us. As it was, the nation undertook to do in a few years, what it could not do in ten times as many. And thus the greediness of gain, unavoidable under a system of commercial individualism, benefited a few while it brought the nation to the verge of bankruptcy. And always before the ruins of one convulsion are removed, and before we have recruited our energies from the consequences of one disaster, we plunge into some new gambling vortex (whether of cotton, corn, or railways) which sucks in the capital and energies of the people. *Within 24 years five seasons of intense commercial distress have visited this country.* Experience is lost upon the capitalist, because the intensity of the evil does not fall upon him. Under our present system it is nobody's affair to enquire respecting any proposed investment of capital, whether it will be advantageous to the public? As far as the public can, indeed, it preserves itself from the ill consequences of such evils by legal provisions. These legal enactments, monopolies and charters, or whatever form the obstacle to speculation may present, only mitigate, and cannot cure, the evils they are aimed at. Speculation will find out new objects, new remedies will be required, and nothing save an entire reversal of the system can cure the evils. At one moment our people are laboring as if determined to clothe the world, and, three or six months afterwards, working half-time, or no-time. The effects of these gluts are familiar to all who live in manufacturing districts. The wages of the operative, inadequate even when in full employment to purchase him the comforts of life, prevent any accumulations to meet the periods of distress. Heavy rates and extra aids are demanded from the shopkeepers and tradesmen, precisely when their means of paying them are being withdrawn—the custom of the operatives on whom they depend. Paupers traverse the streets in bands, while hunger is written upon the faces of the larger portion of the population. Could some stranger, uncognizant of the circumstances, be placed at once in the centre of this mass of misery, he might naturally think himself in the midst of some beleaguered city, where war and all the malignant passions had been doing their worst. What would be his surprise to learn, that these results were not the fruits of war, but of the so called victories of peace! What if it were explained to him (if indeed it could be made intelligible), that the haggard faces of the artisans,—this living death, and struggle to maintain the life-spark a little longer, within their emaciated frames—were not the consequences of famine, but of plenty,—that it did not arise from a justly punished idleness, but from excessive industry,—that neither the hand of the conqueror, nor the niggardliness of nature, were to blame, but only the natural desire of a few capitalists to mend their condition,—would he not conclude that we were taxing his powers of belief, and that it was impossible such things should be? But what if he were further informed that such crises were of common occurrence,—that the season of trial and suffering, intense and horrible as it had been, passed over without one lesson for future guidance, without inducing a single precaution against a recurrence of the calamity,—would he not naturally regard us as a nation of madmen, unfit to be trusted with the management of our affairs?

The light in which we are taught to view Political Economy is, that it is to a

State what Domestic Economy is to a Family. A state is but a collection of families, wherein every member is as mutually dependent on the welfare of the rest, as in a family. The principles which should govern the one, are in most respects the same as should govern the other. It would, however, be considered both bad and oppressive management in a family, if the members wilfully left themselves without any store of provisions beyond what was required for immediate consumption, or if they used inferior commodities when they might procure better, or if they employed only the labor of a part, and made that part support the whole, or if they pampered some members of the family to the degradation or death of the rest. These things, surely, would be considered but indifferent domestic economy. And if a person should endeavor to demonstrate to the members of this Family, that this was 'the natural state' of things,—that each person ought to do the best he could for himself, regardless of his brother's interest,—that instead of unity of aim towards their common welfare, mutual rivalry was most favorable to the happiness of each and all,—would they not treat the 'demonstrator' either as an interested enemy, or as a 'learned' madman whose words were not worth minding?

Yet that course which would seal the destruction of the physical and moral comfort of the Family, is precisely that which political economists recommend for the State! We are reminded of Col. Thompson's admirable illustration of the monkeys in old Exeter Change menagerie, who were placed in a row of cages, separated by thin partitions. Before each cage was a pan for food, which was replenished several times a-day. Now the behavior of the monkeys at their meals, was one of the amusing sights of the place. It was this: no sooner had the food been placed in the pans, than these 'political economists' began to eat, not out of their own pans, but out of those of their neighbors. Each stretched his paw obliquely into his neighbor's pan, in order to filch a little from him, expecting to have his own pan to empty at leisure besides. But as every monkey did the same, it happened that, while one was stealing from his neighbor on the right, his neighbor on the left was stealing from him. Instead of any one monkey being the better for it, quite the reverse happened; for during the splutterings and fights which took place, a great quantity of the common food was cast out, and lost in the process. In short, the simple effect of the plan of mutual aggression was to make the whole of the monkeys have uncomfortable instead of comfortable meals, and very much less to eat than they might have had, by regarding their mutual rights and welfare.

The conduct of the monkeys is precisely that which the economists, under the name of *laissez-faire*, recommend to society.

We pity that fatalism, under the influence of which the Orientals permit pestilence, flood, or fire to destroy them, without making any effort to arrest the disaster. Yet the present age witnesses an economical fatalism which blinds even the wise and the humane, but still more the selfish, to the perception of the frightful evils which exist around us. Taught from infancy to regard our own interests to the exclusion of all others, we readily adopt a theory which squares with our current habits. We learn by degrees to consider panics, gluts, and the evils of machinery, as unavoidable portions in our social condition. The theory of the economists as to supply and demand, is true only on paper. It would be

true in fact, if capital could be transferred as easily as the word is spoken,—if laborers could on the instant turn to new employments which they never learnt,—and if during the period they were on short time, or no time, they could intinate the *laissez-faire* principle to the stomach—that noisy radical member, which endures not parley, but rises in rebellion immediately. With these and sundry other impossible, miserable ifs, dearths might be remedied, gluts pass away, and supply and demand again approach each other. But saying this is no credit to political economy, for here, as in everything else, *res nolunt diu male administrari*—'Things refuse to be long mismanaged.' If the physician cannot cure the patients, fever and death will—still we do not call Fever an artist, or Death a philosopher, but he whose skill prevents, or speedily cures, the evil. When a glut occurs (and in some place or trade they are constantly occurring) it is quite true that the ruin of a number of capitalists, and the starvation of a quantity of operatives, will, like every storm, clear the atmosphere. What Political Economy does is this—it dresses up this conclusion in abstract language, and calls it Science,—but alas! it needed no ghost, not even of an economist, to tell us that all error and wickedness necessarily produce their painful consequences.

It is here, indeed, that we get a glimpse into the fundamental error of the competing-principle. It is true that all things balance against each other, not only in the material, but also in the moral world. Both he who stumbles, and he who stands erect, obey the law of gravity, but the latter counteracts its ill effect by his vital and muscular force. Nevertheless we do not praise the man who stumbles because he acts in accordance with the natural law of gravity, but rather him who uses the artificial effort. So too in political economy, it is quite true that the selling price always tends to equal the cost of production, but how much and fearful evil may be occasioned by its being *actually* above or below that price! In the common argument for machinery, it is quite true that a large portion of the benefits decentralize,—i.e. become in process of time diffused among mankind,—but how much immediate evil might have been obviated had wise arrangements existed for adopting and diffusing those benefits at first. It is true that these conditions tend, in years, generations, or ages, to approach each other, but is life so long, or human misery so small a matter, that the living can afford to wait till time adjusts these proportions? Besides, new disturbances are continually arising: and unless we are prepared to control the causes or to modify their effects (either of which is to attack the *laissez-faire* principle), we still perpetuate evil, tho we change its character or its direction.

SOCIAL SCIENCE.

LECTURE II.—THE LABOR QUESTION.

IN commenting on Political Economy, as may be thought with severity, in the previous lecture, we would not be understood to join in the vulgar prejudices against the science. The investigations into political economy have, for the most part, been conducted by gifted men, actuated by a love of truth. In the short period of its scientific existence it has done great service to mankind. Of its scientific existence, we say, because, as Whately observes, the world must always be governed by political economists of one sort or another, which implies that very different views may be entertained on the subject. It has brought some of the laws which most concern man's happiness to the test of investigation and argument: it has shown the inestimable value of security of property, to the increase of wealth and the progress of civilization: it has developed the advantages which arise from the accumulation of capital and the division of labor: and it has cleared the ground for future and fuller enquiry, so that if we have not yet attained the whole truth, we at least know where to look for it.

What the advocates of Association object to political economy, is, that so many of its teachers assume it to be complete, while the contrary is the case. When it is remembered that it did not take the form of a science till the days of Adam Smith—that not above a dozen writers of note have applied themselves to the investigation of its principles—and that many of its most important problems are still matter of dispute—it is somewhat dogmatical to try new theories of society solely by its maxims, and summarily reject them for non-conformity thereto.

But what it most fails in is, that instead of being a science of *Society*, it is only the science of *Wealth*. Now the slightest observation must convince any one, that the accumulation of wealth, and the distribution of happiness, in a country, may proceed in lines far from parallel.^a Indeed the mode in which wealth is *distributed*, is of much more importance to national *happiness* than its mere production. The fact of man being a moral agent, as well as a wealth producer, should therefore modify the conclusions of Economists concerning wealth in the abstract. The reason assigned for their not doing so, is, that by subdividing the matter of human knowledge, each department of it may be better investigated. Hence the various sciences—hence too the progress made in each.

^a "Wealth, in its original and proper sense, is any material which will contribute to human *weal*. Hence it is not 'wealth' to the *people* (or nation) unless it be fairly *distributed*, since that is the condition of its contributing to their *weal*. The Swedes are a much more happy people than the English, because, tho they have less *goods* as a country, they have more *good* distributed."—*Dr. Lees*.

Had no more than this been done, the reply would have been satisfactory. But in their system, the Economists leave the sphere of abstract theory for that of action. Even omitting moral and individual considerations in the science of wealth, on the score of convenience, still we should not repudiate their practical application. Had the Economists said, when presenting their conclusions to the legislator, or to society—"Inasmuch as, in our abstract investigations, we omit entirely any reference to man's moral responsibilities, and any thought of what most conduces to human happiness, you must therefore accept them with such deduction as may be needful on account of those paramount claims;"—had they thus spoken, we should have understood them. But advocating as they did the doctrine of material interests alone, it is no wonder that we have so often seen their views rejected, alike by the christian, the philanthropist, and the statesman.

Thus, in reference to the Labor-question, the Economists carry out with unflinching logic, their *laissez-faire* doctrine. One might have thought, that the strange anomalies around them, would have induced them to distrust the soundness of the prevailing system of distribution. What do we behold? He who could rear palaces, dwelling in a dirty, dark, rudely furnished, ill ventilated, and badly-drained cottage, and the skilful head and cunning hand which have power to produce food in unlimited quantity, in tens of thousands of instances destitute both of bread and home. The power of production multiplied a thousand fold, and the strength of giants placed in such puny hands, yet the effect of all is but to make the laborer even poorer and more dependent than before! These disproportions are attempted to be explained away by the orthodox Economists and their followers, and any attempt to modify their influences is resisted as the direst misfortune.^b

Nevertheless the great problem, which, in this age, has to be solved, either by or for the toiling people, is, How to bring the material means of happiness within the reach of every human being? It may be humiliating to our just pride in the more refined and spiritual parts of our nature, that they should depend so much on the presence of material comforts. But so it *is*. Men seldom, and communities never, advance in Morals or Religion, until they have learnt to supply with ease the necessities of their physical nature. Food, clothing, shelter, and the arts that supply them, come first; science, morals, and religion commonly follow. The more labor to supply the former, the less leisure for cultivating the latter. Hence every triumph achieved over physical nature, remote as it may seem from spiritual things, will and must advance them. And as every man has a moral and spiritual nature waiting for development, every man should be capable of obtaining those material appliances necessary to raise him above the animal. But instead thereof we find the masses engaged in a round of toil, sleep, and animal relaxation, which presents (indeed admits of) no gleams of high and holy thought. Their life is a constant struggle for a bare subsistence. Is it, we ask, a real difficulty of production which lies in the way? Or is it but a mis-application of the means?

^b In a recent Parliamentary debate, Mr. H. Drummond was candid enough to avow the real state of opinion, and coolly insisted that the great body of the people *always must* live in misery and want.

To know that it is not the former, we have only to look around us. Man has physical strength at his command, which, rightly directed, would amply supply him with all the means of existence. The sun, and the wind, and the rain, the morning and evening dew, and the fertile earth, are ever ready to return him food for a small expenditure of labor: they cry 'Dig and eat.' But not alone is ever plenteous nature there. Man's puny powers are aided by the Mechanical Arts, arts

That make Fire, Flood, and Earth
The vassals of his will.

The elements combine to do his bidding, like attendant genii. What he did by the sweat of his brow, he now does by a thought of his mind. He says to the mountain, 'Be thou level,'—to the valley 'Be thou filled up'—and it is so. From chaos he can call forth use, order, and beauty. He can create every thing that will contribute to convenience or gratify sense. And yet the complaint which was true in former ages, is as true to day.

Thus, but, ye birds, not for yourselves,
Your nests build ye;
Thus, but, ye sheep, not for yourselves,
Bear ye fleeces;
Thus, but, ye bees, not for yourselves,
Make ye honey;
Thus, but, ye oxen, not for yourselves,
Drag ye ploughshares.

In one respect, however, the condition of the bees is not the same—viz. that they have become *conscious* of the wrong they suffer, and *feel* that no solution, save a just one,—a solution worthy of that high destiny which gleams on the awakening intellect of the world,—ought to satisfy them. Our middle classes imagine that the 'Labor-question' is but the name of a temporary infatuation, a sort of political epidemic. Even some of them could tell how it arose in the brain of a few enthusiasts, and how effectually it has been quenched, in England by Newspapers, and in Paris by blood. Yet there can be no greater mistake! The hundred thousand workmen who fought in the streets of Paris, however erroneous their conduct may have been, fought, neither for a shadow nor a sham. The sense of suffering long endured,—all the more painful from the mirage-prospect of deliverance which had transiently opened to their vision,—and the consciousness of deep social injustice and neglect, were there. The roar of cannon silenced, but did not remove, all this: and unless our civilization is prepared wisely and humanely to anticipate the new Era, Europe will not have seen the last of these bloody arguments.

'*The Rights of Industry.*' Yes! that is the phrase which, for the first time in the world's history, has begun not only to claim, but compel attention. And it is a great step even to get the fact acknowledged, that Industry *has* any rights. Rights admitted, the great point of enquiry is, as to what they are.

All wealth is the result of Capital (including land in that term) and Labor. If the same person advanced both, there could arise no necessity for any discussion as to the relative shares which each element contributed and obtained. Under present arrangements, however, the man who advances the capital is one person,

and he who contributes the labor is another, and the question as to the rights of industry, resolves itself into this—What principles shall determine the share of the laborer in the commodities produced by the joint efforts of himself and the capitalist?

Capital is all that portion of wealth applied to the purposes of production. The land, tools, seed, raw material, food of the laborer,—in short, whatever wealth is invested with a view to production—is Capital, and on the amount of capital (not of wealth), depends the demand for labor. It is the desire of capitalists to continue and to increase the advantages they possess, which gives birth to the employment of laborers. The power of the capitalist to purchase labor, and the number of persons dependent on labor for support, constitute the demand and supply of labor. The theory of competition demands that no interference, however slight, be permitted between the two elements of capital and labor, but that the whole relation between the two should be determined by the 'higgling of the market.'

If the advocates of what may be called, for brevity, 'the free-principle,' maintained simply that supply and demand *do* regulate the price of labor, the proposition, subject to some exceptions, might be admitted. If, further, it be contended that this arrangement of society is a necessary result of the conditions of society itself, i. e. that things could not be otherwise with the notions and sentiments appertaining to the transition from feudalism, we should still agree. And that the division of society into capitalists and laborers could not, in any brief period, be changed for one *entirely* different, must also be conceded. But when they step beyond this, and affirm that supply and demand *ought* to determine the return to labor, and that no attempt should be made to alter or disturb that relation, they affirm what they cannot maintain even on their own premises. We propose to show that such a principle is *unjust*, and to a great extent impracticable.

It seems strange, indeed, that the doctrine of free-competition between labor and capital, should ever have been tolerated, when we reflect that the fundamental condition on which any competition could be justified has never, in this (or perhaps in any other) country, been observed. If we suppose a colony of men emigrating to a new country, and dividing the soil in equitable portions among them, however unwise the arrangement might be in other respects, we should at least perceive no injustice in each man being told to 'do the best he could for himself.' But if the leader of the band selected the largest and best portions for himself and followers,—if he left the majority no share of the soil, i. e. no share of the *fund* destined for their support,—we should think it a cruel jest to tell them that their livelihood *ought* to depend upon the proportion between the *fund* for the employment of labor and their own numbers and industry, seeing that the source of it was being wasted, or at all events monopolized, by a few. To make the iniquity more palpable, imagine that each of the members of this colony lived to an antediluvian age,—that one of the more successful followers possessing a large slice of the new territory, had done absolutely nothing during 600 years, or, if you like, had gone to bed drunk every night during that time,—yet the very fact of his owning the soil and the others not, would ensure him the command of the labor of ten thousand men. Now what possible competition would be here? But if by the original conditions even of such an unjust distribution, the majority

had claims on the soil,—and if by accident, fraud, or force, those claims had lapsed,—if all legislation had gone on the one principle of making the rich richer, and the poor poorer,—if commons were added to parks, farms transformed into sheepwalks, and the re-division of the soil forcibly prevented by arbitrary and absurd laws,—to talk of ‘free and fair competition’ would be simple nonsense. Indeed such the law of England affirms it, in acknowledging the rights of the laborer to a maintenance, tho coupled with Poor-law conditions. Harsh as the Poor-law is, it is the last relic of the laborer’s claim on the soil, and an awkward stumbling block to the supply and demand doctrine.

The last great writer on Political Economy, J. S. Mill, justly observes :

“Wages depend on the proportion between the number of the laboring population, and the capital or other funds devoted to the purchase of labor; we will say, for shortness, the capital. If wages are higher at one time or place than another,—if the subsistence and comfort of the class of hired laborers are more ample,—it is, and can be, for no other reason than because capital bears a greater proportion to population. *It is not the absolute amount of accumulation, or of production, that is of importance to the laboring class; it is not the amount even of the funds destined for distribution among the laborers; it is the proportion between those funds and the numbers among whom they are shared.* The condition of the class can be bettered in no other way than by altering that proportion to their advantage: and every scheme for their benefit, which does not proceed on this as its foundation, is, for all permanent purposes, a delusion.”

Under this arrangement the rate of wages depends on the proportion between population and capital. Artificial interferences to proportion one to the other, might act upon either the first or the second of these two elements. For the present we will assume there is no *absolute* ‘overpopulation,’ but that every human being on the face of the earth has a right to remain there. Even were this untrue, it would not materially affect the question we propose to discuss, viz. the desirability of the arrangement by which the conditions of labor are regulated by demand and supply.

It is obvious that the first element (population) is almost entirely beyond the laborer’s control. He may restrain the number of his own family, but he cannot that of others. The number of his competitors is quite independent of his will. What is true of the one element is equally true of the other (capital); its amount is beyond the laborer’s control. He may economize or not his own earnings, but the amount of the fund from which his earnings must be drawn, is out of his power. It depends on a great variety of circumstances. The climate and soil of a country, the nature of its institutions, the rapidity with which inventions multiply, or with which circulating capital is transformed into fixed,—all materially affect its amount; but, still more, the manner in which the soil is distributed, and perhaps most important of all, the mode in which those who possess capital are disposed to spend it.

According to the greater or less preponderance of any or all of these various influences, the amount of capital may vary in proportion to the amount of laborers, and it becomes necessarily a matter of pure chance how much or how little the laborers share may be.

In addition to this, most of the circumstances which regulate the increase of capital are the effects of the *will* of those who own it. It is they who make

extravagant governments or the reverse; it is they who convert circulating into fixed capital. On the presence or absence of their taste for accumulation or present enjoyment, depends the extent of the fund for the employment of labor; whence, as a legitimate conclusion from the supply and demand theory, the following consequences result :—That the majority of society depends for its whole social character on the will of the minority. That, for example, the circumstances of A choosing to support an extravagant government, investing his capital too rapidly in improvements, or spending his income on champagne or operas, routs or balls, instead of cotton pieces,—determine whether B may enjoy the blessings of wife and children; whether he shall live in a house or hovel,—become, in truth, the arbiter of his fate, without B having any part or voice in the matter! If indeed every individual were isolated, or self-dependent, i. e. Landholder or Capitalist as well as Laborer, no injustice would be apparent in such extravagance or misapplication of funds. In such circumstances, if the owner preferred present to future enjoyment,—if, like the Indian, he chose the uncertainties of savage life before the comforts of a settled home, or if his tastes and aspirations did not transcend the humblest and meanest state,—no remedy for the evils of such a condition could be found save in the gradual progress of civilization. Under the circumstance of his being self dependent, whatever complaint should be made of his condition would be either against himself, or against the arrangements of providence. But that such results should befall the mass of mankind as a consequence of the acts of a small minority of it, a state inevitable under such a division of society as that of laborer and capitalist, must be regarded as a fundamental absurdity. The absurdity of such an arrangement of society is increased, when we are told that whatever the proportions between capital and labor, no other principle than their mutual competition ought to determine the respective shares of each. The principle itself has never been *proved*, and is pure assumption. Had it been the natural tendency of capital to increase as fast or faster than population, as it does in countries where labor is scarce in relation to the effective desire of accumulation,—had the problem been, in an advanced as well as in an infant state of society, to increase men up to wealth, instead of wealth up to men,—the whole phenomena of present society would have been reversed, and the most dreadful evils of the competitive system would not have existed. Unfortunately, however, the converse of this state prevails now, and ever has prevailed in the world. However fast capital may accumulate in any country, a time comes when population increases at a still faster ratio. The more limited the territory or the fertility of the soil, and the less the intelligence and industry of the people, the sooner will that point be reached at which the fund for the support of the laborer is less than the number of claimants upon it. The ancients remedied this by sending forth colonies from time to time, and these in turn became large states, frequently surpassing in greatness the parent state. Whenever a country has become populated up to the extent of the employment-fund or capital, the comfort, nay the very existence of society is threatened, unless some outlet be created for those who cannot obtain employment. The natural character may become so deteriorated that the people may bear their misery with callous indifference, and premature death may regularly cut off the surplus numbers. If the national spirit be too strong, or if the transition be too rapid from

comparative comfort to starvation, the people revolt against the constituted authorities, and violent disruptions in society are the natural issue. The secret of many a riot and revolution, lays in the pauperized condition of the people. Man is naturally conservative, and when his wants are tolerably supplied he will not readily set himself in opposition to the social order around him. When the mass of people are disaffected to a government, it either proves that the government is so bad that it ought to be removed; or that the destitution of the people blinds them to its real merits, in which case the first duty is to remedy it.

Independent of the danger of permitting the amount of laborers to exceed the demand, there is a manifest injustice in the principle which determines the share of the laborer, or his wages, by the accidents of supply and demand. By way of illustration, take a commodity whose value is 20, and which is the result of

Capital	= 8	} = 20
Labor	... ..	= 8
Surplus to be divided after the original contribution has been repaid to each		= 4	

Justice here determines the total result to be 10 to each: and no principle which proceeds other than on a basis of justice can or ought to stand. We do not admit the plea that the quantities of capital and labor are so mingled in every commodity, and so various, that it is impossible to distinguish what portion is owing to capital, and what to labor. The problem is of too great a magnitude—involves a question too important to the mass of society—to be thus quietly shelved. Neither does the impossibility of finding a strictly mathematical principle of division, justify the setting up of an inaccurate and unjust one—whose only element is *power*. The apparatus of judge and jury was doubtless regarded as a tedious and artificial process for the settlement of quarrels, compared with the ready mode of personal revenge. Just as absurd as it now seems to us to 'let private interests take care of themselves' in this instance, will a wiser generation deem it, to leave the division of wealth produced by Capital and Labor to an always selfish, and often sanguinary, conflict between the two. Impossible to do justice! Who has made the attempt? To substitute intelligent direction for blind chance? When, where, or how, has it been tried?

If there be employment for 99 laborers, and 100 are wanting work, it would be a moderate evil to 'shoot and pickle' the supernumerary laborer, as recommended by Herr Teufelsdröckh. At least there would be an end of him, and he would not destroy the comfort of the remaining ninety nine. But before he resigns himself to this 'proper fate' of a supernumerary laborer sent into the world by some mistake of mother nature, or to the worse 'providence' of the Poor's-bastile,—he reduces the wages of his ninety nine 'brethren.' Instead of labor *taking* its 10 in the supposed commodity 20, it *receives* but 8, 6, or 4. It is defrauded of the difference, and part of that goes to the share of the capital.

Now as it confessedly is the tendency of population to exceed capital, it follows, that the bargain between capital and labor *must always* be against the laborer. Whenever this excess exists, any contest between the two elements involves injustice to the weaker, and yet the very men who assert the constant existence of such a tendency are found to advocate the free-competing principle. And the injustice is augmented, when, as before remarked, the other conditions

are not fair,—when the soil is unjustly divided, and taxation, which takes but a twentieth part of the increase of the capitalist, absorbs a third or half of that of the laborer. To bid *these men* compete, is like telling two men to run a race, one of whom has a huge chain, doubly loaded, attached to the leg.

As this is a most important point, let us state the same argument in another form. Suppose a capitalist wanting 100 men, and 100 men wanting work; and further, that the workman's wage secures to him his *due* share of the commodity produced. However absurd the free competing principle might be in other respects, it would at least not be unjust in this case.

But suppose that while capital required 100 men, there were only 50 laborers; then the competition of capitalists might so raise wages as to ensure the workman *more* than his due share, thereby defrauding the capitalist to that extent.

But suppose (which, alas! is the common case) that while capital could only employ 100 men, 200 were wanting work; then, under free competition, wages might be reduced to the minimum which would support existence. *Unless, then, it were shown, that the competition of laborers for employment was always precisely that which was needed to secure them the exact share they had in production,* (a proposition which must be untrue on account of the continual variations in the competition)—*the doctrine of supply and demand applied to wages, involves a continual injustice either to capitalist or laborer.* As the competition, however, is in general amongst laborers, it follows that the principle is adverse to the interests of labor.

But let it not be supposed that the capitalist is benefited, at least to the same extent to which the laborer loses. The competition of the surplus laborers having reduced wages, diminishes the consumption of the mass of society; it diminishes the profits of the capitalist, and his power of accumulation. Not only this, but he is additionally cursed by a superfluity of labor, and taxed to maintain the pauperized laborer; for if he did not do this, he would probably be robbed of the principal by social convulsion.

This cant about supply and demand of labor, is treated with more respect than it merits, because so few reflect on the comparative novelty of the doctrine. We are not of those who regret the times gone by,

'When every rood of ground maintained its man,'

or when the laborer sat down with the well-to-do-farmer, eating at his table and sleeping under his roof. That state of dependence necessarily passed away, as the present form of his dependence must likewise disappear before the progress of ideas. Yet there was in that relation much that was kindly, and which, as yet, has been replaced by nothing that is better. It always secured the laborers a livelihood at least,—and generally a participation in the well-doing and comfort of the master. If *he* was warm in the Hall, *they* did not shiver with cold in the kitchen, or the cottage. If the master's table groaned beneath the substantial fare, the laborers could at least boast something better than an inadequate meal of potatoes. Thus were the interests of the two classes in some measure *identified*. A master has the same interest in his slave as in his cattle, and for his own sake will keep them well. One by one, however, the links of this relationship have been broken. Many view this with regret; we do not. The gradual and up-

ward developments thro which humanity must pass, demand the total destruction of this slavish dependence of man on man. But let us not over-estimate the benefit. Milnes, in his beautiful poem of 'The Men of Old,' has well expressed the thought.

I heed not those who pine for force
A ghost of Time to raise,
As if they thus could check the course
Of these appointed days.

Still is it true, and over true,
That I delight to close
This Book of Life, self-wise and new,
And let my thoughts repose
On all that humble happiness,
The world has since foregone,—
The daylight of contentedness
That on those faces shone!
With Rights, tho not too closely scanned,
Enjoyed as far as known,—
With Will, by no reverse unmanned,—
With pulse of even tone,—
They from to-day and from to-night
Expected nothing more,
Than yesterday and yesternight
Had proffered them before.

So late as half a century since, the aggregation of capital into such vast masses had not taken place. Before this period the ruin of the small manufacturer, both in its cause and its consequences, mainly rested with himself and immediate connections. Now a thousand, and thro them ten thousand, individuals, depend for their daily sustenance on a single capitalist. From independent laborers they may at once, thro his extravagance, his misdirected enterprize, or the mania of commercial gambling, be plunged into pauperism. If the capitalist is successful, they participate only remotely and indirectly in his good fortune; but if he fails, the laborers immediately and directly suffer in his misfortune. From first to last the Laborer is but an appendage, and tho he is truly no longer the slave of the *Capitalist*, he is indubitably the slave of *Capital*.

If a single argument were wanted to condemn the present relation of labor to capital, it is furnished by the fact, that of two men commencing life, equally skilful, industrious, moral, and in all personal respects equally contributive to the welfare of mankind, the *one* who differs only in the single circumstance of having the command of a portion of capital and relies on *profits* for his remuneration, will, at the termination of a given period, be found to occupy an entirely different sphere in society from the other who depends solely on wages; and the longer the period, the greater the disparity. At a very short period after the commencement, the receiver of profits would be able to save more in a single year than the receiver of wages in a lifetime. Not one laborer in a thousand could, if he would, secure a moderate competence for the latter days of life, by the surplus

of his labor. Trade, and trade alone, confers the privilege;—we need not therefore feel surprized at the morbid longing which exists in the minds of the more intelligent and enterprising of our young men to quit the department of productive employment for the brilliant possibilities of trade and commerce.

That in this country the supply of labor far exceeds the demand, is undeniable. The evidence of it surrounds us on every side. In the best counties, such as Lincoln and Rutland, where the laborer is *assisted by an allotment*, his wages are calculated to equal 18s. 3d.; while in those counties where he has generally no allotment, as Dorset, Wilts, and Somerset, and which of course give the true test of what 'supply and demand' apportions as the wages of labor, 'a man and his wife may earn 9s. a week, or £23.8s. per annum, to provide for 3½ persons on an average.' Deducting a moderate amount for rent, fuel, soap, candles, and clothes, the residue is 8½d per day wherewith to buy food for the family—or a fraction more than 2½d per head daily! In manufactures the state of things is better, but the continual fluctuations, arising from speculation, the varying supply of raw material, political crises, etc., render the position of the operative sufficiently deplorable. Speaking of their distress on one of these continually-recurring occasions, Mr. Thornton, from whom we take the preceding facts, remarks of 1842;

"Thousands were absolutely unable to procure employment, and might be seen standing in constrained idleness about the streets; or might be found in their dismal houses, bending over a scanty fire, their heads sunk on their breasts, and surrounded by pale emaciated beings imploring them for food, which they knew not where to seek. Others somewhat less wretched were able to obtain work, but only irregularly, and at greatly reduced wages. Scarcely anywhere was there an individual wholly unaffected by the prevailing distress, and who did not perceive its presence at least in some diminution of his accustomed comforts. These expressions are no rhetorical exaggerations, introduced for the sake of effect. The subject is too serious for such trifling. They are a plain and temperate representation of the recent condition of English operatives, and are supported by the minutest and most trustworthy evidence." ^c

Had the writer been drawing a picture of some savage or semi-civilized nation suffering under the infliction of war or pestilence, he could not have given a more terrific picture. But it is of no savages without art, civilization, or christianity that he speaks, but of a nation the productive power of which has surpassed that of every other people on the face of the globe. It is in the midst of our vaunting egotistical civilization that hundreds of thousands of human beings live on rations scarcely capable of maintaining the life-spark in their bodies. Reluctantly do we urge the tale of distress, but it is our duty to din it into the ears of indifference and ignorance, if only that they may be without excuse. Luckily, however, it is not so much sympathy as wisdom that is wanted. Many are the nostrums daily offered to the 'discerning' public, until from very fear of doing wrong we do nothing, and almost literally fulfil the recipe of the *laissez-faire* doctors.

And yet it is a sad and awful fact, that while civilization has thus advanced, it has left the masses so far in the rear, that hundreds of thousands of men willing to toil, demanding but a 'fair day's wage for a fair day's work,' are unable to

^c Over population and its remedy, page 31.

get any wages, either fair or unfair. According to the statement of the Poor Law Commissioners,

"The total number of persons relieved in the 3 months ending Lady-day 1844, amounted to nearly a million and a half, and were about 9½ per cent of the entire population according to the census of 1841. Of the million and a half persons thus relieved, a large proportion were permanent paupers; but the numbers of new cases in the other three quarters may be safely estimated at half a million, so that the number of persons relieved in England and Wales in the course of the parochial year 1844, may be taken at about two millions, or nearly *one eighth part of the actual population*. In other words, about one person in eight, thro' the entire population, received relief from the poor rate at some time during that year."^d

Of the 1,477,561 paupers relieved in the quarter ending Lady Day 1844, there were

On account of temporary sickness or accident	169,738
All other causes, including vagrants	261,746
Total, able bodied paupers	431,484
Partially able to work	107,665
Making a total of	539,159

Let us deduct the odd 39,000 as a set off to the inefficiency of the 107,000 only partially capable of work, but who, with the aid of machinery and a scientific adaptation of their powers, might be made to support themselves, and we arrive at the astounding result, that there are in this country, in the best of times, of able bodied laborers, half a million more than capital can employ, or rather, than capital is *willing* to employ—for it will be easy to prove that there *is* capital sufficient to employ them.

We select a favorable year (1844), because of late the failure of the potato and cotton crops, and Railway gambling, might be assigned as causes extraneous to the deficiency of capital, whereon to rest excuses. In the corresponding quarter of 1843 there were 68,829 more paupers, and in that of 1847—243,789, more, than in 1844. The cost of maintaining the poor amounts to from 5 to 6 millions, and prior to the New Poor Law Bill, it was frequently much more. We do not here speak of poor and oppressed Ireland, but of England, 'merric England,' where capital has accumulated faster than in any other country. The total sum expended on the relief of the poor was:

In 1834 £6,317,255.

In 1844 £4,976,093.

This reduction might be very gratifying if it were not accompanied by the knowledge that the average expenditure for the relief of the poor was reduced per head from

9s. 1d. in 1834 to } being = to 2s. 10d., or nearly one third less—
6s. 3d. in 1844; }

and that, contemporaneously therewith, the county rate had risen from

£691,548 in 1834 to

£1,356,457, in 1844.

^d Report of Poor Law Commissioners for 1845, page 5.

Much of this increase may be attributed to the greater efficiency of the police, but much must still be attributed to the growth of crime,—a fearful item in the account, and doubtless greatly increased by the deteriorating influence of poverty, rendered even less endurable by the operation of the New Poor Law Act.

The evil is still more lamentable if (as is probable) the fund for the employment of labor is not augmenting in the same ratio as population. According to the last census, the increase of population in Great Britain, was 2,609,129 in the ten years, which gives an average annual increase of 260,912 persons, notwithstanding an annual average Emigration (from 1825 to 1847) of 75,547.

This is a very large additional number to provide for: and if our resources have not hitherto increased in an equal ratio with the support of laborers, this can be less and less expected in the future, since the soil of England is becoming more fully cultivated, and she herself losing her manufacturing supremacy over other nations. Here, then, in the face of the stern fact of half a million of men wanting work, and two millions in general either actual paupers, or at the verge of pauperism, we have the Political Economists demanding that no interference on the part of society shall mitigate the relation between competing capital and labor!

To the influence of this dogma, the New Poor Law was owing, and its spirit may be traced in each of its enactments. The New Poor Law was necessarily harsh, because based upon the supposed necessity of leaving supply and demand to regulate the condition of the laborer. The condition of the employed laborer was low,—so low, that the pittance which might seem fitting for overseers with 'any bowels of compassion' to offer, was sure to be comparatively high when coupled with the condition of entire or partial idleness. There was, therefore, the greatest inducement to the unthrifty and inactive laborer, to throw himself on the parish. It was a premium to indolence and a spur to dissipation, and the grossest abuses accordingly prevailed. The disease must at all events be remedied; but how? What could be devised by men who thought the highest wisdom was to 'let things alone'? Let the Poor Law Commissioners declare:—

"In no part of Europe except England, has it been thought fit that the provision, whether compulsory or voluntary, should be applied to more than the relief of *indigence*, the state of a person unable to labor, or unable to obtain, in return for his labor, the means of subsistence. It has never been deemed expedient that the provision should extend to the relief of *poverty*; that is, the state of one, who, in order to obtain a mere subsistence, is forced to have recourse to labor."^e

We might reply, that in few other countries of Europe has it been thought fit to give to a few great Lords nearly all the land of the country. Being better divided, the necessity of relief has not been so great. But apart from this consideration, if *poverty*, from its very extent, becomes a great social disease, we do not see why it should not be legislated for, as much as *indigence* which confessedly merits it. What fault have the half million surplus laborers committed? By what law of justice, of humanity, can society visit upon them the disproportion of the two elements of capital and population? Did they create that

^e Commissioner's Report for 1834.

disproportion? Then why must the penalty fall upon them? And what a penalty! "That his situation on the whole shall not be made, really or apparently, so eligible as the situation of the independent laborer of the lowest class." Such, these Commissioners declare, is the first and most essential of all conditions of relief. Now any body who has read the Goatacre revelations, knows what the condition of the laborer of the lowest class is. And yet human ingenuity tried to find, and actually succeeded in finding, beneath this 'lowest depth,' a lower deep. The real, the obvious remedy for the poverty of the laborer who wanted work but could not get it, was not a Bastille,—not the separation of husband and wife, of parent and child,—not the destruction of the laborer's comfort and the best elements in the laborer's character,—but simply the supply of Capital whereupon to labor. But the supply-and-demand theory, which necessarily leaves the creation of capital to chance, was driven to the principle that it should make the surplus laborer's condition 'irksome.' And irksome it did, and has continued to make it, until every bond between the Working and Legislative classes has been severed,—until the working man has learnt to regard the government as an enemy instead of a protector,—until the whole army of soldiers, policemen, and middle class special constables, is found scarcely sufficient to preserve order,—until the *bourgeoisie* are afraid to ask for the least change of legislation, lest they should add to that fire which spreads and burns beneath, like a volcano over which the social fabric even now totters, threatening to overwhelm all that is great and good in the institutions of our country, in one common ruin.

On the free principle that capital and labor can best protect their own interests, the poor law should not exist at all. A compulsory deduction from the increase of one portion of the community to support another portion, is a manifest confession that supply and demand may not be trusted. The Poor Law as it is, therefore, is the mongrel offspring of a lingering humanity and an incomplete *laissez-faire*-ism. The former was too strong to let the latter have full play. It would shock English sympathies to proportion the supply of labor to the demand by *killing off* the superfluous laborers. Still *laissez-faire*-ism was too strong to permit humanity to extend any effectual relief. The natural result of these conflicting elements is seen in the curious phenomena of useless stone heaps and Andover torturings. It will be one of the enigmas destined to puzzle posterity, that England, which undertook to clothe, conquer, and evangelize the world, should yet be baffled by its own paupers. They will attribute it to some monster delusion, and find confirmation in the fact, that infinitely more ingenuity was employed to discover how *small* a quantity of food the pauper's stomach would submit to without rebelling, than *how to obtain a larger quantity* for the said stomach. What to do with them, that is the question? They have broken stones till the stones have become in value a negative quantity—worth less than nothing. They have picked oakum in the most primitive and expensive manner that could be devised. The only thing that poor law Guardians have not yet tried is the digging of holes and filling them up again, which French Statesmen and English Editors persist in designating as the 'organization of labor.' There they are, however, sitting with 'baleful enchantment' upon them, deprived of the social amenities of life, many of them kept up like cattle lest they should fulfil the command 'increase and multiply,'—an organization of forced idleness, alter-

nating with useless labor, the absurdest, cruelest monument of the civilization of the 19th century now extant!

In the Poor Law, notwithstanding all its harshness, we trace the presence of that conservative element in society, whose aim is to prevent any disease reaching such a crisis as would be destructive of its own existence. If society did not so far deviate from *laissez-faire*-ism, as to support the life of him whom the latter would condemn to death, he would rebel against the verdict, and turn like the trodden worm upon that society which had thus unnaturally cast him out. Even as a measure of self defence, society is compelled to *keep* the laborers whom it will not *employ*. The free advocates are in this sense quite as '*impracticable*' as many they dub with that name,—i. e. their system is not, never was, and never will be, carried out by society in its full and fair proportions.

This conservative influence of society is manifested in a multitude of other ways. Every attempt on the part of the state or individuals to raise the lot of the laborer above that which it would be as determined by free competition, is an attack (mostly unconscious) of this character on the free principle. It would be useless to detail all the modes by which sometimes benevolence, and sometimes the sense of self preservation, counteracts the consequences of the selfish-system, but two or three instances must be named. The interference is perfectly empirical, it acts from no clearly defined view of the *cause* of the evil it would cure. All that society knows is, that the evil has assumed a gigantic and defined form. No longer caring for its consistency, it deserts the principle of selfishness laid down as a general guide, and grasps (what it conceives to be) the monster by the throat.

One form in which this rebellion to the supply and demand system manifests itself, is in the claim recently set up for participation by the workmen in profits. In Britain, Babbage, the excellent Messrs. Chambers, the *Morning Chronicle*, and John Stuart Mill, have especially favored this view. In France M. Chevalier, so lately the pet of the English press on account of his opposition to the imperfect but philanthropic scheme of Louis Blanc, speaks thus of the participation of profits:—

"I am convinced that this participation will change the character of labor, and still more of the laborer; that it will confer on the latter a dignity, a love of order, a spirit of good conduct, which he could obtain in no other way. Those inarticulate contests between the master and the worker which produce so many disorders, so many little acts of havoc, such a waste of living force,—will disappear as if by enchantment; and it is motives like these, above all, connected as they are with moral, political, and social order, that make me eagerly long for the realization of that principle."

In order to inaugurate the idea, he would compel new Railway Companies to adopt the principle of participation of profits. "Gradually and surely," he says "the public authorities firmly desiring it, and opinion seconding them in that desire, the whole industry of the country would contract that salutary habit."

If the competition of supply and demand results in the laborer obtaining his due share, why propose to deprive the capitalist of a portion of his legitimate profits to add to the wealth of the laborer? If the laborer does not obtain his due share, then it should be the primary and paramount duty of the true Economist, to endeavor to discover the correct principle which should regulate his

remuneration. The advocates of participation either go too far, or not far enough.^f

If the employed be partner with the employer, he is transformed into a capitalist. If to become joint capitalist with the sanction of the employer, and yet remain laborer, involves no absurdity, or impracticability, we see none in the same result taking place at the will of the laborer himself. This proposal, clumsy after all, is but a sort of Organization of Industry, its chief merit being the confession of the false position of labor. As a practical remedy for the great grievance, however, it is absurd. The origin of low wages is in deficient capital to employ all who live by employment. Unless the surplus labor is prevented by some means from entering into the labor market, the return to the laborer cannot rise much above the rate determined by competition. A benevolent employer, however willing to divide his profits with his laborers, cannot do so while numbers are clamorous for employment, for as the workman will take the lowest wages, a less scrupulous or considerate tradesman will beat him out of the market. In vain are the objurgations of the author of 'Past and Present,' or the milder remonstrances of the author of the 'Claims of Labor.' If labor is sold at all, (for this is the fundamental error,) it must in general bear the lowest price. Capitalists may mitigate the evils of the laborer, by kind and considerate conduct, but as individuals they neither cause, nor can cure, the essential evils. True Captains of Industry, like Samuel Greg of Hyde, and Leclaire of Paris,—far seeing and benevolent men,—may do much. But must the working classes idly wait until the capitalised classes place a higher value on the welfare of the species than on their own immediate gain? Or should the welfare of the mass of society depend on the accident of their falling into the hands of public spirited employers? This course is now too late, even if it were just. It is to deliberate on the nature of the fortifications, whilst the enemy is at the gates. If it be desirable to free labor from the bondage of capital, it is equally desirable not to leave the issue to accident, or to physical-force revolutions, which indeed never *can* produce it. The gulf between wealth and poverty is daily widening,—the intellectual insight of the Have-nots is also awakening,—while recent events have shown us that the arts and embellishments of life, and much of what is greatest and best in human nature, hang by a thread amid the surrounding Barbarism.

It is all-important that this question should be settled, and settled speedily. It will not be by a compulsory division of profits; this is obviously impossible. Any legislation with a view to such a result, would share the fate of all the legislation of past times which attempted to fix the rate of wages by arbitrary enactment: nor would it cure the main evil; which is not so much the unequal division of wealth, as its inadequate amount,—not merely that some have *too* much, but that some can have none at all. All such legislation,—all the schemes of those who, in various forms, advocate the participation-system,—strive to reconcile *essentially* conflicting principles. The free competing principle (what-

^f The remark especially applies to M. Chevalier. He would compel the man who invests his capital in a railway to divide his profits with the Stokers and Porters; yet if the same capital were invested in a Woollen factory, the Engine driver, Overlookers, and Hands must be regulated by competition!

ever its other faults may be) is consistent. But the attempt to maintain *it* in union with the advantages of the opposite principle of association, *must* fail.

Under the old Hebrew Legislation, the very same conservative-element was displayed in the Laws of the Sabbath and the Jubilee, which is manifested in modern Factory-Legislation. They are, equally, examples of the *felt necessity* of the Legislator's stepping in between Capital and Labor, to protect the latter from the ultimate tendencies of the former.^g As respects the Factory Bill, however, instead of discussing how many hours infantile muscle could work against steam and iron, or the possibility of mitigating the bondage of the female White Slave,—a *previous* and pertinent question should have been asked—How, capital, mere capital, ever came to have the power to *compel* from the workman such an exorbitant sacrifice as health, wife, and child? The benevolent men, however, *would* know nothing of political economy, and the political economists *would* know nothing of benevolence. Both lost sight of the great and permanent question, *almost* the only one which needed solving, viz., the real cause of the evil itself.

The Truck Act, in compelling employers to pay money instead of goods, is another interference between employer and employed, another confession of the *inability of the latter to make his own conditions*. Why should not the *amount*, as well as the *kind* of remuneration, be fixed by the legislature? The justice would be the same, but the practice is different, because in the former case Capital, in the latter the Legislature, is the strongest.

The working classes themselves are not idle in adding to the general mass of inconsistency. Ask them whether they admire 'free-competing,' and they will reply in the affirmative. But *apply* the principle to *Wages*, and it will be another matter; they will demur to permitting 'supply and demand' to regulate that.^h By various limitations, by Unions fixing the numbers and terms of apprenticeships,

^g An ancient assertion of the right, the expediency, of interfering between the Owning-few and the Toiling-many—a divine denial of the modern dogma of the Capital Economists—the assertion of the superior claims of the *Laborers* over the *material* of labor—is seen in the Theocratic Legislation of the Jews. The Jubilee and the Sabbath were made *for Man*—the Land and Labor for the Laborer, not the Laborer for the Labor or the Land. Some political economists, while declaiming against a Ten-hours' Bill, will even fanatically uphold a Sabbath-Bill! But in truth, the Jewish Sabbath, as our Social Sabbath, *must* be regarded as a Law for the protection of the Laborer. But his protection against *what*? One answer only can be returned—Against the crushing tendencies and encroachments of Capital, which, like the horse-leech, is ever crying, 'Give, give, give.' As to the Sabbath, even a Religious Sanction has been called in, and is still swayed, for sustaining a Social Law for regulating the *days* of human toil:—on what 'principle' then, and with what consistency, can such politicians object to interfere with the *hours* of labor, or any other of its conditions, as the interests of Man, and the new aspects of Society, may call for such interference? On no principle whatever, as it seems to me, save this—that Mammon is our God and Man our Slave! The *principle* of the Factory Bill, therefore, is at least as ancient as the Sabbath-Law, and as far as principle is concerned, we must receive or repudiate them together."—*Dr. Lees*: Speech on the Ten-hours' Bill, 1845.

^h The economists infer that because every body likes competition *in his own case*, it must be good. Now as, according to their view, each one knows what is *best for himself*, it seems to prove the contrary

by strikes which have cost millions and wasted millions more, they try, and to some extent successfully, to keep themselves out of the reach of competition.

The good feeling of employers also, operates much more than is suspected, in the same direction. There is not perhaps one employer in a thousand who absolutely buys his 'laborers in the cheapest market,' while few reduce wages until compelled by competition. Badly as the laborer is remunerated, he is rarely squeezed so dry that an exacting employer might not get more out of him. Masters did not combine against laborers, till laborers combined against masters. When we affirm that capital takes the share of labor, the smallest portion of blame lies at the door of the capitalist. On the contrary, *If the just share of the laborer be that which is determined by the competition of supply and demand, the capitalists are robbed of all they are compelled to give above that*, whether it be paid in the shape of pauper relief, or that of hospitals and charities. The capitalists are *men*, and therefore include both good and evil; the former mitigate, the latter intensify, the evils of a false system. The master who makes the most he can out of his laborers, differs but in degree from the slave driver, and the principle of political economy justifies the slavery of Greece and Rome as much as it does the system of modern labor. The so-called 'Tyrant millocrat' is often a mild, benevolent gentleman, who, by means of schools, donations to chapels and soup kitchens, endeavors to alleviate the misery around him. His mistaken philanthropy it is true, often saps the spirit of independence in the laborer, and ultimately increases the evil. The laborer wants *work*,—the means of earning his own comforts,—instead of which the means of existence are supplied *without* work. To such an extent has this folly proceeded, that there is scarcely a want for which a 'charity' does not exist.¹ It would almost seem that the legislature, the capitalist, the workman, and the pauper, were in league against the just rights of labor. By endless patches we hobble on, but it is only in moments of alarm like the present, when the system threatens to break down, that any attention is paid to 'the labor question.'

The special cases of oppression which the law has undertaken to rectify, are few in comparison with those which claim its aid. Voluminous as our code is, it would be much more so, if the legislature interfered in all the cases that need its protecting arm. It is objected by the advocates of the free-principle, that no legislation could meet the ever varying evils which all see it desirable to remove. True, but what then? Must *finite* power cease to act, because it is not *infinite*? Must the journeyman baker die of disease and premature decay, in order that some fraction of a farthing may be saved in the price of bread? Or the poor needle-woman wear out her over-wrought frame, 'stitching at once a shroud and a shirt,' to enable some metropolitan clothes dealer to keep a gig and give the public cheap shirts? Shall such fearful oppression go on for ever? Surely not. What, then, is the right course? The fundamental principle of regulating the reward of labor by the competition of laborer and capitalist, is either true or false; and the basis of social action should be in accordance with one or the other. If interference is at all permissible in the conflict of labor and capital, it ought not to be tentative and accidental,—mere symptom treatment; it should

¹ See appendix A.

strike at the very root of the evil. If we adopt the free principle, let us at least be consistent. Let us have no compulsory provision for the poor, no robbery from capital to maintain in idleness the laborer which it cannot or chooses not to employ. Let us have no hindrance to the capitalist's chance of making the best bargain he can for himself, as when we compel him to pay money instead of goods. Let us abandon our Factory Acts, which either lessen wages as they lessen hours, or rob the Capitalist to the extent which they do not. Let workmen abandon all unions by which they place their wages, or hours, beyond the competitive level. Let us banish all those barriers which humanity, or self preservation, has compelled society and individuals to adopt, in order to save its humbler members from annihilation. Let the economists' *natural* (or most *unnatural*) law of wages, as determined by the fullest competition, be the only recognized one. The lower portion of society would, by the complete adoption of such principles, be reduced to a state analogous to drowning men, holding by an insufficient plank; some must be thrown off to save the rest. Picture the state of men, as we have read of them, crowded in a solitary boat, breadless and waterless for days, each man looking hungrily at his neighbor till the dreadful lots were cast. Or conceive of that Calcutta black hole, piled with bodies that a few might ease their panting breasts,—or of Dante's *Inferno*;—yet why pursue the dismal theme? These are but faint types of what the Economist's World would be with an over-population on the one hand, and a let-alone system on the other. The conservative element in society, however, is too strong ever to permit such results to their full extent, tho we approach such a consummation far too nearly,—witness the revelations from some of our larger cities. But with the let-alone system completely triumphant,—with every law repealed, every obstacle removed which benevolence and wisdom have set up against individual selfishness, it would be impossible we think for society to hold together one month, if even one day. If this plan dare not be tried, if the voice of our common brotherhood speak too loftily to be drowned by the hoarse croaking of an atheistic selfishness, let us still be consistent. Let us not, like empirics, apply partial remedies to cure evils which are but the symptoms of a deeper disease, the nature of which may be expressed in two sentences. First *the masses of society are depending on capital not their own*. Second, *that they are increasing faster than the capital which employs them*. To reverse this condition of society, will therefore be the object of the genuine philanthropists, and the value of most remedial measures must be estimated by their tendency to do so. Of every proposed plan, let us demand this question: Will it either increase the amount of capital, or tend to render the Worker less dependent on the accumulations of others, and more on his own? The more it aims at these fundamental conditions, the more worthy will it be of consideration. Alms to sots and premiums to vagabonds, tend to drag down the artisan. The various forms of charity are good as acknowledging some bond between man and man besides interest, and as indicating, and often alleviating, the evils of the present system; but as *remedies* they are worthless. The point of primary importance is *to increase the fund for the support of labor*.

In strictness, it is not competition which is *the cause* of low wages and of the oppression of the laborer, any more than bricks are the cause of a house. The cause is *deficiency of capital* as compared with population,—a deficiency which

may and does co-exist with overflowing *wealth*. Competition is the instrumentality by which the deficiency tells upon the laborer and the freer the competition, the more rapid the result. The competitive principle arrays man against man, classes against classes, but the slavery of labor to capital has its root in the conditions assigned. It is this deficiency in the *demand* for labor, which has transferred half-a-million of able men to the poor-house, and compels a tenth of the English people to be claimants of occasional relief. It was this which enabled the capitalist to strain the factory operative to the verge of physical endurance, in his hours of labor, and to dictate the terms and conditions of payment. It is this which has turned what is simply an exchange between capitalist and laborer, into an act characterized by dictatorial supremacy on the one hand, and degrading subservieney on the other. It is this which compels the workman to enter his employers presence, not as man *should* that of his fellow-man, but as an intruder and interloper, to whom *Work*—the primal right and duty of the race—is doled out as an act of charity! By changing that relation—by reuderig the number of laborers scarce instead of plentiful, in regard to the *individual* owners of capital,—the whole phenomena might be reversed. The terms Master and Servant would be immediately voted vulgar, as in America. Pauperism, except as the result of bad conduct, would be unknown. The workman, by the presence of comfort, would be capable of reaching the first stage of education, preparatory to a higher culture and development.

Will society stop here? No! By that eternal law of progress which will at last rectify every wrong, and vindicate the equal rights of men, the social dependence of one man upon another must cease, as befits the brethren of one family whose origin and destination are the same.



SOCIAL SCIENCE.

LECTURE III.—SURPLUS LABORERS, ECONOMISTS, AND THE POOR LAW.

IT WAS a necessary consequence of the breaking up of the feudal sytem, and of the mutual ties which bound the lord and serf, that very different laws must henceforth regulate the share which the laborer should receive of the joint results of labor and capital. As soon as the hirer of labor was free to buy his labor where he liked, and the seller of labor to sell it where he best could, the law of supply and demand came into operation, and the price of labor (wages) must then be regulated by the number of laborers wanting work compared with the means or capital of those who wanted the services of the laborer. At first the effects of this transition were not very obvious to those who experienced them, and for a lengthened period, society struggled to reconcile the gradually increasing freedom from vassalage, with the advantages which the feudal system had secured. Owing to the large number of those who were landed proprietors, and the comparative scarcity of laborers, coupled with the powerful influence of the associations contracted under the old system, this attempt for a time succeeded. When, however, the small freeholds became more and more absorbed into large estates, the class who subsisted by labor increased in numbers, and in proportion as their claims to employment and maintenance from the landholders became less and less a matter of right on their part and of duty on his, the relation of employer and employed resolved itself into a simple bargain between the two interests. The Legislature sometimes attempted to keep matters on their old footing, by enacting laws for the regulation of wages; and it was not till a comparatively late period, and after multitudes of repeated failures, that the conviction became general, that laws to keep up or to depress wages must prove abortive. Under the feudal relationship, such a thing as vast numbers of people, without the means of maintenance, could not well exist, unless from some sudden and unforeseen calamity destroying the means of subsistence. They had a hold upon the soil, and if they wished to increase their stores, they had simply to work harder, and economise more than previously.

As however the soil in this country was gradually appropriated into a few hands, the maintenance of the laborer no longer depended so much on the extent and fertility of the soil whereon he and his master dwelt, as upon the means which his master had at command, and was willing to use, in the purchase of his services. Competition (i. e. the mere relative *power* of the two) would regulate the bargain between the parties, and if the total means for employing labor were less than equal to the entire number wanting employment, not only would wages be low, but some must actually die, or be supported from the bounty of their fellows.

In the previous lecture we stated the injustice of the competitive principle under such an arrangement—a principle which divides the wealth produced jointly by capitalist and laborer, not according to the real share each had in production, but according to the abundance or scarcity of laborers as compared with the existing capital, or wages found for employing them. The question now meets us, how is the surplus labor to be dealt with? How shall we diminish the disproportion between the extent of employment and the number of laborers?

Two modes have been proposed. The first is to diminish population down to the means of subsistence, by deferring the period of marriage, and limiting the number of births. This theory has found great favor in the eyes of what is called the new school of political economists, including in it Malthus, Ricardo, McCulloch, James Mill, Chalmers, and John Stuart Mill. This absurd proposal had its origin in the doctrine that the soil's return to human labor continually diminished in amount as man was driven by the pressure of population, to cultivate lands of less and less fertility, and that therefore, a time must come when the cultivation of the soil could not secure the cultivator's own subsistence, still less a subsistence for those employed in producing the less essential articles of consumption. Happily for mankind, the doctrine on which the over-population theory is based, is untrue. The soils differ in fertility in reference to the production of a single article, say for example, wheat, yet the progress of agricultural knowledge has shown that by adapting the crop to the soil, that difference is in a great degree nullified; while chemistry, by showing that a great variety of substances contain the constituent elements adapted for the support of life, renders man less dependant on any single article. Hence, the power of man to earn a subsistence from the soil is continually multiplying. With the immense powers which chemistry and mechanics can bring to agriculture, over-population from deficient return to labor, is more remote than it was 4,000 years ago.

But even if mankind had only the little knowledge and rude implements of the infancy of the world, the population question might safely be postponed for many milleniums. That portion of the earth's surface which is populated to any thing approaching its capability of supporting its inhabitants, is a very small space compared with the vast tracts scarcely trodden by the foot of man. Thousands of square miles of the richest and loveliest parts of the earth, capable of supporting hundreds of millions of people, are lying desert. What then becomes of this nightmare of over-population? With the undeveloped capabilities of the earth and of man's genius, it may be predicted that the speculations as to over-population will occupy the same position in the future history of literature, which the discussions of a former period, as to how many angels could stand on the point of a needle, do to us in the present.

If the over-population theory were merely harmless, we might laugh at it. But its effect is to throw a doubt over every effort to raise the condition of the wage-receiver. Thro' its perverting medium many persons look upon war and pestilence as blessings, which

Thin the heavy air, make clear
The dense and dangerous atmosphere
O'er laden with humanity —

and think it an act of true wisdom and charity, to refuse relief to the paupers. It is of such that the poet of the Poor, Charles Mackay, speaks:

If each poor couple, boors and clowns,
Or dirty artizans of towns,
Would, when they wed, produce but two
To take their place in season due,
Philosophy might spare its frowns;

But this not chancing, he declares
The rich alone should live in pairs,
And for their sake each other man
Consume as little as he can,
And die unmated in his cares.

He thinks, while sympathy is sure,
That mendicancy is the cure
For pauperism; that its not right
To mulet the rich in their despite,
But that the poor should feed the poor.

This said, he clasps his fingers ten,
And sniffs th' applause of voice and pen,
Bows placidly, goes home to dine,
And wastes the food, in pomp and wine,
Of half a hundred better men.

When, however, there is no fund to employ the surplus laborer, what is to be done with him? enquires the economist. 'If you relieve him, you protract and aggravate the evil.' That depends upon the mode of relief, whether productive or nonproductive. *True*, if you supply his necessities, without caring whether an additional amount of wealth is created to sustain his consumption; *false*, if you relieve him setting him to such work as will *reproduce* what he consumes in the process.

Before the economists assumed, that to cure pauperism, relief must be refused,—or, that to raise wages, we must diminish population,—they were bound to look at the other side, and see *if it were not possible to create capital* for the employment and support of the surplus population. Such an attempt may be full of difficulties; we know nothing worth attaining which is not so. But whatever the difficulties, we know of none comparable to those which attend an opposite procedure.

In the first place, we have never met with any economist of the new school who fairly answered the argument so obvious to every one, that the institution of marriage is not an arbitrary enactment of human laws, but a law written in the constitution of mankind by the presiding mind of the universe, and, like all such laws, incapable of being broken without incurring certain penalties. Yet the economists treat the whole affair as a 'luxury' which may or may not be enjoyed at will, and capable of being regulated by legislation. To hear them talk, one would imagine that the sexual instinct was a human invention, instead of a law of man's physical and moral nature.

"Who" says John Stuart Mill,^a one of the best of the school, "meets with the smallest condemnation; or rather, who does not meet with sympathy and benevolence, for any amount of evil which he may have brought upon himself and those dependent on him, by this species of incontinence? While a man who is intemperate in drink, is discountenanced and despised by all who profess to be moral people, is it not to this hour the favorite recommendation for any parochial office bestowed by popular election, to have a large family, and to be unable to maintain them? Do not the candidates placard their intemperance on walls, and publish it thro' the town in circulars?"

It would have been well if so accurate a reasoner had defined this term 'intemperance.' Notwithstanding his wish that the subject should be freely spoken of, he ventures not to throw aside the 'spurious delicacy' involving this question, and we get nothing save innuendo. What is intemperance? How is it to be measured? This analogy is false. We do not term a man intemperate who drinks only *when* and *what* a healthy nature requires. Intemperance is, that which exceeds this limit, and whether with or without the means to support the noxious indulgence, does not make it more or less intemperance, tho in the latter case it adds the crime of dishonesty. It is a new element in the doctrine of morals, that virtues and vices may interchange characters, according to the length of purse in the agents, or in truth, according to the insane and unjust limit put to the means of subsistence. Fancy a code of Ethics, which, under the head of intemperance and gluttony, should specify the number of bottles of wine or quantity of saucers, that men of a certain income might indulge in! Assuredly the reproductive instinct may, like any other, be abused. But it is a question of quite other laws than political economy,—the laws of physiology and morals,—to determine what is and what is not intemperance.^b

When we hear such men denouncing Marriage, as "a degrading slavery to a brute instinct in one of the persons concerned, and most commonly in the other hopeless submission to a revolting abuse of power,"—we are strongly tempted to wish that these gentlemen had been present at the creation, so that the mistake of endowing mankind with passions *ten years too soon*, might have been avoided. Regardless of the physiological necessity, and high moral uses of marriage, they would, if not blot it out entirely, at least exclude it from the majority. The perfection of such a system would be attained by filling the world with wealth, and annihilating every soul in it.

Owing to the spread of this doctrine, the evil of celibacy, and the crime of prostitution are increasing. With some, a small number it is true, the best years and holiest affections of the heart are sacrificed, to make way for an incurable selfishness. But a larger class of our young men make up for the late period to which *prudence* commands them to defer the period of marriage, by vicious indulgence. Let the economists say without shuffling or evasion, and

^a Political Economy, Vol. i, page 441.

^b Of course it will be understood that these observations apply only to such doctrines when recommended as the remedy for *Social* evils, as low wages and pauperism. We take it to be the less of two evils, and therefore to be preferred, to defer the period of marriage under the present arrangement of society.

clothing their meaning in dark phrases, whether, if the period of marriage is to be deferred, they imagine chastity is to be preserved? 'That it is possible,' says John Stuart Mill, "to delay marriage, and to live in abstinence while unmarried, most people are willing to allow."—No physiologist will allow it. There is no nation, or tolerably extensive class of people, that has deferred the period of marriage, whether from economical or religious motives, where the results have not presented the grossest immorality. Nor do we want testimony on this subject.^c It comes home to every one's experience. The belief alluded to is the talk of jugglers, a make-believe and a lie. It is to such that Mephistophiles's words apply—

It seems chaste hearts may not forego
That which chaste ears may never know.

The evils, physical and moral, of the over-population dogma, are not its only ones. When we consider the social and family feelings involved, we must become sensible that many of the charms of life would be taken away. The artisan doubles and redoubles his toils, he deprives himself of the enjoyments of single life and feels himself rewarded by the society of his wife and little ones. Home is still a happiness to him, tho factories and fire water have made sad havoc there. Yet he must give up the domestic fireside for the solitude of the lodging house; he must forego the dearest relationships for ten to fifteen years of his existence, in order to guard against a contingency which cannot occur for thousands of years to come! Would not the laborer before he makes such a sacrifice, be right in demanding that the resources of his country should be made fully available. When there is no room here, let him go elsewhere. When the last square mile has been compelled to yield its produce, let those whose affair it is, take heed of plans for the prevention of over-population.

The true remedy is not to depress population down to capital, which is neither politic nor possible, but to raise capital up to population. This is the problem to which every, but especially the British, government, should pay earnest and immediate attention. How to find productive employment for that portion of the population for whom no wages-fund exists. It is a question which cannot, will not be evaded. Before wages can be raised to any extent, the surplus laborers, whose competition keeps wages down, must in some way be taken from the labor *market* (tho not from the labor-field). It is also essential to any elevation of the great mass of laborers from the condition of mere appendages to the capital of the minority. The rapidly increasing amount of pauperism is attracting the attention of the most indifferent. Even the fact that every tenth person in England is a pauper gives no adequate idea of the deficiency of employ-

^c We would counsel those liberal persons, who devote money and time to the suppression of prostitution, to ponder this *prudential* doctrine, and its effects. They will discover that, for every single brand which they pluck from the fire, there is a social machinery, boldly backed by a false social theory, which hurls in fresh victims by thousands. Let them reflect on the strength of the sexual instinct on the one hand, and on the other of a state of society, which forbids the reflective and the humane to marry, lest they should entail poverty on themselves and offspring. Haply they may come to the conclusion, that their present efforts are like checking an inundation with buckets, and look a little deeper at a system of society which thus proclaims itself rotten at the core.

ment. Numbers of workmen will toil for the most inadequate wage, while others will share the pittance of their neighbors, relatives, and friends, before they will submit to the degradation of the workhouse or the infliction of the stone-heap. Perhaps an eighth of our population might be fairly called 'surplus,' according to the rule of Political Economists, to whom they are a very troublesome 'surplus' indeed! What is to be done with them? Two or three plans have been suggested. The most original and ironical one is that by Thomas Carlyle:—

"The old Spartans went out and hunted down their Helots, and speared and spitted them, when they grew too numerous. With our improved fashions of hunting, Herr Hofrath, now, after the invention of fire arms and standing armies, how much easier were such a hunt! Perhaps in the most thickly-peopled country, some three days annually might suffice to shoot all the able bodied paupers that had accumulated within the year. Let Governments think of this; the expenses were trifling, nay, the very carcasses would pay it. Have them salted and barrelled; could not you victual therewith, if not Army and Navy, yet richly such infirm paupers, in workhouses and elsewhere, as enlightened Charity, dreading no evil of them, might see good to keep alive?"

Scarcely superior to this impracticable plan, is that of 'letting them alone,' 'leaving them to their own resources, etc.' French Political Economy triumphantly snapt its fingers at 'Red Republicanism,' and announced *this* as the cure for pauperism. But, alas! it was compelled to administer secret relief, and organize the surplus into an army. The economical creed of the *bourgeoisie* forbade them to organize industrially the surplus industry, and therefore it equipped them as warriors—an employment it justly supposed not liable to the slightest imputation of being useful. Another plan is, to ship them off, out of the road. A time will doubtless come, when the whole of the land in this country which can be cultivated, *will be* in complete cultivation. But that time is not yet. There are millions of acres in Great Britain untouched, and millions more in very imperfect cultivation. Nevertheless, as it is always desirable to leave a margin, it would be well that those with capital, a strong constitution fitted to encounter the hardships of a settler's life, and the requisite knowledge of agriculture, should have such advantages placed before them by means of systematic colonization, and a wise organization of their resources, as to make it worth their while to break the associations of home. It cannot, however, be expected that, as emigration is now conducted, such people, who are the only class fit to emigrate, will not rather

Bear the ills they have
Than fly to those they know not of.

If the government would arrange for large numbers of such to go together, so as to obviate the painful loneliness, and to remove immense obstacles which meet the solitary settler, during the first years, a much more extensive emigration of this class would follow.

Unfortunately however this is *not* the class, whom it behoves us to get rid of. The repeal of the laws affecting the inheritance of land in this country, would render enough of it available, to absorb all the surplus agriculturalists, whether with or without capital, for many years to come. Our most unmanageable sur-

plus, is the half million able bodied paupers,⁴ and a vast number of manufacturing operatives all but paupers, whom successive improvements in machinery, have deprived of employment, Hand Loom Weavers, Bradford Woolcombers, Leicester Stocking Weavers, Nottingham Lace makers, and the like, who, to use the phrase of the economists, have never been 'absorbed'—and we fear never will be. Added to these, every trade can furnish a quantity of unemployed workmen more or less large, altogether making perhaps an eighth of the population of this country, who squeeze a bare subsistence out of the rest, diminish the profits of capital, and the possibility of future accumulation, by reducing the consumption of the wage-receivers. It is this class, who, as Fielding said, "starve, and freeze, and rot, among themselves, but beg, and steal, and rob, among their betters." They inhabit the cellars and pigstyes, dignified with the name of dwellings, which from so large a part of our manufacturing towns. They suffer the evils of savage life, its hardships and uncertainty, without its freedom and its virtues, while of civilization they know nothing except its vices. To bid this class emigrate, in the present sense of that term, would, in many instances, be tantamount to a sentence of death, and with the greater part, be utterly impossible to carry out.

If therefore the remedy suggested by Carlyle, in happy ridicule of certain modern doctrines, be rejected—if 'letting the paupers alone' to die off quietly, or transporting them to meet a similar fate in another country, be equally impracticable,—the fourth alternative is, that the state shall *provide employment* for them. One might suppose, that this would naturally have presented itself as the very *first* alternative, with the evident and equitable proviso, that the state, undertaking to provide subsistence for the unemployed laborer, should, at the same time, adopt practical methods of causing him to return an *equivalent* by his labor. But contrary to this very natural presumption, the legislative assemblies of two of the most enlightened nations of Europe, France and England, have decided that the pauper has a right to subsistence from the state, but no right to *labor* as the *means* of subsistence. To those, who, in strict logical consistency with the *laissez faire* principle, deny both these rights—who would have the pauper to perish unless maintained by private charity,—we have not a word to say.

⁴ Number of Paupers relieved in 592 Unions up to Lady-day 1847.

In door	...	...	...	...	...	226,499
Out door	...	..	...	...	...	1,224,544
Estimated to have been relieved under the local acts and other places not under the New Poor law.						250,000
						1,721,043
						<hr/>
Number of adult able- bodied Paupers	}	In door	...	...	...	123,224
		Out door	...	...	...	439,131
Total						562,355

Total amount received for the relief of the Poor £7,117,352

Their iron theory would either decimate society, or involve a perpetually recurring contest between those who have and those who have not wealth. So long as the deficiency of employment is comparatively small, this let-alone doctrine is useless; and when that deficiency is large, who would have the hardihood to carry it out? With those who admit the principle of state interference for rescuing the unemployed laborer from the fate which would otherwise await him, the case is different. The question is narrowed here, as to what kind of interference is expedient, or possible. Those who deny the duty of the state to provide labor, do so mainly on the ground that the state *cannot* provide employment without *substituting* greater evils than it removes. Such a conclusion, however, is not warranted by the premisses from which it is deduced; and, on the contrary, we shall exhibit the grounds for a very different conclusion.

The most important part of the History of the English poor laws dates from the year 1601, when the celebrated act of the 43rd of Elizabeth^a was passed. This law had two objects; 1st, the relief of the impotent poor, and, 2nd, the employment of the able-bodied and idle. To the relief by the state of the first of these classes, the objectors are few. Among those few, however, is the late Dr. Chalmers, who objects that the law cannot create the moral feeling of charity by compelling the individual to part with so much material wealth. It would be equally just to object to the employment of soldiers, that 6d. per day cannot purchase patriotism; or to the physician's medicine, that the fee rather than benevolence, was the condition of his applying curative agents. The main end of poor relief is to abate suffering, not to arouse charity, and for this object, the organized machinery of a public tax is obviously superior to private voluntary contributions. It is fairer, because it compels the mean and selfish, equally with the benevolent, to bear their share of a common burden. It is more humane, because it prevents the dreadful risk of any human creature perishing for want. It is more discriminating, because it makes it the special business of some parties to sift true from false claimants. And it is more economical, both as regards time and money, on the well understood principle of division of labor, to which the relief of the poor is no exception.^f These advantages have led to most forms of local relief having become organized, even where the law has made no provision.

In the early days of English pauperism, notwithstanding the very clear distinction between the pauper incapable of working, and the pauper *unable* to obtain work, the two were placed on one footing. It is true that from 1601 to 1722,

^a The 43rd Elizabeth remained for many years a dead letter, no assessments being made, but the height to which vagrancy attained caused the 13 Car. 2. cap 12. to be passed in 1662. This law provided, that any person who should reside in a parish forty days should thereby obtain a settlement, and thus would become chargeable to it, in the event of his becoming destitute. It became an important portion of the duties of an overseer to prevent the laborer from obtaining a settlement. For a picture, said to be exaggerated, of the atrocious treatment to which the poor were subjected in consequence, see an interesting extract from Dr. Burns' History of the Poor laws (1764), quoted in the Poor law Report 1843, 101.

^f The sums annually extorted from the citizens of Munich, by beggars alone, exclusive of private charities, amounted to more than three times the sums given to the support of the institution established by Count Rumford, which by maintaining them all, entirely suppressed mendicancy. Rumford's Essays, Vol. i. page 121.

a period of 121 years, the law required, in every parish, the church-wardens and overseers, with the consent of the justices, not only to raise money for the impotent, but likewise a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other necessary ware and stuff, with which to set poor persons to work, having no means of maintenance. The act did not contemplate the bestowal of relief except in return for work, or give any power to hire or purchase workhouses. But as there was no organization for providing work, those whose business it was to distribute relief, frequently found it easier to give relief without work. As might have been foreseen, the most extensive abuses prevailed. The amount of poor rates increased very rapidly, and the sense of self-reliance and responsibility in the laborer declined. As the evil grew, the subject excited attention. Numberless were the proposals made for setting the able-bodied paupers to work. Among others, one Stanley, as early as 1646, proposed the establishment of workhouses. He complained that "the poor may be whipt to death and branded for rogues, and so become felons by the law, and the next time hanged for vagrancy, before any private man will set them to work, or provide houses for labor, and stock and materials for them." Other proposals were made in 1650, in a tract entitled "a clear and evident way for enriching the nation of England and Ireland, and setting very great numbers of poor to work." Again, Sir Josiah Child (before 1669), saw the radical error of the laws in leaving it to the care of every parish to maintain their own poor, and he proposed that London, Westminster, Southwark, and all the places within the bills of mortality, should be associated into one Province, and the relief and employment of the poor entrusted to a corporation specially chosen for the purpose. Sir F. Eden, whose work on the state of the poor contains a full and fair statement of these plans, mentions other proposals in 1673, 1677, and 1678. The latter was that of a Mr. Firmin, who practically and to some extent successfully carried out his view of the mode of preventing pauperism by providing employment. He was baffled by an obstacle which has been destructive to many later plans,—the want of a market for the commodity produced. A private individual of ordinary fortune could not reasonably be expected to attain an object which demands the most ample resources. In 1683 Sir Matthew Hale justly complained of the absence of any provision for the employment of paupers. Speaking of the relief of the poor, he says, "the plaster is not so large as the sore! There are many poor people, who are able to work if they had it, and had it at reasonable wages, by which they could support themselves and families. He proposed a plan for remedying the deficiencies of the act of Elizabeth. Two of the main features of his proposal, were the combination of several parishes into one; and the collection of 4 or 5 years rates at once or twice, in order to raise capital for setting the poor to work. He anticipated many objections, of which one was, that "many idle people would rather beg than work." To this he replies, that the establishment of workhouses will render working more profitable than begging, and that the educating of children in industrious habits will remove their propensity to become beggars. The objection founded upon the smallness of the capital for employing the poor, when probably ten times the amount was required by single trades in the same line, Sir Matthew admitted the force of, but contends that it "would be a great help to the poor in time of scarcity of work." Sir M. Hale, like most who have

attempted to remove pauperism since his time, treats it almost as if it were an accident, a temporary condition of affairs no way to be dreaded, and demanding but a temporary remedy. The idea of raising the labor fund *very much above* what was sufficient to satisfy the mere necessary wants of the laborer, seems scarcely ever to have occurred to them, still less that of the laborer being capable of *creating* and *owning* the capital which employed him. Another objection urged, was, "that private manufacturers, who endeavor, for their own interest, to make the most of their trade, often meet with great losses, which impair their stocks; and that a public concern, which cannot be expected to be managed with such prudence, must often be in the same condition." He admitted, that even the stock itself might be annihilated in five or six years, but the nation would be re-paid by the industrious education of the poor. But why, we ask, should a concern carried on for the benefit of the public, be less efficiently conducted than one for private advantage? Obviously, if the primary checks and conditions were the same, the same results would follow. That it is not possible to secure those conditions in the management of a public concern which ensure the success of a private one, is a mere assumption, very convenient we dare say, but not very correct.

If the stimulus of interest in the managers be an element, consult it. If skill, energy, and perseverance, be desirable qualities, are they not all obtainable by paying the proper price for them? That this is so, is evidenced by the Banks, Railways, and other vast associations, of the present day. It is also proved by the management of the Post Office, the grandest and most perfect organization hitherto accomplished, except for purposes of folly, fanaticism, or mischief. If it be said that public bodies are fallible, and may be deceived in the choice of agents, we reply that this charge appertains to every thing human; the same thing happens repeatedly to private capitalists, with whom the chances of failure are quite as great. What is wanting, is the feeling that the thing *must* be done; which once awakened, the obstacles to its accomplishment will disperse like the morning mists. The profitable employment of the poor, once felt to be as stern a necessity as the creation of a Railroad, ten thousand busy intellects will devote themselves to surmount all difficulties in the former as in the latter case. It is the bugbear of 'failure' which does so much mischief; for with *faith* only can men move mountains. Social experiments must fail before they can succeed, just as much as the child must often fall before he can walk well. Failure supplies the ashes out of which the glorious Phoenix of Success must arise. If any man dreams that society is to be organized *at once*, or when organized, not susceptible to continual changes, we apprehend he has studied history little, and human nature less. The fallacy of Sir Matthew Hale lay in conceiving of the employment of paupers as a *public* concern only. But this, instead of being its primary, is its secondary character. Altho, as a public benefit, it offers ample reasons why society should undertake the task, yet in reality, and in order to the successful working out of *any* scheme of employment, the interest of the laborer himself, and of the conductors of that labor, should be primarily consulted. They should have the greatest stake in the success or failure of the undertaking. Toward the successful production of wealth, Political Economy truly says, 'the greatest stimulus is the advantages which the producer

will probably receive in return.' Yet precisely in that case where, *above all others*, it was necessary to offer such a stimulus, it has ever been the least regarded. So long as the notion prevails, that the laborer is not to work *for his own benefit*, but, in some sort, like the slave, for the benefit of another, how can just views ever prevail on this subject? Hence an old objection, suggested by Sir Matthew, against his own plan, is likely to be repeated to day, namely, that the setting up of a public trade, will only make workmen more independent, and therefore less solicitous of employment with private traders. Supposing it possible to employ the pauper productively, this might be carried out to an extent that would absorb all the surplus labor in the country. Every additional draft from the class of laborers, by diminishing the competition among them, would raise the general standard of comfort, and doubtless render the employed laborer less dependent on the private capitalist. So far from this being an objection to the plan, it will, to all generous and truly enlightened men, be its main recommendation. Forgetting, for one moment, the common and equal rights of men, which do not permit of one class being permanently elevated and another permanently depressed—looking at it simply as a question for the capitalist himself, we ask, whether it would not be an immense and invaluable exchange, if he could transform his present mingled fear and contempt of the laborers, and their jealous hate of him, into a relationship of equality and fraternity? When we reflect on the indissoluble tie which binds our neighbor's fate to our own, we are tempted to pity the infatuation which sacrifices *men* in the pursuit of money—which knows not how poor are the greatest gauds of life without sympathizing minds to share them, which cannot perceive that the finest parks, or horses, or dogs, or chiseled statues, or painted canvasses, however good in their way, are of infinitely less value than the men and women near us—which feels not that *these living immortal statues*, are beings whose love or hatred, virtues or vices, divinity or degradation, we *must* share, whether we will or not, and which regards them simply as the basis of this business calculation—'Given, a human being, how to extract the largest amount of work, with the smallest amount of wage?' Alas! that any man, still more any class of men, should have their souls so vulgarized by the atmosphere of selfishness and exclusiveness, as to imagine that *the mass* of mankind were born to be naked and miserable, in order that a few might be richly decorated and exalted, in which few of course they always include themselves. Happily they cannot stop the progress of society—happily, Humanity will roll on in its resistless development in spite of them, and the stern elvener of all distinctions, in due season, will remove these obstructives to make room for wiser men.

From the period last named, the ideas of society with reference to the relief of the poor, seem to have turned more and more in the direction of finding them *productive* employment. The thought naturally occurred, that if the vast number of unemployed laborers, who *must* be kept whether employed or not, could be *usefully* employed, they might become a source of profit to the nation, instead of expense and annoyance. But the good which might have arisen from the acceptance of this principle, was in a great measure nullified by the belief, then general and still common, that poverty was rather the result of idle or vicious habits, than of any real deficiency of employment. An act for the relief

of the poor passed in 1674, and several later acts, while authorizing the erection of Workhouses, virtually made them Houses of Correction for vagrants. The first likely attempt to cure pauperism by removing its causes, was made at Bristol, chiefly thro' the active exertions of Mr. John Cary, a merchant of that City. An act was obtained in 1696, for erecting hospitals and workhouses there, for the better employing and maintaining the poor.^s It transferred the management of the poor from the overseers, in isolated parishes, to a collective Board of Guardians, as in the modern Unions; and it gave to that board a power to build or hire workhouses; and to appoint *paid officers*. This was at least a step in the right direction. Cary writes of it thus:—

"The success hath answered our expectations; we are freed from beggars, our old people are comfortably provided for, our boys and girls are educated to sobriety, and brought up to delight in labor, our young children are well looked after, and not spoiled by the neglect of ill nurses; and the face of our city is so changed already, that we have great reason to hope these young plants will produce a virtuous and laborious generation, with whom immorality and profaneness may find little encouragement; nor do our hopes appear to be groundless; for among 300 persons now under our charge within doors, there is neither cursing nor swearing, nor profane language to be heard, tho many of them were bred up in all manner of vice, which neither Bridewell nor whipping could frighten them from; because, returning to their bad company for want of employment, they were rather made worse than bettered by those corrections; whereas the change we have wrought in them is by fair means. We have a Bridewell, stocks, and whipping-post, always in their sight, but never had occasion to make use of either."^h

This plan, however, was not remunerative, of which the reason is apparent enough. We are told, in an account of the Bristol paupers, that they "tried them upon a great many sorts of work." This was blunder one, since the primary condition of efficient labor, is continued application to *one* business, and especially to that in which the individual has been trained. We are next told, that as soon "as they come to do anything tolerably well, that they might have been assisting to the younger and less practised, they went off to sea, or were apprenticed in the city; by which means the public so far benefited, tho the corporation bore the expense of the charge of teaching them, and of all the tools with which they were to work, and of the materials for it." Here was blunder second. The useful results of the plan being diffused, were less palpable than the cost of it, which, unlike the benefit, could be estimated by pounds, shillings and pence. It is one of the evils of entrusting the management of the poor to *local* corporations, that they are more apt to regard their own immediate interests than the public weal. The Bristol one did not belie this characteristic. Instead of rectifying the defects of their plan, they "laid aside their projects of labor, and set themselves to find out those who had no right of settlement in this city, sending them away to the places to which they belonged." No matter who suffers, provided *we* don't! The remedy it behoved them to adopt was, first, to give the pauper the greatest possible inducement to become an independent, self-supporting laborer, and second, to take care that this object was attained in such a way as to

^s For a very interesting account of this, see Eden's *State of the Poor*, Vol. i. p. 275, note.

^h Eden's *State of the Poor*, vol. i. p. 281.

be manifest to those who advanced the funds. That inducement was *simply to secure to the pauper the results of his labor*. But they acted on the fatal maxim, 'once a pauper always a pauper,' and instead of attempting to *cure* the evil, they only tried to transfer its burden from their own shoulders to those of other people. Nevertheless the beginning of the Bristol workhouse was prosperous so far as to diminish rates (all the payers cared about), and hence attracted attention elsewhere. Within two years of its establishment, the authorities at Exeter, Hereford, Colchester, Kingston on Hull, and Shaftesbury, were empowered to erect workhouses, and these establishments were soon after extended to Lynn, Sudbury, Gloucester, Plymouth, Norwich, and other places. In 1722, an act called Sir Ed. Knatchbull's, authorized the establishment of workhouses generally. This may be considered as the second epoch in the history of the English Poor Laws.

These efforts for the establishment of a somewhat better mode of employing paupers, met with strenuous opposition, and on a ground which still presents one of the greatest obstacles to the organization of pauper labor. It arises from the partly real, and partly imaginary, danger of the commodities produced by the paupers coming into competition with those produced by the independent laborer. A bill which actually passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords, drew from the celebrated De Foe in 1704, an address entitled 'Giving alms no Charity.' He says:—

"Suppose a workhouse for the employment of poor children sets them to spinning of worsted. For every skin of worsted these poor children spin, there must be a skin the less spun by some poor person or family that spun it before; suppose the manufacture for making baize to be erected in Bishopgate Street, unless the makers of this baize can find out at the same time a trade or consumption for more baize than were before, for every piece of baize so made in London there must be a piece the less made at Colchester."

He appeals to the House of Commons whether this can be called employing the poor.

"Since it is only transposing manufactures from Colchester to London, and taking the bread out of the mouths of the poor of Essex, to put it into the mouths of the poor of Middlesex."ⁱ

It is difficult to reconcile this reasoning, so generally admitted by the economists, with their usual argument on the machinery question, viz., that commodities cannot be too plentiful. As the paupers have to be kept, whether they produce something or nothing, one would imagine that whatever they produce would be *clear gain* to the community, as much as if the addition had been caused by mechanical improvements. Whether a hitherto useless pauper, or an improved stocking frame, throw an additional pair of stockings into the market, the effect must be pretty much the same, so far as the displacement of labor is concerned. It is but a confirmation of the view which cannot be too much insisted on, that *true* political economy must concern itself quite as much with the *distribution* of wealth as its *production*. It is not enough to increase production, unless it be shown how the laborer is to secure *his share* therein. But a greater danger than that which De Foe pointed out, might arise from the employment of paupers, viz.

ⁱ Eden's *State of the Poor*, vol. i. p. 261.

that of taxing the capitalist to produce commodities which will enter into competition with his own. This was one of the fatal defects of the French National Workshops. If the commodities produced therein were sold at a higher rate than in the open market, there would be no buyers, and the affair must soon come to a dead-lock. If the commodities were sold at equal or lower rates than the market price, the capitalist would be taxed to maintain a competitor who sometimes would drive him out of the market, and often disarrange his calculations. The difficulty is to find an independent market for the commodities produced by the organized labor, or, to quote again the expression of De Foe,

"If these worthy Gentlemen, who show themselves so forward to relieve and employ the poor, will find out some new trade, some new market, where the goods they make shall be sold, where none of the same goods were sold before; if they will send them to any place where they shall not interfere with the rest of that manufacture, or with some other made in England; then indeed they do something worthy of themselves, and they may employ the poor to the same glorious advantage as Queen Elizabeth did, to whom this nation, as a trading country, owes its peculiar greatness."¹

Sir F. Eden falls into the same mistake.² He says:—

"It is impossible to provide a national fund for setting the poor to work in any species of employment, without, in some degree, injuring those who are engaged in similar undertakings. If, for instance, a parish workhouse undertakes the manufacture of mops, ropes, and sacking; those who before subsisted by means of these trades, are sure to be sufferers. Whether mops are made by the private manufacturer, or by the parish children, no more will be sold than the public have occasion for. [What say the advocates of machinery and competition to this?] The managers of the workhouse, however, without being able to increase the demand, can generally obtain a preference, and a certain sale for their goods, by selling them rather below the market price. The concern, tho a losing one, is carried on by the contributions of the purchasers, and a poor industrious manufacturer will perhaps often have the mortification to reflect, that, in contributing his portion of poor rates, he is helping the parish to undo him."

Sir F. Eden then goes on to talk of the regular accumulations of capital, as if there were naturally some regular proportionate connection between population and capital, or as if *human will* had nothing at all to do with the matter!

Now, it does not demand the wisdom of a Solomon to find out the required new market where none of the goods were sold before, and where the commodities produced shall neither interfere with the same manufacture, nor any other made in England. *Let the pauper consume his own produce*, and the required market is at once found. That which constitutes a pauper is absence of *food, clothing, and home*, and yet we are puzzled what to do with the results of his labor! They cannot, it is true, feed themselves with the stones they break, nor clothe themselves with oakum. Even if productively employed, they should not be employed in one or two commodities, otherwise they glut the market. This would be but to copy the present absurd procedure of society, where commodities are thrown

¹ Eden's State of the Poor, vol. i. p. 262.

² Ibid p. 467.

into the market without the slightest regard to the extent of consumption. A classification and adaptation of the various branches of production, according to the *wants* of the consumers, is essential, and this demands but the same skill that is exhibited in every large manufactory, or even in the commissariat of an army, or the victualing of a ship of war. That which led to the formation of workhouses, as in the case of Bristol, was the notion that they might be rendered an *useful source of wealth* to the community. But in the attempt to realize the scheme, there was not a single condition preserved to warrant the most sanguine in anticipating their ultimate success. It is important to remember this, because the failure of all efforts to employ paupers profitably, has been constantly urged by the Poor-law-commissioners, as a reason for declining the attempt. Indeed, those efforts were never intended to succeed. If *now* there is a terror of the operative becoming too *independent*, how much more would such a feeling influence the actions of landlords and capitalists a century and a half ago! The workhouses were then as now, penal establishments. There was insufficient capital for the purposes of profitable production. There was no superintendence worthy of the name, and the superintendent's interest was opposed to the interest of those who employed him. The pauper, when employed at all, was mostly set to some strange business, for which his previous habits gave him no fitness. But had the entire machinery been rightly adapted to the professed object, his condition would still have resembled that of the slave, since he was not permitted to participate in the results. Pauper and slave are both deprived of hope. No industry, however great,—no application, however unremitting,—would add a comfort to their lot, or purchase their manumission. Like beasts they must toil the allotted number of hours, like beasts receive their daily measured quota of food, and, worse than beasts, be denied the intercourse of friendship and the joys of family. In one respect, the condition of the slave is superior to that of the pauper—the slave is conscious of being kept for his *use*, while the pauper feels he is eating the rations of a grudging charity.

These defects, with others we shall hereafter allude to, were fatal to workhouses, as a source of national wealth. But some of these very defects which unfitted them for becoming productive establishments, constituted their merits in another important element of pauper repression, and one which the first projectors of workhouses had not anticipated. The penal character of the workhouse deterred applicants for relief, and most of the places where workhouses were established experienced a reduction in their poor rates, of from 25 to 65 per cent. Part of this reduction is attributable to the cheaper cost of living consequent on a number of persons dwelling together, but the greater part was owing to the workhouse acting as *tests* of destitution, and preventing applications except from the most degraded and destitute. It was, in fact, a carrying out of the same principle as that enforced by the New Poor Law Bill of 1834, but without the systematic and general extension which centralization enabled the New Poor Law Commissioners to effect. Had the system been generally applied, of restricting the relief to the able bodied within the workhouses, notwithstanding their defective management and arrangement, and the want of central superintendence, many of the evils which resulted would have been avoided. All that portion of pauperism capable of being deterred from facing the dispensers of the fund by the fear of

the partial imprisonment accompanying it, would at least have been prevented, altho the *source* of pauperism, the deficiency of the wages' fund, would still have remained. This extension of the workhouse system, however, was not destined to take place at that time.

The second epoch in our Poor Laws, embracing a period of 73 years, terminated in 1795 by the passing of Sir William Young's act; from this date to 1834, a period of 39 years, constitutes the third era, and the most disastrous of any. The act of 1795 authorized justices of the peace to order relief to poor persons at their own houses. The cause of this absurd, and, as it proved, most injurious law, had its origin in the high prices of 1795, and succeeding years. The motive for this law was probably not so disinterested as might be supposed; it is stated to have originated from an apprehension that the high prices would raise wages to a height from which it would be difficult to lower them when the cause for it had ceased; or, that during the high prices, the laborers might have had to undergo privations to which it would be *unsafe* to expose them. The object was generally effected by the magistrates forming a scale of relief, graduated according to the price of bread, and the extent of the family of the claimant for relief. This placed the idle and industrious on one footing, because the difference of wages was made up by the parish. It was the *realization* of that which the ignorant and distorted imagination of modern selfishness ascribes to *Communism*! But, unlike communism, it offered no inducement to the exertion of skill and industry; whether in the shape of increase of products, in the self-respect of the individual, in the approbation of his fellows, or in the sentiment of duty,—but exactly the reverse of all these. It did not discriminate its objects, and thus it taught the laborer to look upon relief as a permanent right, quite apart from his necessities. The most fiendish ingenuity could not have devised a system more calculated to destroy the welfare of every class, but especially of the laboring class, of society. It was calculated in every way to deteriorate the poor laborer. It offered a premium to extravagance and idleness, and gave a direct discouragement to the practice of the opposite virtues. The principles of management enforced, varied with the varying dispositions of magistrates and overseers. From the want of efficient superintendence, the work performed had seldom either the positive merit of being productive, or the negative one of serving as a test. Sometimes the pauper laborers were compelled to give up a certain portion of their time, by confining them in a gravel pit, or they were directed to sit at a certain spot and do nothing; or they were obliged to attend a roll call several times a day.¹ In other places, what was called the Round'sman system, or that by which the paupers were distributed among the farmers, prevailed; they were sold by auction, "the old and infirm at from 1s. 6d. to 3s. per week, the unemployed at 5s. per week."^m In some places the "*employed* was pledged to set himself at no necessary or essential occupation."ⁿ

In those cases where labor was demanded, the superintendents of it were not remunerated, and had much to gain and little to lose by extravagant liberality;

¹ Poor Law Commissioners' Report 1834, p. 20.

^m Ibid, p. 32.

ⁿ Ibid, p. 33.

moreover, they had to give away other people's money, and not their own. The pauper had no incentive to exertion, so long as the parish made up his earnings to the requisite amount, putting him equally on a footing with the industrious laborer. The farmer, altho he paid in rates what he should have paid in wages, and secured inefficiency by his bargain, fancied that he saved by the system, because he could throw part of the cost of keeping his laborers upon other people. The honest industrious laborer found the incentives greater for wrong than for well doing. It cannot therefore be wondered at, that, under such a system, the poor rates increased enormously. In 23 years the rates rose from £3,000,000 to £7,870,801. Such was the pecuniary cost of pauperism under this system. Nor was this the only loss. That which the wonderful progress of machinery (in giving great opportunities of amassing wealth, and thus stimulating Mammon-worship) was doing in the towns to destroy the social character, and ruin the domestic happiness of the operative, was quite as effectually done in the agricultural districts by the old poor law. Those mutual offices of attention and kindness which the savage pays to his kindred, in suffering,—which even brutes have been known to manifest,—became questions of barter under the withering influence of parish pay. Mr. Cowell, speaking on this subject, justly remarks, that the pressure of the sum annually raised upon the rate-payers, and its progressive increase, was an insignificant evil compared with its effects on the morals and happiness of the laborer.

"A person must converse with paupers—must enter workhouses, and examine the inmates; must attend at the parish pay table, before he can form a just conception of the moral debasement which is the offspring of the present system; he must hear the pauper threaten to abandon his wife and family unless more money is allowed him—threaten to abandon an aged and bed ridden mother, to turn her out of his house and lay her down at the overseer's door, unless he is paid for giving her shelter; he must hear parents threatening to follow the same course with regard to their sick children; he must see mothers coming to receive the reward of their daughter's ignominy, and witness women in cottages quietly pointing out, without even the question being asked, which are their children by their husband, and which by other men previous to marriage; and when he finds that he can scarcely step into a town or parish in any country without meeting with some instance or other of this character, he will no longer consider the pecuniary pressure on the rate-payers as the first in the class of evils which the poor laws have entailed on the community."^o

These sad results, however, are no part of our present enquiry, which concerns the validity of the objection, that paupers cannot be profitably employed. We have now seen that there never was machinery efficient for the purpose, or embracing those conditions which common sense would prescribe as essential to success. For example:—The poor rate returns for the year ending 25th March 1832, state that out of £7,036,968 expended in that year for the relief of the poor, less than £354,000, or scarcely one twentieth part, was paid for work, including work on the roads, and in the workhouses.^p Again, with respect to the management of the poor, we put it to any man in the remotest degree acquainted with the conduct of any manufacturer, whether every principle on which success

^o Ibid, p. 97.

depends was not entirely reversed? What should we say of a capitalist who should change his managers sometimes two or three times a year, who should not remunerate them at all, but leave them to pay themselves by what they could embezzle out of the general fund, who should not have the slightest motive for attention to their duties, but many incentives to misconduct, men "who have to give, or to refuse, public money to their own workmen, dependents, customers, debtors, relatives, friends, and neighbors; who are exposed to every form of solicitation and threat, who are rewarded for profusion with ease and popularity, and punished for economy by labor, odium, and danger to their properties, and even their persons?"¹ What sane person could expect other than disastrous results from such a misorganization? Yet this was the management to which the pauper laborer was subjected.

The fourth Epoch in the history of English pauperism, commenced with the passing of the New Poor Law Bill, which received the Royal assent August 14th, 1834. It provided a central authority of three Commissioners, who, with the aid of nine Assistant Commissioners, were to control the whole administration of Poor relief, and whose acts were to have the force of Laws. The great and most unpopular feature of the law under which they acted, was the compelling of relief to the able bodied pauper, under conditions which should render its acceptance undesirable, unless suffering under extreme destitution. This was done by refusing relief except on the condition of confinement in the workhouse. The carrying out of this measure excited a universal burst of indignation. Tory and Radical papers vied in their abuse of the tyranny of 'the three kings of Somerset House.' As the commissioners themselves remark, 'the demand of the public was for poor law horrors, and an accommodating literature found the supply. The organization of labor, the birth cry of the French Republic, is now passing thro' the same ordeal. Nevertheless, the poor law bill was successful, and immeasurably superior to the old one, in many respects. It compelled relief and wages, which the old system totally confounded, to re-assume their respective characters. It prevented the reduction of the whole laboring population to the condition of parish-pay receivers. It saved an immense amount of litigation and legal expenses. It economized the maintenance of the indoor paupers by means of the workhouse. It systematized the poor relief of the country, so that there were no longer as many systems of relief as there were parishes. It enforced a system of clear and uniform accounts. These, and other less important benefits, it undoubtedly conferred. But here its advantages cease. The great cause of pauperism, namely the deficiency of the wages-fund, was left untouched, except so far as the training of pauper children, and the emigration of paupers, have a tendency to diminish the disparity of the two elements. It was assumed that the State could not create, and therefore ought not to attempt to create, a fund for the support of paupers by means of pauper labor. The labor provided was not meant to be productive, it was intended merely as a test. But the Commissioners shall speak for themselves:—

"The work to be provided for paupers should be of a laborious and undesirable nature

¹ Poor Law Commissioners' Report, 1834, p. 36. ² Ibid.

³ Report for 1839, p. 28.

itself, and the remuneration less than would be paid for work of equal quantity—if performed by independent laborers, and further, such work should not be of the kind in which the independent laborers; of the district are ordinarily employed, neither should it be much regarded as to its profitable results; but it should be viewed merely as a condition on which that relief which their necessities require, and which the law allows, is to be administered to paupers."

"The Commissioners consider that the question whether the work performed by paupers is profitable in a pecuniary sense, is altogether secondary to the main question, namely, whether as a condition of obtaining relief, it operates to discourage pauperism. From misapprehension on this point, it has been sometimes attempted to obtain a profit for the parish, not only by cultivating parish farms, but by setting up various sorts of manufactures, to be carried on by pauper labor. Such efforts have always proved abortive, and have invariably entailed a loss upon the parish, as well as caused injury to the independent laborer, by interfering with the labor market."³

If the treatment experienced by the unemployed laborer, was, as a consequence of these views, harsh and cruel in the extreme, it by no means follows that the men who promulgated them were hard-hearted, or uncaring for the interests of the working classes, as is commonly supposed. No man can read the reports of the Poor Law Commissioners without feeling that most of them had a strong sympathy for the people, and that, like the cool and skilful surgeon, they inflicted (as they thought) temporary pain, in order to eradicate that gangrene of society—pauperism. As, under the influence of principles diabolical in their nature, but conscientiously held, affectionate mothers have betrayed their doubting children to the fangs of the murderous inquisition, so, under the influence of the false dogma that it was neither desirable nor possible for the state to provide profitable employment for the unemployed, they were tied to the alternative of compelling the unemployed to find it for themselves. The real success of the attempt was great enough to lead the Commissioners to flatter themselves that they were in the right track, while the apparent success was even still greater. This was owing to the fact already stated, that a large portion of the poor-rates were in reality wages. The employer paid little wages, and the parish made up the difference. The temptation to the employer was, that he thus made others contribute to the maintenance of his own laborers; the inducement to the laborer was, that while he could seldom secure work on other conditions, his idleness, or inefficiency, was as well remunerated as his industry and ability would have been. Under the new arrangement the fund which was nominally poor relief, but really wages, re-assumed its proper character of wages, while, in addition, the idle were impelled to labor, and the improvident to economize. This effected a reduction in the parochial rates of not less than 36 per cent. within three years of the passing of the act. Hence, if we may use such an expression, 36 per cent. of the theory of the Commissioners was true, since 36 per cent. more money than was needful had been paid under the mal-administration of the old system. But then, what became of the remaining sixty-four per cent. of the theory? It was entirely false. Had the doctrine on which it was based been true, pauperism ought to have diminished to zero—a result actually anticipated by the Commissioners

⁴ Report of Poor Law Commissioners for 1836, p. 45. Ditto on the amendment of the Poor Law, 1839, p. 45.

themselves, except as respects the aged and impotent. But what was the fact? Why, that from that very year 1837, the fund has gradually risen from its then minimum of £5,412,938 up to £7,117,352 in 1847, which is nearly equal to its amount in the period of its greatest abuse and mal-administration. The Poor Law Bill, besides, was passed at a juncture most favorable to its success, viz, while food was low and an unusual activity prevailed in the manufacturing districts. The system of intimidating poverty has, therefore, *not* proved successful. The rates have risen to the old misery-mark, and the recourse to an irksome *new*, New Poor law-Bill, might possibly be dangerous. Twice has relief been prohibited save in the workhouse.¹ The first act of the kind was repealed,² and the second is incapable of being carried out, from the sheer want of 'bastiles' and barracks, for so large an army of *unorganized* laborers. The workhouse test is not applied to a sixth of the applicants for relief. A grand mistake lay at the basis of poor-law-legislation. It made provision for compelling *one-third* of the paupers for whom employment really existed, to have recourse to, and be paid by, that employment. But it blundered in overlooking the other *two-thirds*, for whom no employment exists. It went only so far as to provide a test (that is, either labor at the stone heap, or imprisonment) which, it was presumed, nobody would submit to so long as he could obtain *other* employment. Now, the meaning of a test is, an experiment to ascertain the presence of a certain phenomenon; in this case whether the applicant for relief be *really unable* to find employment. Well, the test is applied, the experiment is made; and it appears that half-a-million of men really do want employment, *but for whom no employment exists*.

Common sense would say, that the desired fact being ascertained by testing, the test should cease, and the *remedy* begin. But mark the logic of *laissez-faire-ism*. It identifies the test with the remedy, that is to say, it ascertains the disease but does not attempt its cure. The disproportion between capital and labor it treats as a crime, and thrusts the politically-diseased 'surplus' laborer into 'a gaol without guilt.' In truth, the disproportion between the wages fund and labor, is 'the crime' of society, not of the surplus laborer. His only fault has been, that, in the scramble for wealth, he was too weak, or too ignorant, to secure his share. The great error which has pervaded the attempts to remove pauperism, was, the omission to remove the causes which led to it. The object aimed at, was to throw the laborer on his own resources; forgetting to enquire whether any such existed, and in case there were none, the attempt to remove pauperism must be *futile*. It is one thing to refuse relief,—it is another and a very different thing to cure pauperism. The fallacy of the new poor law legislation consisted in confounding these two things so essentially different. No efforts were spared to frighten pauperism, but pauperism was not to be frightened. Vast as were the powers of the commissioners, they could not cow hungry bellies into silence. All the varied talent and extensive experience which they possessed themselves, or could command thro' the means placed at their disposal, have been baffled, and pauperism is nearly as rife to day, as it was when England was poorer by hundreds of millions of pounds. With the unfortunate dogma that it was not desi-

¹ 9th George 1, C. 7, and the New Poor Law Act of 1834.

² By 36 George 3. C. 23.

able to interfere with the relation of capital and labor, men by nature and education inclined to be humane, were compelled, in order to drive the pauper laborer 'to rely on his own resources,' to have recourse to refinements of cruelty which made the shooting and pickling plan of Thomas Carlyle, the child-eating recommended by Dean Swift, and the painless extinction doctrine of Marcus, no such very extravagant expedients. We need not ask whether the plan of intimidating poverty has proved a failure. At the present moment the rates are as high, and press more heavily than in the worst days of pauper mismanagement. The excuse cannot be pleaded, that the funds are dispensed extravagantly; for the pittance given as out door relief, will scarcely keep body and soul together. It does little beyond avoiding the odium, without removing the guilt, of killing them off by slow starvation. Even the sum now bestowed as out door relief would provide a far larger amount of comfort, if it were a combined expenditure, as in the workhouses, than spent by dribblets in the purchase of infinitesimal quantities of the various articles of food.

Nor has the poor law diminished begging and vagrancy. Groups of able-bodied men perambulate the streets, singing some doleful ditty, or attend from door to door with lucifer matches or other articles, as pretexts for asking charity. Hundreds, again, are passed thro' the vagrant office, after having received a single night's lodging, and are turned out of the town, to visit some new place, again to partake of the vagrant's fare, again to be turned out, until habit has made it familiar, and the transition to depredations and theft is easily accomplished.

Vain indeed are the efforts of philanthropists to cure the evils arising from poverty, till the remedy for poverty itself be found. In vain to appeal to the starving prostitute to quit the paths of vice, she cannot afford to be virtuous—she wants bread! The other day, the benevolent Lord Ashley collected the thieves together. Among various questions asked them, was this, "Are you all willing to give up thieving and go to work?" The whole 138 who were present replied in the affirmative. As the *Manchester Examiner* truly said,

"One hundred and thirty-eight of our fellow-creatures, in the prime of manhood, thieves by trade, self-acknowledged felons, ready to abandon their unlawful pursuits, and in this Christian, moral, liberal, and enlightened age, actually incapable of discovering how to be honest—and live! Out of 372, 278 had received no education, and their times of imprisonment varied from one to twenty-seven times, while two forgot how many times they had been incarcerated. What was to be said to the 207 confessed and convicted rogues then there? 'Mutual aid' was what his lordship most recommended—self-reliance, self-sacrifice, a relinquishing of their old practices, and new resolves for the future. 'But how,' said they, 'are we to live till our next meeting? We must steal or die.' One of the party arose and said, 'My lord, and gentlemen of the jury, prayer is very good, but it will not fill an empty stomach.' There was a general response of 'Hear, hear!' and the directors of the meeting, we are told, 'were in considerable difficulty'."

No doubt! They ask for bread, and we give them a stone. Even let-alone-ism may find, that it is not 'buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market,' to pay for judges, gaols, and hangmen, instead of providing good education and the means of employment.

Under a well organized system of employment, mendicancy would be an impos-

sibility. The removal of beggars by the police would be rendered unnecessary, because the public would feel that proper relief existed. Their sympathies would be on the side of the law, instead of being against it, from the feeling that the relief is inadequate, and in many instances unattainable.

It is a disgrace to the good sense of the English nation, that such a vast number of unemployed laborers, capable of at least maintaining themselves, capable of adding to the wealth of the country, and becoming worthy and reputable members of society, should be doing nothing, worse than nothing, work which is not work, but a make-believe and a sham, work by which they get demoralized in character, and drag down the independent laborer on whose wages they subsist to a position little better than their own.

It is shocking to reflect that the worth of a man was greater in those feudal days when the Saxon Serf wore the brass collar of his Norman Master, than is the value of that man who at the test-heap lazily earns his few pence per day. There is a frightful absurdity in the thought, that a Southern Slave-holder will go to an immense expense in the purchasing of a slave, that this slave must be dragged from the interior of Africa, must escape the cruisers employed in the suppression of the traffic, must be transported at an immense expense before he reaches the slave mart, seeing that half or two-thirds perish by the way, and yet his labor will repay all this outlay, and the expense of feeding and maintaining him, to the planter—while a pauper Englishman is not only not worth his keep, but is actually a burden in the way.

"A full formed horse," says Thomas Carlyle, "will, in any market, bring from twenty to as high as two hundred Friedrich's d'or: such is his worth to the world. A full-formed man is not only worth nothing to the world, but the world could afford him a round sum would he simply engage to go and hang himself. Nevertheless, which of the two was the more cunningly devised article, even as an Engine? Good Heaven! A white European Man, standing on his two legs, with his two five fingered Hands at his shackle bones, and miraculous Head on his shoulders, is worth I should say from fifty to a hundred horses."

Even where the laborer's own misconduct has brought him to poverty, it may generally be traced to society having permitted him to grow up without culture; a savage amid civilization. But, admitting that his poverty is a crime, and a crime of his own creating, it has yet to be shown that the principle of *Coercion* will remedy the evil. We are fast giving up the theory of revenge as part of our criminal jurisprudence. Why retain it in our poor laws? All the circumstances which usually call forth the better principles of man's nature,—kindly treatment, intelligent training, the desire of securing and increasing his advantages,—are withheld. Even brutes must have some kind treatment, something more than the whip. Thus, this accursed theory of leaving capital and labor to a so-called free-conflict, has driven Christians to consider as the appropriate usage of a large portion of humanity, treatment which could not succeed if tried upon a dog! But even if this treatment were applied to the wilful pauper alone, it would be intelligible, if unwise. Against him the fiat might go forth—"He that will not work, neither shall he eat." But to him who *would* work, if he could get it, *what apology can be made for thus felonizing him?* By what right do you claim to punish him with coarse diet, imprisonment, and disgusting or useless labor?

It is impertinent to reply that population exceeds the *means* of subsistence. What is meant by *means*? Does it signify that portion of capital which capitalists are able or willing to use in the employment of laborers? True, but what then? It by no means follows that the capabilities of creating wealth for those who are without, are wanting. In this sense, 'means' *do* exist in plenty, and it demands but human will, using appropriate skill and energy, to render them available. To the consideration of those means we propose to devote the next lecture. Let us however no more tolerate the dogma of 'over-population,' and the cruel consequences drawn from it, for it is a libel on the Goodness of Deity. As well attribute the death of a miser, caused by his penurious abits, to poverty instead of avarice. It is to confound similarity of effect with identity of cause. Let the name be 'deficient wages fund'—deficient because the natural means of its creation are artificially limited, and the fault will then be brought home to its true source, namely, HUMAN MISMANAGEMENT.



SOCIAL SCIENCE.

LECTURE IV.—ORGANIZATION OF SURPLUS LABORERS.

IN the present occasion we shall not insist on the *right* of the unemployed laborer to demand employment from the state, but, for the sake of argument, assume that all the great advantages would be realized, which are promised by the *Laissez-fairians* as the result of confining the functions of the State to the administration of Justice solely. Indeed, until we can commence a social state with perfect arrangements, which, admitting no despotism and monopoly, shall give every one a fair chance of using his *natural* powers, a properly conducted system of relief and labor for the able-bodied poor may safely rest for its defence on the ground of expediency. We do not here so much propose a *new* interference as a *wiser* one. It is vain to object to the employment of the pauper, because we shall have 'such a good time, when universal Justice prevails.' As we are compelled, even *now*, however inadequately, to protect the laborer and feed the pauper, would it not be the shortest way of doing both, at once to provide employment for the surplus laborers, thereby rendering a host of minor interferences by the state, and a vast amount of mischievous private benevolence, quite unnecessary?

Perhaps no two things are more dissimilar, than such a system of poor relief as would recommended itself to any humane and intelligent individual, not laboring under the domination of a political dogma, and the systems of relief adopted under the old and new Poor-law. The primary fallacy which lies at the root of both systems, is the making of pauperism into a sort of venial sin, to be remedied only by a system of relief which takes the shape of punishment. Hence the gravel pit atrocity in the old and the stone-heap and oakum picking abominations of the new law. The Poor-law Commissioners were anxious that the law should not destroy the strongest motives to good conduct—steady industry, providence, and frugality, among the laboring classes; and thus induce persons, by idleness and imposture, to throw themselves upon the poor-rates. This object they affirm, could only be secured by making the condition of the pauper less eligible than that of the independent laborer.^a The notion, if sound, would strike at the principle of relief altogether. If to make the pauper condition ineligible be to stimulate the motives to good conduct, providence and frugality, to make that condition still more ineligible would be to stimulate to the practice of these virtues still more, and to deny relief altogether would afford the strongest motive of all. The fact is always overlooked, that the greatest of the sources of pauperism,—deficiency of employment,—is not to be cured by intimidation,—

may, that a very Socrates must perish, in spite of his virtues, under the same circumstances in which a vast number of our population are so often placed.

But how can it be just to let those who *must* be supported by the rates, fare as well, or better, than those who contribute to them—the independent laborers?

Ans. 1st. We also object to the pauper being maintained by the semi-pauper, but this only shows that the rich should pay more. The rich are most capable of paying the tax, and if they felt its pressure more, their sympathies and interest in preventing the poor becoming paupers, might possibly be quickened. *They* who have partaken most liberally of the vast increase of wealth, may fittingly contribute most bountifully to those less fortunate ones who have not at all participated in the advantage.

2nd. A liberal pauper-relief conditional upon work, instead of being a hardship to the rate payers, is in fact far juster than a system of relief which aims at *no return* for the rates, and contains no machinery for the eventual extermination of the evil. Pauperism is now a continual tax. The amount of rates spent since 1834 is nearly 70 millions, one quarter of which, properly expended in employing the paupers, would have extinguished pauperism itself, whereas we are now more remote from the cure of it than ever.

3rd. The most important advantage of a liberal poor law would be, that of acting as an effectual protection in keeping up the rate of wages—an advantage equally to landholder, capitalist, and laborer. If the competition of laborers reduces the wages of the masses, so that they are compelled (while surrounded by wealth which they cannot touch) to subsist on garbage, amid rags, filth, and all the brutalizing influences of poverty, it is the merest delusion to expect that they will submit to their fate in peace and quietness. They will begin to manifest their own view of matters by Swing-fires and agrarian outrage, they will end by reducing England to the condition of that political opprobrium—unhappy Ireland. The capitalist compels his work-people to take less wages, under the terror of a harsh poor law. But if they receive little, they consume little,—if they consume little, he can sell little; for every new pauper made, there is, besides the cost of his keep incurred, a customer lost; and the final result is, Capital saddled with an increasing pauper population and diminishing income. Such a state of things may speedily come to a crisis not very agreeable to those who now so insolently reject the claims of the laborer.

4th. A liberal poor law would be the cheapest on another account. It is an undoubted fact that the very poor are the most prolific of offspring, and of an offspring most costly to the state. They either grow up the outcasts and enemies of society, or never reach that period of life which should repay the expense of their early rearing. The solitary merit of the old poor law was, that the liberality of the relief often helped to maintain the rate of wages. Even for the avowed object of the Malthusian school,—that of keeping down population,—we would advocate a liberal poor law. It is not the man constantly at the verge of destitution, who is regardless of the calculations of prudence. His condition cannot be worse,—possibly his children may be able to support him,—the instincts of nature turn the balance, and he marries, reckless of taxing the funds of the overseer to purchase the bridal-bed. The worst feature of Irish distress is not that

^a Report on the amendment of the Poor Law, 1839. Page 45.

the laborer subsists on so little, but that he is *content* to do so. In those countries where the primary wants are supplied with ease, the greatest obstacle to civilization is this very contentedness. The lever of progress is without its fulcrum.

The arguments in favor of a better division of landed property, confirm this view. J. S. Mill, Laing, Thornton, and other opponents of the monopoly of the soil, all claim, as their justification, that population does not progress with dangerous rapidity when men are in a comfortable condition. It seems, indeed, that where affluence and luxury prevail, population absolutely decays. Whether the effect be traceable to the greater prudence which the comfortable classes exercise to avoid endangering their advantages, or, as Mr. Doubleday has rendered probable, to a great law of nature, extending to the entire animal and vegetable kingdoms, may be matter of debate,—but the fact itself is certain.^b There is, in fact, no greater security against the increase of population than the comfortable condition of a people, while the surest way for a state to incur the evils of a redundant population, misery, turbulence, and eventual decline, is to let the great mass of the people suffer destitution. Knowingly or unknowingly, the rich are compelled to be sponsors for the poor, by a law higher than acts of parliament. They may *learn* 'let-alone-ism' from their books and newspapers,—they will *act* it at their peril.

Having already traced the failure of the attempts to employ pauper-labor productively, to the disregard of the most simple principles, we proceed to consider the Plan on which labor may be successfully organized.

Three important elements in production, are Labor, Capital, and Skill in superintendence. The greater efficiency secured in these elements, the greater the success to be attained. If the state intends to employ the whole surplus laborers (which it never will do, however, until labor is *represented*), most of whom it now maintains unproductively, the proper procedure seems to be the following. Taking the proportions of the various occupations existing in so vast a number, as a tolerable approximation^c to that which exists in general society, it would be needful to ascertain the previous employment to which the paupers may have been accustomed, and to classify them according to age, general character, number of family, etc., thus placing the Poor Law Commissioners in full possession of the material to which they have to apply the principles of an industrial organization.

As the superintendence of so large a number of paupers would be impossible, they should be subdivided into *colonies*, putting each under the superintendence of persons of known ability in those departments of industry to which the colony was to be principally devoted, and who also possessed habits of discipline, and the

^b What an arrangement of the world it would be, if the increase of wages but increased population in as great or greater ratio! In what a gulf of misery would the mass of mankind be irrevocably fixed, since from such a state they could never emerge.

^c Among the pauper body there will be a larger amount of unskilled laborers. But this disadvantage will not be great, since their first occupation will obviously be to supply the *primary wants*. The pauper population may be conceived of as a kind of state within the state. The government assumes functions with regard to them, new in themselves, and hitherto entrusted to individual efforts solely.

power of governing numbers. The appointment would not of course depend on popular control. Men so elected, seldom possess that skill and intelligence in the application of capital which is essential to success. Neither must they be subject the accidents of political intrigue, mistaken benevolence, or commercial rapacity, nor marked by that consummate dulness which has so often characterized the administrators of the poor fund. These, indeed, have not hitherto *professed* the possession of the qualities necessary to an industrial chief. Bronzed impudence, and a tolerable toughness, are all now deemed requisite in 'a good overseer.' When we set about creating wealth for the pauper (instead of ruining his character or breaking his heart), we shall look for very different qualities. Happily, in this country, there are hundreds of men qualified for the task. Under them would be a number of overlookers or foremen, partly selected from the superior portion of the paupers themselves, making the reward of each, as far as possible, contingent on the results of their management. The occupations selected should be principally those in which, from use, the paupers had the greatest aptitude—an important point, hitherto miserably disregarded in attempts to employ pauper labor, it being so much easier to the parish philosophers to turn the pauper on to a parish farm and thus get rid of his importunities, than to make a judicious adaptation of his powers by which he might ultimately have become self-supporting. There are many paupers, indeed, whose previous employments deprive them of even that strength and skill necessary to make a tolerable laborer on the soil. When a transfer of occupation is unavoidable, the transition should be as easy as possible, since, otherwise, the previous skill and habits are not only rendered useless, but become hindrances.

All who reflect, however slightly, on this subject, must regard the labor at the stone heap, and the picking of oakum, with extreme indignation. These tasks would be performed at a hundredth part the expense by means of machinery.^d But the waste of labor is the least evil. Men become very much, what their mode of treatment implies them to be. Condemn a man to a drudgery scarcely fit for the criminal, and he loses all his self-respect. Treated as a thief, *why* should he not be one? His poverty which claims pity as a misfortune, is punished as a crime. Knowing that he only breaks stones as a test, he contracts a slovenly, lazy mode of working, destructive even to his future efficiency. After he has worked at the stone heap, he is worth less as a working machine,—as a man he is degraded. The right plan is to treat him as an unfortunate brother,—to make him feel that he has not sunk in the estimation of society,—and that it is his duty, because in his power, again to become the supporter of himself and family. Instead of giving the pauper degrading labor, labor for labor's sake, or as a test, we would, while preserving all its value as a test, make the laborer honorable, by making his labor useful in the production of wealth. Not only should the division of labor be introduced, but also machinery for *saving* labor, to the greatest practicable extent.

As a good proportion of the colonies would be mainly employed in agriculture,

^d From a report of the Guardians of the Leicester Union (1847), it appears that in the course of 14 weeks, £1051 were expended in breaking stones, of which no more than 5 tons were sold, yielding 17s. 6d. against the cost of labor.

the question arises, where should they be situated? It is very desirable that the first experiments in the organization of pauper labor should take place in Great Britain and Ireland, but especially in Ireland, where an infusion of English character would do great good. Home-colonies would secure a great saving in the item of transit, obviate much opposition, and leave the management open to discussion, by which abuses and errors would be more easily repressed or rectified.

The system of living in these self-supporting colonies should be based on the principle of *Association*. Greater comforts are obtained in the workhouse in comparison with those which the same sum would purchase under isolated expenditure. The model lodging-houses in London have secured to the lodgers excellent accommodation at a cheaper rate than that previously paid for bad lodgings, besides paying a handsome per centage on the investment. The baths and wash-houses for the poor, the club-houses for the rich, equally exemplify the advantages of the same principle. All the best features of these various *practical* institutes are combined under the title of the 'self-supporting village' advocated by Mr. John Minter Morgan, and perhaps this would be the most desirable form, with such modifications as the different character and number of the inmates might demand.

It is owing to the power of combination, aided by machinery and the division of labor, that a few hundreds of people in a factory are capable of producing such vast quantities of commodities. Yet the workers are conscious that they are working for the benefit of another, and can do little toward increasing their own comforts, or securing a provision for sickness and old age. With the pauper laborer it would be desirable to add every stimulus possible to his exertions. This could be done most effectually by placing him in the position of a partner, which would also have the desirable effect of multiplying the superintendence.* The motives of present and future advantage, with good superintendence, would doubtless insure tolerable efficiency.

The *only* restrictions should be such as tend to secure good conduct. The diet, clothing, etc., should at first be just what are essential to health, and *nothing more*. The large and shameful items sometimes seen in Poor-House accounts, for *Wine, Beer, Tobacco*, must find no place. The pauper would be considered as a Debtor to the state for the whole amount of food, clothing, and share of capital advanced to him, and Creditor by the proceeds of his labor. When these two have balanced (i. e. when he has repaid the whole he had consumed), the restriction will cease,—he assuming the position of an independent laborer, tho still enjoying the advantages of the associated colony. When the entire colony has cleared its expenses, and becomes *enfranchised*, as it were—its connection with, and responsibility to, the GOVERNMENT, will also cease, except in the relation of subjects. Similar arrangements might even be continued by the colonists on their own account, for their mutual profit. The advantages of subordination and association would be such, we apprehend, as not only to justify, but demand, the continuance of the system.

During the period of their probation the neglected education of the adults

* See details of M. Leclaire's experiment, No. 91, Chambers' Journal.

should be atoned for as far as possible, and a superior training given to the younger portion of the colonists.

This system would secure several advantages. It would attack Pauperism at its chief sources, viz. deficient wages-fund, and immoral, improvident conduct. It would be humane,—free from useless pains and degrading processes. The worst class of operatives it would deter, the better kind it would invite, preserve, and enrich. The condition of *labor* would deter the idle, enforced sobriety the habitually intemperate. The general restrictions now recommended have all the advantages, without any of the disadvantages, of 'the test.' The voluntary pauper who likes to *eat* without fulfilling the condition of work, would find no encouragement, while to the honest pauper, with an average labor, and the quantity and quality of food sufficient for health,—the consciousness that he is not deemed an outcast, but earns what he eats,—that his children will be educated,—that when he has earned his independence he will obtain it, and may leave it to his children,—abundant motives are supplied for self-improvement and industry. If the 'Organization of Labor' mean anything, it means that the laborer should have the OPPORTUNITY, if he deserve and will it, to become *free* and *independent*,—not independent of *labor*, and free from the *other duties* of life—(as the so-called 'Independent men' but really most dependent of all, now misuse the word),—but independent in the sense that each man shall be the arbiter of his own fate, instead of being a slave or hanger-on to his fellow man. He deserves not his liberty who will not pay its price. No government, no Communism, can much mend the lot of the drunkard, the glutton, the idler, or the knave. It is the *duty* of society to snatch the innocent child from the pernicious influence of its worthless parent, but for him there is no 'Paradise made easy,' or Paradise of any other sort, till he shall become willing to quit the sty. It would be unjust in society, even if possible, to secure a comfortable subsistence to the pauper, unless he should merit it. So long as it offers premiums to imposition, whether by bad Poor Laws, or Alms-giving, it will have plenty of the article.

It should be our object to remove, as speedily as possible, every trace of *penal treatment* from self-supporting pauper colonies, since it is not necessary as a criterion of those who can, or cannot, find adequately remunerative employment elsewhere. The tests should be of such a nature, that the man of honest and independent character, might *show* his honesty by *accepting* them, when other work fails him, so that he would not hesitate between a cold hearth and pining children on the one hand, and the acceptance of the means of relieving his necessities in an *Industrial Colony*, on the other.

There is another class of persons, to whom such a system would extend help and protection, and save from ultimate crime—the thriftless and the improvident,—who oft-times possessing the means of earning a livelihood, but conscious of their inability to refrain from vicious indulgences, would gladly substitute for their own deficient self-denial, the wholesome discipline and restraint of arrangements which at once denied indulgence and compelled economy.

Ample room exists in Britain for such an organization. The state might repurchase the rights to some of that land which was taken from the use of the poor by the Reformation, and since then by numberless inclosure bills, and which has simply gone to swell the means of those who have already far too much.

There are 14,000,000 acres of waste land in this country, and many landholders would be glad to *sell* (for it should never be leased) land which in many cases produces them nothing.

We propose that the sum now expended in *punishing* the poor (more than £7,000,000 sterling), should be expended in *employing* the poor. To this sum may be added a large portion of the present cost of crime, nine tenths of which originates in the early vagabondage occasioned by poverty. If half a million of able-bodied laborers, working 300 days per year, only created produce equal to 13d. a day in value, it would amount to £8,125,000 yearly—i.e. a million more than the total amount now paid in poor rates.^f Yet 13d. per day is far lower than such a person would earn even in agricultural operations. In the strength and industry of our unemployed population we possess a mine of wealth, worth a dozen Californias. Not only do we not appropriate our idle wealth, but gladly export it, kill it, do anything with it, to get it out of the way. Mr. Poulett Scrope, speaking of cultivating the waste lands of Ireland, quotes the digest of the evidence taken by the Devon Commission [Vol. i. p. 565], where the compilers affirm, as a result of much experience in similar improvements, and a mature study of the question—statistical details and calculations supporting them—that cultivating of the waste lands of Ireland would provide a livelihood for no less than half-a-million of the laboring population, representing at least two millions of souls; and would thus not merely prove a saving of the national capital now lost in the unproductive maintenance of the able-bodied poor, but “would produce a very large permanent gain to the country at large; raising the produce of the 3,755,000 acres of reclaimable waste, now not averaging four shillings per acre, to a value of at least £6 per acre; i. e. creating a *new produce* of the ANNUAL VALUE of £22,000,000,—while the first three or four years’ crops will return the cost requisite to bring this change.”

Pauper laborers are indeed less efficient than other laborers; but not irretrievably so; and when we reflect that the labor of the independant workman, maintains *not only himself*, but ALL THE OTHER CLASSES OF SOCIETY,—soldiers, sailors, paupers (both rich and poor), and that far too large class who subsist on profits arising from the mere ‘distribution’ of commodities,—we can have little doubt that the pauper-laborer, free from several of these burdens, will *at least maintain himself*, and very speedily contribute his fair share towards the general expenses of Society.

But would not the funds requisite for such an organization of pauper labor, be considerably more than the sum at present required to relieve them?”

It *would* be greater, by all the amount needed for the erection of the necessary buildings and the purchase of the tools and raw material. What then? While under skilful management the cost would not be so much greater, the return and the results would more than justify any temporary sacrifice. The first buildings need not be palaces, but have the simple cottage character, and might, in a great measure, be erected by the paupers themselves, with the assistance of a small staff of skilled laborers. They must *rough* it, as they would have to do in emigrating to a foreign soil. With the progress of accumulation, their debt to the state being first discharged, they might increase their expenditure with the in-

^f See Appendix B.

crease of their means, and, machinery no longer working *against* but *for* them, this would very soon come to pass.

To render the funds now dispensed in relief available for the purposes of production, it would be expedient to collect them into one sum, or into a few large amounts. The poor tax should be considered as a national, not as a local one, since the chief causes of pauperism are national, not local, in their character. If the Bradford Wool-comber is pauperized by the introduction of a new machine, it is *the public* who receive the benefit, and it is the public—the Nation—that should remove the evil.^g Some of the advantages of a national Poor-rate are thus enumerated by the Poor law Commissioners.

“It would put an end to settlements. With settlements would go removals, labor rates, and all other restrictions and prohibitions by which each agricultural parish is endeavoring to prevent a free trade in labor, and to insulate itself by a conventional cordon as impassable to the unsettled workman, as Bishop Berkeley’s wall of brass. There would no longer be a motive for preferring in employment the men with large families to those with small; the married to the unmarried; the destitute to those who have saved; [the commissioners could not conceive of a man willing to work and save too, being destitute]; the careless and improvident, to the industrious and enterprising. We should no longer have those local congestions of a surplus, and therefore a half-employed, dissolute population, *ascripta glebæ*, some driven not by the hope of reward, but by the fear of punishment, to useless occupations, and others fed on condition of being idle; character would again be of some value to a laboring man. Another advantage, much smaller than the first, but still considerable, would be the diminution of expense; a considerable sum would be instantly saved in litigation and removals, and we might hope to save a still larger sum by substituting the systematic management of contractors and removable officers, for the careless and often corrupt jobbing of uneducated, unpaid, and irresponsible individuals.”^g

The objection advanced by the Commissioners as a reason for not recommending the change, was, that it made government “general insurer against misfortune, idleness, improvidence, and vice.” We are attempting to propound a plan which meets pauperism arising from every source. But even if no such plan were practicable, one cannot discover the difference, in this respect, between a local and a national tax. Whether the government shall provide relief, or only insist that the parish provides, makes little difference so far as insurance is concerned.

A national rate would remedy such inequalities as the following:—The parish of St. George’s, Hanover Square, pays sevenpence three farthings the pound; the West End of the Metropolis, elevenpence halfpenny; while Leeds pays five shillings and fourpence; and Norwich six and five pence. The agricultural gentlemen who drive the poor from the soil given to them by God for their maintenance, would at least pay a little more of the penalty, so far as it is measureable by money.

The plan here proposed must not be confounded with the one now being carried out in various places,—that of *Parish Farms*. The plan is a good sign, how-

^g If it be objected that the Bradford Capitalist gets rich by a particular improvement, and should therefore pay the penalty of keeping the laborers thereby pauperized, we reply, that in general he receives no higher profits than are sufficient to encourage the accumulation and diversion of capital into the new channels. If the object were to tax the *machine* which supplants the operative, it should be laid at once upon the machine itself—a plan which seems open to several objections.

^g Poor Law Report, 1834. Page 179.

ever, showing that we are getting weary of sending the unemployed to the stone-heap. The parish Farm serves the purpose of a test equally with the stone-heap, while its results are vastly superior. An experiment was made at the Chorlton Union. A piece of moss land worth nothing, was, in the space of two years, made worth £50 an acre; the sum of £629 6s 3d of wages was divided among 385 paupers who had accepted work; and a profit of £176 8s 0d was left in favor of the plan. At Farnley Tyas, near Huddersfield, in 1842, the able-bodied poor reclaimed some acres of moor land. In four years the Committee who managed it "had relieved all their able-bodied poor in a healthy and industrial mode, had converted a piece of barren waste into a fertile garden, had thereby permanently augmented the wealth of the country; they had, moreover, *gained ten per cent. on their transactions, and had their original relief fund undiminished.*"

These experiments, in-so-far as they are more productive than stone-breaking, and less degrading in their character, are entitled to praise, but they do not, touch the cause of pauperism, *deficiency of the wages-fund.* In fact the Chorlton experiment was only intended as a test. The pauper had no share in the proceeds, nor indeed could he have, seeing he was only designed to be in the field, when not wanted in the factory. On this principle the parish farms are conducted. When a press of business sets in, calling for many laborers, the parish farm is deserted: when trade is again deprest, it will not contain the applicants for relief. There is no real attempt at the creation and accumulation of capital *for the express purpose of employing surplus labor.* The general surplus laborers keep down wages in bad and middling times, while in good times the manufacturer can draw as many hands from the Pauper Body as he requires, *thus preventing the competition of capitalists for laborers from raising wages.* There can be no hope of the removal of pauperism, till a capital equal to the permanent employment of *all* is created, nor can there be any advance in wages, until the entire surplus labor is thus absorbed.

An interesting experiment was tried by Count Rumford, at Munich. The city was beset by beggars until the nuisance grew intolerable. He formed, with the concurrence of the authorities, a large establishment for feeding and employing all who were without adequate means of subsistence. His plans were remarkably successful, and quickly cleared the city of beggars. In the first six years of the existence of the institution, "the net profits arising from it amounted to above 100,000 florins (£9090), after expenses of every kind,—salaries—wages—repairs, etc.;—were deducted."^b The subjects of this arrangement were certainly a much inferior class to the majority of our unemployed operatives. If, then, wise arrangements accomplished so much for the Munich beggars, what might not be expected from a better population, with greater inducements and superior powers of organization? Even Rumford, with all his benevolence,¹ tho he did not

^b Rumford's Essays, Vol. i. p. 84.

¹ When Rumford was ill, the poor of Munich went in procession to the Cathedral Church, where they had divine service, and public prayers for his recovery. Well might he exult at hearing the confused noise of a multitude, going to offer prayers for him:—for him! a private person, a stranger, and a protestant, but a true hero, fit to rank with the Howards of Humanity.—Four years later, when the Count was ill at Naples, his grateful Munich friends set apart an hour each evening, after work, in which to offer up prayers in his behalf.

scruple to give to his work-houses an aspect of elegance, never aimed at the curing of poverty—but only at relieving it. "In fixing the amount of the sums which they receive weekly upon stated days, care was always taken to find out how much the person applying for relief was in a condition to earn, and only just so much was granted as, when added to their earnings, would be sufficient to provide the necessaries of life, or such of them as were not otherwise furnished by the institution."^j

Mr. Nicholls, one of the Poor Law Commissioners, referring to this and similar experiments, asserts that "Experience has proved that pauper labor can never be profitable." We cannot too often repeat that the facts of the case warrant no such inference. *The experiments did not aim at creating a capital for the benefit of the workman, but only in turning a temporary relief into a source of profit to the State—objects as distinct as can well be imagined.* Nor can the experiment be truly represented as a failure. Mendicancy was removed, and the most ignorant and degraded members of society were rendered useful. That the machinery ceased to work with its original efficacy, after the master spirit which constructed had left it—is an objection that applies to every human arrangement, and of which the New Poor Law is itself a flagrant proof.^k That a single commercial firm seldom lasts three generations, is no objection to trading. A successor has not been found for Wellington, yet we do not disband the army. Each succeeding day develops the talents of a greater number competent to the task of Direction, while, for extraordinary talents, there is less play and less need.

An experiment of an agricultural character was tried by the Dutch Government in 1818, when pauperism there was even greater than it is in this country. It adopted the plan of locating paupers on waste lands. The total expense of each family, of six to eight persons, was about £150, including the building of each house; the furniture and implements; the clothing; two cows, or one cow and ten sheep; cultivation and seed, first year; advances in provisions; advances of other kinds; flax and wool to be spun; and seven acres of uncultivated land. The settlers were expected to repay their advances, in rent and labor, in 16 years, and maintain themselves in the interval. Conjoined to a kind of military superintendence, the desire of gain and the approbation of the Directors, were generally found to be sufficient motives to good conduct. When not so, forfeiture of privileges, confinement, and hard labor, were resorted to. Badges of honor were instituted, such as medals of copper, silver, and gold. Those who had the copper medals might leave the colony on Sundays without asking leave; the silver ones were given to such as had made some savings, who were allowed to go beyond the colony, in the intervals of labor, on working days; and the paupers were entitled to the gold medal on showing that they cleared £22 a year by thier

^j Rumford's Essays, Vol. i. page 97.

^k Second Report on Irish Poor Laws, 1838, p. 11. We may retort the Commissioner's words upon himself. "It cannot reasonably be inferred, that because insulated establishments, originally founded on a false principle, unchecked, and undirected [as the French National Workshops, or the Irish Public Works], have fallen into decay on the Continent, therefore institutions founded here on different principles, with different objects, and under different management, will also fail."

labor, when they became free tenants, released from the regulations of the colony. Great attention was also paid to the education of the young. Upwards of 30,000 paupers were thus located, who speedily became self-supporting, placed on a spot where everything was against the experiment. The very soil had to be *created*,—the colonists were located far from the great towns and populous places,—they were deprived of the advantages of accumulated capital, of mechanical and horse power,—and yet they succeeded in literally making the wilderness to blossom as the rose, and that social and moral wilderness of pauperdom give place to a healthy and thriving peasantry.¹

Contrast this humane system with the heartless policy which drives the unemployed laborer to the profitless and demoralizing stone-heap,—contrast it even with the plan of the parish-farm, a plan which tosses the operative from the factory to the land, and from the land back again to the factory, making him into a mere shuttlecock of the overseer and the cotton-master,—a plan which does not cure pauperism by gradually absorbing the surplus laborers, but leaves that terrible surplus to accumulate, with all its monster miseries of ignorance, improvidence, and idiocy,—contrast, we say,—*this* picture with *that*, and then, if we can, let us hug ourselves in the belief that we are the wisest and most humane people in the world!

Superior as are the Dutch pauper colonies to anything attempted in this country, they are by no means *such* as should be demanded for the organization of our own paupers. We do not find so much fault with the stringency of the Dutch regulations, for in the present degraded state of our population it would perhaps be impossible to govern them, still less to attain useful results from their labor, without a *strict discipline*. But the vastly greater wealth of Britain, the far larger amount of good soil lying waste, and the progressive improvements made in the government of large organizations, warrant grander attempts. To give them the benefits arising from the division of labor, is strict common sense; while there would be both political and poetical justice in giving *those* the benefit of machinery, whose pauperism had in many cases been occasioned by it.

Another remarkable proof of what can be done with a pauper population, is exhibited in the poor colony of Ostwald, near Strasburg, founded by Dr. Schutzenberger, which has more than realized the sanguine expectations of its originators. From the first settlement in 1841 up to the year 1843, it received 191 individuals the vagrants, beggars and outcasts of society. The most of them had arrived at an age when the habits are fixed, yet a most remarkable improvement was effected in them. "Not less than 83 left the colony as highly moral, talented, and industrious persons, and settled in the neighborhood with success. Only two were imprisoned for theft, and twelve were sent back to the workhouse in Strasburg. * * * All these wonderful improvements were wrought in the colonists, not by the introduction of the silent system, increase of labor, diminution of food, or privation of all that tends to cheer life, but simply and solely by keeping them to a strictly organized activity, and habituating them to cleanliness, by not making labor a burden but a pleasure to them, and by rousing in them the feeling of human dignity, and a desire to live honestly and work diligently, by mild and humane treatment."

¹ For a fuller account of these Colonies consult the *Quarterly Review* for 1828.

It was as successful in an economical as in a moral point of view. "Before the establishment of the colony, the half of Ostwald which belonged to Strasburg, only yielded a net income of £16, and the capital value was computed at £5,800. At present the value of the land alone is now estimated at £10,080 or nearly double. To this must be added the edifices now estimated at £4,040, and furniture, cattle, etc., valued at £1000. In the year 1843 the total expenditure was 27,193 fr. while the revenue was 46,515 fr. Thus showing that the colony has not only maintained itself by its own resources, but even promises gradually to increase its revenues, and to hereafter become itself a source of support for poor communities within its neighborhood."^m

Such instances might be greatly multiplied, but we shall cite one other and most important example, because it realizes most nearly what we conceive ought to be attempted in this country. It may be confidently affirmed, that if a *will* existed, a *way* might be found, for the extinction, not only of involuntary Pauperism, but of Poverty likewise. Both spring from removable causes, and not from some dread decree of Fate."

The experiment we more particularly refer to, is the one made at Ralahine, Clare, Ireland, by Mr. Vandaleur, under the management of Mr. Craig.^o

"The rent of 622 acres, interest of stock, buildings, etc., was estimated at £900 per annum, to be repaid from the produce at the prices of the Limerick market. By the adoption of this mode of payment, in a fixed quantity of produce, the society undertook the risk of good or bad seasons, and Mr. Vandaleur the hazard of high or low prices. By the terms of the agreement Mr. Vandaleur placed a large amount of property in the hands of persons completely devoid of capital, and whose prejudices and ignorance led them to oppose the plan in the first instance, tho they became subsequently alive to its advantages. It was agreed therefore, that if the scheme should fail, the property should revert to the proprietor at the end of the first year. The objects of the association were,—1st. The acquisition of a common capital. 2nd. The mutual assurance of its members against the evils of poverty, sickness, infirmity, and old age. 3rd. The attainment of a greater share of the comforts of life than the working classes ordinarily possess. 4th. The mental and moral improvement of the adult members. 5th. The education of their children. The advantages anticipated by the proprietor were,—1st. To obtain a higher rent for his land. 2nd.

^m *The Topic.* Art. Famine, its causes and remedies.

^o "It is curious," says Mr. Minter Morgan, "to observe with what a tender regard for the extreme sensitiveness of the public, some of our little plans for giving a basin of soup to the poor are prefaced by a solemn assurance that no *new* organization of society is in contemplation, while nothing *but* a better organization of the people can yield them regular and healthy employment and a just compensation for labor, no longer subject to the fluctuating demand of a market. We hesitated not to organize the people when we wanted them to destroy the people of another country, as innocent and perhaps as ignorant of the cause of the national dispute as themselves, and to be as little benefited by the result of the battle. We hesitated not to organize multitudes of women for working in mines. We hesitated not to organize troops of little children to toil in the factory for twelve hours in the day, but to organize them for their own benefit, for their moral and religious improvement, and in order that they may be brought unto him who said, '*Suffer little children to come unto me*'—then indeed, to our eternal disgrace, we do hesitate."—*Letters to a Clergyman.* Letter 10.

^o Communicated to the *British Association for the advancement of Science*, by the Rev. E. R. Larken, M. A. Report of 1847, p. 98. For further particulars, see Appendix C.

Better interest for his capital. 3rd. To secure the punctual payment of these. 4th. Security for the advances made upon the labor of the people. 5th. The safety of the stock, machinery, and capital entrusted to them. 6th. To effect their objects in accordance with the laws, and at the same time to improve the condition of every member of the Association. The members were to work as many hours, to do as much work as common laborers or workmen, and to draw no more from the fund of the Society, than would have been paid them as such. This they were to continue to do until they had a capital of their own. A regular account was kept of the time and labor of each individual each day, and at the end of the week the same sum was paid to each, upon his or her labor, that Mr. Vandaleur had formerly paid them for wages. All the profits were to accumulate until the value of the stock and implements, as per inventory, should be paid off; when the society should decide what was to be done with the surplus in future. Education was afforded to the infants, children, youths, and adult members. Meals were taken in public or private, as best suited the convenience of each person. The labor of women was rendered available to the increase of the Society's wealth, or the cleanliness of their habitations, the washing and cooking being performed apart from the dwellings, and the children being taken care of in the schools. The Association had rapidly improved during the second year of its existence. The landlord was satisfied with his rent in produce, and the members had increased their comforts. Their number had increased to 81, and the society had built several cottages for the newly married members. They had improved the property by spade cultivation, and each enjoyed greater individual comforts than they possessed before. Some who entered the society with a scarcity of clothing, had now two suits and a reserve fund of money. Their morals and personal appearance had improved. All articles of consumption were paid for as received, and habits of prudence were acquired which before had been unknown. The aspect of the Association promised a career of success, when circumstances compelled Mr. Vandaleur to leave Ireland, which put a stop to proceedings that had exhibited to the world the possibility of governing the Irish people upon a plan at once practicable, profitable, and prudent; and which, it is conceived, might be introduced with very little additional capital to that now invested in that country in agricultural and manufacturing operations."

Let the powerful machinery put in action in 1833 for exhibiting the effects of the old Poor-law and the possibility of supplanting it by a better, once more be set in motion—to ascertain the precise nature, the advantages and defects, of these and similar industrial experiments. This at least is no very extravagant demand, seeing the decided failure of the New Poor-law, after a fifteen years trial.

There is one form in which this question of Home Colonization is likely to press itself early into notice—that relating to the treatment of criminals. At the colony of Mettray in France,^p it has been found that by a rational and benevolent adaptation of the labor of criminals, they were not only reformed but rendered nearly self-supporting. From 1840 to 1848, 967 young criminals were admitted into the colony. Of the 373 who have left the establishment 29 have relapsed, 19 have conducted themselves tolerably well, 5 have escaped observation, and 320 have remained irreproachable in respectable stations of life. The total annual cost of these wonderful results was £12 per head—(about as much as it costs to murder a child at Tooting). It was 54 francs per head less than it would have

^p For an account of this colony, see 'Letters to a Clergyman,' by John Minter Morgan, where the delightful results of good training and rightly conducted organization on ill trained youths, including even the children of convicts, are clearly exhibited.

cost to support them in prison, without the benefit of any reformatory process whatever. The expense of maintaining criminals in England and Wales is estimated at £400,000 per annum, whose productive labor only realizes £30,000. With the example of Mettray before us, and of many American prisons entirely self-supporting,^q and the fact that 83 per cent of our male criminals are between the ages of 15 and 45, an age when they are capable of labor,—it is but reasonable that the same principles should be applied here. As truer perceptions of the cause and cure of crime prevail, we may hope to find useful employment and rational treatment for the criminal. But this will pass sentence on the system of wretchedness and destitution under which the pauperized portion of the working classes suffer. We shall, then, either have to go back in our prison reform, or forward in elevating the laborer, since the latter will find that crime is the only condition of receiving the treatment due to a human being. In numberless instances prison diet is a temptation even now. Of the reformed prisoners discharged from the Reading gaol, a large per centage are recommitted, simply because they have no outlet for their exertions such as Home Colonies would supply. Mr. Field, the Chaplain, justly observes that the system of criminal treatment will remain sadly imperfect "until some plan for employment of the released offender shall furnish him the opportunity of obtaining an honest subsistence from his own efforts."

Some advocates for the profitable employment of the poor, strongly recommend their employment in Public Works. So far as the intention of preventing private individuals from appropriating the benefits of labor to which they have no claim is concerned (as when the estates of Irish Landlords are drained at the public cost), the principle is good, but the end is equally attained by securing to the pauper the results of his own labor. Mr. Poulett Scrope thinks, that "if the rate-payers provide the funds, the work should be carried on for their benefit in the aggregate; if the public are called on to pay the cost, the proceeds must be carried to the public account." To such a conclusion there are several objections.

1st. It prevents the attainment of what should be the object of every rational poor-law—the cure, the utter extinction, of pauperism. However largely Public Works add to the wealth of the country, so long as the present system of Wealth-distribution exists, they may and will add very little to the *Wages-fund*, on the extent of which the prosperity of the laborer entirely depends. Roads may be made, canals dug, arterial drainage effected by an army of pauper laborers, it is true; but that army would still exist depending on public bounty, and subject to public officials, keeping down wages by its own low standard of remuneration, and ready, at the first failure of public employment, to rush into, and glut, the general labor market.

2nd. Public works by means of pauper labor, are peculiarly liable to abuses.

^q "The prison for the state of Indiana contains only 125 prisoners in a population of 800,000. They are set to work in yards and workshops, as coopers, joiners, blacksmiths, etc., and provisions are so cheap that the sale of the produce of their labor yields a profit to the state of £1,600 a year, after deducting all the expense of their maintenance, including the salaries of their officers. * * The older state of Kentucky also, with above 800,000 inhabitants, has only 160 convicted prisoners, and a considerable profit accrues from their labor, after defraying the cost of their maintenance." *Prentice's Tour in the United States*, 1848. Page 67.

We put a quantity of the least efficient labor into circumstances most likely to increase the inefficiency and diminish the checks on its detection. It is very difficult to balance the value of a road, or a drain, against the quantity of labor required to produce them; laxity and sometimes dishonesty creep in, and nothing is known of it until the public discovers that it might have been cheaper to pay the paupers to do nothing, and to employ independent and skilled laborers to do the work in the best manner. This objection does not apply to industrial colonies. These necessarily contain a self-acting and self-registering test of their efficiency, in the degree to which they become able to dispense with the pauper ration and government surveillance,—that is, in the degree to which they become self-supporting. In public works bad management is infectious, and might ruin the whole plan; but the half-a-dozen separate pauper colonies might fail and need re-organization, the example of those which succeeded would clearly indicate both the source of the failure, and its remedy. Public Works almost exclude the greatest element of success—the stimulus of present and future advantage to the *individual* laborers. The managers are stipendiary, the paupers have fixed rations, with no prospect of increasing them. Pauper colonies, on the contrary, could give the managers the same stimulus which the intelligent and humane capitalist desires, his own and others interest; while to the paupers themselves they would afford the strongest possible combination of motives.

3rd. Nor does it follow, that a public fund must be expended in public works. If the capital advanced be reimbursed,—if the public be saved from the pressure of a certain tax in the shape of poor rate, and of another large tax in the cost of crime,—if the wages of labor and the profits of capital are raised, and a better feeling established between the laborers and capitalists themselves,—surely the public will be infinitely more benefited than by the most judicious public works.

If it be objected that pauper colonies remove pauperism altogether from local control, we answer, that one of the chief causes why pauper labor has been so unproductive, was the inefficiency of its conductors, and this very subjection to popular clamor and control. To suppose that a person who has to conduct productive operations, shall be subject to the control of an external power totally uncognizant of a multitude of circumstances which he will have to foresee, adapt, or reckon upon, betrays the grossest ignorance of industrial processes. It is but an illustration of the fallacy of the day, to fancy that *majorities* are identical with wisdom. The Lilliputian intellect can never imagine that the insight of one Gulliver is greater than that of fifty thousand dwarflins. We do not see how the organization of anything can ever be effected, unless people will rely a little more on the intellect of those whom it has selected to govern, and a little less on the infallibility of votes. The *best* Government is the government of the wisest and best—*with checks*. We do not want ignorant servants, but wise representatives, whose interest is made *identical* with our own.

If it be insisted, however, that the rate-payers should have a direct interest in the repression of pauperism (tho this is as well attained by a national as by a local tax), it would only be necessary to render the admission of paupers into the Industrial Villages, contingent on the district which sent them forwarding the funds needful for their support, until they were able to maintain themselves. It is not to be supposed that the rate-payers have any particular qualms as to the

nature of the occupation and fate of the pauper laborer, seeing how reconciled they are to the unemployed operative being reduced to the shame and slavery of the stone-heap. How many shillings in the pound? is the main point: and while the terror of heavy rates still acted as before, it would be accompanied with the pleasing conviction of their speedy termination. It is not important now to discuss, whether the tax should be assessed upon rents, properly, or income, tho the latter seems the most fair and economical. The important point to secure is, that the funds, however collected, be not (as now) dissipated in a number of infinitesimal amounts, incapable of any function in the employment of labor.

Our first object, then, should be, to make these Home Colonies self-supporting—the second, to repay the capital advanced to them by the government. This last object could not be attained until they produced a surplus amount of commodities, which would be sold in the open market. This may seem exposed to the objection of throwing *other* laborers out of employment. But it must be remembered, that the greatest portion of the evil arises from the monopoly which the pauper-produced commodities enjoy. If no produce from pauper labor were permitted to enter the general market *until they themselves were entirely self-supporting*, their commodities would be sold on the same footing as those of all other producers.

If it be objected, that in seasons when trade is brisk and the demand for hands great, the manufacturer could not supply himself with hands so readily as he now can—we reply, *so much the better!* He could not then go on glutting a market and speculating for future ruin to himself or others. It would act as the Ten Hours' Bill acts (only far more beneficially), in distributing employment over the whole year,—and, like the weight and safety valve in the steam engine, prevent the deviations of pressure. The only mode of raising wages is to render labor scarce, but labor cannot be scarce, while a vast mass of the population live on 'Charity.'

If it be further objected, that, in rendering the pauper laborer moderately comfortable, the applications from the other classes of laborers will rapidly increase, until, instead of having to organize half-a-million of paupers, we shall have two or three millions claiming to come into the pauper colonies;—*what then?* Such an issue would be the saddest and severest commentary possible, on the present relations of capital and labor; it would show that the pauper's prospect of earning a *bare subsistence under the restriction and discipline proposed*, and with the condition of repaying the advances, was in fact *superior to the boasted state of the 'independent' worker!* High time, indeed, to begin setting our house in order! But even if claimants came faster than it was found possible to organize them, could we not stop at any point just as with the numbers of the army? Whether 50 or 500,000 paupers be put to reproductive employment, is a matter perfectly within the control of society;—only the further it proceeded the better, until there was not an individual left who could plead want of work in excuse for mendicancy.

But why, it may be asked, if it be desirable to organize pauper labor, should not the state proceed further, and organize other labor, as proposed in France? We answer, that tho other labor *be* organizable, it is better organized *without* than with government assistance. If the surplus population be absorbed or

removed, so that wages may be raised, the workmen will then possess the *means* of accumulation and combination, and if they have sufficient intellect, self-denial, and virtue, can organize their own labor. Without these realities a voluntary combination of workmen, to create capital for themselves, and thus supersede their present state of servile dependence, is impossible. If, in their absence, however, a government steps in to supply their place, it must be a kind of despotism, such as that we suggest for the government of paupers. Must we, therefore, approve of this mode of dragging up *Society*? We prefer elevating it by the infusion of Ideas of Progress; but the *starving* pauper wants something else; and first. The organization of labor is not to be *brought to Society*; it must proceed *from* it. The disturbed mass is not to be crystallized at once, but at various points, which all eventually converge, until the whole mass become symmetrical. In this way, as soon as Association has become a part of the *life* of the People, it will become a function of the Government—for the latter is simply the expression of the former.

The case of the pauper differs from that of the employed laborer. He is already the dependent of society, and the alternative is, whether he shall find a cruel and foolish paymaster, or the reverse. We conceive that, by locating all the surplus labor under a well developed organization, first on the waste and available lands of Great Britain and Ireland, and next on the Colonies,—the government might always keep the rate of wages at the point of comfortable subsistence. This, we apprehend, is all that government can do, in the present state of society, so far as presiding over the processes connected with the production of wealth is concerned, tho, as we shall show hereafter, not by any means all that it can do to elevate the lot of the laborer. It would be a fatal error to devolve upon a Government duties which it could not fulfil,—for example, to organize the whole labor of society. Society can no more overleap any of the steps and conditions of progress, than the babe can pass to manhood without the intermediate stages of childhood and adolescence. Let us first learn to raise wages, before we attempt to do without wages. Let us try to raise the laborer from his degraded position by all those helps which each day is rendering more practicable.

In our view that arrangements similar to those recommended would materially tend to raise the wages of the working classes, we are by no means singular. J. S. Mill long since admitted it: * but holding the Ricardo theory of rent, that as the progress of population continually compelled recourse to soils of decreasing fertility, the income from capital must be lowered as population increased,—he inferred that the very source from which such establishments first drew their support would be ultimately dried up; therefore, that the main remedy was to prevent the increase of births beyond a certain point. We have already combated this objection. But even if it were sound, it would not invalidate our position, since it is with an *existing* surplus population, not a prospective one, we have to deal. By making that surplus work, we at least diminish the disparity between the wages-fund and labor, and get breathing time to look about us. The immediate want—the point so strongly urged by J. S. Mill—is an arrangement which shall remove poverty for one entire generation. Such an object

* Elements of Political Economy. Chap. 2, Sec. 4.

might be attained a without committing a single injustice,—without even doing anything to alarm those most conservative of existing institutions, or most jealous of new ones.

It is a matter of surprize that great social theories are not, like scientific ones, at once subjected to the test of adequate experiment. When we see the state expend immense sum (not unwisely) in tracing the course of a river, a North West passage, the path of a planet, or in testing the value of Warner's long-range destructive,—is it too much to insist that efforts at least equally extensive shall be made in behalf of humanity? However important or interesting these scientific matters are to man, they are surely less so than his own nature and the true principles of *Social Science*. While to the former he is continually adding by experiment, the issues of the latter hang on the breath of an accident. Supposing the theories of the great social reformers to be a mere delusion, yet, if only to save the valuable time and feeling now wasted in discussion, to say nothing of the preservation of order, such experiments ought to be made. Columbus did not dispute about his fourth continent,—he sailed in search of it. The astronomer applies his telescope to verify the place of the newly found star. Were an equally common sense procedure applied to social questions, the results would guide the legislator and the public,—it would accelerate mankind by ages in the career of improvement,—and the national activity so often dissipated in useless or injurious channels, would take a proper and profitable direction. How much better would be *such* experiments, than the beggarly associations of mistaken benevolence formed for distributing soup-tickets and blankets,—or than those which offer premiums for bringing up large families on eight shillings per week, and systematically destroy the self-respect and independence of the laborer! How much more easily might we suppress mendicancy by the higher motives presented in our Industrial Colonies, than 'put it down' by the empty thunder of the *Times*, or the frown of some sapient Justice who punishes poverty with the treadmill!

Industrial organization has been well compared to the organization for fighting; for the analogy holds good in more points than may be at first apparent. For instance, it would be considered absurd to let every village, town, or country provide its own quota of troops,—to clothe, feed, and quarter them,—to select the officers and to superintend the discipline; in short, to exercise in reference to soldiers, those functions which the Union and the Parish think themselves entitled to exercise over the paupers. Were the British Army established on the local instead of the centralized principle, then, in place of being the most perfect machine for cutting off mankind ever devised by human ingenuity, it would degenerate into an ineffective mob of whom Falstaff himself would be ashamed. Yet, if we consider it, the military machine demands far less ingenuity than the industrial. It is easier to guide the mechanical evolutions of ten thousand men, than to regulate the labor of five hundred operatives to productive employment. If the simpler elements *need* 'organization' to make them effective, the more complex need it *still more*. The destructive business goes on tolerably well, altho six feet height fares no better than five feet, and a ferocious pair of whiskers obtains no more than a beardless chin. Why, then, must the Industrial Army go wrong, with higher motives, and equal discipline to keep it right?

"Is organization to fight the only organization achievable?" In the name of human nature, I protest that fighting is not the only talent which can be regulated, regimented, and, by organization and humane arrangement, be made—instead of hideous—beautiful, beneficent, and of indispensable advantage to us. Not the only arrangeable, commandable, captainable talent, that of fighting; I say that of digging is another, and a still better. Nay, there is no human talent whatever but is capable of the like beneficent process, and calculated to profit infinitely by it; as shall be seen yet, gradually, in happier days, if it please Heaven; for the future work of human wisdom and human heroism is discernable to be even this: Not of fighting with, and beating to death, one's poor fellow creatures in other countries, but of regimenting into blessed activity, more and more, one's poor fellow creatures in one's own country, for their and all people's profit, more and more. A field wide enough, untilled enough, God knows; and in which, I should say, human heroism, and all the divine wisdom that is among us, could not, too soon, with one accord, begin! For the time presses; the years, and the days, at this epoch, are precious; teeming with either deliverance or destruction!

Yes, much is yet unready, put off till the morrow; but this, of trying to find some spade-work for the disorganized Irish and British spademan, cannot be delayed much longer. *Colonels of Field-labor*, as well as colonels of field-fighting, doubt it not, *can be found*, if you will search for them with diligence; nay, I myself have seen some such! Colonels, captains, lieutenants, down to very sergeants and sifers of field labor, can be got, if you will honestly want them,—Oh, in what abundance, and with what thrice-blessed results, can they be 'supplied,' if you did indeed, with due intensity, continue to 'demand' them! And I think one regiment, ten regiments, of diggers, on the bog of Allen, would look as well almost as ten regiments of shooters on the field of Waterloo; and probably ten times as well as ten war-ships riding in the Tagus, for body-guard to Donna Maria da Gloria, at this epoch of the world! Some incipency of a real effective regimenting of spade-men, is actually a possibility for human creatures at this time."

Strange indeed, that a Persian Xerxes leading two millions of men to destroy Grecian liberty, or a French one leaving the bones of half-a-million men to bleach on the plains of Russia, should be regarded as *historic facts* and *human possibilities*, while the organization of an industrial army, for the most beneficent purposes, should be treated as an *impossible* Chimera! Strange that wealth, talent, genius, health, life, and life's best gifts, should not be esteemed too high a price for a good destructive engine, while *chance* is considered the best preparation for the grand industrial machine! Still stranger, that the behests of one selfish man should awaken energies and enthusiasm, which the wocs, the aspirations, the best and noblest purposes of humanity, will fail to evoke.

No! we will not despair of seeing, ere long, an industrial organization of Humanity. The Railway alone refutes the common notion that nothing can be done well by extensive associations. This wonder of the Nineteenth Century, throwing the vast works of antiquity into the shade, indicates the immense possibilities which lay before us. Unlike the Egyptian pyramids,—those tombs of kings, made at the cost of the sweat and blood of millions,—the Railway symbols an age when kings are less and men are more. And tho our Railway now classifies its burden, whether of pigs, peasants, or princes, simply according to their powers of paying, we will yet believe in that 'good time coming' when all social appliances shall arise in obedience to higher laws than those of Mechanics or of Mammon,—a time when these, and all other works of Art, may be produced with a plenteousness, and scattered with a generosity, which shall imitate the processes of all bountiful nature.

* The question is asked by THOMAS CARLYLE; the quotation is from *the Spectator* Newspaper.

SOCIAL SCIENCE.

LECTURE V. THE LAND.



INTIMATELY connected with the labor question is the subject of the land. Before the laborer listens to the claims of the 'rights of property,' it behoves him to ask *what* things are property? Before he listens to the clamor of over-population, it becomes him to enquire whether the *means* for supporting population are rightly distributed? Nay, what avails it to us, to reckon up the vast space of uncultivated soil in this country and elsewhere, if it is destined only to be possessed for the benefit of the few to the exclusion of the majority? Were this planet to be swelled to a million-fold its present bulk, there exists among men a lust of possession which would put a fence around it all, and call it 'mine.' Their "Want," says Emerson, "is a gulf which the possession of the broad earth would not fill. Yonder sun in heaven they would pluck down from shining on the universe, and make him a property of privacy, if they could; and the morn and the north star they would quickly have occasion for in their closet and bed-chamber. What they do not want for use they crave for ornament, and what their convenience could spare, their pride cannot." There is no limit to individual greed, except that which society is, for its own welfare, compelled to enforce. Not only would the so-called *proprietor* of a farm grasp a county if he could, but his class have continually attempted to dictate the rights of posterity to the soil. How can political economists flatter themselves that their views respecting over-population shall meet with discussion, to say nothing of acceptance, until the soil be fairly distributed? There is at least a shadow of sense in telling the French or Prussian peasantry not to make any addition to their numbers, because the land will support no more; but to tell Smith, the workman, to be careful about the increase of his family, because Lord Fitzgraball has been able to appropriate what should support 10,000 Smiths, is an absurdity. Yet whenever our opponents treat of the claims of labor, they take the present distribution of the land as a settled point.

Land is one of the natural elements essential to mankind, and given for their support by God. In this respect it resembles the light of the sun, the water, and the atmosphere. No man made the land, any more than he made the other elements necessary to existence. How then comes it to pass, that the land is appropriated by a portion of mankind to the exclusion of the rest?

The first assignable reason is, that the land available for the uses of men is a limited quantity. The partition of the air and the sunlight causes no dispute, because both exist amply for all. Where water is plentiful it is valueless, while in Eastern countries the rights to a well are jealously guarded. It was the same

with land. As population increased, the finer and more fruitful localities became appropriated. Probably no discussion would have arisen concerning the right to the land, had there been no limits to our power to appropriate. Until man appropriated the soil, agriculture could not begin. It was found that by people locating themselves on one spot and cultivating it, more produce was obtained than by trusting to the precarious bounty of nature. No man would sow, unless sure to reap. This necessity of mankind to divide and cultivate the land must have been forgotten by Rousseau when he exclaims, "From how many enemies, battles, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes, would that man have saved mankind, who should have pulled up the stakes, or filled up the ditches, crying out to his fellow, Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and that the earth belongs to nobody."

Out of this natural origin of landed property, arise two other results. Mankind in sacrificing a portion of what had hitherto belonged equally to all, could do so, solely and simply that the portion so given up should be *cultivated*. We do not say there was any bargain to that effect, for circumstances rather than stipulations would determine these primitive arrangements; but still it is obvious, that if any man had enclosed tracts of land which he did not intend to cultivate, and said '*This is mine*,'—he would have been justly liable to that treatment from his fellows which Rousseau recommended. A man claimed the land on the principle that he had given it value, by having bestowed labor upon it; and the fruits were his property, because he had produced them. But tho his cultivation of it gave him a temporary right over it, it could give him none over that which he *never used*. Thus Paley justly compares "the gifts of nature to a feast provided for the freeholders of a county, where each freeholder goes and eats and drinks what he chooses, without having or waiting for the consent of the other guests. But in the entertainment we speak of, altho every particular freeholder may sit down and eat till he be satisfied, without any other leave than the general invitation, or the *manifest design with which the entertainment is provided*, yet you would hardly permit any one to fill his pockets or his wallet, or to carry away with him a quantity of provisions to be hoarded up, or wasted, or given to his dogs, or stewed down into sauces, or converted into articles of superfluous luxury, especially if by so doing he pinches the guests at the lower end of the table."

Neither could force give a right to the land, tho it is the origin of the greater part of the present distribution of land in this country. The generosity with which William the Conqueror divided our common patrimony, or with which the Pope bestowed large realms and empires on such Christian Kings as he thought fit, is one of the coolest pieces of impudence on record. A few adventurers discover a new region, erect a pile of stones, or a pole and flag, and, without enquiring from the aborigines if they wished to be thus disposed of, 'take possession.' The 'discovery' indeed was mutual, and would equally have justified the natives in taking possession of the ships,—the only defect in this sort of title being—*they had no gunpowder*. If the right to the soil conferred by William, or asserted by the Barons of John when they drew their swords to show their title deeds, be valid—such a mode is equally so to day; a conclusion in which few will be disposed to concur. It has been artfully sought to mix up the question of

property in *the soil itself* with that of the *products* of industry in the soil. The cultivator's obvious right to these, has been a pretext for covering his defective title to that. In truth, individuals can have simply the right to the *use* of the soil; for the soil itself must belong to the race. The act of mixing his labor or capital with the soil, gives a man that temporary right in it which is necessary to secure the return to his investment. If a man sow the seed he is entitled to the harvest, but no more. The temporary value which he adds to the land by improvements is infinitely small compared with the permanent value of the land itself. The improvements are entirely the property of him who makes them, while the land can never be so. His having cultivated the land for one year could not make it his for all time to come. In this relation Land differs from all other property. Whatever utility belongs to a house, a table, a coat, is the result of the labor employed in making it; the destruction of the commodity by its use and wear repays that labor, and it is no more valuable. But the land, after repaying all the labor that has been put into it, is as valuable, and as essential to the existence of the race, as ever. For their own convenience the first generation of mankind could give up, or neglect to assert, their rights to the soil: but the accident of priority of birth could give them no power over any rights of mine; otherwise they might have laid an embargo on the sunlight, or willed away the personal Freedom of Man in all after ages. This obvious view, however, is seldom attended to in this discussion. The distinction between landed and personal property is ignorantly or wilfully overlooked, and attention directed to property in the abstract—to the justice and advantage of permitting a man to bequeath his property as he thinks fit, etc. It is said to act as an efficient spur to industry.

"The laborer strives to increase his deposits in the saving bank; the farmer and retail dealer become more active and enterprising; and the plans and combinations of the capitalist cease to be circumscribed by the brief duration of human life." *

The influence of such a motive is very much overrated, and that it is not essential as a stimulus to industry is proved by the fact that the vast mass of society who have the greatest share in production have literally the smallest prospect of being able to bequeath anything; while another class—the inventors, discoverers, and geniuses of the race, are proverbially indifferent to such considerations. But allowing, for argument's sake, all that is urged in favor of granting this liberty of bequest, society would be bound to do so only so far as is consistent with its own welfare. Let it grant, if it be proved desirable, full liberty to bequeath mills, machinery, gold, food, clothing,—all personal moveable property, in the accumulation of which there is surely ample verge and room enough for the largest human greed. Little danger can result from a power of bequeathing such things, for at the moment of their creation decay begins, and ere long every atom will be again scattered thro' the universe, in a thousand new forms. But the *space* of earth destined for the support of mankind, must either be used for *that* purpose when required, or its owner will possess a *veto* on the existence of the race. Perhaps not a stone of Troy remains, but its site is as valuable for

* McCulloch: Succession to property, p. 11.

corn fields and kitchen gardens as ever. While mankind therefore permitted the Trojans to do as they liked with all their chattels, they could by no means permit them to devise it to some Priam or Hector, 'and their heirs for ever.'

Some persons have founded the right to property in the land, on the law of the land. Thus Paley observes: ^b

"It is the intution of God that the produce of the earth be applied to the use of MAN: *this intution cannot be fulfilled without establishing property* [?]; it is consistent therefore with the same will, that the law should regulate the division, and consequently 'consistent with the will of God,' or 'right,' that I should possess the share which these regulations assign me."

Now even admitting Paley's conclusion, that society may give up its general rights in favor of a few,—let us recollect that this can apply to an existing generation only. "Nor," adds Paley, "does the owner's right depend upon the expediency of the law which gives it him." True, but the law itself depends upon its own expediency, ^c or what is best for the whole. Society gives up just as much of its primal rights as consorts with its welfare, and every other foundation of property in the soil is therefore built upon force or fraud. Mankind, indeed, have been seldom so utterly blind to justice and common sense, as *entirely and for ever* to exclude themselves from the land in favor of individuals. In most nations the State has been considered the landowner, and the individual tolerated only as Occupier or Tenant, and has exercised a more despotic authority over the modes of division than it has ever done with other property. The law gave the right to land, and the law can *take it away*. Thus, the state exercises its reserved right, or prerogative, whenever it takes land from its owner to make a railway. If the state, then, can take away a portion of any man's land against his will, it can take more, it can take all. ^d

The question now arises, *On what principles* should the land be held? Among the variety of systems adopted among different peoples and in various ages, are any of them, and especially that which prevails in our own country, in accordance with the principles of human happiness? If not, then they cannot claim the sanction of legislation, and must in due season fall before the diffusion of better principles.

Under a competitive state of society, the produce derived from land divides itself into two parts. 1st. *That* with which we repay the expense of cultivation,—viz. wages of labor, and the capital to be replaced,—with the ordinary profits of trade; 2nd. *That* which is yielded over and above this return, viz.

^b Moral Philosophy. Book iii. Chap. 4. ^c McCulloch: p. 57.

^d It should not be forgotten that, according to law, the State is now the owner of the land. The Barons of England held (not owned) their land on certain conditions, such as fealty to the King as head of the State, payment of taxes for the support of government, and the maintenance of soldiers for its defence. This ownership has never been given up. Blackstone says, "This allodial property (that is, a man's *own* property) no subject in England has; it being a received, and now undeniable principle in the law, that all the lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the King." Also he says, "A subject, therefore, hath only the usufruct not the absolute property of the soil, or, as Sir Edward Coke expresses it, he hath *dominium utile*, but not *dominium directum*." Thus the greatest landholder in the kingdom is but a tenant: and thus ownership still exists in the state.

Rent. Unless the land is capable of paying the former, a capitalist will not invest his capital in agriculture; and if the returns are less, he will seek to withdraw his capital into some more remunerative channel.

It is equally clear that the capitalist who cultivates the least productive soil, will have these ordinary average profits of trade,—or that the prices of his produce must yield him as much as the same capital would yield him in any other business. But there cannot be two prices in the market. The man whose lands produce only twenty bushels of wheat per acre, will sell at the same rate to the public as the man whose land produces thirty bushels of wheat per acre.—The man who owns the most productive land, will have a surplus of ten bushels over and above what is needed to reimburse the labor and capital expended in bringing the twenty bushels to market. Whence does this surplus arise, and to whom does it morally belong?

It is due either to the natural and inherent superiority of the one soil to the other, or to the additional fertility conferred by the application of labor and capital. If the surplus arise from the superiority of one soil to another, no *individual* has a right to appropriate it, for as little as any man created the soil, so little did he create its fertility. Hence the Economists admit that the state might appropriate all the rent derived from this source, without affecting either the cultivator or the consumer.

Again, if the superior fertility of the land yielding thirty bushels of wheat, arises artificially,—the result of the application of extra labor and capital,—how can *that* belong to those who have never advanced either? Whenever a man has advanced these appliances, society, by securing him the possession of the soil for a certain period of time, will reimburse him for the outlay. There need never be any anxiety on that point, since men generally will not sink capital without the prospect of remuneration. The capitalist will be repaid by the sale of his extra produce for any extra investment which created it,—or he will not make it. But in the name of common sense, how does this confer a title to the Rent taken by the mass of our landholders? It is neither their labor, nor skill, nor capital, which cleared the land, manured it, drained it, or otherwise improved it. They do not in general even pretend to be cultivators of the soil; they are simply sinecurists quartered upon it. As a wood or desert it originally came into their hands by force,—by force they have held it ever since,—and the cultivator alone, as laborer or farmer, has gradually transformed it into its present fruitful condition. Each addition made to the fertility of the soil by the cultivator, forms, when he dies or quits, an addition to the rent. Thus farms which, sixty years ago, let for one hundred pounds per year, now pay, by a series of re-lettings, two or three hundred pounds. The whole rent of land in this country has increased *three-fold within the last half century*. Now, and then the landlord gives a little hack, to effect 'improvements,' foreseeing that he will thereby obtain a still larger rent; but the *sum* so advanced is mostly rent previously taken from his tenants. Why should Society in this case, more than in any other, be deprived of the benefits left by its progenitors? We inherit the public works, the arts and the sciences of our ancestors,—why not those ameliorations which they have made in the soil? Or rather, why should a private individual enter into the labors of others, appropriate what he never made, and reap where he has never sown? Even if

the landholders and cultivators were identical, it would be unjust that they should appropriate the sum now paid as rent. For they are already reimbursed for all outlays, by the sale of produce. Beyond fair and ordinary profits, they have no right to a monopoly-profit, from which the cultivators of the inferior soils, or other traders, are shut out.

The argument is strengthened by considering the great increase in rent arising from the concentration of people in towns, and the mere progress of population. With neither of these causes has the landlord any *special* concern. The landlord is another Danaë, and has but to sit still, while the Public, like an amorous Jupiter, showers down its gold! The increase of population, by driving mankind to the less fertile soils, augments in the same ratio the rent of all those previously under cultivation. And thus, in fact, a system of private property in land, converts the misfortunes of Society into the gain of the Landlord!

It has been urged, that as the price of the produce raised from the worst land in cultivation must pay the ordinary profits of trade, therefore Rent does not enter into the price of commodities, and the community, consequently, does not loose anything by its payment. But if the view we have stated be correct, Rent, when appropriated, whether by landlord or cultivator, is not only a loss to the community, which is deprived of a portion of wealth without receiving any equivalent,—but the payment indicates another loss, namely, *that the increase of numbers is driving cultivation on to less remunerative soils*. The surplus produce of superior soils is the *natural compensation* for the deficiency of the inferior ones. By permitting private property in the soil—Society takes the penalty, and throws away its advantage, like a spendthrift who constantly increases his largesses as his means diminish. Had not our ancestors so liberally bestowed what they had no right to give, the successive ameliorations which capital and labor have effected in the soil, instead of swelling the luxury and pampering the pride of a few thousand landholders, and occasioning a surplus and starving population, would have proved the very means of its support. The restitution of the soil would go far to rectify the present insane distribution of wealth. It would not only vastly increase the produce from the soil, but share it more equitably. The rent alone would pay the whole taxation of the country.* And if the monster debt were either extinguished, or placed on the shoulders of those for whose benefit it was incurred, and the English nation had ceased to 'learn war any more,' a surplus of more than £40,000,000 would remain to an untaxed nation for the purpose of education, art, and general social amelioration.

Some writers have thought that the possession of large landed estates raises

* In newly peopled countries such as America, if the governing powers were to let the land, instead of selling it, they would, as soils of decreasing fertility were progressively brought under cultivation, become possessed of the whole rent of the country, without inflicting the slightest injury upon any individual. The expenses of the state might be entirely paid out of the fund, so that a tax need not be raised.—If the public revenue from this source should be greater than what was necessary to meet these expenses, as would very soon be the case, the surplus might be disposed of as should appear most for the public benefit—in granting rewards for useful actions, or for great discoveries in the arts and sciences. There would be no Custom houses, no Excise Officers, no smugglers, no preventive service, nor the train of immoralities which they bring with them.—Unpub. Lectures on Political Economy; revised by Lord Brougham. Lecture IV.

the standard of living, and diffuses a taste for the comforts and luxuries of civilized life. It would be juster to say, that while it multiplies the imaginary wants of a few, it pinches the wages of the laborer, and curtails the profits of the farmer in an equal degree. To secure a small section of mankind the possession of the inheritance of the race, in order that its consumption may encourage the cultivation of the arts and refinements of life, is akin to the wisdom of a 'shopkeeper who should attempt to increase his business and get rich by furnishing his customers with money to buy his goods.' The mass of the community do not enjoy the refinements of the wealthy. Indeed the pictures and statues which line the halls of the opulent might as well, so far as the people are concerned, never exist all.

It is not the same 'to own the land' and to 'own the cultivation' bestowed upon it. This is shown by the fact that the land for the most part is, in this country, the property of the non-cultivator, who receives a rent after the farmer or cultivator has been reimbursed for all his outlay.

Nor does it follow that, because mankind taken collectively are the owners of the land, they must *each* be a landholder or a cultivator. Had this distinction been clearly perceived much useless discussion would have been saved. A distribution of employment is essential to the progress, the civilization, and the happiness of mankind. Some must make clothes, others houses, others pictures. In actual practice, therefore, landholding must be principally confined to a portion of society, while to the remainder must be left manufactures and commerce. But in making a *landholder* let us avoid making a *landowner*, and thus purchasing one benefit (the division of employments) by another sacrifice—the sacrifice of the common right of society in the land.

The great objection to the ownership of the soil being vested in anybody save the original owner,—Society, or its representative, the government,—is, that it makes the Few the arbiters of the comforts, and very existence, of the Many. He who controls the land, controls the food of the nation. If the landlord be what is called a great landowner, having abundance of the comforts and luxuries of life, he will not be anxious for the cultivation of his estate beyond the point necessary to supply *himself*, while it is the interest of the people that the land should be cultivated up to the point to satisfy *themselves*. There is plenty of land which would support the cultivators and reimburse all expenditure upon it, but it will pay little or no Rent. This the great landholder will certainly not cultivate, and thus a large portion of land is rendered unavailable to the public from this cause alone.

But the landlord will not feel disposed to cultivate even all the land capable of returning *him* a profit in the shape of rent. In this country society has made the landlord so rich that the prospect of increasing his income by letting it, is of less importance to him than such considerations as the greater convenience of collecting rents, the pleasures of the chase, or the preservation of a picturesque park.

The absurdity of permitting individuals to usurp the soil, is manifested by the difficulties of the Free-Trade defenders of the rights of property, in regard to the Game-laws. If the land belongs to the landlord, *so does the game*, and he has a

† Mc Culloch.

right to make his own conditions and reservations when letting to the farmer. The tenant who leases a farm knows beforehand that a portion of the crops will be destroyed, and should therefore take it into his calculations. If the laborer's employment is ruined and his food cut short, he must change the direction of his exertions. If the public complain, it is very unreasonable, for if the land is the landlord's *own*, why should not the pheasant thereon be as safe as the horse in the stable, or the spindle in the factory? Either the land is not his property, or it is. If it is not, let the law express the fact. If it is, then by putting him on the same footing as owners of other property, you confer on him the functions of Gods! That he may have room to gratify his whim,—or breed racehorses, or preserve vermin, for the purpose of barbarous 'sport,'—*he may destroy the food of thousands*. What then? Have we not Historic parallels? Nero fiddled while Rome was burning!*

The following are some of the Resolutions adopted by the late Committee on the Game Laws.

Res. 10th. That altho by law the game upon a farm is held to be the property of the occupier, except when specially reserved to the landlord, yet it is proved that the practice of so reserving it is all but universal; and that, in reality, the control over the game is in very rare instances in the hands of the occupying tenants.

Res. 11th. That by an overwhelming mass of evidence it is proved that enormous damage is sustained by the cultivators of the soil where game is preserved, greatly exceeding, according to the evidence of many practical and most respectable farmers, the whole amount of the poor rate, county rate, church rate, highway rate, and income tax payable upon the farm on which the game is preserved, or which may be in the immediate neighborhood of a preserve.

Res. 12th. That it is proved upon the evidence of trustworthy tenant-farmers and landowners, that to compensate the cultivator of a game farm, a diminution of rent, varying from twenty to thirty per cent, should be allowed.

Res. 13th. That it does not appear to be the practice of the proprietors of the land to make compensation for the destruction of crops caused by game, altho some honorable instances to the contrary have been brought before your committee.

Res. 15th. That it is proved that the prosperity of agriculture, thro'out very many parts of England and Scotland, is greatly impaired by the preservation of game; that a vast amount of produce is destroyed; that the fertility of the soil is diminished; that less capital is expended and less labor employed; and that thus, by the same process, the profits of the tenantry and the wages of the laborers are reduced.

Res. 18th. That with respect to remedial measures, and to changes in the law, your committee would recommend that in all future legislation on the subject of game, it should be a primary object to discourage the practice of game preserving, as incompatible with the successful pursuit of agriculture, hurtful to the morality of the laboring classes, destructive of that kindly feeling which should exist between the different ranks of society, and generally disadvantageous to the interests of the country.

Notwithstanding these conclusions, the country gentlemen having just learnt the right of every man to do as he liked with his own, parodied the logic which had been used against the claims of the handloom-weaver and the helpless factory child. The free-competition men tried some hair-breadth distinctions about

* In France before the revolution, the landlords "prohibited weeding and hoeing, lest the young partridges should be disturbed; steeping seed, lest it should injure their health; manuring with night soil, lest their flavor should be spoilt by their feeding on the corn so treated; mowing hay before a certain time, or removing stubble, lest the birds should be deprived of shelter." Thornton's Plea for Peasant Proprietors. P. 118.

fera natura, but as they labored under the fallacy of admitting the landlords right to *own* land, they were foiled by the very weapons they had wielded against the Ten-hours bill, and in favor of Free trade. The same principle justifies a landlord 'clearing' his estate of the people, as much as if they were so much vermin. Why prevent a man doing the best he can for himself, when by turning a county into sheep farms he gets a few pence per acre more than if it afforded sustenance to thousands of people? Admit the right of property in the soil, and the rack-rented tenants-at-will of Irish middle-men and landlords have nothing whereof to complain. Would you deprive the landlords of the right to make as much as he can by *his* land, or hinder him from letting it on such conditions as are most advantageous to him? Has he not the *right* to take a higher rent at each re-letting,—and, to evict him when he thinks proper? Assuredly, and the law upholds him therein with admirable consistency. In the pursuit of her own pleasure or interest, the Duchess of Sutherland, or her agent, drove 26,000 people from the homes of their infancy, from the means of livelihood, and turned a happy peasantry into outcasts and vagrants. As sheep-farms the land could realize a trifle per acre more than in the support of the cultivators. What better reason could anybody demand?

It is but the freer exercise of these 'rights of property' in the land which has cursed Ireland.¹ One of the finest countries on the earth, beholds its peasantry first plundered of every atom of produce that could be wrung from them, then evicted from their dwellings, driven to the pestilential holds of over-crowded emigrant ships, forced to break the ties of friends and kindred, landed on a foreign shore to suffer similar evils, and afflicted at once by the evils of ignorance, brutality, famine, and pestilence. *Rent caused it all*, and in the midst of the most

¹ Startled at the horrible consequences of the principle they so lately asserted, the advocates of the rights of property turned round and said, that property has its *duties* as well as its *rights*. Then why does not the law assert the one as well as the other? Besides, we ask, are duties limited to landed property and not applicable to the millowner and merchant? If not, why not? If they are equally incumbent on both, the law must equally assert them. But in that case what becomes of *laissez-faire*-ism?

² In that country there are 20,808,271 acres, and of these one fourth only is under tillage giving employment to the laborer. Eight millions of acres are permanent pasture paying a good rent, but which does not afford employment to a sixth of the labor, nor grow a third of the amount of produce which it would under tillage. There are six millions of acres waste, four millions of which, at the lowest estimate, are reclaimable. Taking the number of agricultural families at 974,000, this would give upwards of fourteen acres to each family, or nearly three times what has been proved, over and over again, to be sufficient to maintain in comfort and plenty a laborer and his family. In Jersey the average size of the farms is sixteen acres; in Guernsey still smaller, but in these islands the produce per acre is larger than in England. It is a false and libelous assertion which throws the whole of the recent Irish calamity on the peasantry, which proclaims that millions "endeavored to evade the great duty of mankind, to make their bread by the sweat of their brow." Had the peasantry of Ireland not been deprived of every other resource save the land, had they not endured the grossest religious and political persecution to which a nation was ever subjected, and been rack-rented till hope itself died within them, they would have presented an aspect probably not unlike that now exhibited by the French peasant—poor and comparatively rude it is true, but how immeasurably superior to the beings which British legislation and landlordism, and the protestant religion as by law established have made of them.

intense horrors of the Irish famine, landlords Irish, and English, were whining about the 'rights of property,' while scarcely a voice was raised for the sacred 'rights of man.' No one doubts that there was room enough on the soil of Ireland for ten-fold the people of Ireland. But the people, instead of exporting their landlords, exported themselves. The landlords could not cultivate it themselves, and, dog-in-the-manger-like, would not suffer anybody else. But why not get rid of Landlordism? Because it makes the laws, and maintains soldiers and constabulary to protect it in the exercise of its misdeeds. Much as we deprecate brute force decisions, in such circumstances it is a question of life against life, and we cannot blame the peasant if he prefer his own to the aggressor's. We cannot understand why death inflicted by the bullet of the outcast, brutalized laborer, should be a crime,—while death inflicted by the educated landlords, by means of process-server and bailiff, should be legal. Of course 'respectability' will stand aghast at such views, but how shall it learn to do right, unless taught by convincing lessons?

The feudal system of landholding has been upheld lately on the grounds of its beneficial political influence. Mr. McCulloch advocates a landed aristocracy for its conservative tendency, and as affording a bulwark against the encroachments of democracy.¹ The conservatism spoken of is either a well grounded reverence for what is good and valuable in itself,—and in this case, where is the proof that the possession of land gives a clearer perception of that good than the other classes of the community possess?—or it is a mere unreasoning obstinacy, which is the virtue of a pig, and resistance to change simply because it is change—certainly a very slender recommendation. The 'encroachments of democracy' is an equally unintelligible phrase, unless, as we presume, a minority of the people, in virtue of possessing a higher nature, are entitled to set the will of the majority at defiance. Such an aristocracy, for such purposes, we hold to be unnecessary, and now rapidly becoming superseded. We have no need to provide for an artificial aristocracy, for the true aristocrat will ever exist without. The swiftest and strongest warriors are the aristocrats of the savage,—the merchant princes those of a nation of shopkeepers. As men come more and more under the guidance of intelligence and virtue, such leaders will be the governors of society. No artificial arrangements of property can maintain an aristocracy after its time. That of England, however well it suited the nation in its semi-barbarous state, has now become an excrescence. It will fall before public spirited calico printers and cotton-lords, because these better express the wants and spirit of the times; and these in turn shall give place to the advanced minds of a newer era. In states of society when men were poor and uncivilized, a special provision for those who were to govern may not have been so injurious, but to rest the institution on these grounds at present is to overlook all the changes taking place in society. The people are determined to have self-government or no-government. They are learning that wisdom and virtue are not 'hereditary,' nor necessarily allied to the possession of broad acres, and that these qualities are purchaseable at a lower rate than the monopoly of the soil by a few noble families. Had the fate and fame of England depended on the capacity of those of 'noble blood,'

¹ McCulloch. Succession to Property.

rather than upon men in the middle and lower ranks of life, many of them not owning a rood of land,—instead of being the first of empires, it had remained an insignificant island to this hour, and probably an appanage to some continental state. Call over the lists of great men which the English or any other aristocracy has offered to justify an immunity from the ordinary duties and responsibilities of life. Tell over the poets, the orators, the scientific men, the legislators, all who in any way have written for themselves a name in the page of history or earned the gratitude of nations, and they will be found, with very few exceptions, to have been men who have had no prepared way for them, no hereditary greatness thrust upon them, who have owed little to the world and but too frequently have had to struggle for the very means of existence.

"It is not," confesses the advocate of aristocracy, "to those placed by their fortunes at the head of society, but to those in its humbler walks who have raised themselves to eminence, that mankind are indebted for the greater number of those inventions and improvements which have so greatly extended the empire of mind over matter, and made such vast additions to the sum of human happiness. But, were large fortunes broken down by a system of equal partition, and reduced to a comparatively moderate level, the stimulus of inequality being wanting, or very much diminished, there would be less emulation, and society would come nearer to a stationary state."^k The argument for inequality is false as respects the facts. No great man was ever made such by the 'stimulus of inequality.' Whom did Shakspeare, Milton, Watt, Newton ever attempt to rival, and so attempting, attain their high pinnacles of greatness?

The mischief however ends not here, but the important functions of government themselves fall into discredit. Instead of getting men for legislators who have sprung from the people, and who therefore understand and sympathize with their wants, whose very advancement is the surest guarantee of their experience, their industry, or their ability, and who might introduce into the social system the best fruits thereof, we have for legislators a set of men secured from their birth against want, against all claims on their time or talents on the part of their fellow men, and with no motives to industry either on behalf of themselves or others. That such men should be incapacitated for dealing with the mighty interests of society,—timid, lumbering, effete, and protective of every antique abuse, that even in those portions of the common business of life which it behoves a government to undertake, they should be proverbially the "worst manufacturers, farmers, merchants" in existence, it is but reasonable to expect. In their acknowledged incapacity *laissez-faire*-ism finds its strongest argument against the prosecution of the most needful public duties, such as national education, sanitary measures, the productive employment of the poor, etc. Because certain men are born to fulfil certain offices, and are almost necessarily incompetent to discharge them, it is urged as an argument against such duties being performed at all—a conclusion surely of all others the least rational.

If indeed mankind were doomed to be governed by hereditary wisdom alone, we must confess that we would most zealously support *laissez-faire*-ism. Wherever landlordism governs it falls like a blight. The success of landlords in exempting their unearned income from taxation has been remarkable. In Sardinia

^k McCulloch, p. 31.

they succeeded in doing so entirely. In France before the revolution they nearly did the same, tho they dearly paid for their oppressions. But our own country, in which landlordism has been most powerful, exhibits the best specimen of its capability of looking after its own interests. Mr. Macgregor published some years since the following comparison.

Public Revenue.	Amount of Revenue derived from taxes on Land.
In Prussia,—thalers 51,740,000	... 26,630,000
In Austria,—florins 164,000,000	... 87,000,000
In France—francs, 1,018,750,000	... 579,669,030
In England,—£52,226,955	... £1,531,915

In the other German States, he observes, and in Belgium and Holland, the proportion from land taxes contributed to the Revenue is as great, or greater, than in Prussia.

The landed interests of France, Flanders, Holland, all Germany, and all Italy, pay *at least one half* of the national taxation by a *direct tax upon land*.

The land-tax, which raises £1,174,000 is exactly at the same nominal amount now as in the reign of William the Third (a century and a half since), altho the whole *public revenue* was then only £3,895,205 and is now upwards of £50,000,000, and altho the *land rental* of Great Britain and Ireland has risen within that time from £9,724,000 to £47,066,822.

The landlord has not only secured himself almost an immunity from taxation, but his children are quartered on the public as legislators. How could it be otherwise? His family are brought up with the habits and tastes of aristocratic life, but one alone is furnished with the means to become an aristocrat. To condemn all the children to suffer, that one may be aggrandized, would be a piece of refined cruelty, if the public were not there to stand sponsor for the less fortunate.

In truth whether we look for direct or indirect service from landlords, we look in vain. In vain we try to discover on what pretence they extract from us a rental of £50,000,000 per annum. Unlike the profits of the capitalist, it is not the payment for the use of capital, for this was and is advanced by the cultivator. It is not for labor; they touch no tool nor plough. It is not for their agricultural knowledge; they exceed themselves in patronizing it. Rent is the least justifiable of the many drains which, united, condemn the laborer of the wealthiest country in the world to live as those of the poorest; the peasant of the most civilized nation to fare worse than those of the most retrograde. "It is rent," says Goodwyn Barnby, "which comes with a huge mouth annually swallowing farmers. It is rent which out-taxes all taxation. It is rent which in Europe levies itself upon improvement, and which either prohibits or burthens it. Let a farmer build a house, and his rent is raised. Let him prosper in his crops, and the landlord will take an additional benefit. Let him buy Liebig, and he shall pay over and over again the cost of the book."¹

A feudal system of landholding and a dense population are two such incongruous elements, that, we may rely upon it, the advent of the masses of the people

¹ Tait's Magazine. April, 1847.

of this country to power, will witness the destruction of the land-monopoly. It would be very desirable, could the mind of the people be prepared by a system of prospective legislation to avoid alike the evils which must attend a sudden and violent re-distribution of the soil similar to those suffered by the French Aristocracy, and, at the same time, secure the supremacy of just and rational principles of landholding. We would on no account sanction the deprivation of the present owners of their interest in the soil, at all events not without complete compensation. That society has no right to inflict an evil to obtain a good, until all means have been tried to avoid that evil, is a principle as valid for landlords as it ought to have been held for hand-loom weavers. But this by no means excludes action on the future. As Mr. Mill justly observes, "the reason for not disturbing acts of injustice of old date, cannot apply to unjust systems or institutions, since a bad law or usage is not one bad act in the remote past, but a perpetual repetition of bad acts, as long as the law or usage lasts." A law whose action should not commence until all now living had quitted the scene of life, might be framed to secure those just rights of society which it ought never to have given up, and it could not be charged with injustice towards the descendants of the landlords, no longer brought up with the expectations of obtaining superior advantages at the expense of the community. The landlords enjoy the monopoly of the land upon sufferance, just as they did the monopoly of the Corn Laws. The land was never granted them with the acquiescence of those at whose expense it was given; and we have yet to learn that society, in resuming its rights, after protecting the interests of the present owners, would be guilty of spoliation or robbery.

The attainment of the second object,—a rational system of landholding, involves more difficulty. It cannot be secured at once, because society is a progress, not a revolution, and only reaches higher stages by passing thro' the intermediate ones.

Our own predilections are for an associative system of agricultural and manufacturing industry, because we believe that in the judicious union of these two spheres of activity, will be found the circumstances best adapted to man's entire development, both individual and social. But a long period of time must elapse before such a system could become general, and moreover it may happen that there will be many individuals whom no association could retain, compatibly with the comfort of the rest, or to whom association of any kind would be slavery—who love isolation with all its drawbacks, better than a combination which secured the greatest material advantages. A good system of landed tenure should suit these conditions, and, as far as compatible with the general welfare, meet the peculiar wants and tastes of both individual and associative industry. By securing the possession of the land in the hands of the state, these various conditions seem best capable of being satisfactorily provided.

The state should never permit the right of occupying land not actually cultivated or employed to a useful end.

"To be allowed," says J. S. Mill, "any exclusive right at all, over a portion of the common inheritance, while there are others who have no portion, is already a privilege. No quantity of moveable goods which a person can acquire by his labor, prevents others from acquiring the like by the same means; but, from the very nature of the case, whoever owns land, keeps it from somebody else. The privilege or monopoly is only defensible as

a necessary evil; it becomes an injustice when carried to any point to which the compensatory good does not follow it."^m

The practical acknowledgement of this principle would throw open millions of acres of land to cultivation, and render large districts available to the public, from which they are now excluded in favor of a few useless animals.

An obvious corollary is, that no association or individuals should be permitted to occupy a greater portion of land than they have capital to cultivate properly, for otherwise they would virtually exclude the rest of society, without any compensating good. The fact of their being prepared to pay the *highest rent* obtainable for it, would be a tolerable guarantee of their intention to bestow effectual cultivation on the land; and another condition might be added, probably with advantage, limiting the amount of land taken in some general proportion to the capital possessed by the cultivators. Society would then enjoy the advantage of securing the best cultivation of the land, without depriving itself of those general rights which can only be forfeited to its own hurt.

Indeed it would not require any very large amount of skill or intelligence on the part of a Commission of scientific agriculturalists, to determine that size of farms which, in a given soil and situation, would permit the most advantageous application of capital, skill, and labor. Their object must obviously be, on the one hand, to check *any monopoly of the material* from which the means of existence must be drawn, and on the other, to prevent a *too minute subdivision*, which, tho it might support a large population, would, by lessening the nett surplus produce, render the production of the other commodities essential to a high state of civilization, difficult or impossible, as among the peasant proprietors of some countries. Far better that the soil should amply supply the wants of a moderate population, than meagerly those of a dense one. Of the two evils it is better for a population to diminish thro luxury, than by deficient supplies. The accessions to population beyond that which the most judicious cultivation of the soil is capable of supporting in comfort, should be carried off by rational and systematic colonization.

The cultivator of a farm should be the tenant of the state so long as he continued to pay the rent at which his farm had been leased to him, and should retain possession until his death, when it would be re-let to the highest bidder. If he wished to quit it before then, it should also be re-let, compensating the outgoing tenant for his improvements, but not permitting him to hold any interest therein in the character of a sinecurist quartered on the land. The land leased on such terms would pay the highest rent compatible with returning to the cultivator average profits. There would not be the inducement of the peasant proprietor, for being contented with an inferior cultivation, because secure that he cannot quite starve so long as he owns his patch of land. The rent, at the time of entering, should be that which the most active capitalist was willing to pay, and therefore the tenant must continue to pay this, or quit. By securing him the

^m Pol. Econ. Vol. i, p. 275.

ⁿ The land was divided into fixed portions among the Jews in quantities varying from 6 to 25 acres. If mortgaged, the encumbrance ceased every 50th year, or year of Jubilee. In Austria landed properties not above 140 metzen (equal to 66 acres) are indivisible.

possession of the land during his lifetime, and so long as he complies with the conditions, he has almost the same inducement to improve as if he were a proprietor, since the termination of life seems to each man an event too distant to prevent any clearly advantageous undertaking, and as the period of death is seldom foreseen until too late to make important changes in the system of culture, the tenant would not exhaust the soil, as now so frequently happens when near the termination of leases for fixed periods. The more important improvements might be made under authority of the state, and paid for out of the rents.

The space required for the sites of Towns should be planned on principles which would ensure health, convenience, symmetry, and beauty. Such a thing is almost impracticable so long as the land belongs to private proprietors, without the sacrifice of many times the amount of money that it would have taken had a little foresight been used. A vast number of restrictions are required, and a corresponding difficulty in enforcing them experienced, to remove abuses which should not have been permitted to exist at all. The public interest, which really means the interest of every individual, demands that the requisite space of land should be allotted to every dwelling for health and ornament. The private interest of landholders demands that the greatest number of houses stand on the smallest possible quantity of space. Not a square inch but must pay its rent, and a rent, too, enlarged to a hundred or a thousand times its original amount. The result is, towns, large enough to fill a province, are hemmed into a few acres. It is not alone that a vast and ever increasing revenue, which they have done nothing to deserve, goes into the pockets of those who happen to be the owners of town-localities, that we object to the private appropriation of rent, tho this is an enormous abuse of the principle of property, but thousands pay that rent over again with their lives, prematurely cut off by disease, and tens of thousands by their injured health and lessened happiness. Were the laborer doomed to dwell for ever in dingy streets between masses of red brick, and heaven's face—the only divine thing about him—obscured by smoke, labor would indeed be the curse it has falsely been represented. Why should not the bright sun shine upon our labor, emblem of Him who blesses it? or why should not the pure air and the refreshing influence of the vegetable world surround every dwelling and consecrate every manufactory? We would that every man should enjoy

'The bounteous store of charms which nature yields,
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves and garniture of fields,
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountains sheltering bosom shields,
And all the grand magnificence of heaven.'

Having foolishly given up his inheritance, he must be grateful for the permission to look thereon, if property has not so far asserted its rights as to bar him out by stone walls and steel traps, while the inhabitants of the largest town think themselves happy if they can command a vacant space equal to a tithe of that required by any one of the surrounding gentry for a park!

We entertain indeed a strong objection to the present segregation of manufac-

turing from agricultural industry, believing that both lose materially thereby. It can be no ordinary motive which impels a tradesman to toil, year after year, with unremitting industry, and an economy which but too often starves his own soul, in order to spend his few declining years in the country. He frequently finds that, like the gin horse, his habits are fixed, and he must tread the monotonous circle to last. But how few can solace their toils even with this prospect. The instinct of all men, were it not constantly repressed by the want of means to gratify it, would prompt them to live in the presence of nature. No healthy being selects a life entirely urban by choice, and any system of social arrangements which condemn the vast majority of society to such a state, is in the strictest sense *unnatural*.

The principles already expressed are equally valid whether the system of agricultural industry be based on association or on individual competition. It next forms part of our object to show, that strong presumptions exist in favor of the associative, and against the competitive, theory of industry, at least so far as agriculture is concerned.

Next to the system of landed property in this country, that of France, much lauded by many modern reformers, seems to be the worst that could possibly be devised. The law (introduced at the first French Revolution) decrees that property shall, at the death of the proprietor, be divided among the children. The result, foreseable enough, has been the splitting up of the land into innumerable small portions or parcels. The average number of parcels at present belonging to each proprietor is about *twenty*, and so small are they sometimes, that it is difficult to turn the plough on one, without interfering with the land of another proprietor. Such a result is possible wherever an unlimited power of division is permitted, and indeed will usually follow from the mere progress of population, unless counteractive tendencies of a very strong character are called into existence to prevent it.

The compulsory division exercises a different influence on the conduct of children to the system of primogeniture, but one nearly equally unfavorable, by rendering them independent of parental control. It also makes them indisposed to quit the spot where they have been brought up, and thus it perpetuates the morcelling system. Like the English laborer, the French peasant proprietor frequently fares worse than the soldier and the convict. The consumption of meat is said, upon good authority, to be materially diminishing. It is indeed very certain that the subdivision of her fertile soil, tho so complete, has not availed to save the vast majority of her population from deep poverty, that it has not secured her manufacturing operatives from an over-crowded labor market, but her Lyonesse workman must, notwithstanding, bear the terrible words on his banner,—“To live working, or die fighting,” while her destitute workmen in Paris risk their lives at the barricades. Three millions of her population are dependent on public or private charity, and as many more are on the verge of the same condition. It is curious, too, that in a country which should be the peasant’s paradise, many of the leading minds of the country, the most capable of forming a judgment, and those also least capable and least disposed to embrace sound or unsound theories, should alike accept the idea of association, as offering a solution

of their difficulties. It is a strong argument in favor of the latter and against any system which permits the cultivator an unlimited power of subdivision.

To refute the advocate of both small and large farm system, it would only be requisite, did space permit, to pit their arguments against each other, and, like the far-famed Kilkenny Cats, there would remain of each but the smallest residue of tail. Both are inimical to the welfare of society, one by striking at civilization itself, the other by limiting its blessings to the few at the expense of the many.

If the size of the farm be only sufficient for the employment of the peasant and his family, the production of food must be effected on the least economical method, so far as the expenditure of capital and labor is concerned. Under this system, the use of expensive mechanical aids, and the division of labor, are excluded from the helps to the husbandman. The capital sunk in providing the necessary buildings is much larger, in proportion to the amount of produce, than is required in extensive farming. Much valuable time must be lost by each little proprietor in conveying his produce to market. If it be said that the small proprietor, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, can still contrive to obtain a greater produce per acre, it does not meet our objection, that such additional amount of produce is obtained at a vastly disproportionate expenditure of labor. The power to produce an increasing amount of wealth with less labor, lays at the basis of human elevation and progress. The fewer persons required to cultivate the soil, and the greater the amount of disposable-population which they can maintain, the greater the power of providing all the other necessities, comforts, and luxuries of life. It is quite possible that the peasant proprietor may produce more food from a given space, but he himself is sacrificed in the process. His whole time is incessantly occupied by the minutiae of his farm. With no temptations to withdraw him to other occupations, and stimulated by the feeling of individual responsibility under which he labors, his industry is untiring. This entire devotion of the whole powers and time compels the neglect of all the higher portions of man’s nature. This effect is still further increased by the separation of one family from the other, and the few opportunities afforded for social intercourse. There can be none of that collision of mind with mind, which in some sort has atoned to the town-operative for the absence of better culture. There can be little taste, and less opportunities for the enjoyment of books. The beauties that lay around us are lost to him for want of the seeing eye, the understanding heart. From the treasures of Art he is shut out, and a destiny not much unlike that of the animal that drags his own plough,—a barren round of eating, sleeping, and working—must be his fate. The peasant proprietors are ever found least disposed to cherish elevated views of the progress and destiny of man, the most conservative of old and absurd institutions and the most hostile to improvement, either in industrial processes or social arrangements. In the southern departments of France it is customary, as it was three thousand years ago, to thrash corn by treading it with horses and oxen! and in some parts, the ploughs now in use, are fac-similes of those described by Virgil! ^a The strong feeling of ownership fostered in peasant proprietors is an obstacle to their gradual removal with the increase of numbers. They cling with all the obstinacy of uncultured minds

^a Mc Culloch, p. 92.

to the place of their birth, and pay enormous amounts for the privilege of remaining landholders.

Such an institution necessarily therefore limits and obstructs human progression. Man is a citizen, and it is the duty and interest of each to take some share in the interests and objects of society. But the peasant proprietor knows nothing of this duty; he would be loyal to Satan himself provided his patch of property were undisturbed. The slight political duties of the citizen he does not fulfil, those involved in the more refined application of the associative principle, he would not attend to if he could, and hardly could even if he would.

The peasant proprietor is frugal to meanness, it is part of that narrowness of soul which all his circumstances tend to foster. Character is a circle; given a portion of the arc, it is easy to complete the periphery.

That we may not be accused of libelling a class that, notwithstanding all their faults, stand infinitely higher than the English or Scotch hirelings, we will quote the admission of one of their ablest defenders, Mr. Thornton.

"Ignorant self-sufficiency, coarseness of mind, and rudeness of manners, are natural to those whose days are spent in incessant bodily labor, and who are cut off from intercourse with classes enjoying more leisure and more abundant means for intellectual cultivation. Wherever, as in the greater parts of Germany, the gentry live entirely in towns, and abandon the rural districts to a laboring peasantry, the latter, seeing none superior to themselves, form their standard of excellence from their own practice, to which they become absurdly bigoted, while they conceive a stupid prejudice against all customs which differ from their own. Wholly absorbed in material cares, they remain in ignorance of the higher gratifications of which man is capable; they cannot aim at elegance or refinement of which they have no examples, nor sympathize with sensibilities which they do not understand; they continue thro' life plodding and dull, and their demeanor answers to the obtuseness of their nature. Education by itself is not calculated to have much effect in humanizing them. They have been taught to read, but they have little time and less inclination for availing themselves of the acquirement. In their brief intervals of leisure they are too much exhausted by toil to seek recreation in intellectual exertions. The civilization of the lower orders of society can scarcely originate amongst themselves, but must rather descend from the ranks of those above."^o

Speaking of the Norwegian Peasantry, Mr. Thornton says

"Almost the only thing in their condition which is to be regretted, is the deficiency of mental culture, which prevents their leisure being turned to the best account, and heightening their material enjoyment with intellectual pleasures. Would to God that laborers in other countries had as little to sigh for."^p

Why advocate a system so imperfect, or rather why, not seek to develop a principle which, while securing to the cultivator the fruits of his exertions, shall enable him to enjoy the higher portions of his nature?

To remedy the evils so obviously and necessarily attached to peasant proprietorship, the writer argues that we ought to have "farms so extensive as to require the superintendence of men of considerable wealth and proportionate instruction, who would avail themselves of the discoveries of science and effect improvements in agriculture, and would also serve as models for their humble neighbors in their modes of life and general habits of thinking, as well as in the conduct of their business." We have precisely such a class of people in this

^o *Plca for Peasant Proprietors*, p. 183.

^p *Ibid*, p. 87.

country, and probably to a greater extent than any other country in Europe. If any peculiarly beneficial influences could be experienced at their hands, our peasantry should have derived at least a share of that benefit anticipated for the small peasant proprietors. Surely a set of wealthy, intelligent farmers should have prevented the necessity of half their laborers becoming pensioners on parish relief every winter. The wealth of the large farmer has been obtained by the very means which degraded his laborer, and the small landowner would scarcely fare much better. He must take his produce to the same market, to obtain the commodities his land will not produce. He will seldom be able to compete therein with the large producer, and will frequently be driven altogether out of the market. The trouts would swallow the minnows, and the large estates frequently absorb the small ones, and turn their owners into day-laborers again. In France the peasant proprietors cannot maintain their land, and it is hypothecated for debt to an amount beyond one third of its value, to creditors who thus receive a share of the small earnings of the cultivator.^q It is an unsound theory of property which sets up, not as a temporary expedient but as a fixed principle, one set of men as the guides, protectors, benefactors of the rest, which renders the acknowledgement of a social division of superior and inferior classes permanent,—which says, a minority shall be in such a position as to command wealth, leisure, culture, and refinement, and dooms a majority to constant toil, ignorance, and debasement, with a bare possibility of being rescued therefrom by the goodwill of the former.

Notwithstanding these defects, peasant proprietorship in this country would be a great boon to the people. It is indeed a clumsy primitive mode of securing the cultivator his share of the fruits of the earth. So long as the social arrangements of any country are in a low state of advancement,—so long as correct principles of wealth-distribution are treated as dangerous theories, or absurd chimeras,—peasant proprietorship is the only alternative against the monopoly of the few at the expense of the many. We have to choose between a few men very wealthy, surrounded by a number of dispirited, pauperized, and brutified laborers like the English peasantry, or an independent peasantry, like the French and Norwegian peasants, who, if they do not much transcend the animals, are at least better fed, and certainly much more moral, than our English laborers.^r

^q Lest it should be imagined that English Landlordism is not so injurious as French Subdivision, we may state, that the land in England is burdened with debts and encumbered to the extent of 50 per cent, that of Scotland 60, and that of Ireland 70 per cent.

^r "M. Moreau de Jonnes, a statistician of some celebrity, presented a comparative view of crime in France in 1841 (the latest year reported), and England, including Wales, in 1842. Correcting a misprint by the help of the English tables now before us, it stands thus:—

France—Population 34,230,000				
	Crimes.	Simple Thefts.	Total.	Ratio to Population.
Accused	7,462	10,744	18,206	1 to 1,900
Condemned	5,016	8,889	13,855	1 to 2,500
England—Population 15,901,000				
Accused	14,089	17,220	31,809	1 to 500
Condemned	9,735	12,998	22,733	1 to 700

What are termed 'Simple thefts' here are those which stand in our returns as 'Simple

Our English Political Economists, disregarding all principles for ensuring a just distribution of wealth, have in agriculture, as in manufactures, looked simply at increasing its amount. In perfect accordance with their theories, the large farm system produces a large nett surplus over and above that necessary to maintain the cultivators. It is true that under it wealth accumulates, but no less so that men decay. Less and less labor becomes requisite to raise a large amount of produce. That which a few years since required the labor of *five* families to produce is now produced by *four*. The following table may give some idea how matters have progressed in this direction. Out of every hundred persons in

	Agricultural.	Commercial.	Miscellaneous.
1811 there were	35	44	21
1821 " "	33	46	21
1831 " "	28	42	30
1841 " "	22	46	32

And tho the population of Great Britain increased 50 per cent. from 1811 to 1841, the agricultural population decreased 13 per cent.

	Population.	Agricultural.	Per Cent.
1811—	12,596,803	4,408,808	35
1841—	18,844,424	4,145,703	22

Even the rapid growth of our manufacturing system could not employ the *surplus* population as fast as the landlords created it. To assist them in getting 'absorbed' with greater rapidity, their cottages were pulled down and themselves driven to find employment in the towns, with no great advantage either to their morals or happiness. They provided the master manufacturers with children for the factories, and their competition for employment prevented any chance of the operative obtaining some proportionate share of the enormous wealth he was mainly instrumental in producing. The emigration to the towns did not however improve the condition of the laborers left behind, for they still obtained mere existence wages in summer and parish relief in winter. The farmer did not become so wealthy as he would have done, because he in turn was impoverished by the rent and game of the landlords. Thanks to that Machinery which the landlords so much abuse, feudalism in England obtained a respite of another century.

If such are the disadvantages of the large farm and the small farm systems, is there a third system which shall unite the advantages, yet be free from the evils, of both? It is required to obtain a large amount of produce, but neither at the cost of a large amount of unskilled labor from the vast majority of the people, nor with the danger of the profits falling into the hands of landlords and capitalists, the cultivator taking barely sufficient for his existence. It is required to obtain the advantages of large capital and division of labor enjoyed by the large farm system, with that fair distribution of the results to which the small farm system has hitherto alone made any approximation.

larcenies.' M. Moreau separates these, and lumps all the other offences of every kind under the name of 'crimes.' Taking the two classes together, it would appear that there is nearly four times as much crime among 1000 Englishmen as among 1000 Frenchmen." Aristocracy of Britain and the laws of Primogeniture and Entail. P. 185.

Such a result is attainable but in one way—by means of Association. We do not mean an arbitrarily enforced association, for if the state see that no man or body of men take land without cultivating it, or at least paying as high a rent for it as those who would cultivate it, it sufficiently protects the interests of society against private aggression. But tho the state may not compel individuals to unite their energies and funds for combined cultivation, it may do much to *encourage* it, by making various experiments, and diffusing education and intelligence. That agricultural association so originating, would remedy alike the evils arising from large and from small farms, is now frequently conceded by continental economists. It will be long ere the subject receive the attention of English economists, probably not until the pressure of suffering, and growth of intelligence, have to some extent actualized it in France. John Stuart Mill is an exception to this remark. Above all other economists he seems to have the greatest knowledge of the wants of the time, tho even he is not sufficiently alive to it. Speaking of peasant proprietorship, as opposed to the large farm system, he says:

"The large farmer has some advantage in the article of buildings. It does not cost so much to house a great number of cattle in one building, as to lodge them equally well in several buildings. There is also some advantage in implements. A small farmer is not so likely to possess expensive instruments. But the principal agricultural implements, even when of the best construction are not expensive. It may not answer to a small farmer to own a threshing machine, for the small quantity of corn he has to thresh; but there is no reason why such a machine should not in every neighborhood be owned in common, or provided by some person to whom the others pay a consideration for its use. The large farmer can make some saving in cost of carriage. There is nearly as much trouble in carrying a small portion of produce to market, as a much greater produce, in bringing home a small, as a much larger quantity of manure, and articles of daily consumption. There is also the greater cheapness of buying things in larger quantities." *

One is tempted to ask, why not have the buildings as well as the threshing machine in common? Why not carry produce to market, and buy and bring it back in common? *It is obvious that by so doing a number of small capitalists could command all the facilities of the largest, and that the evils complained of are precisely those which a combination is most likely to prevent.*

The defender of the English system of primogeniture and entail, Mr. McCulloch, speaking of agricultural association, finds it difficult to speak seriously of such a project. † Judging by the strength of his objections, his mirth would perhaps be wiselier expended on his own argument than on the 'association panacea.' He thinks the farmers of England and France would treat it with contempt. It is possible the former might, because as large capitalists they do not need it. The latter *do* associate even now. In the Netherlands the small farmers combine to effect the drainage of the soil. In the Channel Islands the small farmers show the greatest readiness to assist each other. The peasant holders of ten to twenty acres in Germany, Austria, and Russia, says Banfield, in order to obtain even the little money required for their taxes, are obliged to farm on a large scale, which they accomplish by association.

M. Thiers, in his work on the 'Rights of Property,' affirms that because the

* Pol. Eco. vol. i. p. 174.

† Succession to property, p. 126.

land of France is much of it divided into small parcels, the peasantry cannot associate beneficially. A writer in the Quarterly Review, "commenting thereon, justly considers it as an instance of the *reductio ad absurdum* of false reasoning.

"The fact of these small divisions is the very reason why association would be proportionally more beneficial to peasant proprietors than to the workmen of large towns,—nay, is more beneficial to the extent in which association is carried out by either class. M. Thiers is altogether inaccurate in his data. Where has he lived or traveled not to know that peasant proprietors, in tilling the ground, gathering in and harvesting their crops, associate continually, in the common use of the same teams, the same ploughs and harrows, the same barns, and in helping one another in the field, whenever extra labor is needed; and without which *la petite culture* would often be altogether impracticable?—and what more familiar fact is there to statistical investigators than that many of the workmen of French towns are associated peasant proprietors, deriving part of their income from rents paid to them by another peasant proprietor farming their land with his own?"

That they do not associate more, arises simply from their want of intelligence. This is so much the worse for them, but it is an obstacle removable by time and instruction.

Mr. McCulloch cannot understand how the associated cultivators are to apportion the expenses of cultivation in the first instance, nor how they are to divide the produce. We reply, that they might do it even in the same manner as in commercial concerns. In a mercantile partnership the contributions of each partner whether of capital or skill, are estimated, and the profit is divided accordingly. "The thing is plainly impossible"—that is, it is impossible in his conception. His case however is not hopeless, for he admits that "small proprietors, may, it is true, combine to erect threshing mills, to provide ploughs, and perhaps horses, to be used for their common advantage." If so, why not in other things, as for example, sending their produce to market, and thus economizing their labor, etc. "But there would be great difficulties even about this; and such accommodations will, in all cases, be more cheaply and better provided by private parties than by associations." A difficulty is a thing to be overcome. We do not admit that private will be cheaper than associated enterprise; but if it were so in some small degree (and the difference could not be great), the question would lie between a smaller produce equitably divided among those who raised it, or a rather larger produce, entirely appropriated by an individual proprietor, minus the small portion usually allotted to the day laborer, being the smallest quota sufficient to maintain his existence. Turn it how we will, it is ever a question of *distribution*. If Mr McCulloch will indicate how the mere laborer dependent on wages is to secure the same comforts, social status, and development as his master, or show us *why* he is not equally entitled to these, we shall then be ready to entertain the question of cheapness; but until then, we shall insist that a just *distribution* is the primary, and *cheapness* the secondary object, tho firmly believing that both are entirely compatible.

Mr. McCulloch thinks that "the making of roads and main drains may also be effected by associated parties; tho it may be quite as well or better done by rates levied on the various properties to be benefited and expended under authority. Both of these methods are the result of association. Government as it ceases to

^u No. lxxxiv. p. 561.

be a piece of family property, and becomes the expression of the Social Will, will, no doubt, be entrusted with the provision of many such works, as it is to some extent in several countries of Europe." ^v For anything we see to the contrary ten men holding ten acres each, may by combination ensure all the superior farming practicable on a farm of one hundred acres. They are more likely to accumulate capital when each works with the stimulus of a partner, than where there is one proprietor absorbing the whole profit, and nine laborers working by the day for a dole which scarcely feeds them with potatoes, and seeking at every turn to do as little as possible.

We shall return to the discussion of the question of Association versus Competition in the succeeding lectures of this course, and will therefore conclude with a quotation from Goodwyn Barmby, as offering a resumé of our views on this subject.

"Small farms would also be a return to something like Patriarchalism, a past societary state. They existed when the spinning wheel went round in the cottage. They were contemporaries of the home-spun. When they were, there was no power-loom,—Arkwright was not, nor Crompton. They would be a retreat from the congregation of the manufacturing system of the present, only to the isolation of the agricultural system of the past. As combination is strength, isolation also is weakness. Supposing small farms were attainable, they would not be so desirable. The necessities of life for an isolated family are not all that is wanting. The refinement of society is the result of the congregation of minds. Civilization is the child of municipality. The village has cradled intercourse, as the town has nursed liberty, and as the city has educated mankind in the arts, tastes, and amenities of existence. What is wanting, then, is a union of the manufacturing and agricultural spheres—that is to say, Farming by Association. Small farms would be backward,—Associative agriculture would be forward. The allotment system purchases its field. It is generally the worst piece of ground in the parish, and it has fixed upon it the most exorbitant price. An association purchasing a large farm would procure it proportionably cheaper, and secure soil, if not of the best, at least of an average quality. The capital of a small farmer must be limited. The capital of an association, wisely and legally constituted, might be illimitable. The small farmer must employ his neighbors, with the least skill and at the dearest rate. An agricultural association might erect its barns, granaries, and other buildings by contract, on the best plans and in the cheapest way. Matters managed on a small scale are always dearer and inferior. Affairs conducted on a large scale are, on the contrary, always superior and cheaper. In fine, a small farmer, isolated and struggling with an incapable amount of capital, manures insufficiently, tills incompletely, farms badly, competes at disadvantage in the market; while an agricultural association, possessing large capital, employs the manure and the labor that is required by its land, and, resting upon its credit, meets the demand for its produce under the most favorable auspices. The tendency of the small farm is to be absorbed by a larger one, and to make the small farmer a laborer. The tendency of agricultural association is to absorb and additionally fertilize the large farms, now incompletely cultured, and to raise laborers to the condition of farmers. The conclusion is evident, either in colonization at home or in emigration abroad—the agricultural plan should be, Farming by Association." ^w

^v Banfield's Lectures. Lect. 2.

^w Tait's Mag. 1847. p. 267.

SOCIAL SCIENCE.

LECTURE VI. MACHINERY.

In the preceding lecture we have seen that the principles which regulate the distribution of one important element of wealth—the soil, are not those of Justice and Wisdom. Let us proceed to enquire whether there is any better foundation laid for justly distributing the advantages of the other element—capital.

If we suppose for a moment, that a state of pure individualism existed, man being isolated from his fellows, producing all that he consumed, and uniting in one person the character of Capitalist and Laborer,—it would obviously follow that any invention or discovery which should double the productiveness of labor, would also double the wealth of all those who availed themselves of it—would make each one twice as rich as before, or give him twice the amount of comforts he before possessed. No complaints of injustice could be made, for each would reap the full reward of the toil and ingenuity he put forth.

Ought it not thus to be in Society? If the distribution of wealth be not a mere scramble, but based on some principle of equity, the increase of *wealth* should benefit all who contribute to it, if not in an equal, at least in a proportional degree. The advocates of competition contend that this result is, as nearly as possible, actually attained. They are compelled to deny or explain away whatever evils have followed from the introduction of machinery, tho half the ingenuity thus employed would have sufficed to remove them.

The enmity of the working classes to all labor-saving processes, is one of the surest signs that we are yet far removed from a right application of such advantages. Many books have been written to *prove* to the worker the advantages of machinery! It is certainly possible to persuade a healthy man that he is sick; but how millions of men should be so deluded by 'a popular fallacy' so as to believe themselves sick when they were really '*as well as possible*,' is a problem which even the 'Society for the diffusion of Useful Knowledge' might find difficult to solve.

A less numerous but powerful section of society arrayed themselves against machinery. Clinging to the feudal relation between the upper and lower classes, they saw that machinery was fast breaking every link of that relation and substituting no new bond to consolidate society. Probably, too, they felt some jealousy of the new aristocracy which machinery was creating. With fond regret they reverted to the period when May-day, Harvest-home, and other customs of the country, were kept up in all their completeness—ere the stallwart redfaced rustic was transformed into a pallid operative, and the myriad factory chimnies sent up their dark incense to the shrine of Plutus. The elevation of the laborers to the same social platform with themselves, they would look upon as an attempt to

counteract the 'eternal laws of providence.' The laborer's highest virtues were—to be contented with the situation to which it had pleased God to call him, and to manifest a submissive deference to his superiors! They, in turn, owed the peasant protection, and it is due to them to say that in the contests of capital against labor, to which the competition between machinery and manual labor has given birth, they have boldly sided with the laborer, opposed his further degradation, and stood between the newly stimulated greed of wealth and the victim of tender age.

Widely different is this question viewed by the manufacturing and commercial classes, who owe almost their very existence to the immense progress of mechanical invention. Without it, they had remained the hewers of wood and drawers of water,—with it, they have emerged from serfdom and become the masters of civilization, the governors and guides of society. Is it to be wondered at, that they should view all discussions on this topic thro' the deceitful halo of advantages which themselves enjoy? or that they should characterize the opinions of those who have not quite so many reasons for thankfulness, as 'popular fallacies'?

It is amusing to see these popular instructors taking up the cudgels on behalf of machinery. Sometimes, at Mechanics' Institutes and elsewhere, they undertake to convince the incredulous workman of the extreme error of all doubts on this point. They point in triumph to the glory of England, and our supremacy over all other nations, ancient or modern. They allude to the bundle of rags deposited in one end of a machine, and shortly after appearing at the other end ready for use. They point to the steam press printing its thousands of sheets per hour, or to the lump of raw cotton, silk, or wool, transformed as by magic into the most useful or costly products. Look, say they, at this iron-horse, which whirls us from place to place, faster than the panting wind—at our Electric Telergaph, whereby we compel the lightning to convey our messages and to move our time-pieces. Nay, see the Machine taking the office of the human intellect itself, as in the calculating-machine, and tell us, if all these are not things to be proud of? Would any one presume to stay these improvements, to say to them, thus far shall ye go and no farther? To command these wondrous improvements to stop, would be to arrest civilization, to roll back the wheels of time, and to return to that Barbarism which the historian describes us as having been in two thousand years ago. Nay more, if you exclude man from the use of tools and machines, you must descend still lower, you must reduce him to the level of the brute, for it is only by means of such instruments that he is superior to them. If you object, say they, to the immense power machinery gives, where will you stop? for every such instrument, even if it be but a hammer or a spade, abridges labor,—and if your objection be valid let us descend at once to the use of our fingers and teeth only. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

Stay good friends, *that* is not what was required to be demonstrated. Had you collected the Luddites, the destroyers of threshing machines, hand-loom weavers; all the opponents of machinery whatever; had you asked them if they objected to receive the same amount of wages for half the usual amount of work, or double wages for the same work,—no one doubts what would have been their answer. This ought to have been, and might

have been, the results of machinery. Its advantages were as much the right of labor as of capital, but capital being stronger, not only appropriated the lion's share of the advantages, but made labor the scape goat on which fell all the penalty.

No doubt the adjustment of the respective claims of Labor and Capital presents difficulties. The problem is a new one in the world's history. But if, instead of trying to meet the difficulty, the sufferers are merely told that they must be mistaken, we cannot wonder at their adopting more violent remedies. To men deprived of the means of existence, the triumphs of science which caused it, could not be matter of exultation. To preach, as was and still is done, about the abstractions of 'supply' and 'demand' must seem a bitter mockery of their woe.

In any enquiry into the effects of machinery, it is important to bear in mind the distinction between what is usually termed Fixed, and Floating or circulating Capital. The following definition (given by Mr. Wilson, in the *Economist* Newspaper, No. 178) is very clear.

"The distinction between fixed and circulating capital is, that all commodities or improvements for the use of which only the current income of the country is charged—or in other words, for which the owners only receive rent or interest—constitute the fixed capital of the country, while all commodities, the entire cost of which is replaced out of current income, constitute the floating capital of the country. The former class of commodities are stationary, yielding only income, the latter class are constantly circulating, affording a constant means of new employment for their reproduction from the current income of the country.

"The two most important distinctions between fixed capital and floating are, *first*, the former consists of labor employed only for the purpose of affording greater facility for the production of those commodities required for the daily use of mankind, while the latter consists of labor employed in the actual production of those commodities themselves: and, *second*, that the use of the commodities representing fixed capital, returns no fund from which the same amount of labor can be continuously employed, whereas the use of the commodities representing floating capital returns an undiminished fund by which the same amount of labor can be again employed. The occupation of a mill, or the use of well-drained land, may add to the income of the capitalist, but the fund, employed in the building of the one, or the performance of the other, is absolutely withdrawn (except so far as the additional profit, rent, or produce which they yield is concerned) from the fund for the future employment of labor, while the fund employed in the immediate growth of wheat, or the manufacture of cloth, is returned to the farmer or manufacturer entire, and is again available for the employment of labor to the same extent as before."

With this definition in view, we proceed to examine the arguments of the pro-competitive economists on behalf of the non-injurious effects of machinery. The amount of floating or circulating capital is, clearly, that which determines the amount of labor that can be employed. Mr. McCulloch, the great authority of the school, thus writes:—

"A manufacturer's power to employ labor does not depend on the entire amount of his capital, but on the amount of that portion only which is circulating. A capitalist who is possessed of a hundred steam engines, and of £50,000 of circulating capital, has no greater demand for labor, and does not in fact employ a single workman more, than the capitalist who has no machinery, and only £50,000 devoted exclusively to the payment of wages."

If this be the case, it obviously follows that the transference of circulating into

fixed capital, which occurs in every investment in machinery, must so far forth diminish the demand for labor, to an equal extent. The capital sunk in the machine is no longer available for wages. This change in the direction of capital inflicts a serious temporary evil on the laborer,—it takes place without his consent, almost without his knowledge, and no provision exists to shield him from its effects. One or two examples may better enable us to understand this. We shall take the case of the Handloom Weavers, because, from the magnitude of the evil, the facts are more authentically known. Their condition was brought before the House of Commons, July 28th, 1835, when it was stated that eight hundred and forty thousand human beings, men, women, and children, dependent for subsistence on hand-loom weaving, had been driven to the verge of starvation by the substitution of power-looms for hand-loom. An appalling amount of misery was created. "A weaver earned in 1797 twenty-six or twenty-seven shillings per week, with which he could command two hundred and eighty one pounds of flour, whereas in 1835 his wages were so reduced that, notwithstanding he gave two hours additional labor per day, he could only command eighty one pounds of flour. Corn was selected as the most usual and well understood estimate of labor, altho it indicated only one article; this weaver had of course lost in the same degree in clothing, fuel, and house rent." The following was the rate in which his wages had diminished:—

From 1804 to	1811 wages =	£1 0 0	which would buy	238 lbs flour
" 1811 "	1818	" 0 14 0	"	131
" 1818 "	1825	" 0 8 9	"	108
" 1825 "	1832	" 0 6 5	"	83
" 1832 "	1834	" 0 5 6	"	81

From the highest class of operatives in respectability, intelligence, and earnings, they became degraded to the lowest.

In the debate it was shown that immense numbers of the poor Hindoo weavers perished from the same cause which destroyed the livelihood of our own people."

The Wool-combers of Bradford are a later instance. This class, thirteen thousand in number, and dependent on Combing for subsistence have had their wages reduced to the lowest subsistence-point by the introduction of the Combing machine. One of these machines enables one factory girl to do the work of twenty five men. ^b The poor rates in Bradford progressed as follows:—

In 1841 the rateable property =	£ 90,708	Poor relief =	£6,413 19 4
1846 " " =	104,616	" =	4,521 8 10
1848 " " =	118,625	" =	14,601 1 3

Dr. Bowring, in the debate on the Hand-loom weavers, proclaimed the doctrine that the national good cannot be purchased but at the expense of some individual evil. It will be time enough to admit such an assertion when fair endeavors have been made to avoid the evil. Strange it never struck such reasoners, that that must be a defective social arrangement which demands that one portion

^a See Appendix D.

^b Southey on Colonial Wool, p. 9.

of society should be made the 'conscript brothers' of the rest,—that the benefit of one portion should be bought by the destruction of another! On the ground of simple and natural Justice, to say nothing of humanity, we deny to society any such right. If the nation takes a piece of land to make a railway, it compensates the owner. If any official, from the Lord Chancellor down to the Town Clerk, loses his situation, he is pensioned. Under the protection of the Social Compact, I devote myself to a particular employment,—I give up a portion of my liberty, and renounce the rights of the savage to such food and clothing as fall in my way. My skill and labor in one particular direction thus become my only property and means of subsistence, and are equally entitled to protection as this man's house and that man's land. What right have my neighbors to introduce an invention simply because it advantages them, which shall deprive me of bread, and put me, the civilized man, on a relatively lower platform than the savage? It is true that in sacrificing the Hand-loom weaver, the Hindoo peasant, and the Bradford Wool-comber, society is stronger; and it will be said that society (as if the Workers were not the most important portion of Society) reaps the advantage. A banditti urging the same plea, would not only be punished for their crime, but justly censured for their impudence.

We might multiply these examples. Almost every trade into which Machinery has been extensively introduced, affords similar ones. It is said that they are 'only temporary'—as if that were any reason why no attempt should be made to remove them. Storms and hurricanes are temporary,—pestilence is temporary, for it disappears when the weak are killed off,—nevertheless, tho such visitations may serve some wise purposes in the economy of things, we do not 'let them alone,' but provide against their occurrence, and remedy their consequences, as far as we are able.

But is it true that machinery only lessens the demand for labor temporarily? Is it true that competition speedily sets up the old equality, calling as much labor into new fields of industry as have been displaced in the old? It has so often been asserted that it is so, it seems hardihood to deny it. Let us, however, examine the proofs.

The argument of Mr. McCulloch, to show that no increase of machinery can be detrimental to the laborer, is to this effect:—

"Suppose profits are ten per cent. when a capital of £20,000 is invested in a machine calculated to last one year, the goods produced by it must sell for £22,000, viz. £2000 as profits, and £20,000 to replace the machine itself. But if the machine were fitted to last ten years, then the Goods produced by it, instead of selling for £22,000, would sell for £3254, viz. £2000 as profits, and £1254 to accumulate as an annuity for ten years, to replace the original capital of £20,000. Thus it appears, that, by introducing a machine constructed with an equal capital, which should last ten years instead of one year, the prices of the commodities produced by it would be sunk to about one seventh of their former price. The consumers of Cottons would, therefore, by means of their equally increased demand for other articles, henceforth afford employment for six-sevenths of the disengaged laborers. But this is not the only effect that would be produced. The proprietor of the machine would have, exclusive of the ordinary profit on his capital, an additional stock of £1254, or one sixth of the value of his machine, which he must necessarily expend in one way or other in the payment of wages; at the end of the second year this additional revenue or stock would be increased to about one eighth of the value of the machine; and in the latter years of its existence, it is plain that, instead of having declined, the demand for labor must have very nearly doubled."

Mr. McCulloch avoids one of the great arguments against his views by his mode of stating the first proposition. "Suppose," says he, "so much capital invested in a machine"—and then he goes to show the effects of increasing the durability of the said machine. But before we get quite so far, he should in fairness have stated the effect of investing that amount of circulating capital in a machine at all. By *supposing* a machine to begin with, he saved himself the trouble of investigating, or even naming, that great evil which the strongest advocate of machinery, if candid, must admit to arise on its first introduction.

But the second portion of this argument is the main point; for if that be sound, it proves that the greatest possible increase of machinery cannot, in the slightest degree, permanently lessen the demand for labor. We will again quote the proposition on which the reasoning turns. 'The consumers of Cottons would, by means of their equally increased demand for other articles, henceforth afford employment for six-sevenths of the disengaged laborers.' The fallacy is in assuming, that because proportionately *more articles* were demanded, proportionately *more laborers* would be required. The sentence should run: 'The consumers of cottons would demand other commodities to the extent to which they had saved in cotton.' But to assume that those commodities would require equal labor to produce them which it had taken to produce the cottons, is to beg the very question at issue. Suppose that if I want to expend what I save in cottons, in silk or cloth; if the cloth is made by hand-labor mainly,—that is, if there is a large proportion of circulating and a small proportion of fixed capital required to produce it,—I shall then employ as much labor as the new improvement has displaced. But if the contrary is the case,—if the cloth is made by much machinery and little labor,—it is no longer true that the *equal* amount of labor saved by the improvement in cottons will be required in something else. Now a continually increasing proportion of the necessities and conveniences of life, are being produced by machinery. That this increase of machinery will multiply the wealth of those who own it, cannot be doubted. Every owner of capital, or of land, will be benefited. Larger and continually larger portions of produce will exchange against each other. The man who, by means of an improved machine, can create two hats at the former cost of one, will benefit not only himself, but every one who has productions to exchange against his own. It is true that what producers save in hats, they will expend in *something* else, but unless that *something* is a commodity demanding as much labor as has been displaced by the new hat-machine, it is no compensation to the laborer. To make what we mean more palpable, suppose an extreme case,—viz. that *every thing* were made by machines. Such a thing never can occur, as some labor will always be required, but in such a case, it is clear, none but the owners of machinery and of capital, could be exchangers, and therefore none but these could be consumers. Now, tho the invention never will become perfected to such an extent that 'the roasted pigeons shall fly into our mouth,' machinery is approximating to a state when the wealth producing power may be enormous, and yet the fund employing labor very small. The effect on the laborer will then be, to compel him to depend on pauper relief; others may, as Ricardo suggests, become menial servants, while large numbers must emigrate.

If this reasoning be correct, we see that it is quite possible for the wealth of

the country to be continually increasing, without any proportionate increase in the demand for the labor of those who have only the sale of their labor to rely on for subsistence. If a Steam-engine of fifty horse-power cost as much as fifty Horses and produced the same result, it would be a matter of indifference to the capitalist which he employed. We apprehend, however, that it would not be the same thing to the horses, who if displaced, might be represented, as they were some years ago when the Manchester and Liverpool railway was opened, going about begging, with hats in their mouths. Instead of horses, say men, and the case remains precisely the same. The capital employing the men is circulating capital, that invested in the steam engine is fixed capital. If the former be transferred to the latter, the fund which employed the laborer is no longer available, and the greater the extent to which that transfer is made, the greater the displacement of labor.

Precisely the same phenomena take place in so-called Agricultural Improvements. Whenever these imply,—what in most cases they do,—the power of producing the same or greater results with a less amount of manual labor, the consequences must be destructive to the laborer. The faster improvements progress, the sooner will the outcry of over-population be raised. In those countries where the laborer is landholder or half-landowner (*metayer*),—serf, slave, or whatever other character it may be, by which he participates in the profits of capital,—the evil is to that extent removed. Sismondi says, "You tell me you have improved your lands, I ask, what have you done with the laborers?" The advocates of competition are satisfied if they can show that more wealth has accrued. We wish to know *who* obtains it? By excluding the laborer from any ownership in the soil, he is deprived of all claim upon its fruits, save what he can obtain in exchange for his labor. But by improving the land,—i. e. producing equal fruits with less labor,—the laborer's only commodity, his only purchase money (so to speak), is rendered valueless. What is true of that great machine—the Earth—is equally true of all machines. Render the earth capable of producing loaves of bread without any labor whatever, and the loaves will *entirely* belong to those who own the land. Render your spinning-jennies and power-looms perfect,—i. e. capable of producing clothing without any manual labor,—and you may fill warehouses with clothes, while the naked backs outside cannot approach them. "The power to purchase," says Mr. McCulloch, "is the real and only desideratum." Now, who are the principal purchasers of commodities? Undoubtedly, on account of their vast numbers, the laboring classes. *But the laborer's power to purchase certainly depends on his power to sell his labor.* This is his only commodity, and as you diminish the need for this, and consequently its value, so you diminish his power to purchase. The proposition, that "any improvement in the construction of a machine has the same result as if the improvement were in the productiveness of the laborer himself," is therefore false; for, in the event of an extensive substitution of fixed for circulating capital, the result would certainly be to dispense with an immense number of operatives, while if the improvement was only *in the skill or industry of the laborers*, altho under present arrangements they would still be indispensable, and therefore in the latter instance capital would still have to maintain them. "May we not suppose," says a London Paper, "that Iron men and maidens will be invented, Self-acting mules require no spinners.

In fact, we have seen machinery at work, so like the human fingers, performing their most delicate functions, taking up stitches and repairing breaks, that we do not despair of seeing the services of children dispensed with, and as much wealth created without their labor, as is now created by the cruel toils to which they are unfortunately subject." Possibly so—but what provision exists, under the present arrangements of society, for enabling those children to *share* that wealth? They do not work for amusement, but for the means of existence, and their existence depends on their continuing to labor. If machinery be so perfected that labor may almost be entirely dispensed with—and the term 'manufacture' (i. e. 'made by the hand') is rapidly becoming a misnomer—either some other field for their exertions must be provided, or else some new social arrangement must be made by which they may be enabled to share in the advantages of machinery.

To meet objections, recourse is had to the experience of previous ages,—to the effect of Printing, for example; and it is easily demonstrable that more printers were employed shortly after the invention of the printing-press than were of manuscript writers before it. The fact of additional employment, however, to one set of people, is small consolation to another whose labor is substituted. The Bradford Wool-comber, or Nottingham Stockinger, must have more patriotism than ourselves, if they can cheerfully sacrifice themselves for the wealth of their fellows. If the mechanical improvement is indeed for the benefit of the nation, the nation is as much bound to defend that portion of its citizens who suffer the consequence, as it is to protect them from a foreign foe in time of war.

But no inference respecting the effect of inventions prior to the last century can be applied to those since, for the *rapidity* with which mechanical inventions are now introduced, is the essential difference between the two cases, and the cause of the most serious part of the evil. The progress of mechanical invention, and the consequent social revolutions, have during that period been greater than in the whole previous history of the world. Before the Press or Post-office existed, a machine was a curiosity for the learned. It had not time to supersede labor (to any great extent) before that labor could expend itself in another direction. When we removed the prohibitions against exporting machinery, the French, aware that the plan of a machine could go thro' the post, and anxious to encourage their own Mechanicians, imposed an import duty. It would require but peace, and a barely tolerable government, to enable every civilized nation to be stocked with machines, if the machine were not its own greatest obstacle by limiting the power of consumption of the working classes.

Another mode of stating the same argument, on which much stress is laid, consists in alleging 'the extraordinary increase which has taken place in Manufacturing industry.' Manufacturing compared with Agricultural districts, are found to have increased in the last forty years, twice, thrice, and even four times as fast. If, say they, machinery diminishes employment, whence this increase? In reply to this we would remark, that the great increase in manufacturing districts during the last half-century, has arisen from causes which probably will not again occur. Unless we know the previous condition and other attendant circumstances of society, arguments brought from the past and applied to the future, must be subject to great qualification. The knowledge of

the Compass and of Gunpowder existed very early among the Chinese, and yet it produced no very remarkable change in them, while the same things among other nations changed the whole arts of Navigation and of War. The discoveries of the American gold-mines greatly increased the riches of Spain. For a time they became the most prosperous people in Europe. But when the sources of their wealth were shared in by other nations they retrograded, not only to their old position but below it. We had similar advantages, far more solid it is true, in our coal and iron mines, which Spain had in her gold mines. Other nations had not discovered their own resources, and we had the start of all the world. We could supply foreigners cheaper than they could possibly supply themselves, and nothing could keep our manufactured goods out of continental states. Napoleon, tho he commanded the whole shore of the continent, tho he heaped up thousands of pounds worth of our goods and destroyed them,—could not do it. Our cheaper methods enabled us to bear the losses, and to beat all his custom-house officers and *gens d'armes*. Already a trifling advance in foreign duties can play more havoc with our manufactures than all Napoleon's exertions.

Moreover, the increase itself is more apparent than *real*. To prove that machinery increased employment, it would be needful to show that a quantity of laborers previously *unemployed*, had been absorbed by the new branch of production. Thus the cotton manufacture employed more people after the inventions of Hargreave and Arkwright than before. *But where did they come from?* Were they standing idle, awaiting the advent of these inventors? No, but scattered over the country, where they united agricultural with domestic manufacturing operations. From the agricultural districts they were withdrawn to the towns to obtain the great advantages of concentrated capital and division of labor, and the inducement lay in the high wages which capitalists could then, but can now no longer afford.^c

The truth is, there was much more of a *transfer* than *increase* of employment. That which had been made in the home of the laborer, was in future to be made in the factory. What mighty gain this was to the laborer, those who can compare rural influences with those of the large manufacturing towns, can best judge. With high profits and increasing wages, every body flocked to the new field of industry, and little villages became great marts of commerce. But with the exception of the middle classes, who have emerged from the condition of laborers thro' the wealth created by machinery, the vast mass of the operatives have not participated, to anything like a fair proportion, in its advantages. Still less has the laborer reason to rejoice, whose bread was taken from him. Machinery, it is true, made every body's coat cheaper, but it left a mass of useless clothiers. It made cheap cottons, but left an immense mass of hand-loom weavers. It produced cheap stuffs, but left a quantity of wool-combers. It made cheap stockings, but the stockinger is a pauper. It made cheap laces, but beggared lace makers. Wherever mechanical improvements proceed to any extent, desolation is not far off. But these classes, combined, make up a large portion of the population, and pressing into the labor market with the employed laborer, and living on the rates in part collected from him, they help materially to deteriorate his condition.

^c See Appendix E.

Nor are the future prospects very bright. No longer can we have the manufacturing business of the world in our own hands. Great as our skill and knowledge may be, we have no monopoly of these qualities, and the time is going by when one Englishman can beat five Frenchmen, as in the days of our juvenile patriotism we were made to believe. The continental states are rapidly coming up with us, and America only wants population, which we are giving her fast enough. Other nations see what has made us surpass them so immensely, and are anxious to imitate us. They will not remain in pastoral simplicity to please Great Britain, and as their numbers increase, they will employ more and more in manufactures. They are taking our best artisans and machines. Our immense powers of production enable us to make more goods than we can sell, and in the busiest seasons we have much machinery at rest.

Railways have also been cited as evidences that machinery tends rather to increase than diminish employment. But they are too recent to enable us to judge of their permanent results. Like improved methods of manufacture generally, they create a vast field for exertion, which goes far to compensate for the evil they inflict in the commencement. Iron stokers, guards, and porters, are not yet invented. The principal reason however, why railways can never injuriously supersede a large portion of the community, is found in the fact of their exemption from the influence of unlimited competition. Tho they may be made much too fast, and thus inflict great evil,—the supply and the demand of the Means of Transit run so parallel, that a glut can scarcely occur. No sane man proposes to make two railways between the same towns. But our spinning-jennies and power-looms frequently go on manufacturing goods for which no general demand exists. If the second power-loom had not been brought into existence until the first had a customer for its produce, we should not so often have witnessed the anomaly of machinery producing goods without a market, while men stand by with half-clothed backs.

There is another fact to which far too little attention has been paid—the diminished necessity for, and consequently lessened value of, two important elements in the price of labor—Skill and Strength. Adam Smith justly observed, that “the improved dexterity of a workman, may be considered in the same light as a Machine or instrument of trade which facilitates and abridges labor, and which tho it costs a certain expense, repays that expense with a profit.” M'Culloch remarks that every individual who has arrived at maturity may be viewed as a machine, “which it has cost twenty years of assiduous attention, and the expenditure of considerable capital to construct. And if a further sum has been laid out in educating or qualifying him for the exercise of a business or profession requiring unusual skill, his value will be proportionably increased, and he will be entitled to a greater reward for his exertions—just as a machine becomes more valuable when new powers are given to it by the expenditure of additional capital or labor in its construction.”

Admitting this, is it not to the advantage of the laborer to be as skilled as possible—that his trade should demand much time and attention for its perfection? If seven years labor be required to learn one employment, and only three months another, the former must clearly command a higher rate of wages. If a certain amount of intelligence is needed for an employment, the wages paid must

be sufficient to purchase that intelligence. It is therefore of importance to every seller of labor, that labor should be dear. But the effect of machinery is to diminish the necessity of those important elements of the price of labor, skill and strength,—and to supplant the labor of man by that of women and children.^d Machinery subdivides and simplifies every process, and carries the division of labor to the greatest extent. In numerous cases the workman has but to ‘tent’ the machine—i. e. to see that it performs its operations properly.

“The object of Machinery is to diminish the want, not only of physical, but of moral and intellectual qualities on the part of the workman. In many cases it enables the master to confine him to a narrow routine of similar operations, in which the least error or delay is capable of immediate detection. Judgment or intelligence are not required for processes which can be performed only in one mode, and which constant repetition has made mechanical. Hence it is not necessary where all the property is under one roof, or in one enclosure, so that its abstraction would be very hazardous; and where it is by its incomplete state difficult of sale. Diligence is ensured by the presence of a comparatively small number of overlookers, and by the almost universal adoption of piece work.”^e

It is therefore a disadvantage to the laborer, *as such*, to be compelled to adopt employments easily learned. It is no fault of the laborer if, in so universal an adoption of machinery, he is compelled to betake himself to an employment which can never return the wages of skilled labor. But it *does* form an ample ground for compensation. If he thus loses one of the most valuable trainings of his faculties, the loss should be made up to him by placing at his disposal the amplest means of education and development.

We alluded before to machine assisted employments. Compare them with those where machinery has made little or no progress. Common sense seems to declare that if wages are anywhere high, it should be in those employments where the power of production has been most increased. Is it so? On the contrary, it is in those employments only where machinery has *not* been introduced, or but very partially, that the highest wages are enjoyed. These employments yet demand the strength and intelligence of the full grown man to perform them, and therefore the price of that strength and intelligence must be paid for. In this class of handicraft’s men,—the aristocracy of the working classes,—we do not find that discrepancy between the condition of the employer and employed. The master himself has been a journeyman whose superior intelligence and morality have enabled him to become an employer, and he still partakes of the labors of his men. It is this class of journeymen who still send their children to the day school till the age of apprenticeship; it is this class whose wives still stay *at home*, their true place, and continue to fulfil those domestic duties which so endear them to us, and make

‘Our hearth and wife, the orient pearl and gold of life.’

It is true that their position is gradually becoming worse, owing to the competition of those with whose labor machinery and land monopolies have dispensed. But this action upon their condition has been only *indirect*. Bring it to bear

^d See Appendix F.

^e Poor Law Commissioners’ Report for 1834, p. 73.

directly upon them, and behold the results! Subdivide the labors of the mason, the carpenter, the tailor, the compositor, the shoemaker,—apply the factory system to them, and perform each process with the aid of a machine,—and that which has resulted in the textile manufactures, will not fail to exhibit itself here—immense wealth on the one hand, intense misery on the other. The child must quit the school, and the mother forsake her home, and entrust her babe to some child or superannuated woman.

Domestic bliss

(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,
How art thou blighted from the poor man’s heart!
Lo! in such neighborhood, from morn to eve,
The habitation’s empty! or perchance
The mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of the peevish babe;
No daughters round her busy at the wheel,
Or in dispatch of each day’s little growth
Of household occupation; no nice arts
Of needlework; no bustle at the fire,
Where once the dinner was prepared with pride;
Nothing to speed the days or cheer the mind;
Nothing to praise, to teach, or to command! ^f

The sweetest charities of life will be trampled under foot, and for what? That a portion of society may be raised above the masses, as the feudal baron above the serf, without even a ‘brass collar’ bond of sympathy between them to atone for the harshness of the slavery.

It is a remarkable condemnation of the *laissez-faire* principle, that society has, in the mere instinct of self-defence, without any ‘chimera’ or foregone theory to delude, been compelled to reject it—earliest and most completely in those departments where science has made the greatest progress,—where, consequently, one would expect *à priori* that the laborer should be well off, and most able to protect himself. We would ask our opponents, how it was that the machine-assisted laborer *alone*, had to be prevented from employing his child of nine years for fourteen hours a day, nay twice or thrice that period, without intermission? How is it, that the first education a do-nothing-government felt compelled to give, was to the child of the operative? If the present mode of employing machinery to *compete with* labor (instead of working *for* labor) be the correct one, whence the discrepancy between the laborer’s immensely increased power of production and his degraded condition? The operative would have obtained the necessaries of existence if Watt and Arkwright and Wedgwood had never existed—*how much more* does he get now?

Many writers on the machinery question have lugged in the doleful condition of the English laborer in former ages, to show the vast benefit he has derived from mechanical improvements. We would be the last to underrate those benefits, but they seem very much over-stated. There is a vague tradition that the people of this country were once well off; we cannot think it is all a myth, arisen

^f Wordsworth—‘The Excursion.’

nobody knows when nor how. On the contrary there is evidence extant to show, that the English laborer was once in a comfortable condition. From the 13th to the 15th centuries various acts of parliament were passed to prevent wages from becoming too high. Mr. Thornton remarks of one made in the year 1482, that "considering the fall which has since taken place in the value of money, it was really much as if a law should now be necessary to prevent ploughmen from strutting about in velvet coats and silk stockings, with silver buckles in their shoes, and their wives from trimming their caps with Brussels lace." * Indubitably they had plenty to eat. They had no Goatacre meetings, no Irishmen unable to lift the 'third sod from exhaustion,' no mother poisoning her children to receive the funeral money from the death-club. If the luxuries and comforts of modern civilization were unknown, they were also undesired. The worst effect of our present civilization, is the disproportion between our *wants* and our *means* of satisfying them. In former days rich and poor fared much alike: in our day the poor are surrounded by an atmosphere of luxury. *Then* all was rude, there were no painful contrasts; *now* civilization dwells side by side with want and barbarism. *Absolutely* the laborer of those days was better off, *relatively* he was infinitely so. The fall of the laborer from this palmy state was owing to a cause precisely similar in character to the extensive introduction of machinery, viz., the aggregation of many small farms into large estates. This process of enlarging estates and diminishing the number of landholders has been going on for the last three centuries, and with an ever increasing impoverishment of the peasantry as the result. The *material* improvement was great,—i. e. an increase of wealth was the consequence,—but the laborer in ceasing to be landholder, ceased to participate in the proceeds. The great lesson which runs thro'-out history,—one the Economists have altogether forgotten,—is, that so long as the laborer remains only a laborer, however much wealth may increase, his share depends upon the possibility of his selling his labor.

Wealth has indubitably increased in the country far faster than population. It is not that we have a less amount of necessary, useful, and agreeable commodities, in proportion to our numbers, than in the reign of Henry VI.,^h when laws were made to restrict the extravagance of the laborer,—we have vastly more, and scarcely any limit to our power of increasing them. In agriculture, which has made the slowest progress, the increase of the productive power of labor is manifold. But in manufactures it is so great that no comparison can be instituted. In many processes one person can do as much as one hundred, two hundred, and in some instances one thousand could formerly, and improvements are continually making. It was stated before a Committee of the House of Commons, that the introduction of machinery had so greatly facilitated production in the Cloth manufacture in the various processes which precede weaving, that thirty five persons were able to perform, in 1800, as much work as would have required sixteen hundred and thirty four persons to perform in 1785 (or forty six times as much, in five years). The employment of machinery in the single manufacture of cot-

^h See Appendix G.

^g See also Eden's state of the Poor, vol. i. p. 59.

ton was calculated by the *Quarterly Review* in 1826 (twenty-four years ago), to save the country seven millions per annum, if the same results had to be attained by hand labor. The increase of population between 1831 and 1841 was 13.2 per cent. for the whole kingdom.ⁱ The total value of our exports had increased 38.9 per cent., and of course our imports had also materially increased. Notwithstanding a duty of 200 per cent. on Fire Assurances, the amount insured increased 29.4 per cent. The increase in the value of all property, both real property and profits, was not less than 20 per cent. But the condition of the class dependent on daily labor for sustenance, did not improve. We know of no class of operatives whose wages have increased 20 per cent. We know of several whose wages were reduced, and we know too that pauperism increased, notwithstanding that the amount of relief was diminished nearly 50 per cent. Persons in commerce, trade, and manufactures increased in numbers 29 per cent.; capitalists, bankers, professional, and other educated men, 32 per cent. We have a very significant hint as to the class to whom the increasing wealth of society accrues, in the fact that domestic servants increased 90 per cent. Population is not increasing faster than *wealth*, the population *is* increasing *faster* than the fund for the payment of labor.

We have no wish to arrest the progress of Invention and Discovery, of Science, and Art. We have no sympathy with that short sighted benevolence which, to cure the evils of machinery, would deprive us of its advantages. As soon believe that the rain and the sunshine by which the teeming bosom of the earth is quickened into life, were sent as a curse, as that knowledge rightly applied should prove the bane of the humblest individual. The task is not to destroy the factory, but to Christianize it. The duty of society in relation to machinery seems very obvious. If invention increases the productive value of capital, it should increase that of labor no less. As the laborers are perhaps a thousand times more numerous, care should be taken to apportion to them their due share of the advantages. Instead of this, the capitalist builds his country house, buys wines, pictures, and costliest furniture, and then ostentatiously subscribes to relieve the distresses of his workmen; who are entitled to ten times more as a *right*, than he dispenses as a *charity*! The public,—good easy folk,—rejoice at cheap stockings, and when they read of great distress in the town of Leicester—are led to fancy that we only want a *financial* or *representative* reform! The first and most immediate duty of society, the absorbing of the unemployed laborers that machinery and the changes of fashion throw out of employment, they never think of at all. A rational system of Home Colonization, instead of the present brutal and costly poor law, might attain this object.^j Society ought to have extended its protecting arm over the domestic hearth, far earlier and more completely than it has done, by rescuing females and infants from Factory labor. Thus would have been avoided that bitter feeling which has arisen at various times between employer and employed. There would have been no destruction of machinery.^k

ⁱ Knight's Political Dictionary. Art. 'Census.'

^j See Lecture iv.

^k The trade of Sheffield is said to be departing in consequence of the destruction of tools and machines by the Unionists.

There would have been no half-apologetic hesitancy in introducing new machinery on the part of the capitalist, till driven to it by the force of competition. If the laborer *had shared* in the benefit, the faster we improved the better—if he *really had* derived advantage, it would need no labored arguments to convince him of it. He would have had the greatest interest of any one in the increase of machinery, while that absurd state of things—idle machinery and idle men, too much clothing and too many half-clothed people,—would have been banished.

But we rest not here. The progress of invention opens to us still grander possibilities. It seems destined to rescue every man from the necessity of more labor than is needful for the preservation of health. When a man says he '*wants work*,' he simply employs a phrase in which the *mean* indicates the *end*. It is not work itself which he wants, but only the conveniences and enjoyments that cannot be produced without work. Those benefactors of the race who have toiled that we may reap, who have substituted Order for Chaos, and the light of intelligence for the night of barbarism, have not surely labored that a mere section of mankind should enjoy the great powers which they have been the means of bestowing.¹ The right 'Results of Machinery' are, that all should enter, and if possible enlarge, the region which Genius has opened. The purpose of the Machine is to *save*, not *supersede*, the Laborer. By performing tasks otherwise impossible, it should release him from constantly toiling for mere bodily wants, and enable each one to reach a higher culture, and thus lead a better and nobler life. Its business is to add leisure to labor, to lighten the toils of the feeble and the aged, to spare the woman and the child. Man has to 'subdue and inherit the earth,' and therefore the iron arms and sinews are to serve man, not to turn *him* into mere cogs and wheels; they are for him—not he for them. The blessings of machinery should be held with no monopolizing hand, but spread in broad and expanding streams over the whole surface of society. This might be accomplished by Association, but will not until a loftier Ideal of Society pervades the reading and reflecting classes. This state, however, seems rapidly approaching. Time was, when there was an aristocracy of knowledge,—when the larger portion of the race were esteemed the born-drudges of the few. The fashion has now so much changed, that the class who clung to the notion of some being born to work and some to think, is almost extinct. If one of these curiosities of Conservatism,—fossils of a past generation,—still survives to refuse his subscription to a Mechanic's Institution or a People's College, he conceals his antiquated thoughts in some vague mutterings about 'leveling system.' In a generation or two, we predict, the *right* and *duty* of Universal Culture will be fully recognized.

As with mental, so with material wealth. If we cannot endure an aristocracy in the greater, we shall cashier it in the less. We shall perceive that, by means of the wonderful powers of nature which we have subdued to our service, there need be no limit to the production of wealth; and hence, that to quarrel over it is as insane as to quarrel over the distribution of the air or the water. We shall learn that every child of earth has certain physical wants given to him, which may be adequately supplied,—faculties that need cultivating,—and tastes which may be refined. When we have learnt this great truth, we shall perceive that to *do*

¹ See Appendix H.

good is to *have* good; and that to love our neighbor, is in reality wisely to love ourselves. Unless the *economical* laws of the universe are not only distinct, but diverse, from those of *morality*,—a Manichean doctrine which we at least repudiate—this consummation must be yet realized by the human race. It has been the undying faith of prophets in every age, and is beautifully expressed by perhaps the greatest of our living poets—Wordsworth.

I exult to see

An intellectual mastery exercised
O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed, almost a soul
Imparted, to brute matter. I rejoice,
Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
That, by the Thinking Mind, have been compelled
To serve the will of feeble-bodied man;
For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope that time may come,
When strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gained,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, tho late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law.

SOCIAL SCIENCE.

LECTURE VII.—THE PROVINCE OF SOCIETY.

THE present age is, necessarily, one of political rather than of social reform. We stand at a point in the history of the world, when much of the old social elements are breaking-up, when the flood-gates of revolution and change are opened, and the stream of events is carrying the wrecks of the past to oblivion. The cry of the nations is for Liberty—liberty of thought, speech, and action. Spiritual and kingly despotism tremble in their seats, and the last bonds of feudalism are fast disappearing. It is natural that Reformers who are actively engaged in the work of demolition, should feel little interest in that of construction. To secure an immunity from those evils which human ignorance and passion, clothed with irresponsible power, have inflicted upon society, they would reduce government to a nullity,—regarding it as a sort of necessary evil,—a machine capable of little good and much mischief, of which its highest virtue is to let private interests alone, and its greatest perfection to fulfil the function of a cheap-policeman.

The favor which this absurd doctrine now receives, is easily accounted for. In a low state of civilization, the chief is a sort of minor deity, giving rather than executing the laws, the master of society rather than its servant. He claims to hold his place by a right divine, and to exercise his function without being responsible to his subjects, whose lives and fortunes he looks upon as a kind of patrimony. The growth of intelligence in the *many* is incompatible with this supremacy of the *one*, and successive limitations are put upon his power. The day at last arrives when government ceases to be regarded as other than it really ought to be,—an emanation from the will of Society. The former state is despotism, the latter democracy.

So long, and so far as irresponsible government exists, the let-alone principle is *practically* right. If the functions of government are to be at the mercy of an accident, the more it is limited and restricted the better. If antique usages and prescriptive rights are to exclude genius and talent, energy and application, in order to place dulness and lethargy in the seats of trust and power, then confide to officers so selected as little of the means of mischief as possible. When it is an accident which determines whether a child or an inexperienced young woman, a knave or a fool, shall fill the highest offices in the state, no wonder that men who are the supporters of *such* a government, and who also aspire to the character of reformers, should be driven to accept the doctrine of non-interference on the part of government. They begin by upholding a stupid machinery, they end by giving it nothing to do. With a farcical solemnity, these friends of liberty fence government around with restrictions, and then call it a skilful balance of legislation.

In the early History of nations the functions of Government were comparatively few. It had work enough to protect the physically weak from the physically strong. With centralized populations, intercourse increases and social necessities multiply. Society implies relations, rights which each man can claim from his fellows, and correspondent duties which he owes to them. Men learn that there is the tyranny of the mentally strong over the mentally weak. We have then no longer a number of individuals without cohesion, without relationship, but a Society bound by common feelings, wants, and interests, the subjects of mutual influences for good or ill, and of which no member, however humble, can suffer or rejoice without affecting his fellows. In Law and in Custom (which is but unwritten law) we have an expression of that relationship, and it is absurd therefore to regard law as something antagonistic to society. It is a mark which indicates how high the average moral sense, or it may be, the æsthetic culture of the community, has risen. The philosophy which limits the functions of law to the requirements of Justice, is an exceedingly narrow one. Love of his kind, or the sentiment of Fraternity, is as really a need of human nature as is Justice. Absolute perfection in either cannot be reached by codes, but society may at least affirm the lowest limit. 'Self sacrifice,' says Bastiat, as if advancing an argument against this view, 'extends from the gift of an *obolus* thrown into the dish of a mendicant, up to the gift of life.' The majority will give an obolus, the martyr will go to the rack for the benefit of mankind. It follows, only, that society should *require* the lesser sacrifice and be *thankful* for the greater one. Whether to do justice, which also admits of degrees, or to show mercy, the case is the same; for the school and the workhouse have as valid a foundation as the prison.

The number and variety of the objects cared for in one form or another by the State, is the best argument for the value of its interference. Sanitary matters, and the relief of the poor, are now acknowledged to be within its province. Manchester has charged itself with the duty of providing its gas, and with great advantage. Fire and Life Insurance, public Granaries, Hospitals and Dispensaries, Libraries and Museums, Baths and Wash-houses, public Parks and Picture Galleries, Schools and Colleges, will doubtless ere long be provided by municipal governments. Government manages the coinage, regulates the standard of value, of weights and measure, conducts the post office. It assists learned societies and it patronizes art. In short, the functions of the state have increased with the wants of society, and the wants of society increase with the means of gratifying them.

Those who think the next best thing to answering their opponents, is to give them a bad name, have attempted to confound the protective-duty of government (which is the natural consequence of the brotherhood of man), with what is commonly called Protection by means of prohibitive duties. Protection has been called Communism with a *circumbendibus*. Ebenezer Elliot, a man strongly infected with the dogma of the *Laissez-faire* school, thus jumbles up together the apostles of the two doctrines. Pity that so true a man should have united his wit to such a vulgar misrepresentation!

Lord! send us weeks of Sundays,
 A saint's day every day,
 Shirts gratis, ditto breeches,
 No work and double pay.
 Tell Short and Long they're both short now,
 To Slow and Fast one meed allow,
 Let Louis Blanc take Ashley's cow,
 And Richmond give her hay.

The free competition pundits cannot discern the difference between a base and suicidal selfishness, little worse than that sanctioned by their own theory, and the divine law of Humanity linked with that of Justice, in our legislation. The blindness which confounds landlord protection and ten-hour-bills, and condemns them both together, has likewise, with perfect consistency, put its veto on every other social amelioration.

You propose to educate the people. Facts are collected to show that what is not expended in Schoolmasters, must be in Judges and in Gaols. The children on the common, and the animals which crop it, are left under like influences! You propose to remedy this evil, to give culture to these outcasts, and prevent them from becoming the future scourges of society. And the reply? *It is not the business of Government—let private interests take care of themselves!*

Or perhaps you pass a factory—whence the mothers and wives of the next generation are issuing forth. One can scarcely think that harsh voice, those coarse manners, belong to one by nature soft and gentle. She has become unfitted for her future high office; the Factory has done its work. You would interfere. Alas! you have yet to learn the new gospel of do-nothing-ism—*Let private interests take care of themselves.*

Half our population is destroyed by disease before they reach a third of man's allotted term. Selfish ignorance breeds fever in our streets and pestilence in our homes. It builds whole towns in so small a place that the winds of heaven cannot enter. It extracts rent from every inch of soil—from door, window, and chimney. Every proposal to hold the creators of these and similar evils responsible, is met by the cry: *'Let private interests take care of themselves.'* Well may Carlyle ask—

"When shall we have done with all this of British Liberty, Voluntary-Principle, Dangers of Centralization, and the like? It is really getting too bad. For British Liberty, it seems, the people cannot be taught to read. British Liberty, shuddering to interfere with the rights of capital, takes six or eight millions of money annually to feed the idle laborer whom it dare not employ. For British Liberty we live over poisonous cesspools, gully-drains, and detestable abominations, and omnipotent London cannot sweep the dirt out of itself. British Liberty produces what? Floods of Hansard Debates every year, and apparently little else at present. If these are the result of British Liberty, I for one, move we should lay it on the shelf a little, and look out for something other and farther. We have achieved British Liberty hundreds of years ago; and are fast growing, on the strength of it, one of the most absurd populations the Sun, among his great Museum of Absurdities, looks down upon at present."

Certainly, when the populations around me exercise an overwhelming

effect upon my own destiny,—I have the deepest interest that they should be virtuous and intelligent beings rather than moral pestilences. To the will of the short-sighted selfish Few, should be opposed that of the Many embodied in the shape of law. Moreover, design is preferable to chance, system to disorder, strength to weakness; and rightful Government, or a wise State, implies all this.

The question then arises, What is government, or the state? We might simply define it, Society organized. Under the use of the term 'Voluntary,' more properly designated 'Let-aloneism,' it is covertly assumed, that state interference is antagonistic to liberty. We admit it, if government have an origin distinct from the people and superior to them, administering its functions by a divine right, or any right other than the Will of those for whose benefit it exists. But Government arising out of common consent, founded in the wants of the people and terminating at their will, executes no laws but such as are voluntary. When Government represents Society, its acts are social, and therefore in perfect accordance with all legitimate liberty. Simply considered, Government is nothing more than the Committee of a large Benefit Society, whereof each member sacrifices a small portion of his labor, or his liberty, in return for a greater advantage. Lord Brougham justly observes:—"All government is made for the benefit of the community: the people have a right, not only to be governed, but to be well governed; and not only to be well governed, but to be governed as well as possible; that is, with as little expense to their natural freedom and their resources as is consistent with the nature of human affairs."—Each particular case of interference must be tried by its own merits, it being impossible, from the continual changes in the wants of Society, to define the duties of government *a priori*.

The goodness of the Governing, obviously depends on the goodness of the Committee. How then shall a good committee be got at? There are two ways, and but two, in which this can be done. Either the Governors must elect themselves, or they must be elected by the people. Either their *title* to power, to the guidance of the governed, is a self-assumed one,—like that of the ancient barons to their lands, or that of the pious New England puritans, who, *nem. con.*, voted themselves 'the elect,' with all the privileges thereunto belonging;—or it is one dependent on the suffrage of others? One of these systems has Antiquity, the other Justice and Common-sense, in its favor. Some people fear the newer system will not work,—that the 'ship will not double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting.'

"Unanimity on board ship; yes indeed, the ships crew, may be very unanimous, which doubtless, for the time being, will be very comfortable to the ship's crew, and to their Phantasm Captain, if they have one; but if the tack they unanimously steer upon is guiding them into the belly of the Abyss, it will not profit them much! Ships accordingly, do not use the ballot-box at all." *

If we remember rightly, however, the ancient system, that had no 'able-editors'

* Latter-day Pamphlets; by Thomas Carlyle. No. I.

or 'ballot-boxes,' and only counted heads as the farmer counts his sheep, to find out the amount of fleece, never proved itself *so very export* in 'doubling Cape Horn,' or *so very successful* in avoiding the 'admonitions of Ice-bergs,' that one should mourn for its restoration. Brief as ballot-box Government has been, it will bear comparison with any Iron-handed Despotism to which Mr. Carlyle's Philosophy would again conduct us. Moreover, should Ballot-box government even fail to double Cape Horn, it must even try again. Every jolt is a lesson, and nations, like individuals, have also to go thro' the school of adversity. The instinct of the ship's crew will teach them to find, in times of danger at least, the ablest captain. But if not so, what then? Liberty is quite as great a necessity of men as guidance, and better sink to the bottom of the Abyss with Phantasm captains of one's own choice, than round the cape with some arrogant self-elected despot. As a rule (which no man has better taught than this writer), Truth and the Right are stronger than Falschood and Wrong—because a God, and not a Demon, presides over human affairs—and will as effectually vindicate themselves as do the laws of light and gravitation. To err, not to see the right and true, and to suffer in consequence, are conditions of States as of individuals, and seem to be as necessary to social development, as the stumbling of the child is needful to its learning to walk, and one stage of its progress. By failure and by suffering men learn the consequences of folly and wickedness, and it is the part of the Historian and Political Philosopher to teach Society what the conditions and laws of the Common Weal really are. The greater the number of men in the state who ponder such teachings, the safer, and the better, any nation must be. Happier far *that* society, each member of which 'knows his rights, and knowing dare maintain,' than a society 'caring for none of these things,' even tho' governed by the pupils of a Xenophon or a Fenelon.

For the same reason much of the outcry about 'rights,' liberties,' and the like, appears unmeaning, if not hypocritical. Far wiser would it be to tell men of their Might than their Rights, provided we included in the term, not merely their material resources, but also their *spiritual* ones. Nations have ever as much liberty as they deserve, and the government is as good as the People. Government, in the main, virtually represents their virtue, their vices, their strength, their weakness. In this country monarchy tricks itself in 'barbaric splendor,' because, notwithstanding all the affected liberalism of the day, there is little of that stern republican sentiment which would frown such foppery out of existence. Aristocracy sends its game to eat up the farmer's produce, and takes the owner to the polling-booth like a lamb to the slaughter, yet the farmer 'doffs his hat' in the great man's presence. Chartism grows hysterical because its vote is not counted, but chartism will scarcely yet give up its gin and its pipe to buy the votes of an universe.

'It is not in our stars, but in *ourselves*, that we are underlings.'

That Government is daily becoming more and more the *instrument* of Society, is simply owing to the fact that society is becoming more and more fit to govern. Indubitably, a people among whom annually circulate one hundred millions of newspapers, with a proportionate number of books, not to enumerate magazines,

tracts, and 'Latter-day' pamphlets, are not exactly in a position to be governed by the old methods. Thro' the agency of the press and the platform, hundreds of thousands of the people of this country are also learning a little of the purpose and nature of Government. Henceforth the steward must be prepared to render an account of his stewardship, to those whose servant he is.

That each man in a nation, or at least the majority of men in a nation, should *understand* the nature and effects of social regulations, seems to be an essential condition of all true and permanent social progress. Practically, in this as in all other matters, the truth vindicates itself. Most admirable constitutions, and cut and dried symmetrical organizations, have been projected for the benefit of ungrateful society, but they perished because they found no responses in the wants and aspirations of man, and were therefore unsuited to him.

The only effectual mode of arriving at social organization, is by the dissemination of Ideas. These given, the adequate social organization to represent them shall follow as naturally as the bud follows the flowing of the sap. Form a social organization for any, the simplest object, without these, and you have a card-castle which a touch will ruin. We can imagine a benevolent despot, à la Carlyle, attempting to reform a good many things, eye-sores to the reflecting intellect and outrages on our sentiment of Justice and Humanity,—nay the gullies, cess-pools, and drains purified, the unemployed poor respectively 'warned, whipt, or shot' into discipline, and many of those tasks actually achieved which are at present reserved for the 'coming man.' But unless these reforms have a broad basis in the public sentiment, there is little or no possibility of their being effected, and not the slightest of their permanence. The influence removed which gave them birth, and straightway society relapses into its previous condition. With an unenlightened, unconvinced public opinion, your despot must have the omniscience and the omnipotence of a God, with much of his duration, to get the cesspools cleansed, the paupers regimented, and the other ends of good government realized.

To *improvise* a state of Society surpassing the visions of a Fourier or a Cabet, is not a very difficult matter. Man, however, is not made of such plastic material as theorists assume. His individuality must be respected, his free-will held sacred. An organization in which the organized do not co-operate, is not good government—it is slavery. The end of all government, the object of every social organization, is, or ought to be—the progressive development and unfolding of each man. To impose laws against the general sense of the community, even with *this* high object, would be to sacrifice the end in the means.

For our part, we respect the old method of preaching and teaching. What approach has yet been made to the desired results have been mainly achieved by that despised person, the 'Stump Orator.' Lecturer, Newspaper, and Magazine, have during the past few years been everywhere denouncing filth, until, by dint of their iteration, John Bull has come at last to believe that there is such a thing, and that it behoves him to be rid of it. To the evils arising from this agent, is no longer turned the light of a solitary intellect; the understandings of millions are now directed towards them. The 'Stump Orator' has educated the popular sentiment on the subject, and has

more effectually removed the evil than could the will of any Napoleon, for this mode secures the *co-operation* of the people in the removal of the filth, which no mere despotic law could possibly effect. The actual progress of Reform is perhaps not so rapid as if dependent on the will of a single individual, but the advantages gained are free from the danger of being reversed by the next 'able man' at the head of affairs. The principles in which they are founded have sunk deep into the public sentiment, and they now stand identified with the nation itself.

Assuming that the majority elect those who make and execute the laws, and not merely a majority, but as large a majority as possible,^b the objection that 'state interference is an infringement of liberty,' falls to the ground. The acts of him who is appointed by me, and responsible to me as my agent, are my acts. In carrying out any act of interference, the legislator is reasonably presumed to express the wishes of those who appoint him, and for them his acts cannot be construed as tyranny. To desire that a law felt by the majority to be conducive to their well-being, should be foregone for the sake of the minority, would be indeed a tyranny. Even in what are called voluntary associations, the majority govern. All that the minority can reasonably claim is the freest discussion, and, as the last resort, the liberty of retiring.

Each particular case of interference on the part of the state must be tried on its own merits. The wants of Society at one period, afford no guidance as to its wants at another. Society must determine for itself what shall be legally right and expedient. To do this, in accordance with the real facts and interests of the case, is the business of the wise and good. Whether votes and ballot-boxes find such men, or not, it will remain the only way till a better be pointed out. In the mean time, the majority must govern. There was sense in the madness of him who said that the world was mad while he was sane, but that the world was stronger. It may be *legally* right to compel the quaker to subscribe to a war-tax, or a church rate, and *morally* right, even heroic, in him to resist it. Let the recusant persevere, if he have truth and right on his side, he will triumph, for, in the long run, the hearts and interests of men will be found with him. On the other hand, the state must have the power of Compulsion, otherwise a fool or a knave might, under any pretext, frustrate the most beneficent social purposes.

An occasional injustice on the part of the ruler is less to be feared than private injustice. The crime of the legislator is seen by all, and if he value not men's love, he will fear their hate. The private oppressor can inflict a deeper injury, and more easily escape detection. The advocates of Let-alone-ism are inconsistent in delegating even the functions of administering Justice to the state. There is scarcely a single argument used against a more comprehensive state-interference which is not equally valid against this extent of it. Has man no property besides house, land, and chattels? Or, to adopt our opponents style of reasoning, Why not let every man take up his own thief? Against such aggression men have weapons, and also 'Chubb's patent.' But what weapon shall defend the ignorant, the poor, the young,—in a word, the weak,—against the overreaching, or

^b It has been wisely suggested to have a system of double election which should enable the minority to be represented in proportion to their numbers.

wealthy tyranny? If it be not the business of the state to interfere, *whose is it?* Better far to suffer from a law occasionally hurtful in its operation (as for example, the Factory Act), than be at the mercy of ten thousand petty tyrants, whose acts are known but to those who suffer from them.

The acts of a functionary, it is true, may sometimes run into abuse from want of attention on the part of the public, but this, so far from being an argument against his existence, is the very reverse. A society too indolent to superintend those whom they appoint, are still more likely to be too indolent to perform the duties themselves, and it is surely better that a needful function be imperfectly performed, than not performed at all.

The opponents of State-Interference are afraid of anything *artificial*. There is, however, an Art which *co-operates* with Nature, as well as Art that is opposed to Nature. The last cannot stand, for the eternal laws are against it. But if the opponents of state-interference object to the first, we recommend them to preserve their logical consistency, and no longer hide the graces of their forms by such artificialities as 'brecks.' Furthermore they should regale on the primitive crab and the raw potato, dwell in caves, and forego the use of fire. Of course, these lovers of *nature* would recoil from vaccination, and reject every appliance that human intelligence has created to soften her rudeness and severity? Their unfairness is as remarkable as their inconsistency. To depress the laborers condition by land monopolies, unequal taxation, or by the introduction of Machines, is (with them) quite *natural*—but to check the operations of these evils, even in the slightest degree, is *artificial*! Or admit, as some do, that the former is an abnormal condition of things, how can the laborers claim to compensatory remedies be denied?

An obvious corollary from the principle which bases the power of the state on the *Public Will*, is, that it should not be called upon to decide questions, or perform duties, on which it can have had little or no experience. It is no true 'liberty' for a people to have the power of deciding, where *the means for forming a correct decision* are denied. On the other hand, the lodging of every function in a single central body, is equally inimical to liberty. A just union of the local and the central principles is the only safe medium. The local body is more likely to know its own wants than a body acting at a great distance, just as "a fool knows more of his own house, than a wise man knows of another's."

In the selection of delegates, and in the management of their local affairs, men use their own knowledge, and are influenced by their immediate interests. But when a whole nation presumes to elect a president for itself, as in the case of the French Republic, it is but too surely digging the grave of liberty.

"Not an individual of these millions would take a servant into his house to cook a dinner, or attend to a shop, upon testimony equally slight with that which the majority have been compelled to rest satisfied [with], in the elections of Louis Napoleon and General Taylor. If the lives of the majority depended upon answering, whether the successful candidate is fair or dark, short or tall, stout or thin, he could not state it upon oath."—"If the question proposed to a body of peasants were, not who shall be the national president, but who shall be the schoolmaster of the next village, the reply should be,

'This is a subject for a committee; we cannot, collectively or individually, enquire into the personal qualifications of the candidates, and therefore we will entrust the appointment to a few in whom we have confidence, and who will see that the interests of our children shall not be neglected.'"^c

Other important advantages attend the system of local government. It trains up and *adapts* men for legislators. Their success in managing small matters, is the best guarantee of their fitness to superintend larger ones. It also gives each man an interest in the public welfare, develops each man's sympathy in the well-being of his fellows, renders him more of a citizen, and fosters public spirit—that strongest bulwark of a nation.

By the too great multiplication of functions in the central body, the state is incapacitated for the discharge of all the duties of which it is otherwise capable. In the moral as in the *physical* world, the strength of materials must be calculated. Ten or twenty small machines may effect certain results better than one cumbrous or complex one. That which the governors of a nation could not attempt, the towns and cities might; and what the city could not manage, the parish would easily effect. It is the overlooking of this plain principle that has led to the fallacy, that because the state *centrally* could not perform a certain task, the state could not perform it at all!

In those cases where national and perfect combination are required, as in the post office, the organization of pauper labor, the army, the coinage, etc., the central power must clearly preponderate, nor ought the supervision of the central power to be absent even from the most purely local councils. A central oversight is to local government, what local government is to individuals. Amid conflicting claims and interests it decides on the general merits, free from local party bias. It compels attention to the general wishes of the nation in those districts where apathy or ignorance would occasion their neglect. A greater advantage is, that by collecting and diffusing information, it gives each place the opportunity of profiting by the experience of all the rest. Without this, the best and the worst management of the same kind of affairs, might exist within a few miles of each other,^d and the local authorities at either place know nothing of the defects or excellencies of the other. In each of these respects, central supervision is worth far more than it costs.

The opponents of government-interference dilate much upon the abuses to which it is liable, and its costliness. It is said that Favoritism and Nepotism are fostered—that those who administer the function of the state, are placed in circumstances likely to encourage extravagance. If these assumptions are rounded off with an allusion to our expensive armaments, to our mismanaged dock-yards, and the high salaries paid for nominal duties, the case is complete! Now the force of these objections lies, in the main, rather against the nation itself

^c Westminster Review. Vol. 50, p. 524.

^d As in the old Poor-law. The Unions of Mechanics Institutes in Yorkshire, and elsewhere, have been established for obtaining the advantages of centralization.

than against the government. In the first place, the people manifest a too great indifference to the conduct of rulers, and in the next, they permit a feudal oligarchy to govern. The first essential of good government is responsibility to the governed. The *social* implies the *democratic* Republic. Moreover, the importance of the national expenditure-question is much exaggerated. The expenditure is small in proportion to the wealth of the country. Deducting war establishments and the debt, two things for which the present rulers are not responsible, our whole civil government does not cost above a twelfth part of what the nation spends in 'strong drinks.' Of the two errors, it is certainly better to overpay than to underpay a government, for good government is, as little as anything else, to be obtained without paying the full price for it. The much vaunted cheapness of the American government is not all gain. For many offices it pays less than the highest class of talent can obtain in other ways, and in such cases it naturally gets, instead of the best, second-best and inferior.

What has been called 'the ignorant impatience of taxation' is a phrase justly applicable to those who complain of *over* taxation, instead of *wasted* taxation. When expended in providing education, roads, drainage,—any of those manifold necessities, utilities, luxuries, which *individual man* (especially poor men) could not obtain,—it is a Capital in many cases more advantageous than if it had remained with those who might have spent it productively, and still more advantageous when, drawn from the very wealthy, it transforms what they might have spent injuriously to themselves and others, into a means of common utility and enjoyment.

Under the voluntary system an Association must be extemporized for every occasion demanding interference, whereas the government (central or local) already possesses a machinery for giving force to its plans. Men habituated to manage public affairs (under responsibilities) best know how to set about public undertakings. Voluntaryism implies the existence of as many taxing bodies, as there are public objects to be obtained. Every-body is running after every-body else, with a begging box or a subscription book! Attempt to supply the desirable, or even necessary social ends, upon the voluntary principle, and Society would become one vast and intolerable Mendicant establishment. Public duties would remain unfulfilled, public objects unattained, and the nation would retrograde to barbarism.

That the voluntary functionary should be unpaid, is no gain to society. The state-functionary's 'to salary' may figure in the taxes, while the unpaid ones expenditure of *time* and *means* does not. But experience has shown that in government, as in other things, the principle of the division of labor is far the best.^e

In innumerable instances a consciousness of some great good to be obtained, or evil to be removed, may exist for long in the general mind of the community, without any person arising, at once *capable* and *willing* to do the needful work. To make exertions in behalf of the public requires spirits of a generous or an ambi-

^e The poor law is an example. The standing army furnishes an analogous one. In those countries where every citizen is compelled to serve, the *apparent* cost of the army is small, but the *real* cost far exceeds the English plan, costly as that needlessly is.

tious mould, and these are rare—still more rare the possession of strength of character and sufficient means to give force and reality to their designs. Each man naturally feels that the required provision, if only of a pump in his neighborhood, a school for the parish, a public library or park for the town, is a matter which belongs as much to his neighbor as to himself. Why shall *he* sacrifice time and money, incur anxiety, and perhaps ingratitude, for others? Why saddle himself with labor, or make sacrifices a thousand times greater than others, to attain objects from which he will derive no more advantage than they?

When we task the voluntary principle to provide the every day wants of men, we *degrade* it. To the voluntary principle belongs all great, heroic action, all self-sacrifice for the good of others. Release it from drudgery that it may expend itself on worthier objects. Freed from the first pressing duties of bare existence, it will find out the useful,—freed from the useful, it will be devoted to the higher and more refined wants of society. The benevolent and self denying are wasting their anxious thoughts to supply wants which the simplest social organization could provide far more perfectly. The mind that is struggling to raise some local dispensary, or some village school, would, if these were provided by the parish-rate, seek other and higher objects for its activity.

To the Voluntary Principle belongs the support of the *untried* principles of inventors and discoverers, the advocacy and development of new truths struggling to obtain the notice of an indifferent or hostile public. To it we look for those sacrifices which great souls *will* make for their race, in times of emergency. Society should pay for whatever service it can, that it may have more of that 'unbought' grace of life, that 'cheap defence of nations,' which neither wealth, nor power, nor honor, can purchase.

Supersede Voluntarism? Never! There will always be some tears to dry, some ignorance or prejudice to remove, some new, beautiful, and refreshing thought for the wise man to carry to his neighbor. Organize society as perfectly as possible, there will still be some misfortune to amend, some wrong to redress, some right to defend,—for progress is as infinite as man's nature is limitless. In the attainment of the ends of his being there will ever remain 'ample room and verge enough' for man's individual activity.

When society virtually taxes the time or means of self-denying individuals to do those things for it, which it should and may do for itself, the results are sure to possess the weaknesses corresponding to the actor's idiosyncrasy, and the defects attributable to the limited powers of an individual. In this case the community can have no title to object, for whatever has been done, is so much over and above what they had any claim to. Tho it may trouble them to see their youth in the degrading apparel of the 'charity-boy,' or brought up in some spiritual-vestures equally antique, piebald, and pitiable,—their public places closed on days when they should be open, or opened when they should be shut,—coals given instead of soup, or food instead of fuel,—or any of the other innumerable freaks exhibited in the annals of our public-charities, how can they complain? 'A gift horse is not to be looked in the mouth.'

The action of the state attains the objects that it proposes to itself. Like a true Social Machine, the idea of government includes an *object* to be attained,

and the *means* of attaining it. The *exception* with Governmental, is the *rule* with Voluntary action. Neglect, failure, weakness, incompleteness, we look upon as crime in the one, while in the other they pass without surprise, often without comment. Let the slightest jar exist in the working of any of the government functions—in the post office, or the poor-laws, for example,—and what an outcry is heard! But had these duties been undertaken by private interest or benevolence, the sufferers would experience little or no sympathy. The functionary is watched by those both above and below him, and owes responsibility to the public whose wages he receives.

Yet these objections to the voluntary system are the least. Suppose a wise, good, generous, and efficiently powerful Individual undertaking the common duty,—who shall ensure anything like an adequate supply of such men? Individual influence radiates only a little way, but the need of these services is co-extensive with society itself. How is the Lady Bountiful to be brought into every village?

For the important public objects demanded by modern civilization, Voluntarism would be but a barely tolerable doctrine *even if* the majority of men fulfilled the duties of the citizen, whereas the masses of mankind feel but the smallest possible interest in public questions, however vital, except in periods of spasmodic and momentary excitement. However useful, or indeed essential, 'agitation' may be for starting a cause, the best of causes condemned to live on such stimulating diet, would languish and die out.

Will Voluntarism look to the rich? If, indeed but a tithe of the rich felt as the ideal rich man painted by Fichte, good government would, to a great extent, be obtained. Thus he is supposed to speak.

"Altho I possess as much as hundreds or perhaps thousands of you do together, yet I cannot, on that account, either eat, drink, or sleep, for a hundred or a thousand. The undertakings in which you see me daily engage; the experiments on a great scale with new methods of husbandry; the introduction of new and nobler races of animals, new plants and seeds from distant lands; the study of their proper treatment, which, being hitherto unknown, has now to be patiently sought out;—these demand great immediate outlay, and the means of defraying the loss consequent upon possible failure. You cannot afford to do this, and hence it is not required of you: but that wherein I am successful, you may learn from me, and imitate; what proves unsuccessful, you may avoid, for I have already encountered the risk for you. From my herd there will gradually extend to yours those nobler races of animals already domesticated with me; from my fields there will be propagated to yours those more profitable fruits already inured to the climate, with the art of their cultivation already acquired and tested at my expense. It is true that my granaries are plentifully filled with stores of every kind, but to whom among you, who stood in need of aid, have they ever been closed?—who among you all has ever been in difficulty, and I have not succoured him? What you do not require, shall, at the first signal given by the State, flow forth freely to any province of our Fatherland that may feel the iron hand of want. Grudge me not the Gold which I receive;—it shall be all expended as I have hitherto expended, before your eyes; there shall not be, with my will, a single farthing of it applied without some gain to the cause of Human Culture. Moreover, if the State shall require my money for the pay of its armies, or the support of its provinces,

or the division of my goods for the maintenance of a larger population, I shall be ready at all times, to deliver them up into its hands. I promise you, you shall not see me shrink from my duty. Should the State not require this sacrifice at my hands, and should I leave my possessions to my children, then I have educated them so that they shall use these possessions as I have used them, and shall teach their successors to act as I have done, even to the end of time." ^f

Unfortunately, however, our rich men value more the culture of the other things than of Humanity, and the consequence is, that the zealous, the generous, and the intelligent, are doubly and triply taxed for the indifferent, the niggardly, and the ignorant. We appeal to common experience, to every man who has ever carried a subscription book or a begging box, whether the most partial tax inflicted by the state, is levied with half the injustice of the so-called Voluntary, but for the most part, most *involuntary* tax. The poor pay for the rich, and some of the rich pay tenfold their due, while others on whom the duty or the charity was equally binding, escape. As Voluntary funds are levied on the most unjust and inexpedient principle, so, in like manner, are they expended. Much is more matter of accident; the fountains of benevolence frequently water places already saturated, and often scarcely touch the desert and sandy places.

Many duties will be hereafter delegated to government which at present would be dangerous, or at all events, inexpedient, to entrust to hereditary incapacity. The administrators of public affairs should be men who represent no mere sectional or class interests, but who are responsible Trustees for the benefit of the whole nation.

In nothing does the cause of progress sustain so much damage, as in the opposition which National Education, and other useful functions of the state, receive at the hands of those who are called 'Voluntaries.' The inertia of Conservatism, —the stolid resistance of those who do not believe in the elevation of the people,—who would by force or fraud, and by all or any means in their power, whether fair or foul, keep the workers in that condition of life 'into which it had pleased God to call them,'—might be easily overcome. *Their* ideas belong to the past, and inherit the characteristic weakness of a worn-out period. 'They wax old as doth a garment,' and fit not the New Ages. They appeal to nothing lofty, noble, aspiring in the race, and their only anchor is usage and conventionalism. But the 'Voluntary'—who claims to be one in the army of progress—he bases his opposition on the ground of Freedom, and with that word on his lips so exciting to the human heart, resists what he calls 'Government-shackles.' We deem his earnestness to be sadly misdirected. In national education the dread of government interference is the more unreasonable from the fact that it has been tried, not only under a Despotism but a Republic, and with *complete success*. Within the brief space of half a century, it was the chief agency in converting the semi-barbarous nation of Prussia, into the most intelligent and moral of all the populations of Europe, and at the same time has been surely undermining the foundations of all despotism both political and priestly. In those portions of the United States where national education prevails most, it is

^f Characteristics of the Present Age. Lecture 15.

most valued. *There* too exists the greatest amount of true Voluntary effort for the promotion of human culture,—*there* religion most flourishes,—*there* crime is least,—*there* is best nursed the sentiments which will extirpate the gangrene of slavery prevailing in those states where education is not encouraged,—and *there*, if any where, must we look for the hope of America.

The American and the Prussian citizens regard it as no invasion of their *liberty* when called upon to pay a school-rate. Too often the cry for 'liberty,' set up against social objects, like other strange deeds done in her name, proceeds from motives the most ignoble. Henry Taylor, speaking of the superior sentiment of independence in the Austrian or Prussian Tradesman over the smirking complaisance of a London Shopkeeper,—says of the latter, "He shouts for liberty at the hustings; but tho the voice is Jacob's voice, the hands are the hands of Esau. What he values in what he calls 'liberty,' is chiefly *protection from a tax*; money is still the tyrant of his mind, and the very colors of his political liberty are often nothing else than the badge of his inward servitude." ^g

If anybody could show that by leveling Snowdon, or bridging the straits of Dover, ten per cent. could be realized, the Scrip would go well enough: not so with National Education, tho the men who know the intimate connection between crime and ignorance, can see that a very moderate amount spent in Education, would be an investment infinitely more remunerative to the nation. Our government spends three millions in the punishment of crime, but what the country spends locally for this purpose, must be enormous. Add to this expenditure the property lost or destroyed by crime,—to this add a good portion of the six millions paid for pauperism,—add a still greater proportion of the £75,000,000 wasted in intoxicating liquors and tobacco,—add the value of much of the property destroyed thro ignorance and carelessness,—and it may be said without a shade of exaggeration, that every pound which could be spent in Education for years to come, would reproduce itself seventy fold.

"No less than £18,502,147 were spent last year on the navy, army, and ordnance alone; an enormous sum (amount unknown) goes every year in the police force and other modes of protecting life and property, including the stupid system by which we punish criminals without preventing crime. £529,804 goes for the pensions of a few great people; and £155,000 for the education of the poor, or the 370th part of the revenue (amounting to about one shilling yer annum for each child who ought to be at school!)—about half what we pay in the tax on men servants, and little more than we give every year for liberty to engrave dolphins and griffins on our spoons and seals!" ^h

Hundreds of children exist in every village, endowed as it is preached (but not *believed*, else it could not so remain) with Divine powers and immortal destinies, whose only school is the street, their only lessons those of mischief, sensualism, and crime. In ten to fifteen years they will have grown to be men and women, and will teach *their* children what *they* now learn. It will cost society

^g Notes from Books.

^h Symons' Tactics for the Times. p. 201.

tenfold more to keep them in order, than to render them its models and defenders. Even the pains bestowed in training an accomplished setter, if expended on one of these neglected children, would produce far more valuable results.

But why take so low a standard? Why speak as if the highest result of education was to economize the expense of thief-takers? Why not strive to raise MAN to a position never yet attained, to give him a training which shall render him the judge and arbiter of his own welfare. Why not see what is *in* man? and what ideal-possibilities the race can *realize*? This is the work of the Fellenbergs and Pestalozzis. It is the highest, the most pressing interest that mankind has, or can have, to bring out every man of this description,—to facilitate their action as much as possible, and to inaugurate a civilization as far surpassing ours, as this of Europe surpasses that of the savage.

Will voluntarism do this?—a system which depends for its whole machinery upon the demands of the market,—that market now determined by the ignorance and poverty of those who most need raising, and are least able to be raised, or upon the chance offerings of a benevolence which gives grudgingly because it is taxed unfairly! Absurd! Indeed, the whole power of the state, backed by the independent effort of all the wise and good men in it, would scarcely accomplish the work which now waits to be done,—and yet men can be found to stand forward and impede this godlike work of Common Education, under the ridiculous plea of Freedom, just as if we could

‘Of inward slaves, make outward free.’

With the progress of popular culture, and its necessary consequence the increase of popular power, men of intellect, energy, and moral worth *will* be placed in the seats of honor and trust, that society may reap the results of their wisdom, and be raised by the spectacle of their merit. Government, we repeat, can neither far excel, nor be far behind, the society it represents. It is unjust, nay, it misleads, to charge upon governments, the weakness, the follies, the vices, which have had their foundation in *the whole society*, and which would as certainly exist if the functions of government were carried on by ‘voluntary’ association. Expensive wars *have* been plunged into with the sympathy, nay, at the command of the nation, but when this has proved a losing game, the public have turned round and charged all the consequences of their own will upon their governors! What can be more unjust? True, extravagance and corruption *are* found in the management of public business, yet thousands of the very men who exclaim against it, are ready to sell their vote to the highest bidder, or have some brother or cousin to whom a place in the excise would be exceedingly useful, and which they would spare no pains to obtain. The cause of social progress has as yet little to hope from the extension of the suffrage, precisely because those to whom the suffrage is due, do not understand and value the benefits of social organization. Look at those popularly elected bodies, Town Councils and Boards-of-Guardians. Large powers are vested in them for the benefit of the people,¹ and they remain unexercised. So it must be, till those who elect them have a better

¹ As for example, the power to establish Museums, Galleries of Art, Public Libraries. Guardians possess the power to take land and employ the poor.

conception of the public requirements, and a deeper feeling as to the duties of the citizen. The foolish public regard it as an astonishing piece of condescension, if a Prince or a Prime Minister attend a meeting for improving the condition of outcast humanity, as if they were doing some work not in their vocation. If government fulfil not our wants, the fault is not in *it*, but in *us*. On this point, Victor Cousin has made the following just remarks:—

“Humanity for a long time reposes tranquilly under *the form* of Liberty, which suffices it. This form can be established and supported only in so far as it suits humanity. There never was such a thing as entire and absolute Oppression, even in the periods which to us appear at the present day the most opprest; for, after all, a state of society endures only by the consent of those to whom it applies. Men desire no more liberty at the time than what they can conceive; and it is upon *ignorance*, far more than upon servility, that all despotisms are founded. Thus, not to speak of the East, where the man-child had scarce the sentiment of its own being, that is to say, of liberty,—in Greece, in that youth of the world where humanity began to move and to know itself, rising liberty was but very feeble; and the democracies of Greece sought not to extend it. But, as it is of all important things to tend onward to perfection, so every partial form has but its limited time, and then gives place to a more general form, which, externally destroying the former, develops the motive-spirit in them; for evil alone perishes, the good remains and advances on its way. The middle ages, in which slavery gradually succumbs to the Gospel—the middle ages possessed far more liberty than the ancient world. Yet now they appear to us an epoch of oppression, because the human mind is no longer satisfied with the liberties it then enjoyed; and to seek to enclose it within the limits of those inadequate liberties, were, manifestly, real oppression. But the proof that the human race did not feel itself opprest in the middle ages, is, that it *endured* them. It was only some two or three centuries back that the middle ages began to be oppressive to humanity: it was, accordingly, some two or three centuries back that they began to be attacked. The forms of society, when they suit it, are immovable; the rash man who ventures to touch them, is dashed in pieces against them; but when a form of society has served its time; when people conceive of, and desire, more rights than they possess; when that which was a prop becomes an obstacle,—in a word, when the *spirit* of liberty, and the *love* of the people, which is its close attendant, have *together withdrawn themselves from the form*, once the most puissant and the most adored, the first man that lays hands on this idol, deserted by the Deity that had animated it, overthrows it with ease, and reduces it to dust.”

In ages when a few thousand ‘dum-drudges’ are ready for no other reason but pay, to slaughter other thousands of ‘dum-drudges’ because two knaves fall out, very great ‘progress of the species’ is not to be expected. The Gazette signalizes General A, or Captain B, but the thousands of poor wretches who sacrifice their lives get what they deserve—oblivion. History hitherto records but the slaughter of mis-called heroes, the diplomacy and trickery of statesmen, and the intrigues of courtiers and kings. Of man’s well-being and well-doing, of arts and civilization, of all that marks the development of humanity, it says little. But as each individual unit of the mass called society, attains a clearer notion of his rights and duties, and a consequent greater power of self-assertion, so does society become diviner, and government a more perfect exponent of its wishes. Some who have many reasons for thankfulness, are in love with our

'glorious constitution,' the product of the wisdom and ignorance of a thousand years. Other wise men wish to *save* society from certain doctrines, just as if the knowledge, justice, and love of liberty in a nation depended for existence on a form of government, or as if men could not to-morrow re-organize a government destroyed to-day. Why, the very scum and vagabondage of the earth engaged in the scramble for gold at California, did the other day so feel the benefits of law and order, that it instituted a government; nor is there a band of robbers without its captain and code of honor. He who would elevate government, let him elevate *the people*. Let schools, books, newspapers, and every agency for good, continue their work on the masses of our country. Let virtue, intelligence, and a sense of the nobleness, not of title or of wealth, but of human worth, embrace the toiling millions, and ere long we shall conquer for ourselves that divine heritage of Justice and Love, which human nature in its best moments knows to be its birthright. Then shall the exultant shout whose mere echo but a few months since roused the enthusiasm of a great nation, and struck the knell of despotism, announce a *great fact*; then shall the State become the embodiment of Liberty, Fraternity, Equality. To those who fear its advent we say, in the words of Whittier,

Oh! backward-looking son of time!—
The new is old, the old is new,
The cycle of a change sublime
Still sweeping thro'.

As idly in that old day
Thou mournest, did thy sires repine,
So, in his time, thy child, grown grey,
Shall sigh for thine.

Yet not the less for them or thou
The eternal step of progress beats
To that great anthem, calm and slow,
Which God repeats!

Take heart!—the Master builds again—
A charmed life old goodness hath;
The tares may perish—but the grain
Is not for death.

God works in all things; all obey
His first propulsion from the night:
Ho, wake and watch!—the world is grey
With morning light!

SOCIAL SCIENCE.

LECTURE VIII.—ASSOCIATION.

HERE is a constant struggle on the part of humanity to achieve for itself higher and better conditions. In modern times it exhibits itself in the tendency to elevate those lowest in the social scale. The slave-class obtained the rights and privileges of the serf, the serf those of the independent workman, but this is not enough. The growth of intelligence and increase of wealth, have opened newer and higher prospects to us. It is not likely that an intelligent and moral agent, such as the workman is every day becoming, will for ever submit to a state which renders his liberty of working dependent on the tastes of capitalists and the caprices of landowners. It cannot be that the vulgar faculty of accumulation, shall continue to render the bread of the many dependent on the sufferance of One,—shall determine one vessel to honor and another to dishonor thro' a whole lifetime,—that a child of God in his true estate of being, should enter the presence of his fellows, as tho he were an interloper, a mere grub or worm on whom it were a condescension for the great man to tread. Men learn that

There is no mark, definite and indelible,
Put on one man 'bove another,
That he should be his Master.

Even in their present state, the diffusion of intelligence ameliorates the servile conditions of labor. No employer can despise or oppress a man with as much soul as himself. But the majority are dependent because they are ignorant, and ignorant because dependent, and thus are involved in a charmed circle. Their weakness invites oppression; irresponsible power and the abuse of it being almost inseparably linked. Just as government uncontrolled by those for whom it acts, is despotism, so the relation of master and servant approaches slavery in the degree in which the servant is deficient in counteractive force, and recedes from it precisely as the laborer acquires the powers of the employer—Intelligence and Wealth.

The benevolent author of the 'Claims of Labor' puts in a plea for the laborer, "Consider," says he, "what a thing it is to be master. To have the king-like privilege of addressing others first, to comment for ever on their conduct, while you are free from any reciprocal animadversion." But why not rather consider whether such a position be the natural, healthy position of man to man? Consider the tremendous degradation of rendering one man dependent for his bread, and that of those near and dear to him, on the whim and caprice of his fellow

creature. Consider how little of true nobleness and independence can lodge in the breast of the worker, entering his employer's presence as a socially inferior being, not daring to express his thoughts if conscious that they differed from his Master's, and who must take note of his slightest word, lest he smile at an inopportune moment.

In the smaller industrial and commercial businesses there exists between employer and employed something more than a mere cash *nexus*, but the relation of natural sympathy and goodwill has diminished as the magnitude of our undertakings has increased. The employer no longer knows the names or the countenances of a tithe of those he employs. They are lumped together under the general term 'hands,'—so much live-stock, which, like the dead stock, are just worth the money they will bring. Their exertions are called forth, increased, or entirely suspended, mainly with reference to his convenience and interests, and necessarily so. This state of dependence, coupled with the extensive division of labor, and not counteracted by any education worthy of the name, has greatly retarded the progress of the English operative, and repressed the sentiments of self-respect and moral responsibility.

So serf-like a relation as that of employer and employed, would stand self-condemned, if its economical results were even much more favorable to the employed than they are. The separation of capital from labor, into rival interests, has been the means of transferring to capital large portions of the wealth justly due to labor. The economical principle now paramount is not, What does the laborer earn? but it is, What can he get, or compel the capitalist to relinquish? The effect is, however vast the increase of wealth may be, that the share obtained by the workman progresses in nothing like a proportional return.

"Take the income-tax return, for example, and compare the gross income of the trading and professional classes a short time before the end of the war with what it is now. In 1812, as we learn from a paper read by Mr. Porter before the British association, the total amount of income possessed by persons having from £150 to £20,000 a year and upwards income, was £21,247,621; in 1848, the gross income possessed by the same class was £56,990,224. In thirty six years it had increased nearly two hundred per cent. But this is only a portion of the wealth possessed by the more fortunate classes. Let us now turn to the class deriving their incomes from property. In 1812, the amount of real property assessed to the income-tax was £55,784,553; in 1843, the amount assessed had increased to £95,284,497, an increase of £39,499,964 in thirty-one years. It is thus evident that the gross income of the trading, professional, and property holding classes, excluding those under £150 per annum, is £75,242,567 greater than it was in 1812. Nor is this all the difference. Money is now much more valuable than it was forty years ago. The prices of almost all the auxiliary comforts of life have been very much reduced since 1812, so that we might safely estimate the real increase of income to the wealthier classes as at least £100,000,000. Now, the very fact that this large portion of the national wealth is absorbed by a comparatively small portion of the community, might suggest a fear that something was wrong, even had we not arrived at the painful conclusion by looking into the actual condition of the working classes. Let any man enquire among tradesmen, and he will find the universal complaint is, that very few succeed in making more than a bare living, that hundreds are continually sinking down into pauperism, or adding to that enormous and constantly-increasing unseen poor rate, with which most of the middle classes are so familiar in the shape of aid for dependent relatives who have been unfortunate in business, and are unable to procure a living in any trade or profession.

"If we turn to the artisan class, the whole of the evidence furnished by the indefatigable commissioners employed by the Morning Chronicle goes to prove that, whatever the nominal rate of wages may be, nearly every trade is greatly overstocked with hands; that few

have constant employment, except those who are willing to work at wages far below the rate fixed by the trade; and that an immense number are altogether without employment. Now and then, indeed, a case may occur in which a few people make good wages; but, looking at the principal trades,—those of tailors, shoemakers, joiners, carpenters, and similar occupations,—it seems beyond all doubt that the total amount of wages earned per thousand men, taking the whole of those connected with any particular trade into account, is very much smaller now than it was in 1812."—*The Leader's Newspaper*. No. 24.

The right of the capitalist to grasp all he can, and give his workmen as little as he can, is only surpassed in injustice by the impudence with which it is avowed and defended. Some of our economists have attempted to show that whatever the increase of wealth, the workman could not be deprived of his due share. If capital is increased, say they, the demand for labor is likewise increased, and wages rise. If one suggests that possibly the capitalist may expend the increased wealth in his own personal enjoyment, instead of industrial enterprise—No matter, they say, he cannot spend it without employing labor, so the laborer is sure to get it either way. True, only there is the *small* difference between the laborer taking at once his due share and letting it pass thro' the hands of the capitalist, that in the latter case he pays his own labor twice over.

How absurd, how essentially unjust, such a principle of payment is, must be obvious when we reflect that the same kind of labor in agriculture is paid forty or fifty per cent lower in some districts than in others. In other occupations, the power of substituting the labor of women and children for that of men, the possibility or otherwise of work being done at home, the introduction of middlemen, and many circumstances totally independent of the merit of the work performed, vary the rate of wages materially. If, further, we take into account the fact, that while invention and discovery multiply the laborer's force a thousand fold, he palpably obtains but little of the benefit, and may even be thankful that he is not superseded—we certainly cannot but wonder at the proposal to measure what every man *ought* to get, by what he *can* get.

That now and then a solitary workman with some good management and more good fortune, emerges from the ranks of his fellow workmen, is no compensation of the system,—the one prize cannot atone for the nine hundred and ninety-nine blanks. The introduction of just and fraternal arrangements might possibly turn all into prizes, but whether they would do so or not, no system can last which erects the palace at the expense of the cottage, and bids many die that one may live.

We are not believers in any system which will suddenly change the relation of capitalists and laborers. Neither the education nor the earnings of a very large part of the working classes, render it likely that any vast accumulations will be made towards their own emancipation. If the state were to provide an outlet on our waste Lands and Colonies for the exertions of all the surplus laborers, and thus free the independent laborers from their competition, at the same time extending the means of adequate instruction, it would in a generation or two greatly raise the condition of our people.

At the very outset of any enquiry as to the remedy for the disorganized condition of labor, we are met by two opposite views. One would make Society, or what it calls 'circumstances,' responsible for individual transgressions. To

erroneous social arrangements it attributes all the evils afflicting humanity. Judiciously adapt circumstances to man, and universal happiness may at once be introduced. The opponents of this view rush to the other extreme. The spiritualists charge the social-reformer with attempting to reform society, by 'organizing the kitchen of humanity'—'attempting to cure a patient by a fresh arrangement of his clothes'—etc." Yet surely they will not deny, that with masses of mankind external agencies are all important. If not, what means their zeal in behalf of Schools, Sewers, Parks, Mechanics' Institutes, Ten-hour-bills, and the like? The truth probably lies between the two. No one will deny that very much of a man's moral nature depends on the management of infancy and childhood, the school and the street where the hours of boyhood are passed, the occupation by which he earns his bread. What education may do for the race, when, instead of chaotic and adverse conditions, the best physical, intellectual, and moral ones are supplied to human nature, it is impossible to determine. Even were that nature radically bad, it would still be important to surround it with the best possible influences. We have scarcely ever trained up one human being to the perfection of his nature. The early training of kings has in two or three instances been entrusted to wise men, but that of the race is to a great extent an accident. All is discordant and almost without the slightest relevance to the high purpose of human development. But, admitting all this, we cannot regard such agencies as a mere mould wherein man is to receive form and pressure, but rather as that thro' which the individual best attains the ends and objects of existence. They do not make the *seed*, but are the light, air, and moisture on which it depends whether we shall have a dwarfed and stunted plant, or the healthy flower and fruit-giving tree. Social organization should not be regarded as a substitute for individual self-culture, but only as one of its means. Arrange 'Circumstances' as we may, the God-given soul on which they act, cannot be *formed*. Will is a state of mind springing out of our nature, and which must freely play its appointed part. It is absurd to speak of the formation of *character* as of the construction of a machine, or the shaping of wax or clay,—Human Nature is no such plastic material. If it were so, how came so many of our great men to exist at all? The 'circumstances' that edged them in, were mean, yet *they* were exalted. Surrounded by petty and corroding cares they rose above them, and breathed a serener air. To show the true germ of these characters we need but ask, Would every or any one have risen to greatness in their circumstances? In the circumstances of Socrates or Shakspeare, what is there that accounts for the marvelous goodness of the one, or the greatness of the other. Even yet, Christendom bows at the name of one who had a stable for a birth-place and fishermen for companions.^b

Spiritual differences (or the organization thro' which they are displayed) render a state of absolute equality impossible. In any state of society that could pos-

^a To organize the kitchen of the British pauper-army and their Irish brethren, would (sensual as the thought may seem) be worth to them more than all that the philosophers have yet achieved on their behalf.

^b For some valuable remarks on the Owenian views on the formation of character, see Mill's Logic: Book 6, chap. 2.

sibly be devised there would ever be, on the one hand, 'genius sailing in its starry track,'—learning, wisdom, and that moral power adapted to command,—and mediocrity and dullness on the other, obliged by spiritual gravitation to revolve around the primary intellectual orbs. The world of humanity will ever bear the impress of the same divine intelligence which has made Star differ from Star in Glory, and arranged animal and vegetable life in superior and inferior ranks.

Such inequality does not necessitate but rather *negatives* any inequality in the advantages of culture, the duties of labor, and the distribution of wealth. Legislators, and even advanced reformers, still talk of educating men according to their rank in life, and the ministers of *Him* who preached the brotherhood of man, are much afraid of educating the people 'above their condition.' It seems to be tacitly assumed that there must be a slave-class, who, according to the notion of Mandeville, are required to perform the hard and dirty labor of the nation, and for whom therefore he deprecates any education that will render them unfit for the station of life to which the greater part of them are doomed. Poor Worker! It needed but this doctrine to fill up thy cup of misery to overflowing. Not only art thou to spend thy life from childhood to old age in unrewarded toil, but that thou mayest do it all the more submissively, thou shalt lose the noblest inheritance of thy *nature*—knowledge. God mistook when he gave thee these divine faculties,—they were meant to sleep within thee, unawakened and unused. Thy brother is born Thinker,—thou art born Drudge,—one is all brain, the other all hands. Can God have decreed this severance of classes?

One part in light and life to bloom,
The other grope in murky gloom—
As all behind were left in wrath,
A gloomy wilderness of death,
And all before rejoice for aye
In starry night and sunshine day.

No reference to classic times is needful, to show from the example of even the greatest men, that labor and culture are perfectly compatible. Every one's experience furnishes numberless instances of this union in all kinds of employment. Few men receive a better education than the Surgeon, and few have more disagreeable tasks to perform. Nor is there the slightest reason why as large a measure of general education, or even a larger than any one at present obtains, should not be enjoyed by the 'Navvie,' the Collier, or the Farm-laborer.

Should this result be obtained, reasonable in itself, and which existing agencies are calculated to bring about, then, even under a competitive regime, the rewards of industry, if not equalized, would at least be determined by very different considerations from those at present prevailing. Mr. Deacon Hume, observing some scavengers remove the filth from the streets, remarked to Mr. Porter that the time would come when such degrading offices must be performed by the aid of Machinery, or it would be necessary to bribe a man to the task, by pay equal to that of a minister of state. Certainly this is a rather higher doctrine than that which holds that a man's soul must be almost blotted out *in order that* he may better serve the function of a lacquey or a scavenger.

A superior education conferred by the state, upon all not willing or not able to obtain it for themselves, is doubtless one of the preliminaries to a true elevation of the people. The abolition of the land-monopoly, and the absorption of the unemployed by a wise organization of their labor, are scarcely less important. These imply a progress in public opinion not yet attained. There is however one instrument in the hands of the working classes which need not wait the tardy interference of the state, but requires only their own active participation—we mean, *Association*. Poor as are large masses of laborers and operatives in this country, ground down by landlords and jobbers, by government contractors and 'Cheap' tradesmen, they have, as a whole, the means of emancipation in their hands. The money invested in Benefit Societies, many of them destined to become bankrupt, and the sums accumulated in Savings' Banks, would, if wisely employed as capital for their own benefit, increase at a very rapid rate. But even these sums bear no proportion to the amounts wasted in drink, and tobacco, in pawnbroking and 'tommy' shops. All the Utopias ever experimented to find a better, a wiser plan of human society, have not cost *one year's* expenditure by the working classes of this country in the lowest of indulgences.^c There are thousands who tax themselves more than the most oppressive government dare tax them, who rob themselves of more than the most grasping capitalist could take from them,—who, not choosing to be masters of capital, must be its slaves.

Unhappily the associations hitherto formed by the working classes have lamentably lacked wisdom. For example, if the many millions spent in strikes, had been formed into funds for the employment of the unemployed, they would far more effectually have enabled the workman to resist the encroachments of capital, because they would have done it with a power like its own, certainly with results not to be compared with the froth of public meetings and placards, the foolery of secret oaths, the tyranny of picquets, and the atrocities of vitriol throwing. Even in the associations for help in sickness, old age, etc., there is ample room for improvement. The members of these valuable helps must yet learn the inadequacy of their subscriptions to provide effectual insurance, and the injustice of the principles on which they are based. They must learn to remove them entirely from the public-house, conduct them on business principles, give them common sense appellations, and banish all their absurd ceremonies, which, at a vast expense, tend to keep from them the more intelligent of the working class.

Imperfect as the preliminary attempts at economy and association necessarily must be, it were much to be desired that even these inadequate associations had a larger extension. How comparatively few invest anything in the Savings' Bank. How small a per centage of them subscribed to the Land-plan of Mr. F. O'Connor, notwithstanding all the noise made about it. How few in any shape make the smallest provision against evils which are certain to befall them. It would be easier to collect thirty thousand, or even ten times that number, to witness a horse race, than one thousand to organize themselves for their mutual benefit. Unfortunately too, the mere windbag is the man the most trusted with the management of their affairs.

^c See Paper read by Mr. Porter to the British Association, 1850, 'On self-imposed Taxation.'

The prospects of the organization of labor looked at from this point, are certainly not very cheering. On the other hand it is clear, that slowly but surely the working classes begin to profit from the lessons of experience. With a little more of that culture which has descended upon the middle classes, the workers will perceive the true conditions on which their well-being depends. They will learn that the magnificent structures, rich furniture, and other refinements of civilized life which their hands fabricate for others, they could also produce for themselves,

Association is as essential to the Education as to the Labor of society. It alone can bring within the reach of its lowest members all the elements of the best education, in the highest sense of that term. This implies a careful early training for the development of future character. To carry it forward there should be Libraries containing the best books which the united experience, wisdom, and genius of the race have produced,—Museums of Natural Objects,—the works which skill and ingenuity have devised,—or the remains which the hand of time has spared of the past. To render these useful, there should be Lectures and Classes conducted by men who have long studied these special subjects. Need we say, that each man cannot have a vast Library, a Museum, a Learned Professor, set apart for himself. Princes cannot command such facilities, yet the combined pence of a number of working men can procure them all, and of the highest character.

A taste for the beautiful and the means of its enjoyment, belong to a properly developed human being. The garden of large extent, ornamented with conservatories, fountains, statuary,—the park, with its magnificent old trees, its undulations of hill and dale,—the picture gallery, with the gems of ancient and modern art, are now reserved for the few,—and if the multitude now and then get to see them when the great man's family is 'in town,' it seems almost like a stolen and timid pleasure. Yet a rate of a few pence per annum, would supply every town with these things in their highest perfection. Just as readily as combination enables the limited finances that with difficulty can purchase a few books, to command extensive libraries, so would the rental which pays for a miserable cottage command a healthy, convenient, almost an elegant abode. No matter for what object the resources of the poor man are expended, combination multiplies their power enormously. And if the various examples of Model-lodging-houses, Baths and Wash-houses, Club-houses and Mechanics' Institutes, served no more directly beneficial end than to demonstrate the vast latent power of association, they would still have done much.

The economy of association is easily manifested in other forms. By its means large capital and the division of labor can be introduced where it would be otherwise impracticable. In the distribution of commodities the advantage is obviously great. The working man too frequently purchases his commodities in exceedingly small quantities, and the profits paid by the poor are proportionably larger than those paid by the rich. Then the process of retailing is the most costly possible. Suppose the orders for bread, groceries, etc., of five hundred families, to be systematized and classified, so that at a particular day and hour, each received the required quantities, an enormous amount of time and labor to the retailer would clearly be saved. If moreover the retailer were the *agent* of these five

hundred families, paid for the services he performed, most of the difference between the wholesale and shop price would accrue to the consumers. To this must be added the amount saved in adulteration, to which the temptations would be less, and which would stand a much greater chance of detection by five hundred parties acting in concert, than by the same persons isolated.^d

Similar economy is manifested in the associated-homes, model lodging-houses, baths and wash-houses, with the nature of which the public is familiar. They are but in their infancy, and have as yet only been tried as charitable experiments by the wealthy on behalf of the most wretched. Humble as are such exemplifications of the associative principle, they have done an amount of good impossible to estimate. But this agency has not yet fulfilled its vocation. By the exercise of the functions of the state, rightly understood and constituted, and the judicious exercise of the power of Voluntary Association, the advantages of civilization may be extended to the vast body of the people. Its higher function is, to take charge, not merely of the consumption of wealth, but of its production and exchange. The workman must become master of the powers of capital and land, that is, Laborers and Capitalists must become *Laboring-Capitalists*. This is the only principle which will secure the workman the full advantages of these instruments of production. It is the only true solution of the labor-question, for between labor and capital there could henceforward be no conflict.

Compared with these, the other advantages of associated capital and labor, seem trivial. But there are others, if not of equal, at least of high importance. The laborer, as partner, would have the greatest interest in improving and economizing every process, at the same time that moderate labor and a good education gave greater power to originate improvement. In the community of Ralahine, the work people hailed with delight a new Reaping Machine, while the half-starved laborers around them viewed its introduction as a calamity. In the first it was a help, with the last it was a rival.

Another advantage of association is the greater power of *accumulation*. With the individual capitalist, however strong the motives to accumulation, a time arrives when he is less able to make the exertions and sacrifices of youth. If not overtaken by the spirit of avarice, he will rather add to his comforts than to his capital. Associations however have a longer life; and if wisely organized, their commercial transactions are not subject to the accidents and limitations of an individual existence. Even if the motives to accumulation be weakened, the obstacles to expenditure are increased. The thrifty man may leave his property to spendthrift heirs, but the accumulated wealth of a society can only be dispersed by the consent of a majority.

Working associations would maintain and increase the sense of *individual responsibility*. A man would not be a mere cog or wheel in the industrial-machine, satisfied so long as he obtains the usual wage for the usual work, his highest faculties and sympathies never called into exercise. He would perceive his own welfare to be intimately connected with the success of the undertaking, and naturally endeavor to ascertain the conditions of its success. Under such

^d See Appendices J and K.

an arrangement there would be a vitality and a healthy relation, which we vainly seek in the present system. A recent pamphlet remarks:

"A working association of journeymen, if it is to subsist at all, cannot subsist upon the same narrow basis as an association of capitalists; it must embrace more and vaster ends; take into account more human sympathies and wants; rise to a higher and more moral tone than the other. The capitalists who join together in forming a joint-stock company, need engage but a small portion of their fortunes; a still smaller portion of their time; there need be no actual contact between them but of the general meeting, or at most of the board of directors, if they choose to attend them; an average share of honesty and civility on such occasions, as well as in the dealing with shares and the receipt of dividends, is about all that is required of them; whilst all that they require of the company is, simply—dividends twice a year, and as high dividends as possible. What they shall do with that money when received, what need they have of it, concerns in nowise their fellow members otherwise than as fellow men. But it is not so with the associated operative. His whole fortune is risked at once; for his fortune is his labor, and he gives the whole of that, or so large a share that what remains is but little. In giving his labor he gives his time, or the best of it; some eight or ten hours a-day at the least. And when a man gives his labor and time, do you not see that he gives his life, and that it is his life which has to be provided for? Hence, on the one hand, a high standard of moral worth becomes necessary amongst the operatives: they must do their work in the best possible manner, or the whole association is disgraced; they must act towards one another with constant forbearance and self-sacrifice during their long weary hours of toil, or the workshop will become a hell; they must be industrious, or they rob their brethren.^e And, on the other hand, they must, somehow or other, be maintained in *the slacks*, as they are called in many trades; they must be maintained and attended in sickness; provided for in old age themselves, and their children in infancy; and how can all this be done more naturally than by the association itself in which they labor, and by setting apart a portion of the profits? To create half-a-dozen separate machineries of sick-clubs, trade-clubs, burial-clubs, etc., would be absurd, where a machinery exists already which can accomplish all these purposes; to hand over to each workman all his earnings in money from week to week, or from month to month, where there are so many contingencies to be insured against which require a portion of those earnings to be set aside, would be to hold out as it were a premium to improvidence and selfish expenditure. Hence, it arises, that the co-operative association tends essentially to absorb within itself, from the first, the trade-club and the friendly society; that eventually it may supply to its members the Model Lodging-House, the Mechanics' Institute, the School,—and who can tell what besides."—*Tracts on Christian Socialism*.

Single associations might undoubtedly be subjected to the same danger from competition to which the private capitalist is liable. A glut of commodities might ensue from overtrading, and the association find itself insolvent thro' the depreciation in the value of goods. But a *Union of Associations*, wisely organized, so as to produce the various commodities in due proportion to the wants of the members, would be entirely independent of the panics and trade-storms of the general market. Speculation must be no element of their industrial undertakings, but supply and demand must be proportioned to each other, not by the rude and painful process called 'the higgling of the market,' but by a calculation of the wants of the members and the means existing to supply them,—just as the parts of every great industrial undertaking are calculated and adapted to each other. Trading associations will to a great extent do away with individual competition, but the competition between associations, can only be neutralized by a larger association, or the State. The French socialists, in the revolution of

^e In the working associations of Paris, 'Saint Monday' is found to be incompatible with successful management, and accordingly discontinued.

1848, began at the wrong end. They wanted the government to organize the nation, whereas the nation must organize the government. The organization of pauper labor is an exceptional case of emergency; it devolves upon the state because no one else *can* undertake it. The pauper, in submitting to it, becomes the slave of the state. It does not mean, as misrepresented by M. Thiers and others, the finding of cases for briefless barristers, of patients for physicians without them, or the supplying of canvass and marble for bad artists and sculptors at the expense of the community, but the satisfying of the primary wants of those to whom society has left no other resource open. Pauper organization is imposed upon the destitute, it is not achieved by the independent. The true organization of labor has a higher origin than outward force; it is based upon the sentiment of human rights and human duties in the individual, and demands personal reform as the preliminary to the social. No scheme can be devised which will give the laborer the results of intelligence and virtue, unless it can also confer these guiding qualities.

In proceeding to consider briefly a few of the main objections to the practicability of social organization, we shall not discuss forms and systems, but principles.

Some of the charges against Association are so absurd or irrelevant, as scarcely to deserve notice. For example it has been denounced as a species of 'slavery.' To call that 'slavery' which simply requires that each shall be subject to rules formed by a body of Men for the preservation of their mutual rights, and to designate that as Freedom which subjects large numbers to the selfish-interests of one individual, is a glaring misuse of language. Again, to mix up discussions on the Right of property with Association, is beside the question. Admit the right of the producer to the product, and the consequent right to exchange his produce and to accumulate it, this gives him no claim to rob the workman by means of an overcrowded labor market—confers no title to grasp as much as he can by a system of speculation and commercial gambling. A man's property is what he has produced, no less, no more, and his 'right' of use should stop at that point which infringes upon the welfare of others. How far the rights of property have approximated to this standard, let the present condition of laborers and operatives, male and female, bear witness.

Neither does the right to property militate one tittle against Communism. A man has a right to defend his life or liberty when attacked, tho his mode of exercising that right may be a question of expediency. If many find themselves jeopardized, they may combine and form an army for mutual defence. Yet no man gives up his rights,—he but protects them in a certain way. So, too, he may forego his claim to the specific results of his industry, when satisfied that by so doing he shall obtain more than an equivalent.

Communism is not a question of rights at all, it is one of expediency. Certain forms of society are adapted to men in certain stages of development, which are appropriate to them. They can be neither much retarded, nor much hastened, but must attend the Progress of which they are the consequence. Association and Communism are no exceptions. Some speculative forms of the associative principle may be liable to objection, but it does not follow that they attach to every form of association. The corrective tendency of human nature to cast

from it whatever perils its welfare, is lost sight of by the objector. Between a man working entirely for himself and entirely for society, there are infinite degrees of applicability, just as there are infinite variations of human character and human wants. There are men, perhaps many, who will not be able to adapt themselves to any association, others who may do so in a limited degree, and others entirely. It is for the state to harmonize these various forms of social existence as it best can, so that individual liberty and the general interest suffer not.

It is affirmed that under a system of common capital[†] production would relax, and speedily cease altogether. The objection is stated in many ways. Mr. McCulloch has thus put it:—

"Suppose you have a thousand individuals who live and labor in common: in this, as in all similar cases, it would be obvious to every one of these individuals, that if, on the one hand, he make any unusual exertions, whether of body or of mind, he will reap only the thousandth part of the advantages derivable from them; while, on the other hand, it would be equally obvious, that if he contrive to avoid performing his due share of work, or obtain more than his fair proportion of its produce, he will be the sole gainer. Under such circumstances, it is clear the community would make no progress, and that it would gradually, and not very slowly, retrograde. Instead of being annihilated, the principle of self-interest would be as strong as ever; but, inasmuch as no one could expect to advance himself by industry, or frugality, a regard for his own interest would teach him to follow an opposite course, and would make him labor as little, and consume as much, as possible!"

Communism among men guided only by low impulses (the result in part of previous misdirected training), and unrestrained by those guarantees which common-sense dictates, might possibly exhibit the results predicted by Mr. McCulloch. This however no more disproves the communist principle, than the necessity of using arms establishes the inexpediency of peace. Enthusiasts, living in too narrow a circle of thought, sometimes carry principles to cases to which they do not legitimately apply. Just as it is folly to preach the non-resistance principle to a mad-dog, or to 'Croats' and 'Cossacks' quite as ferocious, so is it equally absurd to apply the doctrine of entire fraternity to those but partially, or not at all, imbued with its influence and intelligence. To give to the idle the fruits of the laborious, to the sensual the rewards of self-denial, would be self-destructive to any system which permitted it. Social equality[‡] is not to be brought about by mechanical and arbitrary divisions which would only substitute the animal selfishness of the multitude for the commercial and aristocratic selfishness of the middle and upper classes. True fraternity arises from a noble and enlightened sentiment of the uses of property, and Communism, in our sense of that term, will only exist to the extent to which such a sentiment prevails.

On the lower ground of 'enjoyment' even, if idleness and greediness can be such to aught but a *stye-community*—it may be doubted whether a man 'having a regard to his own interest, would work as little, and consume as much, as pos-

[†] Until the most illogical position, that if 'property is common, all individuality in its use must be foregone,' ceases to mislead, the term *common-capital* is preferable to that of *common-property*.

[‡] The twaddle of saying; 'Make men all equal to-day and to-morrow they will be again unequal.'—Bentham would have called 'the calumny of false-imputation.'

sible²; for that would speedily put an end to the association itself—a result, we may presume, which is *not* for his interest.

But does genuine *Human* nature, properly trained and conditioned really prefer idleness to activity? Is not work rather, the very law of our being? The child, the boy, the man, are never idle, except when morally degraded, or physically diseased.

From great to small,
From small to smallest things invisible,
The Law of Labor rules the happy world.
But man, the misinterpreter of God,
Perverts this chiefest blessing to a curse,
And makes his brother labor overmuch,
That he may slumber and grow fat in sloth,—
Misusing earth, his brother, and himself.³

We have tried to make labor unnecessary to a portion of the species, and the issue is, we have lost a good ploughman and got a useless fox-hunter.

Even human nature badly trained and conditioned, gives the lie to the calumny of idleness. Count Rumford found no difficulty in getting the Vagabonds of Munich to work. The very children were jealous of the favor shown to those appointed to spin hemp and flax, and solicited, with the greatest importunity, to be permitted to work, and cried most heartily if the favor was not instantly granted them. The criminals at Mettray, and in fact criminals generally, betray no symptoms of idleness. The objection of Mr. McCulloch, if true, would apply to that portion of our own operatives whose labor is not paid by the piece—by far the larger portion. Agricultural laborers, domestic servants, shopmen, and most factory laborers, are paid by time, and the vast majority could not increase their remuneration by any augmented exertion.

Will it be said that we forget 'the master's eye'? Not so. Owing to the extension of industrial employment in the largest establishments, there is only the superior servant's eye, an eye which is equally at the service of every trade's association, or community,—besides which, piece-work is as practicable as at present! But there would besides be as many Master's eyes as there were Members in the Association,—a supervision quite as strict as anything the competitive system can offer.

It is said however, that the principle of Communism involves Injustice, since it gives but the same return to him whose labor produces much, as to him who produces little. It is surely a very limited part of the social problem to determine the reward of each man according to the utility and difficulty of his task. To help those who are weak is not a less important or pleasing part. Moreover, it is not at all established that the reward of superiority should consist in a larger amount of *material* wealth. But if it were so, the presumption would still be against a system which leaves the just measure of award to be determined by a selfish struggle between the strong and the weak. Intelligence is surely superior to chance, concession to conflict, gentleness to force—in short, Socialism to

² Egeria: by Charles Mackay.

Individualism. Who is most likely fairly to estimate the worth of a workman's services? An employer at once judge, jury, and interested witness? or a body of associated workmen whose interests are identical? These would necessarily divide their earnings according to some mutually accepted and understood principle, while the individual employer, even if well disposed, must accept the rude accident-determined average of the market.

To those who feel the communistic principle to be unjust, we say, Organize your associations on those principles which are just according to your present standards, and if you do not ignore the 'quality of mercy,' your association will certainly *end* in Communism. Would the stickler for his *rights* wish his neighbor's children worse educated than his own, because of some inferiority in the parent? This would be to perpetuate evil. Or if sickness fell upon a poorer brother, or death deprived his family of his support, would the richer one, on the plea of justice having been done, refuse all help?

It is singular that the opponents of Communism (which is simply the principle of mutual aid) should be found among those who admit the golden rule of Christ to be the highest social law. To be civil to one's fellows—to give them of one's superfluity in time of need—requires no very great stretch of philanthropy. But to respect the wants of the meanest and weakest of the human family,—to look upon property, not as a precious object for attaining which each must struggle, or failing deem himself poor and unfortunate—but rather as the *instrument* of doing good, and without which wealth were merest dross,—this were indeed to render our daily life the realization of the highest teaching. Even at present, when the State imposes any tax, it naturally falls upon him who has much, rather than upon him who has little. Taxation, whatever its object, is but the *communizing* of a portion of the funds of society.¹ It is raised for common benefits, but is, or ought to be, levied according to the means of the payers. Now such deductions from every man's income made at the bidding of the common instinct of humanity and for the interests of civilization, what are they but invasions of the Economist's Justice,—interferences with the arbitrary disposal of individual means? If no social enterprise must be undertaken unless an advantage accrued to each exactly proportioned to the contribution made by him, many features of civilization would be wanting. Even Life Assurance, or Assurance in any form, is a contribution from those who do not suffer, in behalf of those who do. A Mechanics' Institution is equally *unjust*, for in general it takes a reduced subscription from the poorer members, and allows them as many advantages as those who pay more. Two persons subscribe equally to a club-house, and one uses it ten times more than the other. A highway rate is levied upon persons according to their rental, but the poor contributor probably uses it ten times more than the

¹ Aucune propriété ne pouvant être créée, ni même transmise, par son seul possesseur, sans une indispensable coopération publique, à la fois spéciale et générale, son exercice ne doit jamais être purement individuel. Toujours et partout, la communauté y est plus ou moins intervenue, pour le subordonner aux besoins sociaux. L'impôt associe réellement le public à chaque fortune particulière; et la marche générale de la civilisation, loin de diminuer cette participation, l'augmente continuellement, surtout chez les modernes, en développant davantage la liaison de chacun à tous.—Auguste Comte, *Discours sur l'ensemble du Positivisme*. p. 150.

richer one. When the nightmare of do-nothingism is taken off this nation, we may hope for National Education, itself another piece of Communism.¹ The communistic formula is—*'To each one according to his tastes and wants within the limits of the common resources, on condition of rendering himself useful according to his faculties and strength.'*² The principle is involved in almost all social objects.

But it is asked, what is a want? How is individual power to be measured? We reply, just as it is now: *it must be determined* by those who associate, and the greater the amount of average common-sense and right feeling, the better it will be ascertained. And what consolation do you offer to the *sufferers* from these injustices? Truly, none but this—that in each of these cases, the contributor gets back considerably more advantage than will compensate him for his sacrifice, with the additional satisfaction of doing good.

While many are ready to concede that the spirit of individual aggrandizement fostered by the present system, is productive of numerous evils, they regard its advantages as outweighing its defects. They attribute to it merits to which it has little claim. Competition, it is said, is the life-blood of society, without which industrial enterprise would stagnate, and society lose that activity which now so largely tends to increase and diffuse the advantages of civilization. Such are the stereotyped arguments with which the proposal for a wiser social organization is commonly met. To attribute the activity which characterizes production and exchange to competition, is to treat as a cause what is mostly an accident, and often an obstacle. It is to mistake struggle for vitality,—friction for the source of power.

If by competition be meant that individuals are stimulated to exertion by the desire of surpassing each other, we venture to affirm that such cases are extremely rare. It is certainly absurd to suppose that it is this motive which nerves the arms of our millions of workmen. The fallacy of stimulation once prevailed (and indeed to some extent still prevails) in education. The connection once supposed to exist between the ferrule and philosophy, gave way to the theory of 'laudable emulation'—a mild form of envy. This too is giving way, and in the best schools it is found that the pleasures and advantages of knowledge are sufficient to draw forth all desirable exertion. So with the production of wealth; higher and more enlarged views being introduced, motives of a merely personal and selfish character must be superseded.

But if by competition be meant, that the process of wealth-producing and wealth-consuming can only be well conducted on the individual basis, we say that it has already been often superseded with great advantage to the general interest. Take, for example, the machinery for traveling. Contrast the system of Coach-conveyance,—its extortionate drivers and guards, its unpunctuality, and other evils now passing from memory, which competition did nothing to repress,—

¹ Horace Mann, Education-Secretary of Massachusetts, says:—

"A child would be as much astounded at being asked to pay any sum, however small, for attending our common schools, as he would be if payment were demanded of him for walking in the public streets, for breathing the common air, or enjoying the warmth of the unappropriable sun."

² A chacun selon ses goûts et selon ses besoins, dans la limite des ressources communes, à la condition de se rendre utile selon ses facultés et selon ses forces.

with that new mode of conveyance, where scarcely anything is left to the 'higgling of the market.' The production of gas is free from the influence of competition in many places, where it is nevertheless produced both well and cheaply. The same remark applies to the Post Office and to the supply of Water. The Bank of England, monopoly tho it be, is said to conduct the Machinery of Banking tolerably well. If competition be unnecessary in such matters, why should it be needful in the other provinces of industry? The associations for locomotion, artificial light, and water, may be monopolies, and open to serious objections. In one place the manufacture of gas is carried on by the public, for the public, and the surplus is devoted to the improvement of the town, while in another all it does is to make a few fortunate people rich. The parties who conduct any industrial Associations may be weak or wicked, their constituents apathetic and negligent of their affairs, and it may thus degenerate into a monopoly. This is no objection to Association properly understood. Enthusiasts, indeed, speak of association as if it involved some occult guarantee against all future mistakes and sins. This is not the case, for if fools or knaves associate, the principle must be abused. We need not seek that good in the whole which does not exist in the parts. All that concerns our argument is the fact, that production and exchange may go on well without the conflict of *individual* producers and exchangers.

In truth, what a sensible man wants is not property—but *the uses of property*. The notion of men consuming more than they require for the purposes of health and enjoyment, appertains rather to the brute than the rational creation. If we credit Harriet Martineau and J. S. Buckingham, the communists in America do not produce as little as they can help, and consume as much as they can. On the contrary, they produce as much as possible. Since they increase in wealth, it is certain that they produce more than they consume.¹

To possess a large amount of exclusive wealth cannot be a necessity of human nature, else the vast majority of the human race could not be excluded therefrom. Am I any poorer because millions more of my fellow men, share with me the air, the water, the sun, the sky, the stars? Am I less owner of the great thoughts of Shakspeare or of Milton, because tens of thousands more have learned and lived by them? The paved streets of our cities, the highways which link with a vast net-work each part of this great empire,—the railway that has cost millions,—are used by my fellow men, but are not the less for me. The books, lectures, museums, galleries, parks, which enlighten and recreate thousands of our operatives, are not their exclusive property, and would scarcely be as much enjoyed as at present, if they were. Few men inhabit a house which is their own, and if the possession were transferred from a private landlord to a joint-stock company of which the dweller formed one, would his comfort be lessened thereby?

¹ The writer of the able article on 'Social Utopias' in *Chambers' Papers for the People*, observes, that "most of the numerous phalansteries established during the last ten years in the United States have failed, and those which still remain are involved in debt, and struggling with difficulties. It seems, indeed, that the preference for Fourier's plan evinced by many rests on fallacious grounds, and that Community of Interests is the only basis on which association can be long or beneficially maintained."

Or of what use is it to multiply the wealth of a single man unless you could multiply his capacities of using it? Why amass wealth for a few individuals, when you cannot thereby increase their real enjoyment? You may load the rich man's Table with the most delicate viands, and tempt him to excess, but you can give him no second stomach. You may fill his Wardrobe, yet he can wear but one suit at once. Sleep will not visit the couch of down more readily than the straw pallet of the husbandman. You may call him the owner of the broad lands, but the poorest wayfarer passing over his domains may have a more elevated consciousness and a finer appreciation of the beautiful—a title-deed worth a thousand parchments 'Give me neither poverty nor riches;' neither the hardship of incessant toil,—the anxieties of a pinched poverty, living in hope yet fearing its future,—nor the ennui of the rich man almost as perplexed to create new wants as thousands to supply their daily needs.

The primary point at which society should aim is Human Culture, to which material progress is but a means. The most beautiful picture without the eye to behold it, is but so much wood and paint and canvass. Yet the exaggerated notion of the importance of wealth makes us forget this most obvious truth. We build palaces, and let the builders dwell in hovels unfit for cattle. A few special favorites are sent to Universities and Colleges, while the millions outside 'perish for lack of knowledge.' To conceive that the spiritual differences of men need the external sign of property to represent them, is certainly a very poor compliment to real merit. Why should there not be among men, the same free equality in the uses of wealth, as that which prevails in an intelligent and united family? Intellectual disparity does not necessitate corresponding material difference. Even if it did, there should be some better ground than the talent of accumulating, to entitle one man to control the condition and labors of five hundred or one thousand of his fellow men.

It is surely a mistake to attribute our grandest inventions and discoveries to so coarse a material motive as 'the desire to get on in the world.' In doing away with the princely fortune which a few adroit men acquire in trade, we shall not lose the services of those men who become great thro' the labors of the intellect, or by the endowment of extraordinary genius. To a few men the large accumulations of their predecessors may give advantages of culture not now obtainable by the rest of the world. But if, for one rich man meriting respect on account of superior powers, History shows a score of men equally great who have never enjoyed wealth, the argument becomes worthless. The touch of a golden rod cannot draw forth the electric spark of genius. Proverbially, penury, misfortune, and disappointment have been the companions of the artist and the poet. Even then such men have sought by copyright and patents to secure to themselves the pecuniary results of their labors, it may be ascribed for the most part to no mere hankering for 'pudding and praise,' but rather to obtain the bread which would be secured in no other way.

We cannot dwell on the moral tendencies of the present system, yet we may consider what sort of discipline that must be for a human spirit, which places penalties upon poverty, and makes wealth the condition of all that men most prize. The first sad lesson now taught man, is that the approbation of his fellow men, their readiness to supply his wants, to sympathize with all he feels and

does and says, depends not on what he *is*, but what he *has*. He occasionally hears of a code of duty which he has to fulfil at the risk of some remote and not very certain punishment. For two hours in the week he may listen to these admonitions, but to set against them are the practical lessons of six days. Is it then wonderful that

The natural bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire?

We are not of those who think that the worst result of our social system is that it robs the poor. It is sad enough that a majority of our people should be dispoiled of their fair inheritance,—that for want of the merest Justice, the creator of unbounded wealth should have his existence cut short ere a third of man's natural term is passed,—that for want of the simplest social arrangements millions should be doomed to life-long dependence and abject ignorance. Yet equally mournful is it to witness the daily spectacle of a pure and upright nature thrown into the vortex of commercial life, who, to sustain his social rank, is compelled to meet sharpness by sharpness, trick by trick, until all refinement of feeling is worn off, all noble integrity lowered to the necessities of the market, and the man has sunk to the pitiful and pettifogging tradesmen,

'Meek and much a liar.'

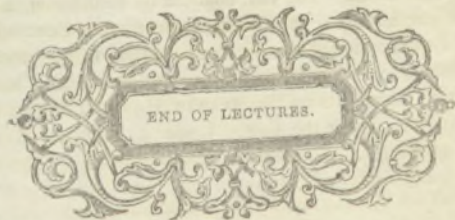
A wise system of Interchange, requires that no useless exchanges be made,—a just system, that in each exchange an equivalent be given for capital, skill, and labor,—a humane system, that no man's weakness, ignorance, or misfortune, become the means of obtaining a greater value for a less. But on the present plan no one even pretends to seek such a result. Trader stands to trader as belligerent parties, who, not allowed to rob each other by a physical contest, are still at liberty to overcome each other by finesse.^m Exchange should and might be a matter of arrangement. The elements of the cost of production once ascertained by mutual counsel and goodwill, all future exchanges would proceed on a determinate basis, so long as the ratio of those elements remained unaltered. The arts of fraud and the devices of lying need be as little called into action in Exchanges as in the construction of a house or a Steam Engine. The present plan, or 'no-plan,' makes the self-interest of the individual, the foremost, continual, and exclusive consideration. The vice charged on association, is the merging of the individual in the society. It is a generous error, and one not very likely to be committed. But the vice of the present system is its essential egotism—subordinating the wants and interests of many to one. Too long has it been permitted to exhibit its results on the stage of Human Life and History, degrading the Many and deforming the Few. Under its influence, Truth, Humanity, and Faith, have with difficulty preserved their existence,—in no age conquering and culturing the multitude. We may be forgiven, then, if, with undying hope

^m 'What is justice?' Your own share of the general Swine's trough, not any portion of my share. 'But what is my share?' Ah! there in fact lies the grand difficulty; upon which Pig-science, in meditating this long while, can settle absolutely nothing. My share—humph: my share is, on the whole, whatever I can contrive to get without being hanged or sent to the hulks.—*Latter-Day Pamphlets.*

in the natural adaptations of man for social and virtuous existence, we turn to the grand idea of our time, which has already taken possession of so many intellects, and which is rapidly finding its way to the hearts of the Peoples. If it be true that the progress of correct thought is mostly coincident with right-action, then a brighter and better day must, ere long, dawn upon the nations. The aspirations of this age will be the deeds of the next. On all sides attention is directed to the important problems summed up in the word 'SOCIALISM.' The now disparate, and like, scattered rain-drops, of no force, yet soon shall the social elements combine into a stream of Thought which no obstacle can turn back.

The Idea that lies at the basis of Socialism is soon expressed. It is, that the workman can never fully secure his own well-being so long as he depends for employment on the accumulations of another,—that the land and capital are essential to the production of the necessities, utilities, and luxuries of existence, Landlords and Capitalists are by no means necessary. Socialism proclaims that the life of the masses ought not to be one dull blank, unhallowed by noble thought or lofty sentiment, its course purely animal, swallowed up in the drudgery of labor, or buried in the mire of sensuality. Further, this old doctrine in a new form, teaches that men should not seek by craft and guile to defraud each other, but live as brethren, mutually helpful. It announces that both man's inner and outer life may be raised and beautified,—that the abuses of property may be remedied, and more humane relations established among men. Such is Socialism. 'The very head and front of its offending bath this extent, no more.'

And it *will* triumph, this socialism, which now alarms even sincere and earnest friends of the poor,—this bugbear which capitalist, landlord, and legislator promise to 'put down,'—which our Charivari have symbolized as a brutal and bearded ruffian with a torch in one hand and a dagger in the other,—which almost every 'respectable' Newspaper (having an eye to its circulation) seeks to suppress by argument, sneer, invective, and abuse. Yes! This socialism will triumph, despite the errors of its friends and the opposition of its foes, because, in its main aspirations and its *organic principle*, it is one with Justice and Order, with Truth and Goodness.



APPENDICES.

A. See page 42.

IF the weather is severe, the 'Spitalfields Associations' is at work, and for months together distribute bread, coals, and potatoes. The 'Soup Society,' also is in operation, and provides him regularly with several quarts of excellent meat soup at a penny, or, sometimes, even a halfpenny a quart. At all times several 'Benevolent Societies' and 'Pension Societies' are acting in the district; and from these he receives food or pecuniary relief. He may apply too, during the temporary cessation of the different religious denominations—to the 'district Visiting Society,' to the 'Independents' Visiting Society,' to the 'Friend in Need Society,' to the 'Stranger's Friend Society,' to 'Zion's Good Will Society.' He may even be lucky enough to get something from all of them.

"If his bedding is bad, he gets the loan of a blanket from the 'Benevolent Society,' or from the 'Blanket Association,' or he gets a blanket, a rug, and pair of sheets from the 'Spitalfields Association.' The last of these charities supplies him with a flannel waistcoat for himself, and a flannel petticoat for his wife. In one instance, it furnishes his wife and children with shoes and stockings.

Thus he proceeds from year to year with a charity to meet every exigency of health and sickness. The time at length arrives, when, either from the number of children born to him, under the kind superintendence of the 'Lying-in,' the 'Royal Maternity,' or the 'Benevolent Society,' or from a desire to add a legal and permanent provision to the more precarious supplies of voluntary charity, he solicits parish relief; he begs an extract from the parish register, proves his settlement by the charity-school indenture of apprenticeship, and quarters his family on the parish, with an allowance of five shillings a week. In this uniform alternation of voluntary and compulsory relief he draws towards the close of his mendicant existence.

"Before leaving the world, he might, perhaps, return thanks to the public. He has been born for nothing—he has been nursed for nothing—he has been clothed for nothing—he has been educated for nothing—he has been put out of the world for nothing—he has had medicine and medical attendance for nothing; and he has had his children also born, nursed, clothed, fed, educated, established and physicked for nothing.

"There is but one good office more for which he can stand indebted to society, and that is his burial. He dies a parish pauper, and, at the expence of the parish, he is provided with shroud, coffin, pall, and burial-ground; a party of paupers from the work-house bear his body to the grave, and a party of paupers are his mourners."—Administration and operation of the Poor laws, 1833, page 301.

B. See page 74.

The immense waste of labor from the non-employment of the paupers called forth from John Bellers (1714) proposals for employing the poor in a College of Industry.

"The poor without employment, are like rough diamonds; their worth is unknown."

Whereas regularly laboring people are the kingdom's greatest treasure and strength: for, without laborers, there can be no Lords: and if the poor laborers did not raise much more food and manufacture than what did subsist themselves, every Gentleman must be a laborer, and every idle man must starve.

The best materials for building, put together without order or method, are little better than rubbish, until they are regularly placed. And the best horses, whilst wild at grass, are but useless and chargeable; and the same are mankind, until they are regularly and usefully employed.

But every man, so employed, adds two hundred pounds, or more, to the value of the kingdom; land without people being of no worth.

And this treasure are the Poor; but the polishing of these rough diamonds, that their

lustre and value may appear, is a subject highly worth the consideration and endeavor of our greatest Statesmen and Senators."

After recapitulating the advantages which he thought might be expected from his College, which, he says, will not only provide for the usual Poor, but find work for the disbanded army, he thus attempts to compute what we may be supposed to lose annually, by the neglecting to supply the Poor with regular employment:—

"Supposing that there are seven millions of people in the nation, and that one in fourteen, either will not work, or that wants it; that is, five hundred thousand men, women, and children.

And reckoning that they might earn, one with another, sixpence a day, a head, it comes to twelve thousand five hundred pounds a day, which is seventy-five thousand pounds a week.

That makes three millions nine hundred thousand pounds a year, which the nation loseth."

To which add but one shilling a head, a week, the nation may be at, parish rates, and other gifts to the Poor, it comes to one million three hundred thousand pounds a year: which account, in the whole, makes the loss, a charge to the nation, to be

Five Millions Two Hundred Thousand Pounds a year.

Some may reckon this account too large, (tho, if but half the sum, its worth looking after); but let them consider, that five hundred thousand people, at three acres a head, may improve one million five hundred thousand acres of land, at ten shillings an acre a year.

That comes to seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year; and then, add the hands and lands in North Britain and Ireland, that lie useless, and they will add sums to the reckoning.

But if we suppose only half this money lost, that is two millions and a half a year, yet this is as much as the revenues of the crown of Great Britain have been in the time of peace; and, being a treasure that lies hid in our own bowels, that we need not run the hazards of war, nor compassing of the globe, to come at, it gives the greater encouragement to try one or two good specimens, which may make the discovery of it at home beyond all contradiction.

Twenty shillings saved every year, and put to interest at six per cent, or used in trade or husbandry with the same advantage, in fifty-eight years time comes to five hundred pounds.

Therefore, two millions and a half thus saved, or got yearly, by a full and suitable employing of our Poor, for the improving of all the several parts of the nation's riches, would, in that proportion, in fifty-eight years, come to one thousand two hundred and fifty millions, which is four times as much as all the lands in the kingdom are now worth; for if they are fifteen millions a year, at twenty years purchase, that comes but to three hundred millions.

Whereas in fifty-eight years time, such a body, as our present indigent Poor are, would be able, (if employed about it,) to turn all our waste lands into fruitful fields, orchards and gardens, and their mean cottages into colleges, and fill our barns with plenty of bread, and our store-houses with manufactures, which would greatly encourage the increase of our people."

C. See page 79.

Ralahine. Report of British Association for 1847, page 99.

	£.	s.	d.
The annual rent of the estate, 622 acres	700	0	0
Interest for live stock, valued at £1500, at 6 per cent	90	0	0
Interest on buildings, valued at £1000, at 6 per cent	60	0	0
Interest on tools, implements, and machinery valued at £1000, at 5 per cent	50	0	0
	900	0	0

The produce required to meet the above charge was estimated at the prices in Limerick market when the scheme was commenced, and those prices gave the following results:

	£.	s.	d.
6400 stones of wheat, at 1s. 6d. per stone	480	0	0
3840 ... barley 10d.	160	0	0
480 ... oats 10d.	20	0	0
70 cwt. beef 40s. per cwt	140	0	0
80 ... pork 40s.	60	0	0
10 ... butter 80s.	40	0	0
	900	0	0

The money advanced by Mr. Vandaleur on the labor of the members was in labor notes, payable only at their own store. The number of these registered for circulation in the Society, amounted to £50, in the following proportions:—

	£.	s.	d.
140 at 4s. representing 6 days labor	28	0	0
110 2s.	11	0	0
210 8d.	7	0	0
120 4d.	2	0	0
120 2d.	1	0	0
160 1d.	0	13	4
160 ½d.	0	6	8
	50	0	0

Whenever the members required articles not sold at their store, they could exchange the labor notes for cash by application to the Treasurer. But no smoking, drinking of spirits, or gambling were allowed by the rules of the Society. The number of adult persons selected for the experiment in the first instance was 40, consisting of 21 single men, 7 married couples=14 and 5 females. The number was too small to cultivate 326 acres, and some additional members were therefore highly requisite; but during the first few weeks no person would offer to become a member of the 'new system,' as they emphatically termed the Society. However a short space of time was sufficient to induce numbers to seek admission. By the rules no person could be admitted without the approval of the president, nor could he force one upon the members against their will as expressed by the ballot. They had also the power, after a new member had lived among them for a week to reject him by ballot, if he did not promote the interests of the Society. This was followed in some cases with beneficial results.

To produce the quantity of produce stipulated for as rent charge it was necessary to cultivate

	£.	s.	d.
40 acres of wheat, at 8 barrels per acre = 320 barrels at 30s.	480	0	0
20 ... barley 12 ... = 240 ... 13s. 4d.	160	0	0
10 ... Oats 5 ... = 50 ... 8s.	20	0	0
And to raise			
12 fat beasts of 6 cwt. each = 72 cwt. at 40s. per cwt	144	0	0
20 pigs 1½ ... = 30 ... 40s.	60	0	0
10 cwt. of butter, at 80s. per cwt.	40	0	0

£904 0 0

Also 40 acres of potatoes for the members and stock, and land tilled for turnips, vetches, rye-grass, mangel-worzel, etc. In January, 1832, there were 50 members, and admission was earnestly desired on account of the comfortable circumstances of the members, which were superior to those of even the farmers of the neighborhood. The wages of the members were as follows, deductions being made for absence from work:—Secretary, superintendent of agriculture, carpenter, store-keeper and smith, 8s each per week. Carpenter's assistant, smith's assistant, gardener, butcher and mason, 6s. each per week. Ploughmen 5s. each per week. Agricultural laborers, 4s., and women, 2s. 6d. each per week. The labor of the youths under 17 was not entered into the labor-sheet, but it was found more than equivalent to the expense of their support and education.

Reports were made at the close of each day of the labor performed by each adult member, and copied into the labor-sheet alluded to above. Each appointment was specified and classed, whether on the farm, for the family, or for improvements. This labor-sheet was made up at the end of the week. The sums appearing therein for the week ending 14th January, 1832, were—

	£.	s.	d.
For Farm	7	4	2
, Family	0	15	8
, Improvements	2	4	4

£10 4 2

The following articles of provisions were paid for at the store, and rent paid during the same week:—Potatoes, 243 stone = 40s 6d.; Milk, 202 quarts = 16s. 10d.; Butter, 13½ lbs. = 9s. 2d.; Rent, 10s.; Mutton, 9½ lbs. = 3s. 2d.; Eggs, 8d.; Fuel, 7½d. Total, £4.0s. 11½d. And the consumption of the week ending 6th October, 1833, was—Milk, 446 quarts at 1d. = 37s. 2d.; Potatoes, and other vegetables, 53s. 6d.; Butter, 12s. 1d.; Pork, 19s. 7½d.; Cottage rent, 4s. 3d.; Turf 9d.; Total, £6 7s. 4½d.

At the conclusion of the paper, the subject was discussed by the members of the Association. If the learned members treat everything as superficially as they treated the subject then presented to them, neither science nor truth will be much advanced by their labors. This, however, will only be the case with such subjects as belong more especially to the department of Social Science—a subject which, from the small attention yet paid to it, is still in its infancy. While every art and science is being carried to the utmost degree of refinement,—while our learned professors will spend months in discovering the habits of an insect, or the nature of a pebble, and burn the midnight oil on some minute mathematical problem,—how few deem the Science of Life a subject worth the smallest attention! How this two-legged rational animal shall get meat and drink, and clothing and shelter in the best and wisest manner,—how it is that, with the power of producing unlimited wealth, men die from cold, disease, and hunger,—how far political power can supply the place of individual effort,—are important problems to those who know the issues dependent on the wise solution of them, but which, judging from the amount of attention paid to them, our wise men consider unworthy of notice—fit only to be settled by a few political economists, or amid the passion and noise of the political assemblies.

Col. Sykes observed, that the system was very similar to that of Owen, which had failed. It also partook too much of the truck system.

Professor HANCOCK, of Dublin, objected to the plan as being opposed to the true principles of political economy, and as destroying the relations of landlord, farmer, and laborer. Another objection was, that as most of the Irish landlords were tenants for life only, no permanency could be ensured for any such arrangement. The conversion of the laborer into a speculator in the produce of the land and the adoption of the truck system, instead of employing him on money wages, was also to be deprecated. The sufferings of the laborers, during the recent famine, had been aggravated by the conacre system, by which they were made speculators in the crops, for when these failed, the laborer, having nothing to fall back on, must perish. He denied that the Irish were naturally indolent; they were as industrious as any people; all they required to develop that industry was to be assured of regular employment and fair wages. Sir J. M. Neill had tried the experiment of paying Irishmen high wages, and exacting from them a high task of work in return, and had perfectly succeeded; and Mr. Murray, the manager of the provincial bank of Ireland, had stated that the Irish emigrants to Canada had sent home, in small sums, £120,000 for the relief of their suffering friends at home. This, and the fact that Irishmen came here every harvest to earn money, when they were certain of it, proved that they were not deficient in industry. The reason the Irishmen preferred in Ireland conacre wages at 6d. a-day, instead of working for others at 1s., was the certainty of the former and the uncertainty of the latter.

Mr. HAGAN also condemned the system recommended, and referred to the scheme adopted successfully by the Rev. Mr. Gilby, of Newport, county Wexford, who, when he saw that the failure of the crops was inevitable, sent round to his friends, and obtained orders from upwards of seventy for hand-spun linen, upon the manufacture of which 600 people were now constantly employed in his parish, on good wages, who would else have

been reduced to starvation. So great was the success of the scheme, that an eminent Liverpool merchant had offered to send over a clerk to conduct the manufacture till November, on condition that it should then be handed over to him, and a similar offer had been made by a Dublin merchant. This was the way permanently to improve the condition of the Irish people.

The Rev. E. R. LARKEN, replied “he was ready to stake the value of the principles on which Mr. Vandaleur’s proceedings were based, on the success that had attended them; for if results were any test of the value of principles, it must be owned that the moral and physical advantages possessed by the subjects of his experiment offered a most striking contrast to the fearful state of degradation of the generality of the peasantry, left then as now to the tender mercies of *laissez-faire*. Hence the fact of the system being opposed to the principles of political economy (granting such to be the case), told nothing whatever against its value, but rather the reverse. The cause of the discontinuance of the associated system at Ralahine was purely an external one, arising from the circumstance of the society being unprotected by enrolment or otherwise; and from its property being at the disposal of Mr. Vandaleur’s creditors, who had claims on him for debts totally unconnected with the experiment at Ralahine. Such disastrous consequences might be, in future, prevented by legislative protection; and the interference of Parliament might also prevent the inconvenience and hindrance to the plan stated as likely to arise from the nature of the tenure on which land is for the most part held by proprietors in Ireland, tenancy for life.

We will briefly notice some of the objections advanced:—

1. ‘The system is very similar to that Owen, which had failed.’ It might as well have been said, it was very similar to the system of the Shaker, and other communities in America, which have succeeded.

2. ‘It partook of the truck system!’ As much as it partook of the Copernican system. It differed as much from the truck system, as giving the laborer his due share—(viz. the wages of labor and the profits of capital) differs from paying the operative his stinted reward in high-priced and often to him useless commodities.

3. ‘It was opposed to the principles of political economy.’ That is, it was opposed to Professor Hancock’s notion of political economy. Political economy is a science not a century old, and has only become fashionable since the repeal of the corn laws. It is studied by but a few; it has not yet even its nomenclature determined, and the application and extent of most of its fundamental principles are disputed by its most learned professors. Last, not least, it takes so much thought of *wealth*, that it forgets *man*; investigates what are, instead of what *ought* to be, the principles which regulate the production and distribution of wealth; and cannot therefore, as at present understood, determine the value of the associative principle, which *includes* all these considerations.

4. ‘It destroys the relations of landlords, farmer, and laborer.’ This is indeed rich; it is painfully ridiculous. And is this the language to be applied to any proposition for ameliorating the condition of Ireland? Destroy the relation of landlord and farmer! In sooth, we wish it could. ‘Relation of landlord and laborer’ there, means the relation of the robber and the robbed—the relation between an absentee revelling in the luxury of foreign cities, and the bare backs and empty bellies which are created to pay the cost thereof. It is the relation of the palace to the cabin, where men and swine herd together as one family. In a country where half the population live in mud cabins—a country which for misery has been a bye-word among nations—a country which has just lost by *famine* its millions of victims—that famine principally owing to landlords, and to remove which landlords did absolutely nothing,—to talk of preserving *such* a relation, seems worse than mockery. It is the relation of wolves and sheep, of the vulture to its prey, and the destruction of which must be a benefit, for it cannot be displaced by anything worse.

The assumption that we *must* have landlord and laborer is gratuitous. In many parts of the Continent the greater portion of the land is owned by the cultivator. In the American communities no man is landlord—or rather, *all are landlords and all are laborers*.

The statement respecting Mr. Gilby’s efforts is highly creditable to him, and shows that if a public-spirited parish priest could achieve so much, what might be done by those whose means of doing good are ten times greater. The condition of the manufacturing operative is infinitely superior to that of the Irish cottier, and he who raised a multitude of

persons from the horrible destitution of the latter position to the comfort of the former, is a benefactor to mankind.

D. See page 113.

From Dr. Bowring's speech in the House of Commons, we extract the following:—

"I hold, Sir, in my hand, the correspondence which has taken place between the Governor General of India and the East India Company, on the subject of the Dacca hand-loom weavers. It is a melancholy story of misery as far as they are concerned, and as striking an evidence of the wonderful progress of manufacturing industry in this country. Some years ago the East India Company annually received of the produce of the looms of India to the amount of from six to eight million of pieces of Cotton Goods. The demand gradually fell to somewhat more than one million, and has now nearly ceased altogether. In 1800 the United States took from India nearly eight hundred thousand pieces of Cotton, in 1830 not four thousand. In 1800 one million of pieces were shipped to Portugal; in 1830 only twenty thousand. Terrible are the accounts of the wretchedness of the poor Indian weavers, reduced to absolute starvation. And what was the sole cause? The presence of the cheaper English manufactures, the production by the power-loom of the article which these unhappy Hindoos had been used for ages to make with their unimproved and hand-directed shuttles. Sir, it was impossible that they could go on weaving what no one would buy. Numbers of them died of hunger; the remainder were for the most part transferred to other occupations, principally agricultural. Not to have changed their trade was inevitable starvation. And at this moment, Sir, that Dacca district is supplied with Yarn and Cotton Cloth from the power-loom of England."

The language of the Governor General is—"European skill and machinery have superseded the produce of India. The court declare, that they are at last obliged to abandon the only remaining portion of the trade in Cotton manufactures both in Bengal and Madras, because thro' the introduction of power-loom the British goods have a decided advantage in quality and price. Cotton piece goods, for so many ages the staple manufacture of India, seem thus for ever lost. The Dacca muslins, celebrated over the whole world for their beauty and fineness, are also annihilated from the same cause. And the present suffering to numerous classes in India, is scarcely to be paralleled in the History of Commerce."

E. See page 118.

Up to a late period in the last century, England, Ireland, and Scotland wanted not linen for all uses, nor for home grown hemp and flax to make it.

Suffolk was pre-eminent for hemp. The tract in which hemp and flax was grown extended from Rye to Beccles, 20 miles, and about 10 miles in breadth; it was cultivated both by farmers and cottagers, tho it was very rare to see more than five acres in the hands of one person. In 1784 the woollen manufacture of Suffolk was estimated to employ 37,000 men, women, and children, whose earnings amounted upon an average to £500,000 per annum. The total number employed in the woollen, worsted, hemp, and flax manufactures, being about 100,000, earning upwards of £1,000,000 per annum. But at present the above fabrics only employ 370 persons in Suffolk.

The *Norfolk* woollen, worsted, and linen manufacture employed 120,000 men, women, and children; but at present they only give employment to 1286.

Essex woollen, worsted, and linen manufacture employed 80,000 persons; but at present they only give employment to 2,000.

Kent woollen, worsted, silk, and linen manufacture employed 120,000 persons; they now employ about 155.

Wiltshire, by manufacturing its own wool, became one of the greatest clothing counties in England, in proportion to its extent, employing in the linen, and worsted manufacture

... ..	60,000
But the same branches now only employ about	6,500
<i>Somersetshire</i> woollen, worsted, and linen employed manufacturers	120,000
But now only about	6,000

<i>Devonshire</i> in the last century was one of the greatest manufacturing counties in England, its woollen, linen, and silk trades employing	130,000
Now reduced to	4,444

<i>Gloucestershire</i> —every town and village in the county was benefited by some branch of the woollen or linen trade which employed	100,000
The same fabrics now employ	8,260

<i>Oxfordshire</i> woollen and linen trade employed	80,000
They now give employment to about	1,700

<i>Lancashire</i> had a large share of the woollen, linen, and silk trades which employed about	300,000
In the cotton and above branches it employed	243,770

<i>Yorkshire</i> woollen, worsted, and linen manufactures employed	300,000
But the above manufactures at present only employ	135,264

Other counties in the same proportion as many of those. In *Ireland*, the cultivation and manufacture of flax, was almost universal among small farmers and cottagers, up to about 1810. Many of them went thro' the whole process, of growing and dressing the flax, spinning and weaving; they made strong cloth for working people at 6d. per yard; 7 sheetings at 9½d.; 28-inch Dowlas 7d.; Osnaburghs at 7d. also. Fine Irish from 1s. to 1s. 6d. The poor people's wool was worked into cloth for their own use. A piece of Serge was 136 yards long, 29 inches broad, and sold for 1s. 2d. per yard: 2½d. was paid for weaving per yard, and a woman could weave 6 or 8 in a day.

F. See page 120.

From returns received in 1850 from 4,339 Factories in the United Kingdom, it appears that there were

Males under 13	years	...	...	...	...	...	21,137
„ between 13 and 18	„	...	...	...	...	...	67,864
„ above 18	„	...	...	...	...	...	157,866
Females under 13	„	...	...	...	...	...	19,638
„ above 13	„	...	...	...	...	...	329,577
Total							596,082

In his History of the Cotton Manufacture, Mr. Baines stated that from returns of Cotton Mills in Lancashire, containing 7114 hands, 3844 or more than half were females, and 2693 males and females were under the age of 16. Out of 12,076 in Glasgow, 7445, or nearly two thirds, were females, and 4220 were under the age of 16. "The average wages of men, women, and children in Lancashire is 10s. 6d. per week, in Glasgow 8s. 1½d. The difference is chiefly owing to a greater number of women and children being employed here than in Manchester."

G. See page 122.

Mr. Thornton in his work on over-population and its remedy, thus speaks:—

"In the year 1349 the wages of labor had become so excessive that the landowners passed the 'Statute of Laborers,' which compelled all servants to accept the same wages as had been customary eight or nine years before. The year after, a similar statute was passed. In 1363, or thirteen years later, a law was passed to render high wages useless to the receivers. Domestic servants, whether of gentlemen, tradesmen, or artificers, were at the same time declared to be entitled to only one meal a day of flesh or fish, and were to content themselves with 'milk, butter, cheese, and other such victuals.' In 1388 another tariff of wages was laid down. These limitations were vain as the preceding ones. Wages continued to rise in spite of opposition, and enabled the working classes to indulge in a degree of luxury which quite scandalized the parliament, and which it attempted to check by sumptuary laws. Accordingly, by a statute enacted in 1463, servants in husbandry were restricted to clothing of materials not worth more than 2s. a yard, and were forbidden to wear hose of a higher price than 14d. a pair, or girdles garnished with silver. The price of their wives' coverchief, or head dress, was not to exceed 12d. In 1482 it was found necessary to loosen these restrictions, and laborers in husbandry were permitted

to wear hose as dear as 18d. a pair, while the sum which their wives might legally expend in a covering for the head was raised to 20d. This legislation, considering the fall which has since taken place in the value of money, was really much as if a law should now be necessary to prevent ploughmen from strutting about in velvet coats and silk stockings, with silver buckles on their shoes, and their wives from trimming their caps with Brussels lace. It exhibits the English peasantry in a condition which was probably never attained by the same class in any other age or country, unless perhaps by the emancipated negroes of the British West Indies, and which they could scarcely be believed to have really occupied, upon slighter evidence than has been brought forward. Sir John Fortescue, chief Justice to Henry VI. says—"The English are very rich, having abundance of gold and silver, and other things necessary for the maintenance of man's life. They drink no water, unless it be so that some for devotion, and upon a zeal of penance, do abstain from other drink; they eat plentifully of all kinds of flesh and fish. They wear fine woollen cloth in all their apparel, they have also abundance of bed coverings in their houses, and of all other woollen stuff. They have great store of huslements and implements of household. They are plentifully furnished with all instruments of husbandry, and all other things that are requisite to the accomplishment of a quiet and wealthy life, according to their estates and degrees."

"In the face of testimony like this, it has been gravely argued, that the English peasantry of the middle ages, were less comfortably situated than their living descendants, because they used barley instead of wheaten bread, ate off wooden platters, never knew the luxury of a cotton shirt or a cup of tea, and slept on straw pallets within walls of wattled plaster. All the details of this picture are not perhaps perfectly accurate, at least there are grounds for believing that in very early times wheaten bread was commonly used by people of the lowest class in many parts of England; but even if the representation be quite faithful, it only shows that certain modern refinements and conveniences were formerly unknown and uncoveted. Altho ruder means were employed to supply the wants of nature, every want *was* abundantly supplied, which is very far from being the case at present. Many advantages of an advanced civilization were once equally unthought of by rich and poor. Our Plantagenet Kings, as well as their courtiers, were fain to drink beer at every meal, and to drink it too out of wooden bickers.—they were as ill provided with under linen as the meanest of their subjects; and so little did they regard what are now considered the most indispensable requisites of domestic comfort, that the bed-chamber furniture of so magnificent a monarch as Henry VIII. consisted only of a couple of joint-cupboards, a joint-stool, two hand irons, a fire-fork, a pair of tongs, a fire-pan, and a steel mirror covered with yellow velvet. At this day little of any grain besides oats is used in many respectable families in Scotland, and many a continental baron, whose domain stretches for miles around his princely chateau, seldom eats any but rye bread. This is mere matter of taste, and no one would think of mentioning it as a mark of social inferiority; but it would be quite as reasonable to do so as for the Dorsetshire laborer to look back with pity on his well clad beef-fed ancestors because some of his own rags are made of cotton, and because the baker of whom he now and then buys a loaf, sells nothing but wheaten bread."

II. See page 124.

"In the village of Humdrum, its thousand able-bodied men and women, without machinery, and having no intercourse with the rest of the world, must work fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, that they may all be housed, fed, and clothed, warmed, instructed, and made happy. Some ingenious hands invent water-mills, which saw, plane, thrash, grind, spin, weave, and do many other things, so that these thousand people need work but five hours in the day to obtain the result of fourteen by the old process. Here then a vast amount of time—nine hours in the day—is set free from toil. It may be spent in study, social improvement, the pursuit of a favorite art, and leave room for amusement also. But the longest heads at Humdrum have not Christian but only selfish hearts beating in their bosoms, and sending life into the brain. So these calculators think the men of Humdrum shall work fourteen hours a-day as before. "It would be dangerous," say they, "to set free so much time. The deluded creatures would soon learn to lie and

steal, and would speedily end by eating one another up. It would not be Christian to leave them to this fate. Leisure is very good for us, but would be ruinous to them." So the wise men of Humdrum persuade their neighbors to work the old fourteen hours. More is produced than is consumed. So they send off the superfluities of the village, and in return bring back tea and porcelain, rich wines, and showy gewgaws, and contemptible fashions that change every month. The strong-headed men grow rich; live in palaces; their daughters do not work, nor their sons dirty their hands. They fare sumptuously every day; are clothed in purple and fine linen. Meanwhile the common people of Humdrum work as long as before the machines were invented, and a little harder. They also are blessed by the 'improvement.' The young women have red ribbons on their bonnets, French gloves on their hands, and shawls of India on their shoulders, and 'tinkling ornaments' in their ears. The young man of Humdrum is better off than his father who fought thro' the Revolution, for he wears a beaver hat, and a coat of English cloth, and has a Birmingham whistle, and a watch in his pocket. When he marries he will buy red curtains to his windows, and a showy mirror to hang on his wall. For these valuable considerations he parts with the nine hours a-day, which machinery has saved, but has no more bread than before. For these blessings he will make his body a slave, and leave his mind all uncultivated. He is content to grow up a body—nothing but a body. So that if you look therein for his understanding, imagination, reason, you will find them like three grains of wheat in three bushels of chaff. You shall seek them all day before you find them, and at last they are not worth your search. At Humdrum, nature begins to revolt at the factitious inequality of condition, and thinks it scarce right for bread to come fastest into hands that add nothing to the general stock. So many grow restless and a few pilfer. In a ruder state crimes are few;—the result of violent passions. At Humdrum they are numerous—the result of want, indolence, or neglected education; they are in a great measure crimes against property. To remedy this new and unnatural evil, there rises a court-house and a jail, which must be paid for in work; then judges and lawyers and jailors are needed likewise in this artificial state, and add to the common burthen. The old Athenians sent yearly seven beautiful youths and virgins;—a tribute to the Minotaur. The wise men of Humdrum shut up in jail a large number; a sacrifice to the spirit of modern cupidity; unfortunate wretches, who were the victims not the foci of society; men so weak in head or heart, that their bad character was formed for them thro' circumstances, far more than it was formed by them thro' their own free-will. Still further, the men who violate the laws of the body, using the mouth much and the hand little, or in the opposite way, soon find nature taking vengeance for the offence. Then unnatural remedies must oppose the artificial disease. In the old time, every sickly dunce was cured 'with motherwort and tansey,' which grew by the roadside; suited all complaints, and was administered by each mother in the village. Now Humdrum has its 'medical faculty,' with their conflicting systems, homœopathic and allopathic, but no more health than before. Thus the burthen is increased to little purpose. The strong men of Humdrum have grown rich and become educated. If one of the laboring men is stronger than his fellow, he also will become rich, and educate his children. He becomes rich, not by his own work, but by using the hands of others whom his cunning over-reaches. Yet he is not more avaricious than they. He has perhaps the average share of selfishness, but superior adroitness to gratify that selfishness. So he gets and saves, and takes care of himself; a part of their duty, which the strong have always known how to perform, tho the more difficult part, how to take care of others, to think for them, and help them to think for themselves, they have yet to learn, at least to practice. Alas, we are still in bondage to the elements, and so long as two of the 'enlightened' nations of the earth, England and America, insist on weaving the garments for all the rest of the world,—not because they would clothe the naked, but that their strong men might live in fine houses, wear gay apparel, dine on costly food, and their mouths be served by other men's hands,—we must expect that seven-tenths of mankind will be degraded, and will hug their chains and count machinery an evil. Is not the only remedy for all the evils at Humdrum in the Christian idea of wealth, and the Christian idea of work?"—*Thoughts on Labor*, by Theodore Parker.

I. On Communism in the Results of Labor.

"We admit" say the opponents of common property in the *results* of capital and labor—"that association is a powerful instrument; we see too that until the laborer can become the master of capital, he must remain its slave, and that he can only become or remain its master by association; but why carry out your association to the products of labor? why propose a common dwelling or a common table, or a common store of clothing?" To this question a variety of answers might be given, but we prefer to view it on that ground which, in the present condition of society, is most likely to be understood,—the economical. We believe the greatest advantages of communities are those now least appreciated, such as the association and conversation of friendly and intellectual natures, which will be much more attainable in such a state than at present. Viewing the question, however, merely as an *economical* one, it is evident that association gives no less advantages in the consumption of wealth than in its production and distribution. Association in consumption is that part of the community-principle which is becoming rapidly adopted by society, and is most capable of being grafted upon our present social conditions. To erect a joint-stock mill, and stock it with machinery, would be a problem to the operative which, tho difficult, he will ere long learn to solve. But to erect a laboring man's club-house, which should unite the individual expenditures of a number of families in one common expenditure, is a process gradually becoming familiarized to us by the clubs of the wealthy, by the model lodging-houses of St. Giles, by the Whittington Club, etc. The advantages of united consumption of products are so obvious that the smallest consideration of them will suffice. If we suppose 500 families (a probable number for one community), expending their incomes separately, there would be 500 females employed in domestic engagements, of whom it would not be too much to say that four-fifths were uselessly employed; that is, the labor of 400 persons would be lost to the society. To use the words of S. Wellwood, "500 women would be obliged to lose their time in cooking in a very indifferent manner 500 meals, 3 times a day, who at the same time, are perhaps burdened with the care of a numerous family, without the necessary qualifications, or any means to impart to them that mental and physical education which they are as justly entitled to as the highest dignitaries of the land." We need scarcely suggest the waste of fuel and commodities which take place in this individualizing process. It is the saving effected by the joint-stock principle, which enables an inn-keeper to give that quality and variety of dinner for a shilling, which his customers could not purchase for three shillings at home.

But 'in things external as well as internal, men's tastes differ widely.' No doubt. We have heard of an etching club which destroys its plates after a certain number of prints have been taken from them, and of a gentleman who destroyed the moulds of some beautiful figures, in order that no one might have duplicates of them; we have heard also of a certain dog in the manger. The said club, gentleman, and dog, we hereby consign to the outer Tartarus of competitive society—at all events they have no business in a community. But for all other people we can conceive of no reasonable want which cannot be much more effectually supplied under the associative than under the isolated system. 'With the public garden rich in bloom,' says Goodwyn Barmby, 'who would say aught to the bouquet in one's bedroom?' As Emerson remarks, the best things of life are the cheapest and most universal. Association will enable us to make this true of every commodity which man requires. I want no proprietorship in a book, if a large library is at my elbow; but should such private proprietorship be needful to me, the book-manufactory will be so plentiful when nobody's labor is wasted, that the volume will be readily spared.

A man sometimes wants *privacy*, and to enjoy the advantages of *traveling*, now a luxury of the wealthy. As to the first, when a man's quota of labor, that which he owes to society in return for what it bestows, is paid, his time will be his own, to spend in any manner conformable to his taste. With respect to the second, like all the wants of a community, it depends on the extent of means for being gratified. By association those means are increased to the greatest possible extent, and therefore the chances of such advantages being enjoyed by every one are greatly multiplied.

Of course the proposition of enabling the laborer to enjoy advantages hitherto monopolized by the owners of land and capital, is a dream, 'a tale told by an idiot.' So it has

ever been. To the inhabitants of the mud-covered, oil-lighted, robber-haunted lanes of a hundred years ago, the prospect of well-paved, gas-lighted, secure streets, would have been quite as visionary. A Mechanics' Institution was a perfect absurdity thirty years ago. Twenty years ago a hubbub similar to the present outcry about sanitary laws, would have been denominated fanatical. The railways have become too hacknied to quote them. And yet all these improvements *are* being made, and by what? By association, in some cases compulsory, in others voluntary; but association has always been *the* power. Nor have we any right to assume that the triumphs of this great principle are complete. To our apprehension they have but just commenced; we are learning the A B C of the matter. The pavement we tread upon, the sweeping machine that cleans it, the gas which lights it, are the common property of the town. At one time, these indispensables were provided by individual efforts, and one of the old school of *laissez-faire*, exclaimed—"Oh, it is perfectly Utopian to talk of common property in these things. Let every body sweep before his *own* door, and light his *own* house, and then all streets will be swept and lighted without any of your co-operations or associations, which are so dangerous to liberty! Am I to be compelled to pay taxes towards lighting streets thro which I never pass?" Absurd as such language now seems to us, it has no doubt been frequently used. The objectors forget, that by the joint expenditure of all, they get much more and much better results, whether that expenditure be for instruction, sewerage, gardens, homes, clothes, or dinners, than they could in a single and isolated condition.

J. On the Economics of Trade.

Perhaps no sight in a civilized country is more calculated to excite astonishment than the magnitude of the arrangements for distributing wealth in our large towns, and especially in London. When we view the miles and miles of shops, each laden with a large quantity of commodities suited to every class of the community,—some for use, others for comfort, others to gratify the most refined luxury,—one is tempted to ask, Whence can this vast quantity of wealth have proceeded? by the side of which the riches of the geni of Aladdin seem but beggarly. One wonders how complaints of poverty could find birth amid the glare of so much wealth. And yet within a score of yards, it may be, from this luxury, there are human beings who depend for the day's sustenance on charity or theft. Strange indeed is the contrast between the fine lady just leaving her carriage to enter one of those magnificent shops, attended by the obsequious footman, that 'the winds of heaven may not visit her too roughly,' and the squalid woman near hand curtsying for the stray pence bestowed of the passer-by. And yet, reader, doubtful as the fact may seem to thee, society *says*—they are *sisters*!

But our intention was not to dwell either on these contrasts or their causes,—rather to question the propriety of the shopkeeping-arrangements for distributing wealth, and to enquire whether the individual-competitive system of distribution is the best and wisest we can adopt. The process of the distribution of wealth, in fact, forms a part of its production. The *cost of distribution* is included in the cost of every commodity. Whether it does not form too large an item in the cost, is a most interesting question.

Society may be divided into three great classes:

1st. *The actual producers of wealth*, including operatives, laborers, journeymen, manufacturing capitalists, farmers, etc.

2nd. *Persons employed in the business of exchanging and distributing wealth*, as the shopkeeper, agent, etc.

3rd. *Individuals not included in either of the former classes*,—such as the legislator, the philosopher, the teacher, the lawyer, and all not *directly* employed in the production or distribution of wealth. We say *directly*, for some of the individuals in the third class do aid in the production of wealth. The philosopher, for example, who discovers modes of applying steam or galvanism, so that great time and labor are saved, or who in any way diminishes the difficulties of production, is a most important wealth-producer, tho perhaps seldom moving out of his closet. The legislator who renders wealth secure,—the physician who assists in the preservation and restoration of health, without which we could not labor,—even the caterers to our amusement, who stimulate to the production necessary to enable us to purchase their exertions, may be considered as wealth-producers, indirectly.

The first of these classes is the main and primary source of wealth. The amount of wealth to be consumed by society must depend on the numbers and capital employed in production. If this class, from any cause, be diminished, and the other classes increased to an undue proportion, a less amount of wealth will be produced, and each individual will consequently enjoy a less portion of the necessities, utilities, and luxuries of life. To make our meaning clearer by an example:—

If 100 persons represent society, and we suppose them divided into

50 producers,
30 distributors,
20 non-producers,—

the 50 persons would have to support, besides themselves, the other 50 individuals. If by any other arrangements the capital and labor of 20 of the distributors could be employed in production, it is plain that an amount of wealth equal to *one-fifth* additional, would accrue to society, i.e., a man who now owns £100 would, under the new arrangement, own £120.

Association would enable us to do this very easily. If half the attention which has been bestowed upon less important matters, would have developed the correct principles on which such combined arrangements ought to be conducted.

In the production of any object, the greater the *amount of capital* that can be employed, and the more extensive the *division of labor*, the greater will be the amount of the commodity produced. It is these advantages which constitute the enormous difference in amount of comforts between the civilized European and the rude savage. We consider it a mighty revolution in human arrangements, which, instead of leaving one man to produce all his commodities, has introduced the division of labor to the immense extent to which it is now carried. The savage remains a savage, because he produces everything he requires by his own labor;—he is his own butcher, tailor, hatter, soldier, etc.; thus realizing the adage—'Jack of all trades, master of none.'

Now the present mode of distributing commodities, by merchants, shopkeepers, and others, almost entirely *excludes* each of these advantages. If the trader be indeed a 'wholesale dealer,' or merchant on a large scale, he may avail himself of them; but the majority of traders and shopkeepers are almost entirely excluded from these important helps to their labor. The greater the amount of traders, the fewer customers each trader will have. He cannot employ sufficient laborers in the business of distribution, to enable him to have that division of employments so conducive to dexterity. Each of his shopmen must lose much time in passing from one employment to another; and the application of machinery to facilitate labor is out of the question. But there is, as Wheateley remarks, another advantage of the division of labor, which Adam Smith entirely overlooked. 'The advantage I mean is, that in a great variety of cases, nearly the same time and labor are required to perform the same operation on a *larger* as on a *smaller* scale—to produce many things, or one, of the same kind.' An example will perhaps sufficiently illustrate what is meant.

Suppose that in a town there are 20 persons who retail hats. For the sake of simplicity, say that each of them has £300 capital, and employs two assistants; there will then be 60 persons and £6000 capital employed in the sale of hats. Now, if the whole of the business of these 20 hat-retailers was carried on under one roof, with one proprietor, one-fourth of the persons and capital previously required, might be enabled, under skilful management, to distribute the same number of hats. The principal portion of a shopkeeper's time is not occupied in any processes necessary to the distribution of the commodity. Much of his own and his assistants' time is taken up in haggling with customers about price, arranging his goods for display, etc. These things might be entirely dispensed with, the former by adopting the principle of a fixed price, the latter by arranging premises for retail sales as they are now arranged for wholesale sales. Next, the letters and accounts now needed for our 20 separate shopkeepers would be reduced to one-twentieth, it being as easy to keep the accounts in thousands of pounds, as in tens. Another large portion of time lost by retailers, is in waiting for customers. One of the arguments in favor of the 'early closing movement' is, that no less business would be done if the shops closed two

hours earlier. There are also a host of minor matters, each demanding the retailer's attention, most of which would be unnecessary if the labor of *distribution* were carried out upon a large scale. Any one actually aware of the facts of the case, will not consider the supposition extravagant, that *three-fourths of the labor and capital thus invested might be liberated*—that is to say, in our supposed instance, 45 persons and £4500 capital, instead of being employed in *SELLING* hats, might be employed in *MAKING* them. Which of the operations would be most beneficial to society, may safely be left to the decision of common sense.

Before arrangements were made for the carrying of letters between various places, a person wishing to communicate with a distant place was obliged to dispatch a messenger, of course at a very great expense. It was a great step to make arrangements for persons to be regularly employed as letter-carriers. This was entrusted for a long period to private enterprise.—Proving lucrative, government kindly agreed to look after the profits, and farms out the post-office revenues to individuals, for a certain rent, the trouble, responsibility, and risk being divided among the several persons who agreed to convey the letters thro' the particular districts. What should we think now, if we were compelled to take our letters for Edinburgh to one office, those for London to another, those for Dublin to another, and so on? What an immense loss of time and money it would occasion, compared with the simple and efficient organization which enables us now, at such a trifling expense, to drop our letter into a box with the pleasant feeling that it is sure to reach its destination almost at a given moment! Such is the wonderful effect of Association and division of labor.

Under the present system, society also loses an immense amount of wealth thro' the inferiority of the commodities produced, and the large number of useless occupations called into existence. The philosophy of appearance is an important part of trade, and the problem which the tradesman has to solve is—Given, an inferior article; how to make it look a superior one? If the commodity is one that will not admit of much tampering with, sell it at cost price, and thus gain a reputation for cheapness, and lay the profit on articles whose real value is not so easily discernable. A large amount of capital is expended in puffing; single houses sometimes expend many thousands per annum in *advertising alone*. Then there is the plate glass and gilding,—the palace-like appearance does contrast rather painfully with the pinched salaries of the shopmen. Cheap, Pinch, and Co. employ a dozen men to parade the town, with bills suspended before and behind, to inform the public that theirs is positively *the* place to which any body pretending to taste or economy must resort. It will be said that all these things employ labor, and we admit it, but what then? The true problem of social science is not how to employ the greatest amount of labor, but how to employ that labor with *the greatest advantage* to society.—The gross fallacy of wasted labor and capital being 'good for trade,' still imposes on many who should know better. The expression always reminds us of the tale of the glazier and the tinker. The two were great cronies; and on one occasion, when drinking together in an ale-house, the glazier thought he could do his friend no greater service than to put the empty kettle on the fire, and thus ensure him a job. One good turn deserves another, thought the tinker; so he went and broke most of the church windows; then hastening to his friend, informed him of the clever trick played in his behalf. But, alas! his words fell heavy upon the heart of the ruined glazier, for he repaired the church windows *by contract*. It was clearly the interest of the glazier to have as few windows broken as possible. Society is in the same predicament; it is the interest of society to waste as little labor and capital as possible. The substitution of things made for *sale*, instead of things made for *use*,—the employment of labor in an useless instead of an useful manner,—is a direct loss to society, consequently to individuals, and can only be remedied by the substitution of associative for individual arrangements.

That the tradesman himself would be the greatest gainer from the application of our views, there can be no doubt. The heavy pressure of a never-ceasing competition has made his life most harassing and comfortless. Constant anxiety arising from the uncertainties of trade,—the competition of unprincipled rivals who under-sell him, as they can well afford to do, since they obtain their goods at half-price, leaving the rest to be paid by an act of insolvency;—the caprice and suspicion of the public,—and a thousand evils from which wealth-producers are comparatively free, would make associative arrangements the

greatest boon to this class of the community. The moral disadvantages under which the shopkeeper labors are even more important. Co-operation is the only remedy.

K. On the Morals of Trade.

A true science of wealth may perhaps for a moment, and for the purpose of better considering the subject, exclude the moral elements of man's nature,—but it is plain it cannot negative or supplant them. The wealth is *for* man, not man for wealth. Man is not defined when he is described as 'a machine which it has cost so many years' labor to produce.' We dislike to hear the higher claims of humanity based upon merely economical considerations—as, for example, 'it would be well to educate the people, because their labor would be worth so much per cent. more,' etc. To follow the principle of a certain school, we might infer that in the acquisition of wealth, wealth was *final*. Small acceptance, however, as such a proposition would receive from the bulk of society, as abstractly stated, it is nevertheless the *acting faith* of society—and necessarily so. Society *has* made wealth the measure of everything else. The creed of Schiller's Franz Moore is the creed of the world. 'Nature has cast us naked and wretched upon the shore of this great world's ocean;—swim who swim can, and let the clumsy sink. ... Right dwells with the most powerful, and the limits of our strength are our laws.'

The intercourse and relation of man to man should be one of benefit. This is the primary object of exchanges. Where exchange is free (and it is not a proper exchange unless it is so), each individual *expects* to be benefited by the transaction. Now the question arises—Should a man, in making an exchange, consider not only his own interest, but also that of the person with whom he makes the exchange? The practice of society, sanctioned by the principles of political economy, says—'No.' In all his transactions he has to consult his own interest, and that only. 'It is every man's business to take care of himself, and then the whole will be taken care of.' Conscience and Christianity, however, say—'Yes; he *is* bound to consult the interest of him with whom he deals: he *must* do as he would be done unto.' Here, then, are two principles contradicting each other, nor is the opposition merely a verbal one; it is one which almost every individual is exhibiting in conduct.

Those who admit both principles—viz. the one of Trade and the other of Duty—reconcile them in this way. They say a man must do nothing in trade *inconsistent* with the divine law. We do not doubt—nay, we are sure, from personal knowledge—that individuals exist who, tho under constant temptation, suffer not their souls to be stained by one mean, sordid, or dishonest act—who seem like gold: tried by the hottest furnace, they but come out the purer. But it is not from such transcendent individuals that questions affecting the mass of mankind must be judged. With these the interests of sense must preponderate over the claims of the Soul. The former are immediate, ever-present and ever-felt, continually exercised and consequently continually strengthened. Now the principle of exchange, altho primarily implying mutual benefit, labors under the great disadvantage, that it is ever bringing a man's own personal interest vividly before him. Day by day, the merchant and the shopkeeper, and to no less extent the other classes of the community, are performing acts which have *only* a reference to self. Would it not be surprising if a constant reference to *self-interest* did not tend to produce a feeling of *selfishness*? As the eye by education learns to measure distances unconsciously, so the mind, under the constant training of this influence, becomes so enveloped in this feeling of self, that at last it forgets to travel beyond itself. This accounts for the fact, that when any good deed has to be done, we have to get upon the stool of some enthusiasm to enable us to peep beyond our little walls of self, call a meeting, summon a demonstration, proclaim it with sound of trumpet to the four winds of heaven—'Lo! we are going to do a piece of justice or humanity!' Nay more; the legislature must step in to prevent our following interest a *leette* too far—to hinder us working children thro the night—or to help to keep women out of coal-mines—or to enable us to pay our debts a little more punctually! Having lost the moral code of the heart, we must write it in acts of parliament, and put the judge, the gaoler, and the hangman, in the place of conscience!—Thus, too, it is in trade. The interest of the individual, tends to destroy all care for the interest of society. The anecdote of the razor-seller who sold twelve razors for eighteen-pence, leaving their *shaving*

powers to be tested by his customers, owes its popularity to 'a great fact.' The maker had only to consider the *selling*;—whether the razors shaved or not, was the affair of the customer.

Of course Co-operation would not exclude Exchange. Not to exchange would be to deprive ourselves of the advantages of the division of labor, and the benefit arising from the diversity of climate. An association in Britain would act foolishly, if, to prevent exchanges, it deprived itself of wine or oranges, or produced them expensively at home, instead of sending calicoes or hardware to Lisbon in exchange for them. But seeing the tendency which all exchanges (and especially individual exchanges) have to strengthen the lower, and depress the higher principles of our nature, we should be anxious to place these exchanges on a basis of equity, and prevent them from being multiplied beyond what is necessary for general welfare. Now we act upon precisely the contrary principle. Scarcely a single commodity in use but passes thro two or three hands,—many pass thro six or eight,—before coming to the actual consumer!

Can this unnecessary multiplication of persons engaged in trade, be favorable to an elevated and generous national character? Let every man engaged in business bring the question home to himself;—let him say whether, day by day, he is not subjected to temptations to do wrong,—to consult profit rather than principle? While we pray—'lead us not into temptation'—we surround ourselves with needless temptations—temptations to which few minds do not yield.

The great fault of profit, and indeed of all individual remuneration, is, that no line can possibly be drawn between *just* and *unjust* profits. Altho there is an average rate of profit to which all businesses are continually approximating, an exact, or anything approaching an exact average rate, is never attained. The nature and extent of no two tradesmen's businesses are alike, even in the same department; with every one of them are connected numberless contingencies; and hence they could not, even if disposed, fix a rate of profit. Jones sells an article at such a rate, and Smith must do the same; but Jones does twice the business of Smith, and therefore can be content with a less per-centage than the latter. But Smith must also live; perhaps he has a child or two more to keep;—what more natural than that he shall sell an inferior article at the same price, since without he does so he cannot exist? But the public are also awake to their interest, and will not buy an inferior quality at the same price, *if*—mark well the *if*—if they know it. Smith must therefore deceive them. He must adulterate, and puff, and exhaust every artifice to preserve his existence. The public are deceived—they buy—and thus Smith learns to look at deception as a legitimate means of livelihood—a successful trick of trade—as rather a matter of self-congratulation than reproach. In most cases, however, such active steps for realizing profit, are needless. Chances of profit are continually occurring, which a man cannot honestly appropriate, but with which he has only to be passive—say nothing about the matter—and they will fall into his treasury. He takes them on the principle, that 'all is fish that comes into the net.' A German proverb says—'Opportunity makes thieves.' What is trade but continual opportunity to do wrong—a daily or hourly opportunity, with a promise of immediate reward to those who yield to it? Under circumstances like these, right action becomes almost impossible, virtue becomes a conventionalism; so that men, instead of looking internally for rule of conduct, learn to take their morality as they buy their coats—according to the fashion. Even the misfortunes of mankind become desirable to individuals. Montaigne gives no very extravagant illustration of the principle when he says—'The shopkeeper prospers by the excesses of youth, the farmer by the dearth of corn, the architect by the ruin of houses, the officers of justice by the lawsuits and quarrels of men, the honor even and business of ministers of religion are drawn from our death and our vices. No physician can take pleasure in the health of his friends even, nor soldiers in the peace of the city;—and so of all the rest.'

The proportion of persons employed in the distribution of any commodity bears no scientific and well-ordered proportion to the amount of commodity to be disposed of, or to the number of persons wanting it. Thus, when more enter into a particular department than are wanted, a depression of profits takes place thro competition, which the shopkeeper and merchant can only replace by vending inferior articles. As the trader is himself a consumer, so this hurtful system is as injurious to himself as to the public. If any one wishes to find out which departments of trade exhibit the greatest abuses, the greatest

derelictions of moral principle, he has but to find out where the greatest competition prevails. In the drapery and spirit trades, where competition has been most active, falsehood and trickery have most prevailed. We are informed by a respectable master draper, that in some of the London shops it is not an uncommon question for a principal to enquire of an applicant for a situation—'Can you swallow fire?'—this Salamandrine qualification implying an ability to swear that a shawl manufactured in Paisley was manufactured in France; such india-rubber conscience being needed for the purpose of 'shaving' (i. e. of duping) the ladies. A young man not so qualified would be considered ridiculously squeamish, and be discharged as incapacitated for business. Emerson remarks, that many young men retire from trade, because they find it incompatible with uprightness of conduct. A friend of ours, a Methodist, left trade for conscience sake, and belook himself to a department of exertion not demanding the sacrifice of principle.

The Lotteries, before their suppression, show, historically, how little chance the higher principles possess when put in opposition to the lower ones. But 1845 is late enough for most people to remember. We yet feel the effects of the railway mania. Great Britain seemed to be turned into a nation of gamblers. Men sold for exorbitant sums, bits of paper, which they knew *would* be, *must* be, a few days or weeks later, valueless to the purchaser. Under the shadow of such terms as railway-shares, scrip, premium, discount, commission, etc., 'respectable men' committed the most monstrous frauds.

Were a competitive state of society the only possible one, there would be small hope of practical Christianity and a high moral culture becoming the portion of the large mass of the people. No education, however complete—no preaching, however earnest and extended,—can counteract the mighty force of *misdirected* self-interest. It has become a proverb, that constant dropping will wear away adamant; and the constant attrition of self-interest will often subdue the loftiest spirits to things, alas! how mean! Nothing save an entire revolution in the *System of Society*, can cure the evils which have become so palpable. Let us render the interest of the individual plainly and clearly *identical* with that of society, and then man's moral nature can develop itself, and a soil will be prepared in which genuine morals may grow. The lessons of Christ, if we apprehend them aright, are intended for man's whole life, not merely for its latest moments. The true homage at the shrine of Duty, is *to do it*, not to spend breath and rhetoric thereon while practically forgetting it. Society is in this dilemma: it must give up either its code of moral obligation, or its system of trade. No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon. Does it stick pertinaciously to its competitive system, its stock-jobbing, speculating, wholesale and retail adulteration, puffery, and all the thousand lies of the system;—let it at least be consistent; let it arrange a system of morals for itself. Let it say—"It is now the fashion to wear buckles on the apparel, wherewith one may draw it tighter or easier according to pleasure. We will have a conscience measured for us, after the newest fashion, to buckle up wider as we may desire." Let us cease to preach the obligations of virtue, while advocating a system which renders virtue to the masses hopeless, if not impossible. Is it not mere trifling to imagine, that a few hours' teaching and preaching on one day, shall counteract the influence of six days? The appeals on behalf of religion and virtue, promulgated by our great men in books and speeches, when compared with the load of evil against which they are directed, seem but as attempts to empty the ocean with a scollop-shell.

But society will not, and ought not, to give up its *theory* of obligations. These are written too indelibly for any system, however false, wholly to obliterate. Still, let society be consistent. Let it adopt such arrangements as shall make goodness and generosity passable. Let it cause honesty to be really the best policy; let it not so often *leave* virtue to be its own reward. Let it adopt some of those common-sense principles in reference to morals, which obtain where any other object has to be attained—viz., make the means adequate to the end.

L. *Objections of Mr. Mazzini considered.* *

It is asked of us, 'What is it which you understand under the term Communism?' According to our apprehension of the term, it means nothing more than such an organization of our *social* arrangements as shall be found most in accordance with justice and humanity, and therefore most calculated to procure the happiness of those who adopt it. It affirms that the production, consumption, and distribution of wealth, have hitherto been in general conducted on principles of an opposite kind; and hence, that society has incurred a vast variety of evils which it might have avoided. The poverty of the people has made them ignorant, and their ignorance has continued their poverty. Communism simply teaches them *wherein* lies the source of their poverty and depression, and points to the *means by which those evils can be removed*.

Let us take for a text the Co-operative Corn-Mill of Leeds. Here are three thousand individuals (representing, with their families, a total of fifteen thousand persons) who have united their means to grind their own flour. Well, what is the consequence? Why, simply this: they now save the profit of the traders, and have secured purity in a commodity hitherto much adulterated. Ask the shareholders of this Corn-Mill if *they think* Co-operation a vain theory, and they will point you to its substantial results.

But suppose the shareholders go a step further. Suppose they say—"The man who supplies us with clothes, by means of his large capital, commands the labors of ourselves and fellow-men at a rate almost insufficient to support life. We do not want our brethren to be oppressed for the sake of obtaining what he calls 'cheap bargains,' but which must end with a workhouse for them and a palace for him. We will subscribe another £3000, and form a Co-operative-Clothes-Establishment, which shall pay the workmen the average wages, and give us the clothes at the cost price." So said, so done. They proceed. Having placed their Corn-Mill and Clothes Manufactory on a sound basis, they apply the principle to hats, shoes, stockings, etc. *No new element is introduced*; nothing is done but what they have already exemplified in the Corn-Mill; and now they begin to cast about and see where they shall make the next inroad on competition.

Hitherto they have not changed their various situations. They have only saved the profits of the various tradesmen with those services they have dispensed, and secured genuine and durable commodities. But they will not rest here. The price of corn fluctuates too much; besides, landlords and gentlemen-farmers take too large a toll before the corn can get to their mill; and then, besides, there is the laborer's family starving on 8s. per week. 'This will never do,' say our Co-operators. 'We must have the land and grow our own corn.' Again they subscribe, and purchase a suitable estate. They do not divide it into plots the size of a pocket-handkerchief. No; that would exclude the application of capital on a large scale, and lose the advantages of division of labor. So they still stick to the co-operative principle. The executive places on the land those shareholders who are agriculturalists, and supplies any deficiency from the laborers in the neighborhood. Next they remove their Mill and Clothes Establishment, and Hat and Shoe Factory, to the estate, and employ, as far as is consistent with prudence, their own members.

But their demands rise with their means. They feel that for 'the soul to be without knowledge is not good,'—so they engaged good teachers for their children; they also bring their books together; and whereas each of them before had a small insignificant library of his own, he has now the command of more than a thousand times as many. The thing indeed looks tolerably like a Mechanics' Institution.

Again; our three thousand original shareholders in the Corn-Mill discover that, notwithstanding all the economy and real cheapness which they have introduced into *production*, a great loss yet occurs in the *consumption* of their commodities. One of them has heard of the Club-houses in Loudon, where a gentleman can get, for £5 per year, advantages he formerly could not command for £200. If that is good for gentlefolk, it is much more desirable for poor folk. Another says—"It's true, for the workhouses and the prisons adopt the same plan, and save a great deal by it." Without more ado, they build a large

* Revised from articles in the *Herald of Co-operation*, 1847, written in reply to M. Mazzini's stricture on Communism in *The People's Journal*.

dining-hall on the estate, and erect vast and commodious kitchens, with every thing that can subserve convenience. Thus they save the labor of the larger portion of the three thousand house-wives, and they save the cost of three thousand kitchen fires, etc. We might pursue this illustration to an indefinite length. We might show that most of the different parts of this co-operative edifice are in existence in our present society. It is obvious that the ultimatum would be Communism, which might be defined 'the perfection of the associative principle.' The day that witnesses its realization by the working man, will be the day of his manumission. He will no longer be the slave of capital, but its master. The noble gentlemen who cannot distinguish the relative importance of peasants and partridges, will have their eyes opened. Men will not beg for leave to toil, nor will they terminate a career of undeserved poverty in the workhouse. The arrangements which a number of such societies would make, would prevent the fraud, violence, and misery which our present antagonism necessarily produces. *In association we trace the element required to distribute the advantages which the progress of civilization has created.* The altered position of society demands entirely new arrangements. One party clings to the form of the past. They would put new wine into old bottles. They see that, notwithstanding our boasted improvements, the mass of the population are not nearly so happy as in the time when

'Every rood of ground maintained its man.'

Therefore would they *conserve*—in other words, retrograde. But it is too late. The young Hercules will not wear the clothes of his grandfather. Humanity is awaking from its deep sleep. That form of society did not admit of those inevitable things, printing presses and spinning jennies; it therefore must pass away. On the other hand, the school which has arisen on the ruins of the former one, the fashionable *laissez-faire* school, cannot long maintain its place. Like a bloody Juggernaut, it has rolled over the masses of our population, and left behind it nothing but the wrecks of man. It has nothing lovely, nothing holy in it. It puts man in false relations to his fellow. It denies the principle of loving one's neighbor, and substitutes a cold selfish creed instead. It puts the wealth above man, and would make avarice the queen of the virtues. But humanity rebels against the lie of these philosophers. Their theory is failing even in its vital part—the production of wealth; and they behold the results of their darling ideal in stopped cotton-mills, heavy poor-rates, and an ignorant, brutalized, and famished population.

Mankind have been placed in a state of mutual dependance so complete, that it is hardly possible to suppose that the race could have maintained its existence at all under a purely isolated and individual mode of life. Our wants and weaknesses, even apart from our moral tendencies, would suffice to constitute us gregarious. *Association has been one of the essential conditions of every step in civilization.* It is true that the principle has assumed ten thousand varying forms, but still it may always be traced. What is a nation, a city, a town, a village, but an association of men existing for mutual protection and justice, for the convenience of proximity and municipal advantages, for trade and commerce? Nay, what is any society or club, but an exemplification of the same principle? In every instance we find an *union of individuals* for attaining some common object—an object, in the greater number of cases utterly unattainable without such union. The combination may have embraced few or more individuals; the association may have been more or less complete,—just as in motion there are many degrees of speed between that of the tortoise and of the electric fluid—but there was *union, co-operation*, benefiting each and all. That which is dictated by the simplest instinct of self-preservation, will, no doubt, ere long, be tried for higher purposes, and in obedience to higher principles. As armies of laborers raised the pyramids, so similar armies now construct magnificent railroads. Combined efforts provide our cities with paved streets, with light, and with water. Combined efforts build our Mechanics' Institutions and Athenæums, and give the paver of 3d. or 4d. per week, advantages he could not otherwise obtain for pounds. Combined efforts build our schools, churches, and chapels. In short, there is scarcely a single social advantage which is not more or less indebted to association for its existence; and it would seem as if association were almost identical with civilization, while Competition seems but another name for loss of power, waste and negation.

But if association has been well and usefully applied, it has also been used as the engine

of mischief. It has been employed to disseminate and control opinions, to establish and destroy religions. It has invaded the sanctity of the human soul, and prescribed the limits of human reason. It has dictated where it had no right even to enter. If it has given power to the associated, it has given no security that that power should not be abused. Societies have done deeds which the single individuals composing them would not have dared to do, or would have found it impossible to execute. To distinguish, then, between those objects which association may legitimately strive to attain, and those with which it has no business to meddle; to discover how far the action of society may trench upon the activity of the individual, is a problem beginning to excite the most attentive enquiry—and not undeservedly, for it involves consequences of the utmost importance to the well-being of our race.

The fault of those who have hitherto promulgated Communist opinions, seems to have been the same as that into which *society itself* has too generally fallen—meddling with matters which exclusively concerned the individual. Not contented with a joint-stock company of *labors and enjoyments*, they wished to make a joint-stock company of *opinions* also. Now we hold that the aggregate force of ten, or ten thousand laborers is indefinitely greater than that of the same number of isolated individuals, and therefore, that such aggregation is often desirable. On the other hand, though ten, or ten thousand minds assert a thing to be true, it makes the proposition in no degree truer; nay, it often happens that one soul sees deeper and farther than a million others,—that the minority are as often right as the majority. But the dogmatical leaders of the Communist movement have hitherto not seen this. Besides the social organization for the wise distribution of labors and enjoyments, they had always a spick-and-span 'new system of ethics,' or 'religion,' or 'metaphysics,' which every one was to swallow, before being permitted to join in the attempt to reform society. They thought to destroy formulas by creating new ones. They justified the reproach of M. Mazzini, in imagining that the true system of the world was to have its birth with them, and with them alone. But that which essentially constitutes Communism, has nothing at all to do with any peculiar metaphysical or religious system, beyond those general principles to which the universal voice of mankind, thro' all ages, is consentaneous. There is nothing in Communism to exclude any portion of the human family on account of any opinions it may hold. There is scarcely a single *essential* element of Communal life, that one class or other of society have not already exemplified in practice. Objectors are bound to show how the elevation of the *material* condition of the people is to be obtained without some form of Communism. We do not mean merely, how is their condition to be simply mended; but how are the whole advantages of land, labor, and capital; of modern science and skill; of the highest development yet known to us, to be brought within the reach of *every human being*?

The difference between M. Mazzini and the advocates of a communitive system of society consists rather in the *means*, than in the object which each proposes to attain. Both wish to raise man to the highest physical, intellectual, moral, and religious elevation, to which he can aspire. Both would avail themselves of the principle of association in the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth. But the difference between the two is, that the former regards association merely as an effect of the improved ideas of mankind, as the necessary consequence of the increased respect which each man is to be taught to bear towards the rights of his fellow, and of his own duties towards him. The communists, on the other hand, view association not merely as a result of these ideas, but as an *active cause in producing and encouraging them*. The consequences of this difference are important. For the one will only preach 'the highest nobleness possible,' and that 'the moral man must first be remade; whilst the other takes for his instruments men as they are, demonstrates to them the suicidal course they pursue, asks them to unite their labors and their enjoyments, and this, not only because it is their duty, but also because it is their interest. The one offers them *elevated ideas*, the other offers them *the means* of elevation. Which is the more likely to succeed? In our opinion, the man who shows the operative how to obtain milk to his pottage, or beef to his potatoes, is worth a whole bushel of such spiritualists; nay, he will have done more to obtain the very objects which they propose. Good food and clothing, comfortable shelter and leisure, are essential to spiritual development, and are objects that a wise and good man may legitimately place before the people as inducements. And sensual as the doctrine may seem, we think the

old tub of Diogenes was less favorable to the 'highest nobleness possible,' than the fine carpet of Plato.

But these deniers of the force of external arrangements inconsistently press another objection against Communism; viz. that 'Communism will destroy man's individuality; will involve the necessity of dragging all men into one monotonous uniformity.' It is imagined that each man's character is to be cut to pattern; that he shall be clothed in uniform (just as the recipients of the bounty of the worshipful company of charitable grinders), and, in fact, that we shall get a stereotyped humanity. If such consequences are indeed to result from Communism—and they have been charged upon it—it would demonstrate a potency in circumstances, such as the most out-and-out follower of Mr. Owen never ascribed to them. Hence these objectors annihilate their own positions; for with one breath they announce that the soul governs circumstances; and with the next, that Circumstances have power to destroy all the native forces of the soul. According to them Communism is at once powerless and omnipotent. We may rest assured, however, that it is neither one nor the other, it is simply a *means*, a mode by which a wise and just distribution of the bounties of God and the fruits of labor may be secured. In an organized society we may not have those dramatic vicissitudes and diversities of fortune, nor that strange phantasmagoria of good and ill, wisdom and folly, greatness and meanness, which is at present exhibited. But in losing those painful contrasts, we shall be amply repaid in obtaining wise and truthful men and women, whose every action will stand upon its own merits. The truth is, that *present society affords no security for independence of mind*. Society determines everything for us, from the shape of our hats, up to that of our creed, the individual having scarcely a voice in the matter. The meanest and the loftiest things of life are regulated by fashions, and hence the reason why absurdities maintain their place so long, and why hypocrites are so numerous.

The 'organization of the kitchen of humanity,'—in other words, the arrangement of our social system upon a just and rational basis, is, we apprehend, a most important object. A wider and wider gulf is opening between the two classes into which mankind have hitherto been divided. In the presence of improvements which multiply the productive power of the laborer a thousand times, learned gentlemen investigate what degree of exertion can be extracted from himself or his infant without inflicting perceptible injury. Other learned gentlemen gauge the capacity of his stomach, and prove that so many ounces per diem are quite sufficient. While the quack of a different school comes before the people and preaches that this is 'the inevitable condition of society,' and that the road to happiness consists, not in the number of our pleasures, but in the fewness of our wants. In the conflict with such pundits as these, it may often happen that the advocate of communism may insist too exclusively upon the advantages of material wealth, but, compared with the others, his fault is venial. So far as we have known these spiritual reformers personally, we never found them practically *avoiding* the good things of life. Like sensible fellows, they leave their doctrine with their books, and wisely increase their creature comforts. Their experience gives the lie to their philosophy, for they feel that poverty is the most ungenial element for the cultivation of the intellect, the elevation of the moral sense, or the refinement of feeling. Mean as may seem the function of supplying society's material wants, it is a thing which, somehow or other, *must* be attained, before ever the spiritualist can get a hearing. It will not be done by preaching to the drudge of the factory and the mine, of their duties and their rights, or of the 'nobleness' and 'progress of humanity.' These are as sounds to the deaf, and as colors to the blind. The present arrangements of society tend to degrade the man into a mere animal or a machine. Communism would reverse those arrangements, and provide a fitting sphere wherein the law of love and the obligations of justice might be realized. This is not to put men into some lubberland of sensual enjoyment. It is not to teach that the doctrine of life consists in 'eat, drink, and be merry.' Life is now a worship of the body; there is no leisure to *educe* the soul. Communism, by rendering the material means of existence more easy of acquisition, by bringing all the elegancies as well as necessities of life into the possession of the lowest, will render them of secondary importance, so that men need not dwell upon them. That which is alone worthy of note in Communism, is not a scheme improvised at a given hour by one of the world's chieftains. It is but the principle of association, carried out to a greater extent, and for more legitimate objects, than it has hitherto been.

M. Mazzini says, that to distribute *equally* the products of labor would be "unjust, unreasonable, and inevitably lead to that which it pretends to suppress." So far he is right. "But," says he, "the thesis of distribution according to *wants*, is not less unrealizable. Can we, by any effort of imagination, suppose, a *government* capable of determining correctly the vocation, the capability of each, and of assigning to each his labor, his function; capable of directing, of overlooking the laborers, of collecting and of administering the productions of their labor, unless, by a number of officers equal to that of the laborers themselves? To each, according to his wants, say you, but what constitutes a want? It is that which the individual himself shall declare to be so. It is evident that the obligation to labor will be avoided by a crowd of factitious wants—such as travelling, for example. Or will authorized power charge itself with the definition? Can you imagine a more frightful tyranny?"

The impression conveyed to the word 'government' is that of a nation; and certainly to suppose a government fulfilling such tasks as are enumerated on behalf of a nation, is an absurdity. But who ever held so preposterous a notion? Certainly not Fourier, nor St. Simon, nor Owen, nor John Minter Morgan. Societies of 300, 1200, and 2000 individuals, are the numbers supposed by the two last named writers, as sufficient to constitute a community.

Is there any difficulty in imagining a government capable of providing for the wants of such a number as this, a smaller than labor in many a cotton mill? Yet here the labor of each one is assigned him; his vocation, his capability, is determined; the laborers are overlooked, the productions of their labors are collected and administered, and the officers who perform it are very few in number. Let us further contrast the two cases:—

IN THE COMMUNITY.

The employed will be intelligent.

All that is produced will be enjoyed by those who produce it.

The employed will select the governors.

IN THE COTTON MILL.

The employed are ignorant.

A very small portion is enjoyed by those who produce it, and the remainder goes to the capitalist and other less useful persons.

The governor selects the employed.

'Can you imagine a more frightful tyranny than Communism?' says M. Mazzini. We can. No greater tyranny can exist than that of capital over labor. Everything that M. Mazzini fears *will* result from Communism, does *now* result from the fact that capital controls labor. Physically, morally, intellectually, the laborer is bound down by a power whose strength is ever increasing; whose vigilance never sleeps. It is not that Association enables man to raise 'sumptuous palaces, magnificent parks, galleries which enchant the eyes.' Not for this do we advocate Communism, tho all these are worthy enough objects of exertion—but for this, that Capital is master, and Man is slave; that those wondrous discoveries which have multiplied the laborer's force a thousand fold, instead of being his benefactors, are the means of lengthening his labor and increasing its intensity. It is that as wealth is increasing, so too is poverty; that knowledge, that the great garden of nature, the blessings of wife and children, are year by year becoming objects to which the laborer can lay less claim. The true tyranny is to be subject to the rules of society, and enjoy none of its advantages. Tell the Irish peasant of the 'tyranny' of being *joint-owner of an estate, and consumer of the fruits of his own labor*, and we answer for it that he will prefer it to the tyranny of the agent of either present or absentee landlord.

To conjure up such terms as 'tyranny,' and apply them to *our* form of association, when, if tenable, they would apply to *any* form of association or society whatsoever, even to a pure democracy—is a fallacy we willingly leave M. Mazzini the full benefit of.

M. Remarks on 'The Theory of Human Progression.'

The writer of an able work just issued entitled 'The Theory of Human Progression, and natural Probability of a reign of Justice,' affirms that—

"Love, benevolence, charity, fraternity, cannot enter a system of politics. No human

society could be founded on them, that attempts to regulate the distribution of natural property, and the allocation of that increased value which is created by the labor of individuals. Love may, to a certain extent, reign in a family; but in a state composed of a multitude of independent individuals, each producing according to his skill, energy, perseverance, and accidental opportunities, *justice* must be the regulative principle, etc." (p. 260.)

The reasoning, by which this proposition is supported, proves to our mind exactly its reverse. The writer supposes a society of purely *intellectual* beings, but without the sentiment of love or benevolence. He conceives it would still present a *political* society, fully and completely. *Therefore*, says he, benevolence is not a basis of political society, and ought not to be taken into consideration, when we profess to reason in politics. Now it is precisely because men *are* benevolent, *as well as* intellectual, that the doctrine is untenable. A system of politics based on Justice *alone*, ignores one half (and perhaps the better half) of man's nature. What would the author do with the idiot or the orphan? To be strictly *just*, since they earn nothing, they would receive nothing. Yet it would be a bold logic that would condemn them to perish. On the other hand, if society may interfere on their behalf, it is obvious that there are, and ever will be, so many shades of mental and physical incapacity between the able and the helpless as to render the above limitation altogether nugatory.

The same author affirms, that the abolition of property negatives the possibility of benevolence. If he had said 'alms-giving,' the assertion might perhaps be admitted. Charity no more means giving of pelf, than greatness means the owning of it;—but we are so constantly measuring everything by

'So much money as 'twill bring,'

that we are apt to forget this. The work referred to contains an excellent exposure of the great Land-robbery perpetrated on the people of this nation, and is altogether a valuable contribution to Social Science.



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