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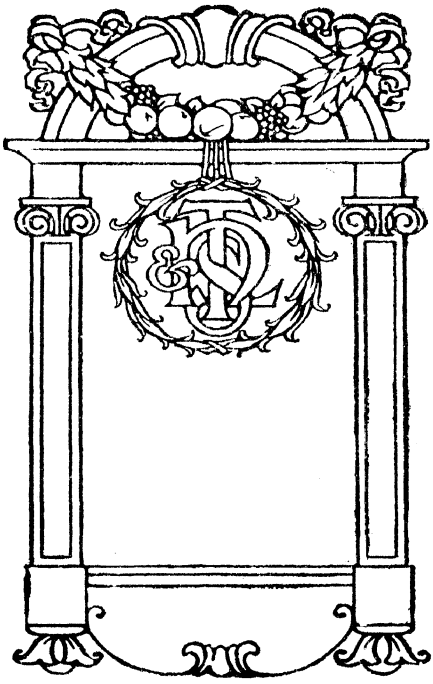

PROBLEMS OF POVERTY

SELECTIONS FROM THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WRITINGS OF

THOMAS CHALMERS

D.D.

ARRANGED BY

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INTRODUCTION.

SOCIAL reform in some aspect is always before the public. There are times, however, when the attention of Parliament and the minds of all thoughtful people are almost exclusively devoted to the question of bettering the condition of the working classes, and the present is such a time. No apology is required, therefore, for printing a volume of selections on that subject from the works of Dr. Thomas Chalmers, a great ecclesiastical statesman, and one of the most advanced social reformers that Scotland has produced.

Although a hundred years have elapsed since his countrymen recognized in him a coming leader, the thought and life of Scotland still run in the channels he digged so deep.

A considerable number of publications explaining his teaching have been issued. These have been for the most part commentaries. Two of the most recent and most excellent are *Chalmers on Charity*, by Professor Masterman, and *The Social Ideal and Chalmers' Contributions to Christian Economics*, by Dr. Harper.

The former confines himself mostly to Chalmers' opinions on charity and the Poor Law, the latter to his teaching on other aspects of economics. It has been considered that a volume of selections from Chalmers' works on both subjects would not

be out of place at the present time, when the questions he dealt with are of paramount importance.

For the information of readers out of Scotland it may be necessary to give some details of the life and work of our author.

Dr. Chalmers was born in 1780 at East Anstruther, Fifeshire. He was educated at St. Andrews University, and even at the early age of sixteen was known to the townspeople as possessing exceptional ability. At the end of his university course he was appointed mathematical assistant at the university, and at the same time minister of the adjacent rural parish of Kilmany.

His interest in economic subjects was manifested at an early age. In 1807 he published an *Enquiry into the Extent and Stability of National Resources*, called forth by the decree of Napoleon shutting Continental ports against all vessels which had cleared from British harbours.

During this period he also published a paper on *The Evidences and Authority of the Christian Revelation*, which was greeted with high approval within the walls of Oxford. He acquired considerable reputation as a speaker at the Church Assemblies, and his fame as a preacher was widely recognized. In 1815 he accepted a call to become minister of the Tron Church of Glasgow. He threw himself into his new work with unbounded energy and devotion. The Tron parish had a population of eleven thousand, and on his appointment he began and finished the stupendous task of visiting and noting the circumstances of every family. It is commonly believed

that in those days nearly every one was connected with the Church. Readers of Chalmers' *Memoirs* know that there were then slums and slum life in Glasgow and Edinburgh more appalling than anything to be witnessed now. Chalmers found as a result of his visitation that two-thirds of his parishioners had cast off the very form and practice of religion. The poverty was, of course, very great; and it is remarkable that, with the most intimate knowledge of the condition of his parish, he made a claim to have it separated from sharing in the compulsory assessment for the poor, so that he might grapple with the poverty of his parishioners on a voluntary basis, as if he were in a rural parish. He objected to public relief as an economist and a student of human nature. It was at this time that he began his writings on the question of pauperism; that subject which was to engage so much of his thought during the rest of his life.

His fame as a preacher was known over the kingdom. On a visit to London he became the lion of the day. When he preached, the greatest people in London flocked to hear him. "Old Rowland Hill stood the whole time at the foot of the pulpit gazing on the preacher with great earnestness, and whenever any sentiment was uttered which met his approval, signifying his assent by a gentle nod of his head and an expressive smile." "All the world wild about Dr. Chalmers," says the great Wilberforce, who himself made a party with Canning and Huskisson to hear the great Scottish preacher. "I was surprised," Mr. Wilberforce says, "to see how greatly Canning

was affected; at times he was quite melted into tears." "The tartan," he is reported to have said, "beats us all." On another occasion Wilberforce and various great ladies had to get into the church where Chalmers officiated, through a window, treading a plank, which the fine people dared with almost more than manly courage, while the preacher himself had the greatest difficulty in getting in at all." *

In 1819 he was transferred to the ministry of the adjoining parish of St. John's, which was created for him by the Town Council in order that he might carry out his scheme of the voluntary relief of the poor.

During his ministry here he issued a series of quarterly publications on the *Christian and Civic Economy of large Towns*, through which he expounded the measures of social reform he was carrying out in actual practice.

The ministry of St. John's only lasted four years. In 1823 he was offered and accepted the chair of Moral Philosophy in St. Andrews University. Here he started a separate class for students in Political Economy; and he afterwards embodied his views on this subject in a publication which was issued in 1832.

It should be kept in mind that Chalmers' writings on social questions were produced at a time of great industrial unrest, which manifested itself in several districts in serious rioting.

Early in his Glasgow ministry he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Glasgow University. Later, the degree of Doctor of Laws was bestowed on him by the University of Oxford. He

* Mrs. Oliphant's *Dr. Chalmers.*

was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and a corresponding member of the Royal Institute of France.

After five years in St. Andrews he was appointed Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh University, and till 1843, when the great Disruption of the Church of Scotland took place, he exercised a commanding influence in Edinburgh and in Scotland. Mrs. Oliphant, one of his biographers, writes of this period as follows:

"In Edinburgh, Chalmers assumed at once his natural place as a great leader of the Church, and one of the most important personages in Scotland. Not only were his footsteps followed by crowds wherever he made any personal appearance, but he was consulted with the most remarkable deference by the public authorities and statesmen of the time. Appointments were made by the Government on the almost sole ground that they were agreeable to this prince of the Church, and his support and advocacy of the most important measures were solicited by the highest functionaries of the realm, in terms which show their consciousness of his authority, almost as if it were that of an independent power."

Of the great Disruption in the Church of Scotland, which altered so much the ecclesiastical and social life of that country, it is out of place to say much here. The chief responsibility for that movement, which rent Scotland in two and sent nearly five hundred ministers of the Established Church out of their manses and kirks, rested on his shoulders, and he carried it with that superb energy and genius which characterized all his actions.

When Parliament rejected the Claim of Rights,

and he and those who followed him felt they could not remain in a Church whose spiritual independence was denied, it was not altogether into the wilderness they went. A yearly revenue of seventy-four thousand pounds was guaranteed from the first, and the practical wisdom and forceful energy of Chalmers and those who worked with him soon put on a permanent footing that great financial scheme known as the Sustentation Fund of the Free Church of Scotland.

Dr. Chalmers died suddenly during the Assembly of the Church in May 1847, and he was buried "amid the tears of a nation and with more than kingly honours."

The writer has divided the selections into two sections—First, those dealing with Chalmers' opinions on general economics; second, those relating to charity and pauperism. There has also been added the account of the experiment in dispauperization carried on by Dr. Chalmers in his own parish of St. John's as related in his *Memoirs*, and a concluding chapter on the development of pauperism since Chalmers' time.

As Chalmers' economic writings are scattered over many volumes, and form a very complete exposition of the science, it follows that a volume of selections must necessarily embody an imperfect statement of his argument. An effort has, however, been made to reproduce those passages which deal with subjects still prominent in the realm of economics.

Dr. Chalmers' chief contribution to the science has been his strong insistence on the principle that the economic question is essentially a moral ques-

tion; that conduct and condition are inseparably connected; and that writers on economics who confine themselves solely to the material aspect of the subject, and teachers of religion who are ignorant of the laws of supply and demand and of the conditions of labour, see only one half of the problem with which they deal. In France, where the conception of economics was purely material, this idea was quite new. In this country his ideas were received with general hostility, but in recent years there has been a marked recognition of his point of view.

In his treatment of Political Economy one has the feeling that the human note is more pronounced than with other writers on the "dismal" science. He seems to have constantly before his mind the peasantry in his rural parish and the swarming hordes in the slums of Glasgow. He knew these people as no other economic writer of his day did. His official position gave him access to their homes and to their confidence. He applied one of the acutest intellects of the last century to a long-continued, patient study of the condition of the working classes, and of the laws and principles of conduct which made for social betterment. Two convictions emerged from this study, which formed the pillars of that structure which he spent so much of his life in rearing. One was the belief that the labouring classes could not reach economic comfort except through the building up of character, and that this could only be obtained by Christian education; the other, that it was the duty of the State to pass laws which would enable men to raise themselves,

and that a compulsory provision for the relief of destitution was a "will o' the wisp," which led the labouring classes away from the true path of economic progress.

In spite of the studied indifference of economic writers to the first, and the headlong rush of legislation away from the second, is there not sufficient reason for holding that these principles of his must be reckoned with before any real betterment can be effected? Since he wrote, the wealth of the nation has increased enormously; yet the problem of the economic condition of the masses is still as acute.

The problems engaging the attention of the country to-day are those to which he gave the best years of his life. Eighty years have passed since his views were published, and still we are planning how to colonize our home land on an economic basis. The duty of Government in labour strikes is still as much debated as when the combination laws were first abolished and Chalmers discussed the rights of strikers and of free labourers. In view of the most recent proposal to put all taxation upon land, one reads with no little interest that our author early last century urged the landlords in their own interest to adopt this method of taxation. The Church is still gravely considering how it can accept assistance from the State and at the same time claim spiritual independence.

The problem as to how far and in what way the State should relieve necessitous people has not been settled by sixty years of a reformed Poor Law in Scotland and eighty years in England, but is still

as eagerly discussed as when Chalmers wrote on the subject.

Early in his ministerial career Dr. Chalmers was on a visit to Hawick; and as that town had instituted an assessment for the relief of the poor, he was led to consider the effect of such a provision on the social well-being of the community. In his own parish of Kilmany there was no assessment for such a purpose. As was the practice in all but a few cities, and some of the border parishes that had become infected by the English practice, the relief of the poor was met out of the church-door collections, and was administered by the heritors and kirk session in landward parishes, and in burghal parishes by the magistrates. The levying of a poor rate was optional.

Led to investigate the matter, he convinced himself that the assessment principle was thoroughly bad for a community and for recipients, and that the moral administration prevalent in Scotland was productive of better social and economic results than the English system of legal assessment. From this time forward he set himself to discourage the adoption of a legal assessment by Scottish parishes, and to persuade those that had already begun this practice to abandon it and return to their old system. He saw no difficulty in grappling with the destitution of large cities, if there were a sufficient number of churches and church workers to give that minute supervision which existed in country districts.

In 1822 he made a tour through England for the purpose of investigating the conditions of pauperism as existing in that country. His fame as a preacher

and as a writer on economic subjects had spread over the kingdom, and all doors were open to him. Every local magnate was ready with eager hospitality, and every public official with statistics and statements. The result of this tour was a fiercer determination on his part than ever to save Scotland from the pernicious effects of a poor rate.

The Report of the Royal Commission on the English Poor Laws, published in 1833, shows the condition to which England was fast drifting; and is perhaps the most appalling document ever issued in this country.

England had embodied in its statutes the principle that it was the duty of the parish authorities to give relief to necessitous persons, even although they were able-bodied. If they were out of employment the parish had to find them work, or maintain them. If they could not earn a sufficient maintenance, the parish made up the deficiency according to a scale which varied in each district.

The result was ruinous to the local finances and to the character of the people. Knowing they could only be relieved in their own parish, the labourers refused to move to other districts where work might have been obtained. All initiative was destroyed. Thrift, forethought, enterprise, and moral restraint were abandoned. What was the use of saving if the parish was to be your banker? Why look for work or endeavour to keep your present employment if the parish had to find you work? Why exercise moral restraint if the parish gave you a fixed sum for each child, whether legitimate or otherwise?

On the other hand, the authorities were unable to meet their legal obligations and at the same time to keep the parish from bankruptcy.

The ranks of the independent labourers were rapidly thinning as the numbers on the rates swelled. The pauper labourers were hired out to farmers at a few shillings a week, the parish making up the difference to a living wage. To make room for these, independent labourers were dismissed, and as a result had to join the pauper ranks. Another plan was to send pauper labourers to repair the parish roads, but the men did little or no work. When the overseers remonstrated, they said, " Why should we work, the parish must give us our twelve shillings a week whether we work or not."

Is it a matter of wonder that in some places the authorities made no attempt to get remunerative work out of the labourers, but made them sit still in one place; or shovel stuff backwards and forwards in a gravel pit; or simply report themselves so many times a day. The result on the finances of the parish was ruinous. The poor rates in some places reached twenty-five shillings in the pound of rental. Farmers gave up their farms because they could not pay the poor rates; whole parishes went out of cultivation. England was on the verge of bankruptcy. The effect on the character of the labouring classes was no less disastrous. They lost all the virtues which make for a healthy economic community. They became lazy, disobedient, indifferent to their employers' interests or property; not only indifferent, as one employer testified, but " hostile, positively hostile."

Dr. Chalmers had the state of rural England before him when he penned his chapter on "Home Colonization." While he was all for an agricultural as against a city population, he was strongly averse to an extension of cultivation by pauper labour. It must also be remembered that the present problem of rural depopulation did not exist in his day.

The Poor Law Act of 1834 greatly altered the conditions described by making it illegal for parish authorities to relieve any able-bodied person except in a workhouse.

An immediate change for the better took place. Men moved freely from one district to another in search of work—knowing they had to depend on their own energy and ability for a livelihood.

The characteristics which make for social well-being, which had been warped by a pernicious system, found again proper channels in which to work. Men, who were formerly lazy, destructive, and in a chronic state of rebellion, became industrious and respecters of law and order. Farmers, who had formerly paid men the parish stipulation of five shillings a week, and found them dear at that price, now paid the same men full market wages, with advantage to all.

The Poor Law Commission Report of 1909 has the following testimony to the feeling in Scotland at that early time regarding the principle of assessing for the relief of the poor: "There is nothing more remarkable in social history than the steady resistance opposed by the people of Scotland to a compulsory assessment through more than two centuries of legislation. The initiative was left with the kirk sessions,

and as the feeling of the Church, expressed in various reports of the General Assembly, was that the principle of a compulsory assessment was altogether pernicious, and likely to lead to a great increase in idleness, improvidence, and dissipation, the introduction of the assessment was naturally very gradual."

In 1818 there were only one hundred and forty-five assessed parishes out of nearly eight hundred, and these chiefly in large towns and on the borders of England, in which country a compulsory assessment for the poor had long been general.

The principle behind the system of relief in Scotland is stated in the following extract from a Report of the General Assembly of the Church to the House of Commons in 1820:—

"The Scotch have uniformly proceeded on the principle that every individual is bound to provide for himself by his own labour, so long as he is able to do so; and that his parish is only bound to make up that portion of the necessaries of life which he cannot earn or obtain by other lawful means. Even in cases of extreme poverty the relations and neighbours of the pauper have a pride in providing for their necessaries, either in whole or in part.

"This circumstance will account for the small number of paupers in some very populous parishes, and serves at the same time to explain a fact which is obvious in so many returns in the country districts, that the sums given to the paupers appear to be so disproportionate to what their real necessities require. A small sum given to aid their other resources affords them the relief which is necessary; and it

would be both against the true interests and the moral habits of the people if a more ample provision were made for them by their parishes."

To beat back the growing tendency to dependence on a poor rate; to awaken the Church to a realization that it was the true and only benefactor of the poor, became the great passion of Chalmers' life. Knowing that example was better than precept, and that as the problem of poverty, then as now, was a problem of the city rather than of the country, he realized that he had to display his principles in actual operation. Hence he set on foot that famous scheme of voluntary relief in his own parish of St. John's, the poorest district in the chief town of Scotland.

Dividing his parish into twenty-five districts, each containing from sixty to one hundred families, he appointed a deacon for each, who was to make himself acquainted with the circumstances of every family. He was to take that special oversight of their secular, which the elder of the Church took over their spiritual, welfare. He interested himself in their work; he induced them to keep their children regularly at school; he persuaded them to attend lectures and join a Savings Bank. He was their counsellor and friend. Above all—though the impression was given that this was merely a subsidiary duty—he administered the church-door collections to the needy. Following the precepts laid down for their guidance, the deacons soon rescued the parish from dependence on a poor rate to dependence on voluntary funds; and reduced a former expenditure in aliment of one

thousand four hundred pounds to two hundred and eighty pounds a year.

It was proved to the satisfaction of independent investigators that, during the eighteen years of its operation, the people of his parish were thriftier, more independent and self-reliant, more contented, and in a better economic condition than neighbouring districts depending on a poor rate. Dr. Chalmers had no difficulty in satisfying the poor of his parish. His chief difficulty lay in obtaining permission from the legal authorities to make the experiment. He had to get his parish disjoined from the general scheme, which included all the parishes in the city of Glasgow. For this purpose he had to obtain the sanction of the Town Council, the magistrates, the managers of the town's hospital, the general Session of the Church, and finally, of the General Assembly of the Church. He afterwards testified that the difficulty of persuading these diverse bodies to give him liberty to make the experiment was the only real difficulty he encountered. The full details of this great achievement are reprinted from the *Memoirs* of Dr. Chalmers, and form a separate chapter in this volume.

Dr. Chalmers failed, except in a few instances, to induce the Churches in the populous centres to adopt his method of district visitation, which he held to be necessary. There is no doubt that this was a profound disappointment to him. The abolition of outdoor pauperism was one of the chief interests of his life, and he knew that it could only be accomplished by an active forward movement on the part of the Church. If the Church generally had followed

his lead, a poor rate in Scotland might have been confined to the maintenance of institutional poor, to which Chalmers had no objection. In insisting on their long-established right to care for ordinary out-door poor, the Church might have maintained and strengthened her hold over the working-classes, and there would not have been to-day that chasm between the two, which all who are interested in the best welfare of the country deplore. Apart from the question as to whether we have travelled too far along the road of public relief ever to be able to return, it is impossible to ignore the teaching of Chalmers on the question of poverty. His knowledge of the poor was so intimate and personal; his intellectual apprehension of the matter was so acute and his sagacity so practical, that the Church and the nation, in periodically dealing with this question, are continually brought up against his conclusions. In one of his luminous phrases Chalmers speaks of the charity of law as contrasted with the charity of human kindness.

At the present time there seems to be a drift in the modern mind towards the charity of law. Chalmers was all for that charity which is unobtrusive and unofficial; which is founded on the great verities of human relationship—on family affection, on comradeship, on friendly intercourse and mutual service. He demonstrated how under the worst circumstances the latter was sufficient. History shows how the former tends but to propagate itself.

HENRY HUNTER.

GLASGOW, 1912.

SECTION I.

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

Is this improvement? where the human breed
Degenerates as they swarm and overflow,
Till toil grows cheaper than the trodden weed,
And man competes with man like foe with foe,
Till death that thins them scarce seems public woe?
Improvement! Smiles it in the poor man's eyes
Or blooms it on the cheek of labour? No!
To gorge a few with trade's precarious prize,
We banish rural life and breathe unwholesome skies.

CAMPBELL.

THE AIM OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.

(*Political Economy*, Preface.)

POLITICAL economy aims at the diffusion of sufficiency and comfort throughout the mass of the population by a multiplication or enlargement of the outward means and materials of human enjoyment. Now we hold it to be demonstrable on its own principles that, vary its devices and expedients as it may, this is an object which it never can secure apart from a virtuous and educated peasantry. Our endeavour is to prove that, in every direction, there is a limit to the augmentation of our physical resources; and that, in virtue of this, there must, especially in old countries, be a felt pressure and discomfort throughout every community which has either outgrown the means for its Christian instruction or, in any other way, renounced the habits and decencies of a Christian land. In other words, our object will be gained if we can demonstrate that, even but for the economic well-being of a people, their moral and religious education is the first and greatest object of national policy; and that, while this is neglected, a government, in its anxious and incessant labours for a well-conditioned state of

the commonwealth, will only flounder from one delusive shift or expedient to another, under the double misfortune of being held responsible for the prosperity of the land, and yet finding this to be an element most helplessly and hopelessly beyond its control.

It is obvious of such a task as that which we have prescribed to ourselves, that it cannot fully be accomplished without an extensive range and survey among the doctrines of political economy. More especially the theory of wealth had to be examined in connection with the theory of population ; and the great resulting lesson is—the intimate alliance which obtains between the economical and the moral ; insomuch that the best objects of the science cannot, by any possibility, be realized but by dint of prudence and virtue among the common people.

ON THE INCREASE AND LIMIT OF FOOD.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. I.)

EACH science has certain commanding positions, whence, if the observer look rightly around him, he may obtain an extensive view of important truths and important applications. Such a position, we think, has been recently gained in political economy, although full advantage has not yet been taken of it. We hold it the more interesting that it includes within its range certain unexplored places of the science, and more especially that department where the theory of wealth comes into contact with the theory of population, and where the two, therefore, might be examined in connexion.

The doctrine, or discovery, to which we refer is that promulgated some years ago, and both at the same time, by Sir Edward West and Mr. Malthus. It respects the land last entered upon for the purposes of cultivation, and which yields no rent. It is obvious that land of this inferior productiveness must mark the extreme limit of cultivation at the time—as land of still inferior quality could not be broken up without loss to the cultivator.

Any land that is cultivated for food to human beings must, at least, yield as much as shall feed the labourers who are employed in working it. But it must do more than this. These agricultural labourers require to be clothed and lodged as well as fed. They must be upheld, not in food alone, which is the first necessary, but in what may be termed the second necessaries of life. The people whose business it is to work up these may, in contradistinction to the *agricultural*, be termed the *secondary* labourers of a country. It is evident that the worst of cultivated land must, at least, be able to feed those who are directly employed upon the soil, and, moreover, those who prepare for the agricultural labourers all the other articles, beside food, which enter into their support or maintenance. Else the cultivation of it behoved to be abandoned. All that land which, by no possible improvement, either in the processes of husbandry or of manufacturing labour, could yield as much as would subsist the agricultural labourers and their secondaries, is doomed by nature to everlasting sterility, and must always remain without the scope of cultivation.

The imagination is, that the land of greatest fertility was first occupied. Men would naturally settle on those soils which yielded the most plentiful return for their labour, or which enabled them to subsist with the least labour. It is farther conceived that, after all the first-rate land had been cultivated, an increasing population flowed over, as it were, on the second-rate land; which, in virtue of its inferior quality, yielded a scantier return for the

same labour. As mankind continued to multiply, a still farther descent behoved to be made, through a gradation of soils, each of less fertility than the one before entered on, and so either requiring a greater amount of labour to draw from it the same food or yielding a smaller amount of food to the same labour. This process, it is evident, admits of being extended till the produce of the soil last entered on shall, by the utmost labour which men will expend on it, be barely sufficient for the subsistence of its agricultural labourers and of their secondaries.

In filling up this sketch, or *histoire raisonnée*, of the conjunct process of culture and population, economists have given in to certain conceptions which require to be modified. They sometimes describe the process as if, at each successive descent to an inferior soil, the comfort and circumstances of the human race underwent deterioration ; or as if, under the impulse of a hard and hunger-bitten necessity, men were driven, like so many famishing wolves, to those intractable soils, whence they could only force out a more stinted and penurious fare than before—and that at a greater expense of toil and of endurance. Agreeably to this imagination, even economists and calculators have, by a reverse process, found their way to a golden age at the outset of the world—when men reposed in the lap of abundance ; and, with no other fatigue than that of a slight and superficial operation on a soil of first-rate quality, richly partook in the bounties of nature. But when all this soil came to be occupied, and the race continued to multiply, land of a second quality

behoved to be taken in—and the conception is that, at every such transition from a better to a worse land, a heavier imposition of toil was laid upon workmen, and a smaller amount of produce was yielded to them in return for their industry. This, certainly, represents to us the species in a course of deterioration, at least, in as far as the comfort of the labouring classes is concerned. They are pictured to the eye, as if goaded on by hard and stubborn necessity at every step of this movement, and going forth in starving multitudes, from that better land which is now too narrow for them, to each new succession of cultivation a more ungrateful soil has to be encountered, on which it is thought that men are more strenuously worked, and more scantily subsisted, than before—till, at the extreme limit of this progression, a life of utmost toil, and utmost penury, is looked to as the inevitable doom that awaits the working classes of society.

Now, generally speaking, this is not accordant with historical truth. We do read of extensive emigrations by men who felt themselves straitened in their native land and went forth in quest of a settlement. But we do not witness, throughout the various countries of the world, the successive degradation of their peasantry. There may be fluctuations in their economic state from year to year, or from generation to generation. But on the survey and comparison of centuries, we should rather say, that there had been a general march and elevation in the style of their enjoyments. There is a seeming incompatibility in this fact with the

process which has just been described—and this has cast a suspicion over its reality. Men have been at a loss to reconcile the descent of labourers among the inferior soils with the undoubted rise which has taken place in their circumstances, or in the average standard of their comfort. This has darkened the whole speculation, and brought on a controversy, which admits, however, we think, of a very obvious and easy adjustment.

For as the fresh soils that had to be successively entered on became more intractable, the same amount of labour, by the intervention of tools and instruments of husbandry, may have become greatly more effective. The same labour which, by a direct manual operation, could raise a given quantity of subsistence from soil of the first quality, might, with our present implements of agriculture, raise as much from soil of the last quality that has been entered on. If, from one generation to another, a descent had to be made on more stubborn and impracticable soils, and which, therefore, required a far more operose treatment ere they could be brought to yield as abundantly, as did their predecessor soils, in the career of agriculture—it should be remembered that, by this time, the labour of human hands might have been helped and facilitated, to the whole extent of the difference, by the implements of labour. With the scraping and stirring of first-rate land by the branch of a tree, there might be as much of real muscular work required to obtain from it the same quantity of produce as from second-rate land by means of a

wooden spade, or from third-rate land by means of an iron one, or from fourth-rate land by means of a plough, or lastly, from fifth-rate and following lands, by means of those successive improvements in the form of the plough, whereby it is made more effective than before. We will not yet designate the implements of husbandry by the name of capital; but, considering them merely as the products of labour, it is enough at present to affirm, that the whole labour, first, of making the plough, and then of working it on the soil of the last and latest quality, might fetch back as liberal a return of food to the cultivators, as an equal quantity of labour bestowed either directly by the hand, or with the intervention of some rude and clumsy instrument on the land that was earliest entered on. It is thus that there may at once be a progress in agriculture, and yet, through all the gradations of it the species be upheld in as great ease and sufficiency as at first. Instead of the strong impulse of population driving them helplessly and ungovernably onward to those more inhospitable regions, where they are doomed to all the miseries of a more stinted provision than before,—they may, simply and spontaneously, and without the pressure of any felt agony or violence, have entered on the possession of these regions, because now furnished by art with the means of extracting, even from the comparative barrenness of nature, as generous a remuneration for their toils as they before drew from nature's greatest fertility. We are not, therefore, to imagine of the great family of mankind, that as they

grew in numbers, and spread themselves over upon tracts of greater sterility than before, they must necessarily sink down into a state of greater endurance, whether in the way of privation or fatigue. It is not always at the call of hunger or distress that these successive movements have been made. They are often made in another character—not in that of famishing hordes, making forcible descent on some untried region, in quest of that which might satiate their cravings; but in the higher character of dominant and devising men, walking forth with master step, and in the triumph of their new energies and acquisitions, to subdue some yet untrodden territory, and force from it as liberal subsistence as any which their ancestors had ever gotten in more favoured climes. We are not to suppose that every increase of cultivation is marked by an increase of wretchedness. Through its whole process, from the first to the last of it, the species might be sustained on as high a level, and even be made to ascend higher than at the first. And, as at the commencement of cultivation, there might have been impediments to be struggled with at the entrance upon the first land, such as the clearing it of wood,—so, on the extreme verge of our newest cultivation, there might have been helps to labour on the last and worst land, such as the perfection of our modern implements, which could ensure as generous a repayment for the same quantity of work in the most recent as in the most remote stages of this great process.

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The labourers of our day work harder than before, but live better than before. They put forth more strength, and receive more sustenance, than they wont to do. There has been an increase on both of these terms; or, such has been the change of habit among workmen, that while greatly more industrious, they, at the same time, have become greatly more luxurious. They at once toil more strenuously, and live more plentifully—putting forth more strength, but withal, drawing the remuneration of a larger and more liberal sustenance. This we apprehend to be the actual change of habit and condition which has taken place, with artisans and labourers, in all the countries of civilized Europe,—so that while, on the one hand, we behold a harder working peasantry, we, on the other hand, behold them more richly upholden, both in the first and second necessaries of life.

Now, this may be either a deterioration or an improvement in their circumstances. One can imagine a day of slavish fatigue, followed by an evening of gross and loathsome sensuality,—as is often exemplified in the life of a London coal-heaver, whose enormous wage is absorbed in the enormous consumption, by which he repairs the waste and the weariness of an excessive labour. This, surely, is not a desirable habitude for the commonalty of any land; nor do we read the characteristics of a high or a well-conditioned peasantry in a state of existence, made up, first of drudgery to the uttermost of their strength, and then of grovelling dissipation to the uttermost of

their means. They spend one part of their revolving day in the exercise of powers, which are merely animal; and the other part in the indulgence of enjoyments, which also are merely animal —like beasts of burden, who are more hardly worked than before, and, in return for this, are better fed, and lodged, and littered than before. They are now in better keep than their forefathers; and this puts them into heart for the greater work that is extracted out of them. Still it is conceivable of the work, that it may be so very extreme, as, on the whole, to degrade and to depress these overdone children of modern industry—and that, in spite of the greater abundance wherewith their senses and their spirits are coarsely regaled, during the intervals of their sore bondage.

If this be the extreme to which the workmen of our present day are now tending, there is an extreme opposite to this; from which men only began to emerge at the outset of civilization, and which is still realized among barbarous and demi-barbarous nations. We advert to the sordid condition of those whom nought but the agonies of hunger can impel to shake off an indolence that is else unconquerable; and who, as soon as they have satisfied its cravings, lapse again into the rooted and habitual lethargy of their nature. If they have but enough of sleep, and enough of surfeiting, they care for no higher gratification; nor will they make one effort, above that level to which they subside, by the weight of their own constitutional sluggishness. Food, of some description or other,

they must have—but, having it, they are pleased to live in filth and nakedness, and nearly in utter want of all the secondary accommodations. It is obvious, of such a people, that so long as they abide in this habit, the inferior soils of the earth never will be reached by them. It is even possible that they may stop short at the very first and most fertile of the land; and never taste of that abundance which is within their reach, just because of their insuperable aversion to the labour of extracting it. It is thus that they might doze away their existence on the surface of an earth, whose dormant capabilities they never enter upon; and in vast territories, capable of sustaining millions over and above the few stragglers by whom they are occupied, both cultivation and population may, just because of this moral barrier, have been fixed and limited for many centuries.

So that, in reasoning on the causes which have led to the extension of agriculture among sterile and intractable soils, other things must be taken into account, beside the mere energy of the principle of population. We have already shown how, without bringing this principle into collision with a taste for the enjoyments of life, there may, without any compromise of these enjoyments, and by a mere improvement in the powers of mechanical labour, be a descent among the inferior soils, and so an extension of agriculture, to afford the increasing population as large and liberal a subsistence as before. And it is evident the very same thing would happen, with every increase that took place

in the amount of manual labour, or in the industrious habits of the people. Certain it is that, in climes and countries the most favourable to production, we may often witness the squalid destitution of whole tribes, restrained, by the mere force of indolence, from the enjoyment of that plenty which, with but a little effort, they could so easily realize. Now this proceeds, not from the principle of population being of smaller strength there than in other parts of the world, but from the counteractive force of indolence being there of greater strength. There is a lethargy, or love of ease, in certain temperaments, which will even carry it over the love of offspring; so that, should it not prevent early marriages, it will, at least, prevent a larger proportion of the fruits of marriage from ripening into maturity. Of the many children who are born, a few only will survive the sickliness and the spare living to which they are exposed, from that state of voluntary destitution, wherein their parents will rather abide than put forth those efforts of industry which they feel to be intolerable. Just as the taste for secondary enjoyments has not yet aroused them to exertion, so neither might affection for their famishing and misguided little ones arouse them. This accounts for the population being stationary in many countries, where, as yet, the first-rate soils have scarcely been entered upon —and it should convince us that something else than the mere energy of this principle must be adverted to, when we reason on that historical progress which has conjunctly taken place in the

extension of husbandry and in the numbers of mankind.

But if, by the strength of human indolence, the process of cultivation may be arrested at an earlier stage in the scale of descending fertility, then, should this indolence, by some cause or other, be removed, or got the better of, the process may be again set at liberty. Now, there is no influence by which man is more effectually roused to exertion than the excitement of new desires, which require exertion ere they can be appeased. Let him, by any chance, come to have a greater number of wants than before; and, to supply these, he may be led to work a greater number of hours than before. His taste for idleness will give way to his taste for other things, when he comes to like these other things better than his idleness. If he will not be satisfied but with a certain style of dress and lodging, or with the enjoyment of certain luxuries which his forefathers never dreamed of—then, rather than be without them, he will put forth a strenuous and sustained effort of regular industry, which his forefathers would have felt to be intolerable. This change of habit has actually taken place in modern Europe. Workmen both labour more, and live better, than their ancestors.

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It is thus that, by a more strenuous industry, and a more effective machinery together, the poorer soils may, to a certain extent, be forced to yield an equal, or, perhaps, a more liberal subsistence to the labourer, than at earlier stages, in the process of culti-

vation. Yet it must be quite evident that, whether in single countries, or in the whole world, it is a process which cannot go on indefinitely. The time may be indefinitely distant, and indeed may never come, when the absolute and impassable barrier shall at length be arrived at. But to be satisfied that there is such a barrier, one has only to look to the extent and quality of the land in any region of the earth. By labour we might grind even the naked rock into an arable soil,—but a soil thus formed never would return the expense of food bestowed upon the labourers. In every country there is an upland or outfield territory, which will always bid defiance to agriculture. And even though it were not so—though to its last acre it possessed a uniform richness—though the plough might be carried over the whole of the mighty continent, and should find an obstacle nowhere but at the margin of the sea ; yet, as sure as that every country has its limit, and every continent its shore, we must acquiesce in it as one of the stern necessities of our condition, that the earth we tread upon can only be made to yield a limited produce, and so to sustain a limited population.

It seems very generally admitted, that should it ever come to this, the population, brought to a stand in respect of numbers, must either have to encounter great positive distress, or must anticipate this distress by a preventive regimen. In the midst of all the minuter criticisms to which the doctrine has been exposed, the great historical fact remains unshaken—that, let the means of subsist-

ence be increased however largely and suddenly, this is sure to be followed by a corresponding increase of population. Every state and country in the world bears evidence to this truth—whether in the steady augmentations of Europe, or in the gigantic strides that are now making in the population of America. The invariable connexion, as of antecedent and consequent, between a great extent of fertile and unoccupied land, and a great multiplication of families, when once it is entered upon, is too palpable to be obscured by any sophistry, or by the allegation of any mystic principle whatever. Yet the power to support, and the power to create a population, are just as distinct, the one from the other, as the constitution of the external world is distinct from the constitution or physiology of human nature. It is not an increase of the former power which gives rise to an increase of the latter—it only gives situation and space for the development of its energies. Should a population, when every let and hinderance of a straitened subsistence is removed, be able to double itself in fifteen years—it would still have the inherent ability of doing so, after that every acre on the face of the globe had been advanced to its state of uttermost cultivation. The power of population would then be kept in perpetual abeyance—with a constant disposition to transgress beyond the limits of the world's food, and as constant a check on the expansion of the capabilities which belong to it.

All this is very generally allowed; but then

the imagination of many is, that, not until the world be fully cultivated and fully peopled, shall we have any practical interest in the question. They seem to think of the doctrine of Malthus, that the consideration of it may, with all safety, be postponed, till the agriculture of every country and every clime have been carried to its extreme perfection; and that, meanwhile, the population may proceed as rapidly and recklessly as it may. When a household is straitened by its excessive numbers, or a parish is oppressed by its redundant families—they would bar every argument about the proximate causes of this inconvenience by the allegation that there were still thousands of unreclaimed acres at home, or millions in distant places of the earth, though of as little real or substantial consequence to the suffering parties, as if the land were situated in another planet. They appear to conceive, that ere any body can be felt as an obstacle to our progress, it must have come to a dead stand—not aware that to act as a check or impediment, it has only to move more slowly, though in the same direction, than at the rate in which we are advancing ourselves. They proceed on the idea, that no shock or collision can be felt but by the stroke of an impellent on a body at rest—whereas it is enough if the body be but moving at a tardier pace. In the one case, the strength of the collision would be estimated by the whole velocity—yet, in the other, there might still be a very hard collision, though estimated only by a difference of velocities. It is thus that, for the continued pressure of the world's population

on its food, it is far from necessary that the food should have reached that stationary maximum, beyond which it cannot be carried. It is enough, for this purpose, that the limit of the world's abundance, though it does recede, should recede more slowly than *would* the limit of the world's population. A pressure, and that a very severe one, may be felt for many ages together, from a difference in the mere tendencies of their increase. The man who so runs as to break his head against a wall might receive a severe contusion, even to the breaking of his head, if, instead of a wall, it had been a slowly-retiring barrier. And therefore we do not antedate matters by taking up now the consideration of Malthus' preventive and positive checks to population. There is scarcely a period, even in the bygone history of the world, when the former checks have not been called for, and the latter have not been in actual operation. To postpone either the argument or its application till the agriculture of the world shall be perfected is a most unpractical as well as a most unintelligent view of the question—for long ere this distant consummation can be realized, and even now, may the obstacle of a slowly-retiring limit begin to be felt. The tendency of a progressive population to outstrip the progressive culture of the earth may put mankind into a condition of straitness and difficulty—and that for many generations before the earth shall be wholly cultivated. We are not sure, but it may have done so from the commencement of the race, and throughout all its generations.

Certain it is, at all events, that the produce of the soil cannot be made to increase at the rate that population *would* increase. Neither mechanical invention, nor more intense manual labour, is sufficient for this purpose. On the supposition that the numbers of mankind were to increase up to their natural capability of increase, no human skill or human labour, though doing their uttermost, could suffice for raising a produce up to the population —nor will the mass of society ever be upheld in comfort without the operation of certain other principles by which to restrain the excess of the population over the produce.

The impotency of the one expedient, and efficacy of the other, are nowhere more convincingly exhibited, than along what may be termed the extreme margin of cultivation. It is there where the land pays no rent; and, laying aside for the present the consideration of profit, it is there where the produce that is reared can do no more than feed the labouring cultivators and their secondaries. But let the population increase to the extent of its own inherent power of increase, and it would force the existing limit of cultivation; or, in other words, flow over upon a soil inferior to that which had last been entered on, or inferior to that which, at the then rate of enjoyment, could do no more than feed the labouring cultivators and their secondaries. The consequence of such a descent is inevitable. The rate of enjoyment must fall. The agricultural workmen must either submit to be worse fed than before; or, parting with so many of their secon-

daries, they must submit to be worse clothed, or lodged, or furnished than before. The likelihood is, that they would so proportion their sacrifices as to suffer in both these ways—and so there behoved to be a general degradation of comfort in the working classes of society. There is, to be sure, another way in which they might possibly extract from the more ungrateful soil, on which they had just entered, the same plenty as before. They may submit to harder labour, by putting forth a more strenuous husbandry on the inferior land—but this too is degradation. Whether by an increase of drudgery, or an increase of destitution, there may, in either way, be a sore aggravation to the misery of labourers.

If it be not possible, then, to sustain in comfort and sufficiency the working classes, by keeping up the produce to the population, when suffered to proceed according to its own spontaneous energies—there seems only to be another alternative for the achievement of this great problem, that of keeping down the population to the produce. We know of no other right, or comfortable, or efficient way of doing this, than by the establishment of a habit and a principle among the labourers themselves. If they will in general enter recklessly into marriage, it is not possible to save a general descent in their circumstances. By the operation of causes already explained, a population may flow onward, in the way of increase, from one age to another, without any abridgment on the comforts of our peasantry. When these are trenched upon, it is

no longer a flow—but we should call it an overflow. And the only way, we apprehend, of preventing this overflow, with all its consequent wretchedness and crime, is by the formation of a higher taste for comfort and decency among the peasantry themselves. Marriage is not necessarily the effect of a headlong impulse; but may be a voluntary act, in the determination of which prudence and forethought have had an influential share. It is evident that the more we elevate man into a reflective being, and inspire him with self-respect, and give him a demand for larger and more refined accommodations, and, in one word, raise his standard of enjoyment—the more will the important step of marriage become a matter of deliberation and delay. There is the utmost difference, in this respect, between the man who is content to live on potatoes, and spend his days in a sordid hovel, and the man who aspires, and, indeed, will not be satisfied without that style of food, and furniture, and dress, which we find generally to obtain among a well-conditioned peasantry. There is a sense of character, as well as a taste for comfort, connected with this habit; and when these become general in a land, there is, of consequence, a most sure and salutary postponement in the average date of matrimony. In a newly-settled country, where there is much good land still unoccupied, the moral preventive check might not be called for. In an old country, where it is called for, but not observed, we are sure to behold a wretched and degraded peasantry. There is no other method

by which to raise them above this level, or to prevent their falling into it, than by the vigorous operation of this check. Our peasantry, it should be understood by all, have in this way, though in this way only, their comfort and independence in their own hands. They are on high vantage-ground, if they but knew it; and it is the fondest wish of every enlightened philanthropist, that they should avail themselves to the uttermost of the position which they occupy. It is at the bidding of their collective will, what the remuneration of labour shall be; for they have entire and absolute command over the supply of labour. If they will, by their rash and blindfold marriages, over-people the land, all the devices of human benevolence and wisdom cannot ward off from them the miseries of an oppressed and straitened condition. There is no possible help for them, if they will not help themselves. It is to a rise and reformation in the habits of our peasantry that we would look for deliverance, and not to the impotent crudities of a speculative legislation. Many are the schemes of amelioration at all times afloat. We hold that, without the growth of popular intelligence and virtue, they will, every one of them, be ineffectual. This will at length save the country from the miseries of a redundant population,—and this we apprehend to be the great, the only specific for its worst moral and its worst political disorders.

It is not, however, by a direct promulgation of the doctrines of Mr Malthus, that the people

will be converted to the side of their own interest. We can imagine nothing more preposterous than the diffusion, for this purpose, of tracts on population among the families of the land. The change will be accomplished surely, though indirectly, and by insensible progress, through the means of general instruction, or by the spread of common, and more especially of sound Christian education over the country. There is an indissoluble connexion between the moral character and the economic comfort of a peasantry; and the doctrine of Malthus is the *vinculum* by which to explain it. But it is not necessary to point out the vinculum to them. To make good the effect, it is not at all necessary that they should understand its dependence upon the cause. It is enough, if, in the state of their own principles and feelings, they present or provide the cause. Let them only be a well-taught and moralized people; and, in that proportion, will they mix prudence and calculation and foresight, with every step in the history of their lives. The desirable effect will follow without any theory, or any anticipation of theirs. Let it, on the average, be held disreputable to marry without a fair and adequate prospect or provision; and the result would be a certain average of later marriages, or a country less burdened with an excess of population. It is thus, that half a century ago, in the Lowlands of Scotland, the habit of a large preparation often required, for its accomplishment, the delay of years after the virtuous attachment was formed—this habit was nearly universal among

our well-schooled and well-ordered families. And so, though poverty was not unknown, yet pauperism was unknown; and notwithstanding the general barrenness of our soil, did the moral prevail over the physical causes, and uphold within our borders an erect and independent peasantry. They exemplified the doctrine of Malthus, and realized its benefits, long before that doctrine was propounded to the world.

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All the remedies which have been proposed against a state of general destitution in society, may be classified under two descriptions. By the first, it is sought to provide the adequate means for the increasing numbers of mankind. By the second, to keep down the numbers to the stationary, or, comparatively speaking, to the slowly-increasing means. The first may, we think, be conveniently designated the external remedies—insomuch as their object is to equalize the means with the population, by an increase on the former term, or by an increase and enlargement of the resources from without. The second may, perhaps, be contradistinguished from the other, by viewing it in the light of an internal remedy—insomuch as its object is to maintain the equality of the two by preventing an undue increase on the latter term, which can only be achieved, in a right way, by adding to the restraints of prudence and principle from within. It is our main design to demonstrate the insufficiency of one and all the remedies put together which belong to the first class—and to contrast with their

operation, the effect of the moral remedy, the prosperous economic state that will surely be realized through the medium of general intelligence and virtue, or by an action on the minds of the people themselves.

ON THE INCREASE AND LIMIT OF EMPLOYMENT.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. I.)

THE great and immediate demand is for the application of the external remedies; and, till these have done their uttermost, the feeling is, that the application of the internal is meanwhile uncalled for. So long, it is imagined, as there are still unevoked any possible resources from without, it is yet time to think of a restraint from within. It is readily admitted, that, as cultivation is carried downward through the gradation of soils, the last which has been entered on does no more, in the existing state of our agriculture, than barely remunerate the operations of its husbandry—or, laying capital at present out of the account, than feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries. And it is farther granted, that, if the last possible limit is ever to be reached, the tendency of the population to increase must either be corrected by the positive, or kept in by the preventive checks; and that, were the operation of the moral preventive check sufficiently powerful, there might, even in the ultimate state of the world's agriculture, be as high,

or a more highly conditioned peasantry, than at any preceding stage of the world's history. But it is not seen, that, long anterior to this consummation, the moral preventive check may be imperiously called for, in order to sustain the comfort and circumstances of the working population. Nevertheless, this moral restraint is desirable *now*, as well as *then;* and that just because the tendency to an increase in the number of labourers far outstrips the tendency to an increase in the productive powers of labour. It is quite true, that, by the inventions of machinery, and the improvements which are ever taking place, both in the methods of agriculture, and the implements of agricultural labour, the poorer soils may, for an indefinitely long period, be made to yield as much, in return for the same work, as did their predecessor soils in the series of cultivation. Yet there is nothing in this to supersede the moral restraint—and precisely because, with every possible enlargement, subsistence *will* not increase so fast as population *would* increase. And therefore it is, that, notwithstanding all which may be alleged of the still unexhausted capabilities of the soil, either in this or in any other country of the world, we cannot possibly be saved from the *present* and the perpetual miseries of a redundant population, but by a higher taste for the comforts and the decencies of life among the population themselves. This, by its controlling effect on the date of marriage, and so on the largeness and number of rising families, keeps up the price of labour, by keeping down the supply of it in

the labour market. This we hold to be the great specific for ensuring a high average style of comfort and enjoyment among our peasantry—nor do we regard it as a less wise and beautiful connexion in the mechanism of society, that the most direct way to establish it is through the medium of popular intelligence and virtue—giving thereby a practical importance to efficient Christian instruction, unknown to the most of economists, and which no mere economist can possibly realize.

But though the progress of cultivation, and the produce extracted by labourers from the last and farthest margin of it, do truly represent both the progress in numbers, and the state in respect to comfort, of our operative population ; * and though, when viewed in this way, the conclusion seems irresistible, that there is a slowly-receding limit to the means of subsistence, on which population is ever pressing, so that if it press too hardly, it must straiten and depress the condition of labourers—yet we hear of a thousand other expedients for an amelioration in the state of the working classes of society, beside the only effectual expedient of a general principle and prudence in regard to marriages, which it is for the working classes of so-

* The produce extracted by that portion of our labourers who are employed at the extreme margin of cultivation, will, after a deduction for profit and taxes, truly represent and measure the general state of comfort among the operative population at large ; because an inferiority of condition cannot long subsist between one class of labourers and another, there being a constant tendency to equalization, by the free movements of individual labourers from the employment that is worse remunerated, to the employment that is better.

ciety, and them alone, to put into operation. What gives plausibility to these expedients is, that society is so exceedingly complicated a thing, insomuch that, when viewed in some one aspect, it holds out a promise of improvement or relief, which, under another or more comprehensive aspect, is seen to be quite illusory. For example, when one witnesses the vast diversity of trades or employments in society, by each of which, or at least in the prosecution of which, so many thriving families are supported, then it is conceived, that the highway for the relief of the unprovided is to find them a trade, to find them employment. Or, when looking to the connexion between capital and labour, and perceiving that the office of the former is to maintain the latter—then, on the idea that capital may, by the operation of parsimony and good management, be extended *ad infinitum*, is it held, by almost every economist of high name, that every accumulation of capital carries an addition along with it to the subsistence of labourers. Or again, when one looks to the multitudes supported by foreign trade, in all its departments, the imagination is, that, as agriculture has its capabilities, so commerce has its distinct and additional capabilities, and that, whatever limit there may be to the power of the one for the maintenance of families, this is amply made up by the indefinite extension which might be given to the other. Again, we often hear taxation vaguely, though confidently talked of, as the great incubus on the prosperity of labourers; and that, if this were only lightened or removed, there would thence-

forth ensue a mighty enlargement both of industry and comfort to the families of the working classes. And then, in the list of national grievances, we hear of the enormous and overgrown properties which are vested in the few—and a general abundance diffused among the many is figured to be the consequence that would result, if not from the spoliation and forcible division of this wealth, at least from the abolition of entails, and of the law of primogeniture. Or in the absence, perhaps the failure, of all the expedients, emigration is held forth as a sovereign specific for all the distresses of an overcrowded land. And, lastly, after every thing but the moral habit of labourers themselves has been thought of, there follows, in this list of artifices for their relief, a scheme which, no longer existing in fancy, has been bodied forth into actual operation, and is the one of all others most directly fitted to undermine the principle and prudence of labourers—even a compulsory tax on the wealthy for the relief of the destitute, so as to disarm poverty of its terrors, and proclaim a universal impunity for dissipation and idleness. Now that this last great expedient has been adverted to, we need scarcely advert to any of those lesser ones, which, though but the crudities of mere sentimentalism, have been proposed, each as a grand panacea, for all the disorders of the social state,—such as the cottage system, and the cow system, and the village economy of Mr. Owen, and the various plans of home-colonization that have been thought to supersede the lessons of Malthus, or, at least, practically to

absolve us from all regard to them for centuries to come.

Now the remedies we have just specified may be regarded as belonging to the first class. They are all external remedies; and it will be our distinct aim to demonstrate, in succession, the inefficacy of each of them. There is not one of them that will serve as a measure of permanent relief. In as far as they hold out the promise of an indefinite harbourage for an ever-increasing population, they but practise a deceitful mockery on the hopes of the philanthropist. To whichever of the quarters now specified we may, with fond expectation, turn ourselves, we shall speedily be met by a check in every way as difficult to force, as is the last limit between cultivation and barrenness. *To this limit, in fact, one and all of them may be reduced*—and just as really, though not so obviously, in Britain as in Norway. In every society of complicated structure and widely-diversified interests, many are the distinct propositions that might be offered for enlarging the sustenance and comfort of the human species. They can all, however apparently remote and various among themselves, be brought to the place at which husbandry ceases from her operations, because no longer profitable; and there the merits of each may be tried and pronounced upon. That is the place, in fact, though but recently adverted to in the science of political economy, where many a question can be decided, which involves the greatest earthly hopes and interests of society.

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Hitherto we have only been attending to the limit of cultivation, where, at the soils last entered upon, the produce is barely adequate to the expenses of the husbandry; or, abstracting still from the consideration of profit, where the produce could do no more than feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries. But the produce of the superior soils is more than adequate to this object. The same improvement in agriculture, in virtue of which we now draw a full subsistence for its labourers, from land that had long lain beyond the outskirts of cultivation, will enable us to draw from the fertile land, that had long lain within its boundary, a greater surplus of produce than before, over and above the expenses of the farm management. It is this surplus which constitutes rent,—which, generally speaking, is *measured* by the difference between the produce of a given quantity of labour on any soil, and the produce of the same labour on the soil that yields no rent. It goes in the shape of revenue to the landlord; who either receives it in kind, or receives in money the power of purchasing it—a power which, in the act of expenditure, he transfers in various parts throughout the year, to those who labour in his service, or who minister in various ways to his accommodation.

Now, it is this expenditure on the part of landlords which gives rise to another class of labourers, beside the two that we have already specified. Should the rent but enable the proprietor to provide himself with the necessaries of life—then that part of it which goes to purchase the first necessaries would

but serve to subsist an idle man instead of a labourer; and that part of it which went to the purchase of second necessaries would but serve to discharge additional maintenance, and so give additional extent to the secondary population. But such is the unequal distribution of landed property, and so large are the shares which fall in general to the possessors, that, in the vast majority of instances, the rent can do a great deal more than uphold the proprietor in the necessaries of life. It can enable him to subsist better, and to lodge and clothe himself better than an ordinary workman. He can afford to indulge in the luxuries of life; and the preparation of these constitutes the employment of a very large population. It will be found very convenient to distinguish them by a particular name, even though we should not for this purpose fix on the best appellation. We conceive that the fittest term by which to characterize them, is one descriptive of a circumstance in which their employment differs from that of the two first classes. The two first classes are employed in the preparation of articles which cannot be dispensed with—the preparation of the first and second necessaries of life. The others are employed in the preparation of articles which can be dispensed with. A man can want luxuries—he cannot want necessaries. He might forego luxuries altogether; and so dismiss from his service the whole of this third class, who are employed in preparing them. Or, he might commute one set of luxuries for another; and so, without dismissing them from his service, he might at least shift their

employment in that service. It is this liability of being transferred from one employment to another, and this power, on the part of their employers, of dispensing, if they choose to make a surrender of their luxuries, with their services altogether, which has led me to affix to this class the title of the *disposable*. They form the disposable population, in contradistinction to the agricultural and the secondary.

It is for the sake of defining, and not of stigmatising, that we speak of luxuries. By this term we would comprehend every thing prepared by human labour, and which enters not into the average maintenance of labourers. The landed proprietor must at least have the food of other men—but, in as far as, in style and in quality, it is above that of common labourers, he indulges in luxuries; and so there are cooks and confectionaries, and many others employed in preparing delicacies for the table, who should have their place assigned to them among the disposable population. He must be lodged as well as other men; but then, in as far as his house exceeds in magnitude and elegance that of an ordinary workman, for that excess he must have an additional service of masons, and carpenters, and roofers, and smiths, who, in respect of their contributing to this higher style, belong not to the secondary but to the disposable population. He must be provided also with furniture and clothing, up to the degree of comfort and tastefulness which prevail among the common people—but, in as far as additional labourers are

required, for upholding a higher tastefulness, or a greater abundance, there is a host of tradesmen, and artificers, tailors, and shoemakers, and upholsterers, and cabinet-makers, who must be classified in thousands with the disposable population. We shall not attempt to enumerate the exceeding diversity of employments which the taste, and the humour, and the artificial wants, and the wayward appetency of the landed proprietors give rise to. It is mainly they who impress on the industry of the disposable population any direction which seemeth unto them good; and who, by spending among them their rents, or, in other words, by making over to them the surplus produce of their estates (or, which is the same thing, by transferring to them the power of purchasing that produce), do, in return for their varied services, effuse maintenance upon their families. This disposable population must, like the agricultural, have a train of secondaries attached to them; and receive as much from their employers as shall provide themselves with the first necessaries, and as shall suffice for the food of those who provide them with the second necessaries of life. It is not enough that the disposable population are *subsisted*—this would only imply their being fed by their employers. They must be *maintained*, which, in addition to their being fed, implies their being clothed, and lodged, and furnished, in all those secondary accommodations that enter into the average comfort of labourers. The price of their services includes in it the power of purchasing food for themselves, and food

for all the secondary labourers who, either mediately or immediately, are employed by them.

This completes our view of the distribution which takes place in society of the labouring classes. The agricultural population are employed in providing all with the first necessaries of life. The secondary population, in providing all with the second necessaries of life. And the disposable population, in providing all who are elevated above the condition of labourers with the higher comforts of life, its luxuries, its elegancies, which are not essential to the maintenance of human beings, but minister to the wealthy an endless diversity of gratifications, and give rise to a like diversity of employments among the people. It is needless to explain here, how it is that the wages of labour, in all the three classes, are nearly equalized—insomuch, that they who are toiling at the extreme margin of cultivation, and there trying to force a return from soils which had never been attempted before, are equally remunerated for their services, with those who, in the walks of busy artisanship, are ministering to the most refined enjoyments of the wealthiest and the noblest in our land. For this, and for many other doctrines which we presuppose, without any exhibition of their proof, we must satisfy ourselves with a reference to the general science of political economy.

Here, however, we cannot refrain from observing the connexion which obtains between the state of the soil and the state of human society. Had no ground yielded more in return for the labour ex-

pended on it, than the food of the cultivators and their secondaries, the existence of one and all of the human race would have been spent in mere labour. Every man would have been doomed to a life of unremitting toil for his bodily subsistence; and none could have been supported in a state of leisure, either for idleness, or for other employments than those of husbandry, and such coarser manufactures as serve to provide society with the second necessaries of existence. The species would have risen but a few degrees, whether physical or moral, above the condition of mere savages. It is just because of a fertility in the earth, by which it yields a surplus over and above the food of the direct and secondary labourers, that we can command the services of a disposable population, who, in return for their maintenance, minister to the proprietors of this surplus all the higher comforts and elegancies of life. It is precisely to this surplus we owe it, that society is provided with more than a coarse and a bare supply for the necessities of animal nature. It is the original fund out of which are paid the expenses of art, and science, and civilization, and luxury, and law, and defence, and all, in short, that contributes either to strengthen or to adorn the commonwealth. Without this surplus, we should have had but an agrarian population—consisting of husbandmen, and those few homely and rustic artificers who, scattered in hamlets over the land, would have given their secondary services to the whole population. It marks an interesting connexion between the capabilities of the soil and

the condition of social life, that to this surplus we stand indispensably indebted, for our crowded cities, our thousand manufactories for the supply of comforts and refinements to society, our wide and diversified commerce, our armies of protection, our schools and colleges of education, our halls of legislation and justice, even our altars of piety and temple services. It has been remarked by geologists, as the evidence of a presiding design in nature, that the waste of the soil is so nicely balanced by the supply from the disintegration of the upland rocks, which are worn and pulverized at such a rate, as to keep up a good vegetable mould on the surface of the earth. But each science teems with the like evidences of a devising and intelligent God; and when we view aright the many beneficent functions to which, through the instrumentality of its surplus produce, the actual degree of the earth's fertility is subservient, we cannot imagine a more wondrous and beautiful adaptation between the state of external nature and the mechanism of human society.

By this mechanism of human society, as far as we have explained it, the exceeding diversity of trades and employments may be accounted for. Even were the barrenness of the land such, that it only yielded food for an agricultural and a secondary population—this distribution would of itself give rise to a considerable variety of distinct occupation; and, under the system of a division in labour, we should have shoemakers, and tailors, and weavers, and masons, and carpenters, and

artificers in hardware, and dealers, as well as fabricators, in sundry more articles—making out, on the whole, a pretty copious enumeration of separate callings, with the separate interests belonging to them. But when, in addition to the subsistence of an agricultural and a secondary, there is fertility in the land for the subsistence of a disposable population, the multiplication of trades and employments is thereby indefinitely extended—being as numerous as the caprices of human fancy and taste, or the varieties of human indulgence. It is thus that, in proportion as the mechanism of social life becomes more complex, it is also all the more bewildering; and, amid the intricacy of its manifold combinations, we lose sight both of the springs and the limits of human maintenance. One very wide and prevalent delusion, more especially, and which has misguided both the charity of philanthropists and the policy of statesmen, is, that the employment in which men are engaged is the source of their maintenance,—whereas, it is only the channel through which they draw that maintenance from the hands of those who buy the products of their employment. This principle has in it all the simplicity of a truism—and yet it is wonderful with what perversity of apprehension, both the managers of a state and the managers of a parish miss the sight of it. Whether we look to acts of parliament, or to the actings of a parochial vestry—we shall find them proceeding on its being the grand specific for the relief of the poor, to find employment for them. Now, unless that employment be the raising of food, it does

nothing to alleviate the disproportion between the numbers of the people and the means of their subsistence,—and if there be a limit, as we have already demonstrated, to the food, we may be very sure that this device of employment will not turn out a panacea for the distresses of an overburdened land.

But the fallacy to which we now advert, is not confined to the matters of practical administration. It may also be recognized in the theories of those who have attempted to adjust the philosophy of the subject. In political economy it will often be found, that the channel is confounded with the source,—and hence a delusion, not in the business of charity alone, but which has extended far and wide among the lessons of the science.

And yet it is a delusion which, one might think, should be dissipated by but one step of explanation. A single truism puts it to flight. Nothing appears more obvious, than that *any trade or manufacture originates only its own products.* All that a stocking-maker contributes to society is simply stockings. This, and nothing more, is what comes forth of his establishment. And the same is true of all the other trades or employments which can be specified. They work off nothing, they emit nothing but their own peculiar articles. Were this sure and ample axiom but clearly and steadfastly kept in view, it would put to flight a number of illusions in political science,—illusions which have taken obstinate hold of our legislators, and which to this moment keep firm possession in the systems of

many of our economists. They almost all, in a greater or less degree, accredit a manufacture with something more than its own products. The inclination is, to accredit it also with the maintenance of its labourers. In every transaction of buying and selling, there are two distinct elements,—the commodity, and the price of the commodity; of which price, the maintenance of the labourers is generally far the largest ingredient. Now, the thing to be constantly kept in view is, that a manufacture should only be accredited with its own commodity, and not, over and above this, with the price of its commodity. These two stand, as it were, on different sides of an exchange. To the manufacture is to be ascribed all that we behold on the one side. It furnishes the commodity for the market. But it did not also create the wealth that supplies the price of the commodity. It does not furnish society with both itself and its equivalent. The latter comes from a distinct quarter; and we repeat, that by confounding, in imagination, two things which are distinct in fact, a false direction has been given, both to the policy of states, and to the theories of philosophers.

This confusion of sentiment appears in a variety of ways. When one sees a thriving and industrious village, and that the employment of the families secures for them their maintenance, it is most natural to invest the former with a power of command, tantamount to a power of creation over the latter. The two go together; and because when the employment ceases, the maintenance ceases, it is con-

ceived of the former, that in the order of causation it has the precedency. We affirm of a shawl-making village, that all which it yields to society is shawls. We accredit it with this, but with nothing more. But it is accredited with a great deal more, by those who talk in lofty style of our manufacturing interests, and the dependence thereupon of a nation's support and a nation's greatness. We hold, that if, through the exhaustion of the raw material, or any other cause, there were to be an extinction of the employment, the country would only be deprived of its wonted supply of shawls; but the prevalent imagination is, that the country would be deprived of its wonted support for so many hundred families. The whole amount of the mischief, in our estimation, would be the disappearance of shawls; in theirs, it would be the disappearance of that which upheld an integral part of the country's population. It is forgotten, that though shawls may no longer be produced, or brought to market, the price that wont to be paid for them is still in reserve, and ready to be expended by the purchasers on some other article of accommodation or luxury. The circumstances which have brought the manufacture to ruin, do not affect the ability of those who consumed the products of the manufacture. The employment is put an end to; but the maintenance comes from another quarter, and can be discharged in as great abundance as before, on as large a population. Their employment in making shawls was not the source of their maintenance; it was only the channel by which they drew it to their

homes. The destruction or stoppage of the channel does not infer a stoppage at the source; that will find for itself another channel, through which all that enters into the maintenance of our industrious families might be effused upon them as liberally as before. We dispute not the temporary evils of the transition. We allow that a change of employment may bring individual and temporary distress along with it. But we contend, that the expenditure of those who support our disposable population will not be lessened, but only shifted, by this new state of things; and that, after the change is accomplished in the direction of their industry, we should behold as numerous a society as ever, upheld with the same liberality in every thing (with the single exception of shawls, and the substitution of some other luxury in their place) that enters into the comfort and convenience of families.

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It must be obvious, that employment in agriculture is not an indefinite resource for an indefinite population—seeing that it must stop short at the land which refuses to yield the essential food of its direct and secondary labourers. And it should be equally obvious, that as little is employment in manufactures an indefinite resource—seeing that the definite quantity of food raised can only sustain a certain and definite number of labourers. The latter position seems, on the first announcement, to carry its own evidence along with it; yet there is a certain subtle imagination in its way, which

we have attempted to dispose of. Our argument rests on the veriest truism—that a manufacture is creative of nothing beyond its own products. But truism though it is, it has been strangely overlooked, not only in the devices of the charitable, but both in the policy of statesmen, and in the doctrinal schemes of the economists. Yet we think a sufficient explanation can be given, both of the manner in which the perverse misconception at first arose, and of the obstinacy wherewith it still lingers and keeps its ground amongst us.

In opposition, then, to the principle, that employment is creative of nothing but its own products, it might be alleged, that the presentation of these products excites a desire for the acquisition of them, and so stimulates other employments in the fabrication of new products, to be given in exchange for the former ones. This was remarkably exemplified throughout the whole of Europe, at the termination of the middle ages. Of this we have a masterly sketch by Dr. Adam Smith, in his Wealth of Nations; when he traces the great economic change which took place, in virtue of a new taste and a new habit on the part of the landholders. Historically, it was the presentation to their notice of those articles of splendour and luxury which manufactures had produced, and which commerce brought to their doors, that prompted the change. This was the moving force, which shifted their old expenditure, and gave another direction to it. They dismissed their idle retainers, and appropriated the surplus produce by which

they had been fed, to the purchase of luxuries in dress, or of luxuries in equipage and furniture. They furnished subsistence to as many as before, but in a new capacity, and in return for a different service. The disposable population were differently disposed of. Instead of so many idle marauders, living, save at their seasons of warfare, in sloth and sordidness, on the domain of their feudal lord, they were transmuted into orderly, industrious citizens—as dependent, for the first necessaries of life, on the country as before, but yielding, in return for these, not the homage of their personal attendance, but the tangible produce of their own handiwork. And along with this economic, there was effected a great moral change in the state of society. The contests of violence between adjoining proprietors, were changed for the more peaceful contests and rivalships of vanity. The hundreds, who in other days would have followed them to the field, on services of revenge or plunder, were now at peaceful occupation in their workshops—congregated into villages, which grew into cities, and there placed under the protection of law and social order. Liberty, and justice, and civilization, and right government, all emerged from this altered condition of things; and when we reflect that commerce was the prime mover in this great transition, by the new desires which it infused, and the change which it effected in the style of living and habit of our landlords—it must be allowed that, historically, to commerce we owe benefits of a much higher order than the mere

gratification of any of the physical or inferior appetencies of our nature.

But there is still another reason (beside the new direction given to the expenditure of landlords) why commerce might be said to have been creative at that period of more than their own immediate products. When the landlords parted with their idle retainers, and they were compelled to be industrious for their livelihood—along with a new habit of indulgence among the proprietors, there sprung up a new habit of industry among the people. At one and the same time, the proprietors became more luxurious than before, and the people became more laborious than before. Even these latter participated to some degree in the taste of their superiors, and were willing also to make their sacrifices, that they might be admitted to their own humble share in those recent gratifications which were beginning to be placed too within reach of the peasantry, and were everywhere raising the standard of enjoyment. They accordingly made sacrifice of their indolence and love of ease, even as the grandees above them made sacrifice of their power and parade of attendance. At the same time, the rights of all were beginning to be more recognised and respected; and, under the administration of more benign and equitable laws, the poor man felt a greater stimulus to labour than before, in the greater security which he now had for the possession and enjoyment of its fruits. And then the severe and regular industry of manufactures was followed by a more severe and regular industry

than heretofore in agriculture. The desire of each man to better his condition, now began to develop its energies in all the classes of society. Landlords, with a larger and juster sense of their interests, disposed of their farms in the way that yielded the greatest revenue to themselves; and husbandmen, with the benefit of a now more industrious peasantry, so laboured the farms, as to work out the greatest remainder of produce for themselves. In addition to this, the business of the country participated, though never to such a degree, with the business of towns, in the benefits that result from the division of labour, and in the greater power given by mechanical invention to the implements of labour. Altogether, the limit of cultivation, under the operation of these various causes, has receded an immense way back within these three centuries. Millions of acres that, under the old lazzaroni system, had never been entered on, are now yielding subsistence to man; and the increase of food has been surely and speedily followed up by an increase of population. The land of inferior soils, that formerly yielded nothing, is now productive; and the land that formerly produced, is now, in virtue of deeper and more laborious culture, of tenfold greater fertility than before. Now, in Europe, all this may be in a great measure traced to the reaction of commerce upon agriculture. It was commerce which gave the impulse; and, in addition to its own products, it, through the medium of the new system of society which it introduced, called forth products from the earth that, but for

it, might never have been extracted. In this instance at least, commerce seems to have been the creator, not of its own commodities alone, but of the equivalents for these commodities—a fountain-head, not merely for the products of its labour, but for the maintenance of its labourers.

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One plain distinction, and a distinction not to be overlooked by the slight exceptions which can be alleged against it, is, that to agriculture mainly we owe the necessaries of life; whereas, many of its luxuries cannot be had without commerce and manufactures. This is a most momentous distinction, and a vast deal turns upon it. We not only see in it, that manufactures must necessarily, in point of extent, be limited by the produce of the soil; but that the owners of the soil, in virtue of the property which belongs to them, have a natural superiority over all other classes of men, which by no device of politics or law can be taken away from them. The holder of what I cannot want, is the master of my services. He can impress upon them any direction which seemeth unto him good. He can transfer his demand from one luxury to another; and so, as far as his consumption goes, he can extend one manufacture at the expense of a proportional abridgment on another manufacture. Or, he can part with the use of some tangible commodity altogether, and, with the price which went to purchase it, may obtain for himself the use of a menial servant; and, in so doing, he effects an absolute

reduction in the manufactures of the country. Or, whether in the spirit of a voluntary patriotism, or in submission to lawful authority, he may render to the state the price of many luxuries; and thus withdraw so many of the disposable population from the business of trade, to the business of our national establishments. It is thus that any given change in the taste or habit of our landlords would effect a corresponding change in the employment of the great mass of our disposable population. They are virtually the holders of the maintenance of this class of labourers; and it is their collective will which fixes the direction of their labour. Apart from the importation of food, there can be no more labourers in the country than the produce of their estates will subsist. It is the quantity of this produce which fixes the amount of labour; and as far as the labour of the disposable population is concerned, it is the will of the holders of this produce which fixes the direction of it. They are the natural masters of the country; and the ascendancy wherewith their property invests them, hinges on this clear and simple distinction—Men can want luxuries; they cannot want necessaries.

But more than this. Every increase of food is followed up by an increase of population. It is not so with any other manufactured goods, save in as far as that may work an increase of food, by pushing on the limit of cultivation in the way that we have already explained. Such, at all events, is the difference between the two sorts of produce, that the market cannot permanently be overladen

with corn, even though its growers should persist in keeping up and increasing the supply of it. Unlike to all other articles of merchandise, an increased supply of food is surely and speedily followed up by an increased demand for it. It may be a drug in the market for a year or two; but though it should continue to be sent in the same, or in superior abundance, season after season, it will not remain so. The reason is, that, unlike to other commodities, it creates a market for itself. Through the medium of the stimulus given to population, it does what no other articles of merchandise can do—it multiplies its own consumers. A plenty of the first necessaries is the only species of plenty which surely and largely tells on the population. A plenty of luxuries has no such effect; and not even a plenty of the second necessaries, as shoes or stockings, or the materials of house-building. The proprietors of the first necessaries are on the only sure vantage-ground. They alone have nothing to fear ultimately from the indefinite supply of their peculiar commodity. The produce of agriculture may be made to increase, up to the uttermost limit of its capabilities; for, whatever the additional number may be which it can feed, that number will rise to be fed by it.

We can therefore be at no loss to perceive, how an indefinite supply of the products of agriculture must be followed up by a like indefinite supply of the products of manufactures or commerce. The people whom it feeds give, in their handiwork, a return for their subsistence. But this does not

hold true of the reverse proposition. The products of manufactures do not *indefinitely* call forth the products of agriculture. They did so historically, at that period when they effected a change in the taste and habit of landlords. They still do so gradually, when, in virtue of their greater supply by an improvement in the powers of labour, they reduce the numbers of the secondary class, and so push cultivation further among the inferior soils. But beyond this limit they have no power. An increase of agricultural produce will, through the medium of an increasing population, be followed up, *pari passu*, by an increase of manufactured commodities. But a mere increase of manufactured commodities cannot force the existing barrier in the way of cultivation, or force an entrance upon that land which is not able to feed its agricultural labourers and their secondaries. There is one way in which this barrier may be made to retire. Labourers may consent to be worse fed than before, or to put up with fewer of the secondary accommodations. If, with this reduction in the standard of enjoyment, they still work as hardly, or, if even with the same, and perhaps a higher standard, they are willing to put forth more than their wonted labour—this might widen the limits, and so multiply the products of agriculture. Still, after these modifications are admitted, there is a wide difference between agriculture and manufactures—the former influencing the latter in a way that the latter cannot influence the former. Agriculture, with every permanent increase of its products, can,

through the medium of an increasing population, command a like increase in the products of manufactures. Manufactures cannot, by any increase of their products, while the standard of enjoyment, and the powers of personal and mechanical labour remain the same, force a like increase in the products of agriculture.

This distinction between agriculture and manufactures would serve greatly to modify the reasonings of Dr. Smith, when, without reference to any such distinction, he tells of one species of commodities stimulating the production of another species of commodities. It follows not, because commerce had the power, by tempting landlords from an old to a new habit of expenditure, of extorting additional products from a soil whose capabilities had scarcely been entered on; it therefore has this power, when agriculture, with its stationary or slowly-receding limit, has either reached, or is so much nearer the uttermost length to which it can be carried. The stimulus might be as powerful as before. There might be as intense a desire for the increase of enjoyments, whether they be the enjoyments of pleasure, or those of pageantry. But this moving force is in contact now with an obstacle which stood then at a distance so remote, as to have permitted an advancing movement, and that a tolerably free one, for several centuries. We now begin to feel, and may indeed be said to have long felt, the utter powerlessness of mere production in manufactures to enlarge the wealth, or speed forward the economic prosperity of a land.

What commerce did in an incipient, it cannot do in an extreme state of agriculture; and in the oldest and richest countries of Europe, the sanguine, the splendid anticipations which the earlier experience awakened, checked and chastised as they have been by the later experience, are now beginning to be abandoned.

But not only is there a visionary hope associated with this contemplation,—there is also an alarm which, it is comfortable to think, is alike visionary. They who so count on the reaction of a stimulus, as to imagine that every addition beyond their present extent to our manufactures will give a proportional enlargement to our agriculture, might also imagine that every subtraction beneath their present extent from our manufactures will proportionally lessen and contract our agriculture also. The two imaginations, in fact, are products of one and the same fallacy. He who thinks that it was the creation of a manufacture which stimulated and called forth an increase of agriculture, may well be apprehensive lest the destruction of the manufacture should as much throw the agriculture back again. Now, it is not so. Though a particular manufacture should be brought to ruin, and the employment in it should cease, the counterpart maintenance will not cease; and our security against this effect is, that there would still remain a sufficiency of objects, on which it were not only possible, but felt by the landlords to be desirable, that they should still spend their incomes. There is not a luxury that can be named, the loss of

which would cause our agriculture to go back; even though, historically, it may have been the first presentation of that luxury to their notice, which, by its effect on the appetency of landlords, helped to bring the agriculture forward. Now that the revulsion has taken place from the habit of the middle ages, there is no danger of the surplus produce of their estates lying idle in their hands. They will set their hearts on as large a revenue as before; and notwithstanding the ruin or disappearance of many separate trades, they will still find use for it all. In other words, amid the numerous failures and fluctuations of employment, they in the meanwhile will not let down the cultivation of a single acre; so that there shall remain as large a maintenance for the same population as before. The expenditure of its holders would be changed, but not lessened. The destruction of one manufacture would be followed up by the creation or the extension of another; or there would be a proportionate addition to the retinue of our landlords. At all events, we should behold as large a disposable class as well supported as ever. It may be Utopianism to expect, that beyond the limits of our present agriculture there lies before us a career of endless and ever-advancing prosperity; but we might at least give up all our sensitive alarms, lest, by any revolution in the trading world, our prosperity shall ever be sensibly and permanently reduced beneath that limit. So long as we have law and liberty amongst us, our economic resources will be found as stable as the constitution of the

seasons or of the soil. Unless we are struck from Heaven with the curse of barrenness, the present means of our subsistence will remain to us. We may have little to hope from a great enlargement of these means, yet have every thing to hope from a right distribution of them. There may be, there is, an impassable limit to the physical abundance of our products. There is no limit to the moral cultivation of our people. We may not be able greatly to increase our stores; but with the stores we have, a mighty achievement remains to us. We may indefinitely increase the virtuous and prudential habits of the community; and on these mainly, on these we should say exclusively, it depends whether there shall or shall not be a high average of sufficiency and comfort among the families of the land.

ON THE INCREASE AND LIMIT OF CAPITAL.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. I.)

WE use the term *capital* in the sense which is assigned to it by the great majority of our economists; not as comprehending all material and monied wealth, but only that part of it which is employed in the business of production, and is generally so employed for the purpose of obtaining a profit. Stock is the generic term, of which capital forms only a part. Were a manufacturer to take account of his stock, he would put his dwelling-house, and his furniture, and his clothes into the inventory, along with all other things which belong to him; but his capital we should restrict to his machinery, and the houses which contain it, and his implements of labour, and the amount of money which he reserved either for the repairs of his trading establishment, or the payment of his labourers. They are these, and not his dwelling-house or furniture, which obtain for him the profit that constitutes his revenue. By laying up part of this profit, instead of spending the whole of it, he may add to his capital; and we hold it one of

the most important inquiries in political economy, what the circumstances are which promote or limit the augmentation of an element that enters so largely into the views and reasonings of the science.

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What is the real power of capital for the maintenance of a people? There is nothing more constantly affirmed, in the writings of political economists, than the connection between these two elements:—"The power of a country to maintain a population is in proportion to its capital." "Increase the capital, and you increase its power to employ and to remunerate labour." "Capital is the fund out of which the wages of labour are paid, and labourers are supported." These are so many different expressions for an oft-repeated aphorism in political science. Now, capital is the fruit of accumulation; and one might be led to imagine, from such representations, as if the frugality of merchants were the primary fountain-head, whence issued forth all the comfort and subsistence of labourers. At this rate, indefinite parsimony would be followed up by the indefinitely-augmenting power of maintaining labour; and, through the medium of personal economy, an unobstructed highway would be opened to increasing and successive enlargements in the amount of the population, or in the general sufficiency of their circumstances. This is the unequivocal impression given by the reasonings of Dr Smith, on the subject of capital, and the methods of its increase. There are checks to this progress, which he has either altogether

overlooked, or at least forborne to dwell upon, and bring prominently forward. The rationale of a country's advancement in wealth and economic prosperity has thus been misconceived. The limits, placed by nature and necessity in the way of this advancement, have not been sufficiently regarded; and more especially has it been thought, that there was a creative and an emanating power in capital, which could overleap these limits, and form a guarantee against all the evils that have been ascribed to redundant population.

And on this subject, too, we might learn a lesson at that place in the science, where so many other of its lessons are to be gathered—even at the margin of separation between the cultivated and the uncultivated land. We have already seen, that cultivation cannot be speeded forward beyond this margin, at a rate faster than the improvement in the powers of labour enables the land of next inferior quality to feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries. If, by an undue increase of population, the cultivation is forced a greater way than this, then the land last entered on is not able to repay its cultivation, and distress is felt in the country because there are too many men. But as surely as there might be too many ploughmen, so there might be too many ploughs. If, in virtue of the excessive number of ploughmen, all cannot find employment, without forcing an entrance upon soils that would return inadequate wages for the labour, so, in virtue of the excessive number of ploughs, all cannot find employment, without a

like return of inadequate profit for the capital. Nay, profit forms such a fraction in the price of most articles, that a large fluctuation of price might not only diminish profit, but annihilate it, or even, by the conversion, as in algebra, of positive into negative, might transmute the profit into loss. It appears from this instance, that just as agriculture might be overladen by an excess of labour, so might it be overladen by an excess of capital. And at the extreme boundary of cultivation, might there be distinctly seen the operation of that check which opposes the indefinite advancement of both. Diminish the wages of agricultural labour beneath a certain rate, and ploughmen will cease to be multiplied. Diminish the profit of agricultural capital beneath a certain rate, or, still more surely, annihilate profit, and ploughs will cease to be multiplied. Both the population and the capital are here brought alike to a stand; and, at the point now specified, both are alike impotent for the purpose of enlarging the wealth of the country. The boasted power of capital for the maintenance of labour is, in this instance at least, found to be an illusion. There is no virtue in the excess of ploughs to maintain the excess of ploughmen. Nothing but an adequate return from the soil can uphold either; and for want of this, each excess must at length disappear,—it being as true of the capital as of the population, that it is heavier than the land can bear.

Now, what is true of agricultural, is true also of manufacturing capital. If, as we have found already, there may be too many manufacturing

labourers, so may there be too many manufacturing implements of labour. On the former taking place, there is work done by human hands, without the return of an adequate human subsistence; and so a diminution of the population. On the latter taking place, there is work done by pieces of machinery, without the return of an adequate profit to their owners; and so a diminution of their capital. What is true of the living is true of the inanimate instruments; both might be unduly multiplied. As there might be too many men, so might there be too many machines—too many power-looms, as well as too many weavers at hand-looms—too many cotton-mills, as well as too many cotton-spinners. There is a check to the one, in the lessening of wages; and in every way as sure a check to the other, in the lessening of profits. They have not looked far onward who speak of the power which lies in capital to employ and to maintain labour. They have looked only to the first step in the process—that at which the capitalist enlists workmen into his service; and for one year, or one term, can pay them liberally and well. They have not looked to the second step—that at which the return is made by them who purchase and use the commodity that has been thus manufactured. If this return be not an adequate one, the capital is not replaced; and, after a single revolution of the economic cycle, it again starts in diminished magnitude, and with a proportionally diminished power for the maintenance of labour.

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It is abundantly obvious that mere accumulation by merchants or manufacturers can only go a certain way, and, without the concurrence of other causes, must be speedily arrested. The capitalist of ten thousand pounds, who, upon its whole outlay, has eleven thousand pounds returned to him annually, can afford to spend a thousand pounds in the year, and to maintain, in a stationary condition, the principal which belongs to him. But it may happen that the taste for accumulation shall prevail over the taste for splendour or comfort. Let him reduce his yearly expenditure from a thousand pounds to eight hundred, and he will be able to vest an additional two hundred pounds in his business. And he may succeed by this in realizing a proportional increase of revenue, seeing that no individual parsimony of his can sensibly affect the general rate of profit in the country. But suppose that the same passion for accumulation should seize upon all the capitalists in the land. Let the whole sum invested by them in trade be ten millions; and their united revenue, with a profit of ten per cent., will be one million. Should all this revenue be spent, both the capital and the profit will remain stationary. But if, in virtue of the change which we now imagine—a change in the average taste and will of merchants—one-fifth of this revenue were saved, and employed in giving additional extent to their business; then, at the next revolution of the economic cycle, instead of ten millions, we should behold ten millions and two hundred thousand pounds vested in trade. The parsimony of one,

or a few individuals, could have no noticeable effect; but such a general parsimony would tell most sensibly on the rate of profit. The truth is, that, *all other circumstances remaining the same,* the revenue of merchants would fall, and that to the very extent in which they had enlarged their capital. For the one saving of two hundred thousand pounds, they would just lose this sum yearly in all time coming. The producing power of manufactures would be extended by this accumulation of theirs, but the returning power of consumers may remain unaltered. There would be more goods brought to market than before, but the whole price given for them may not be greater than before. Anterior to the general saving that we now imagine, capitalists, for the prime cost of ten millions, receive, in the whole price of their commodities, eleven millions. But since that saving, they, for the prime cost of ten millions two hundred thousand pounds, receive the same sum of eleven millions. By the saving in question, they have become at once richer in capital, and poorer in revenue. For the two hundred thousand pounds which they have added to the one, they have sustained a greatly overpassing loss; for they have taken two hundred thousand, and that yearly, from the other. It might be safe and profitable for one capitalist, or a certain fractional number of them, to accumulate. But a general accumulation cannot take place, save at the expense of the general revenue of capitalists. It is true, that, so long as agriculture is in progress, there might be yearly additions to the returning or

replacing power, by which as large, or a larger revenue, might be afforded to a still enlarging capital. But when the progress of agriculture becomes slow and difficult, or, most of all, when it touches upon the extreme limit, then the impotency of accumulation on the part of capitalists must be severely felt. Each new investiture, in fact, will then be followed up by an adverse reaction or recoil upon themselves. As they grow in capital, they will decline in revenue. There is no escaping from this consequence, after that the returning power has become stationary. Every addition to capital causes just a permanent yearly abstraction of the same amount from revenue; and the same return, on a larger prime cost, is all which the capitalists reap for their pains. Society obtains their enjoyments at a cheaper rate, when, by an overdone competition among capitalists, each strains at becoming richer than before. But if there be no increase in the wealth of customers, capitalists cannot persevere in such a walk of speculation without impoverishment and ruin to many of themselves.

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We are abundantly familiar with the idea that the rate of wages is dependent on the average standard of enjoyment among labourers. But we have not been so accustomed to think of the rate of profit as depending on the average standard of enjoyment among capitalists. Nevertheless, it is actually so. It is a question with every individual capitalist whether he shall spend the whole revenue of the current year, or how much of it he shall reserve

for the purpose of vesting it in trade, and so giving additional extension to his business—or, finally, whether he shall expend more than his revenue, and so trench upon his capital? This question turns precisely on the balance between two appetites of his nature—between the appetite for eventual gain, and the appetite for present comfort. Should the latter prevail, *and prevail generally*, capital would be kept down, and profit be sustained. Should the former prevail, and also prevail generally, capital would be augmented, and profit be depressed. It does not affect this conclusion, that the highway to fortune, on the part of the individual merchant, is to save as much, and spend as little, of his revenue as he can. It is true of every single capitalist that he is all the richer by saving than spending; and that under any given rate of profit, or with any given general habit on the part of capitalists. But it is not true that capitalists collectively will become richer by saving than by spending; for on their general habit the rate of profit immediately and essentially depends. Could they effectuate a combination amongst themselves, they might uphold, at their general and collective pleasure, the rate of profit and interest in the land. But they are not able to achieve so extensive a concert, nor would its members be individually faithful in their observation of it; and this is not the only instance in which the good of society is secured by the impossibility of combinations. Meanwhile, nothing can be truer, than that just as the wages of labour

depend on the collective taste and will of labourers, so the profits of stock depend on the collective taste and will of capitalists. With this view, profits are what capitalists in the aggregate choose to make them. And however little the rate of profit may have been associated in the minds of economists with the standard of enjoyment in the middle classes of society—yet, ultimately and efficiently, this is precisely the element on which it turns.

POPULATION AND CAPITAL.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. I.)

THERE is a parallel between population and capital, which, if more dwelt upon, would rectify the sanguine and extravagant imaginations that are still afloat respecting the power and indefinite capabilities of the latter; seeing they are the very imaginations which at one time prevailed regarding the former. The days once were when population was the great demand of patriots and political economists; and accordingly, it was held the wisest policy of a state to encourage early marriages, and raise foundling hospitals, and artificially foster in every sort of way this one element of national greatness. The days still are when capital is the great demand of politicians and philanthropists; and it is imagined that by every effort of parsimony, by retrenchment in all directions, whether public or private, by accumulation to the uttermost, we may build up to an indefinite extent this other element of national greatness. The limits of the first are now understood; and also its own spontaneous tendency to overpass these limits, so as to supersaturate a country, and produce distress

among families. The limits of the second are not understood; neither is it seen how, instead of being the object of an anxious or watchful solicitude on the part of statesmen, it may safely be left to the operation of those natural principles in virtue of which it is ever tending to its own redundancy, and working by its very excess the infliction of many a heavy misfortune on the capitalists of the land. In this respect there is no difference between immediate and antecedent labour. The one is liable to as great excess as the other. As too many human hands may be working *now*, and drawing in return an inadequate subsistence, so too many human hands may have been working *last year*, and the existent products of their industry, whether in the shape of goods, or instruments of future production, may be drawing a return of gains that are wholly as inadequate. What the action of low wages is upon the population, so the action of low profit is upon capital. They prevent the increase of both beyond a certain amount. Nay, support in the one case may be decline into starvation; and population be lessened in consequence,—and profit, in the other case, may be turned into loss, and capital be effectually lessened also.

But population and capital not only resemble each other, in respect of the limit which opposes their indefinite augmentation. They are both subject to losses and deficiencies beneath this limit, and they resemble each other in respect of the exceeding force and facility wherewith these deficiencies are repaired. If, by the operation of

disease or war, any sudden and large blank has been made in the population, it is now understood how speedily this vacuum is filled again, by the general translation of the families into better circumstances, and the stimulus given from this cause to a number of marriages that would have otherwise been postponed. And, accordingly, an unwonted number of deaths in one year is followed up, as may be seen from the tables of political arithmetic, by a like unwonted number of births, throughout the short period of a few years thereafter. But it is not adverted to, that the deficiencies of capital are repaired by a process still more sudden. Let the whole capital embarked in glass-making, for example, be a million of money, which, if replaced in one revolution of the economic cycle by eleven hundred thousand pounds, would enable the manufacturers to live, and to commence their course anew, in the same circumstances as before. But we may conceive one of these manufacturers, with the capital of a hundred thousand, to have withdrawn it from business and to have squandered it in a fit of extravagance, so that, in a few months, there is not a vestige of his fortune remaining. The common imagination is, that the capital thus wasted by the dissipation of one capitalist can only be repaired by a strenuous parsimony on the part of all the rest. But the truth is, it may be repaired, and that in the course of a single twelvemonth, from another cause. There is nothing, generally speaking, in the extravagance of this said glass-maker that can affect the wealth or

ability of his customers. It may lessen, for one year at least, the quantity prepared, but it lessens not the ability to purchase. If eleven hundred thousand pounds were in readiness last year for buying up the glass that had been manufactured at the expense of a million, there is nothing, in the wasteful expenditure of one of the capitalists, that can prevent the same sum of eleven hundred thousand pounds from being in readiness next year. The producing power is, for one season, impaired; but the returning power is as great as ever. And the effect is just a rise in the price of the article. When the effective demand is the same as before, the price, averagely speaking, is in the inverse proportion of the quantity brought to market. The price of eleven hundred thousand pounds, given last year in return for the cost of a million, is given this year in return for the cost of nine hundred thousand. The capital is thus restored to its original magnitude; and that without any effort or hard straining on the part of the remaining capitalists. The truth is, that to them it has been a prosperous, a holiday season of high prices and flourishing markets. That extravagance which has ruined their brother capitalists has enriched them. They, in a single year, have fallen both into his profits and his capital. So far from being more painstaking, or penuriously economical than before, they might spend among them the ten thousand pounds which came to him in the shape of revenue, and still inherit the whole of his capital, or the hundred thousand pounds into the bargain. The glass-

making capital is fully replaced, not with any sacrifice or self-denial on their part, but at the expense of their customers—and with the temporary mischief to these, of a tenth less of the article of glass than they would otherwise have had, the capital starts again into as great extent and efficiency as before.

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Dr Smith mourns over our national debt, as if, by each successive act of its extension, the country had been thrown permanently back in the career of economic prosperity. It has been computed by some how much more populous we should have been had the practice of inoculation been discovered sooner; and, in like manner, he computes how much richer we should have been had the different sums borrowed by government been all retained as capital. But the truth is, that it never could have stood as capital. The effect of the debt, while under its process of formation, was to subject the people to higher prices, and so to a scantier supply of all the comforts of life. Had there been no formation of a debt, and the people been left to their wonted supply of these articles, they would just have made all the larger use of them; and if not, there would have been an excess of capital beyond what the country could bear, and so an absorption of this excess, in the losses and the bankruptcies of over-trading. The whole effect of the debt at the time of its contraction is to expose the people to those higher prices which have both to return the abiding and to replace the withdrawn capital. And the whole effect of the

debt afterwards is to divide property just as a mortgage divides it between the creditor and the landed proprietor. We look to the wrong quarter for its effect when we look for a diminished capital. The truth is, that while this borrowing system lasted, capital was upheld in full extent and sufficiency; and when the borrowing system terminated, capital, unprovided with its wonted vent or absorbent, went to dissipation in the overflow of its own exuberance. It was felt to be a paradox at the time; but we think it admits of lucid explanation, that capitalists flourished in war, and that in peace they suffered the reaction of many adversities and losses.

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It is in old and well-governed countries where capital is most exposed to the discomfiture of its attempts for its own enlargement. It is in these where profit has sunk to the lowest state that is consistent with the maintenance of capital; and where, therefore, if capital were farther extended, the profit might be annihilated or even converted into loss. A country, though well governed, yet if new, may have its profits high, because of the unbroken tracts which yet lie open for cultivation, as in the United States of America; and on which the exuberance of capital may overflow, and find profitable investments for generations to come. And a country, though old, yet if ill governed, may also have its profits high. The insecurity to which all property is exposed, from injustice and violence, will prevent the wealthy, in such coun-

tries, from exposing their capital without the promise of a considerable return. The high profit is an indemnification for risk; and should be equal to the ordinary profit in ordinary circumstances, with a premium, over and above, for a very hazardous insurance. In balancing the matter between the value of a present indulgence, and that of a future acquisition, the uncertainty attendant on the latter will tempt merchants to give a larger proportion of their gains to expenditure; and this, by keeping down their capital, upholds their profit. It is in perfect accordance with this, that, in countries under oppression, the cultivation should have made so short a descent among the inferior soils. The same consideration which operates in restraining the application of mercantile will also operate in restraining the application of agricultural capital; the latter of which requires, as much as the former, the inducement of a large return in barbarous or demi-barbarous countries. Hence the prodigious capability of soils that lie without the margin of cultivation in far the greater number of countries in the world—in Asia Minor, in South America, in Hindostan, along the Northern shores of Africa, and, generally speaking, in all territories under the Mahometan yoke. This holds out the brilliant perspective of a great enlargement in the physical resources of the human family, as being the sure attendant of their growth in morality, and religion, and social order. Even the larger countries of civilized Europe have still this prospect in reserve for them; as is evident from the higher interest of

money, in conjunction with the yet imperfect agriculture of such countries as Spain, and Austria, and Russia, and Poland. Perhaps there is no first-rate nation so near, in this respect, to its extreme limit as Britain, that has long been the seat of pure legislation, and of safe and prosperous industry. There, a low interest, a high-wrought agriculture, the distress both of a redundant population among the labourers, and of a redundant capital among the mercantile classes, go hand in hand. Ireland, with its higher interest of money, and its less perfect agriculture, has yet a career of greater advancement to describe than there is now room for in this country. One of the recipes often given for the medication of that interesting land is to pour capital into it. But this is mistaking the consequence for the cause. The economic will follow spontaneously in the train of the moral improvement. With the progress of education, and law, and industry, capital will naturally be attracted hither; and, what is still better, a capital of home-growth augmentation will speedily be formed. Their slovenly agriculture and unreclaimed wastes are to us the materials of a cheering anticipation; for they tell how large are the still undeveloped capabilities of Ireland. The redundancy of the Irish population is only, as compared not with the potential, but with the actual amount and distribution of their produce, an amount which might be doubled with a better system of husbandry; and a distribution which will become more thoroughly internal than at present, when landlords begin to

feel that on their own estates, and among their own peasantry, they may taste the charm and tranquillity of home. It is competent for moral causes, and for these alone, to effect every desirable amelioration; and if man would but do his part, nature has in store for Ireland a liberal subsistence for millions more of human beings than are now famishing upon its territory.

If the disease in Ireland be a plethora of population, the disease in this country is more like to a plethora of capital. If there, the mendicity be among the living instruments; here, if I may be permitted such an image, the mendicity is among the dead instruments of labour. If there, immediate labour be wretchedly remunerated by a low wage; here, the low profit makes a wretched remuneration for antecedent labour. The phenomena on this side of the water indicate as surely that capital has its limits, as the phenomena on the other side indicate that population has its limits. The annoyance one feels in the competition of porters for employment is not more decisive of the one than the annoyance he is exposed to from the competition of steam-boats or hackney-coaches is decisive of the other. The noisy clamour of beggars on the street does not tell more significantly of an excess of population, than the signs of unoccupied houses, and the flaming advertisements of commodities at prime cost, and the incessant cheapening of articles to the bankruptcy and ruin of their owners tell by another sort of clamour of the excess of capital. Between the two elements, in

fact, there is a marvellous and multiplied accordancy. Both are subject to incessant checks from the want, each of its own proper aliment; the one from an insufficient wage, the other from an insufficient profit. And though both are greatly short, at present, of that magnitude which they may yet attain in the course of ages, both may press at all times on a slowly-retiring limit—nor is there room in the world for the indefinite extension of either.

FOREIGN TRADE.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. I.)

THE *terminus ad quem* of foreign trade, is consumption at home. The maintenance of all those engaged in it—the wages of the labourers—the profits of the capitalist—the tax laid on foreign articles,—these emanate not from the trade, but from the antecedent ability of consumers, who may be regarded as the real supports and fountain-heads of the trade. What is true of home is true also of foreign trade. It should be accredited with no more than with the commodities which it brings to the door of our inland purchasers. This it does, but it does no more than this. There is mysticism in the assertion that a stocking-maker does aught more for the nation than simply contribute stockings; and there is just as delusive a mysticism in the assertion that the wine trade of Portugal confers any other benefit on the nation than simply the benefit of wine, or the West India trade than sugar and coffee, or the China trade than tea. We are aware of other and far more magnificent interests being associated therewith—as the sustenance of a great population; and along with it

power, and public revenue, and national greatness. It is imagined, that, by the excision of a given branch of foreign trade, there would be an excision from the land of the means and the maintenance of all who are engaged in it; whereas, there would simply be an exchange to the consumers of one article of enjoyment for another; and to the people, the exchange of one kind of employment for another, but with as ample means and maintenance as before. The East and the West Indies are regarded as the two hands of the empire; and the imagination is that, were our connexion with these destroyed, Britain would suffer as much as from the lopping of off two hands, or, in other words, would be shorn of its strength and its capacity for action, in virtue of this sore mutilation. It would positively be shorn of nothing but its sugar and tea. Were our intercourse with the East and the West conclusively broken up, we should lose the services, first of our tea-grower, and then of our tea-sweetener—for so might these regions be denominated. It is thus that we would reduce the importance of foreign trade to its humbler, but juster dimensions; and then assert the independence of Britain thereupon. The noble flotillas which periodically leave our shores and return laden with the spoils of every climate form altogether an imposing spectacle; and by which commerce has had a most bewildering glare thrown over it. But this commerce is really not a super-inducement from abroad; it is the efflorescence of an inherent vigour and vitality at home. Foreign trade is not the creator of any economic interest;

it is but the officiating minister of our enjoyments. Should we consent to forego these enjoyments, then, at the bidding of our will, the whole strength at present embarked in the service of procuring them would be transferred to other services,—to the extension of home trade—to the enlargement of our national establishments—to the service of defence, or conquest, or scientific research, or Christian philanthropy. The only change would be a change of object and of end to consumers; and a change of employment, but not a lessening of their maintenance, to those who are now labouring in the various departments and stages of foreign trade for our gratification. It would greatly subserve the cause of peace and of enlightened policy, were this juster estimate on the subject of all trade, and more especially of foreign trade, adopted by statesmen. The great majority of wars are mercantile wars, which never might have been, but for the illusion of those great names and imaginary interests that are associated with commerce. We feel persuaded that the fearful conflicts of other days would not now be repeated, could the nation but clearly see that the only interest for which it was called upon to fight was a somewhat more luxurious breakfast, or a richer dye to the vestments which covered them, or an easier access to certain wines, or a more liberal importation of shawls and silks, and figs and oranges. It was never the menaced loss of one or all of these which formed the jealousy or the provocative that led to war. It was the apprehension of a far more serious

disaster—the loss of revenue to some large class of our merchants, of support to some large class of our industrious population. Had foreign trade been seen in its true character and effect, we cannot imagine that, for the preservation of a monopoly or a sugar island, so many a struggle would have been entered on. A sense of national honour may still have excited the spirit of discord among the kingdoms of the earth—but not a sense of national interest.

But it would appear as if no experience could unschool our politicians and patriots out of their obstinate imaginations upon this subject. In the loss of our American colonies did many a statesman anticipate the downfall of the British nation. And in spite of the utter vanity of this anticipation, do they cling with as fond tenacity to our remaining colonies as before, and would still brave in their defence the expenditure of countless millions. It is not seen how, with the unabated fertility of our own fields, and those resources, far beyond the reach of any distant influence, which lie within the circle of our own shores, we would be in possession of as ample means as before for calling forth and rewarding the services of all our population. Could this only be apprehended, statesmen would not be so tremblingly alive to the interests of any particular trade, nor would they think the prosperity of our island grounded on aught so precarious as the brittle foundation of commerce and of the seas. They would leave commerce to its own spontaneous courses; and instead of undertaking, with anxious

heart and uncertain hand, as their predecessors did before them, the guidance or guardianship of its concerns, they would sleep secure in the midst of all its fluctuations. But this never has been, nor is it yet, the policy of statesmen. The doctrine of its natural insignificance is not understood by them; and both in the sigh of Napoleon's heart for ships, and colonies, and commerce, and the splendid vision of Canning, who thought he had conjured up the resources of a new world by which, through the conveyances of trade, to multiply without limit and without end the riches of our nation, do we recognise that subtle delusion which has misled the legislators of all ages.

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To meet the general demand for our better and cheaper manufactures may require the services of a population over and above what our own agricultural produce can maintain. For the maintenance of this extra population an extra produce must be fetched from abroad, subject, of course, to the charges of its conveyance. But as there cannot be two prices for an article of the same quality, the home and the foreign grain, if equally good, will be disposed of in the market upon equal terms. The same necessity which caused the importation must have raised the nominal value of our own agricultural produce. The necessaries of life will have become dearer than they would have been in other circumstances; but connected, as this is, with an additional demand for workmen, labourers will not on that account let down their standard of

enjoyment; and so manufacturers will have to lift up the money-price of labour. It is thus that the peculiar advantages of a country for export manufactures are met by a counteractive disadvantage, which will at length limit the amount of exportation. But so long as the cheapness of our manufactured foods, arising from the greater productiveness of British labour, compensates, or more than compensates for their dearness, arising from the more expensive maintenance of British labourers, the extra demand for our commodities will be upheld or extended, and along with it the importation of food from distant lands. A population will be formed in our territory over and above what the territory itself can maintain. For the sake of distinction, we shall estimate the *natural population* of our island by the number of human beings within it, actually subsisted on the produce of its soil; and whatever the excess of our whole population beyond this may be, we should term the *excrescent*, or the superinduced population.

Those export manufactures, then, the labourers in which belong to the natural population, are exchanged for foreign manufactures or foreign luxuries. Those export manufactures, which are wrought up by the excrescent population, are exchanged for the agricultural produce of foreign countries; on which countries, then, we so far depend for the first necessaries of life, the means and the materials of human subsistence.

This excrescent population will not accumulate

in a country beyond a certain limit. In the first place, along with every extension of it there must be an increased importation of food, which will therefore have to be fetched from greater or more impracticable distances than before. The sea-coasts or river-sides of an exporting country will only supply a given demand for corn; and should the demand exceed this, the additional supplies must be drawn from the interior, and the heavy expense of land-carriage added to the expenses of navigation. It is thus, that with every accession to our excrescent population there must be an accession to the price of grain, and so to the money-price of labour—a process which must stop whenever the disadvantage to which a manufacturer is liable in the high wages of his workmen exceeds the advantage which he has in the facilities of his British situation; for at that point will he begin to be undersold, and so shut out from any further enlargement of his business by the competition of foreigners. But secondly, with every addition to the excrescent population, there must be an enlarged exportation of British goods, which will become cheaper in foreign markets in proportion to their supply. These two causes act together in powerful co-operation; so that between the increasing dearness of their maintenance at home, and the increasing cheapness of their manufactures abroad, an arrest must at length be laid on the increase of an excrescent population. Add to this the constant approaches to equalization between different countries in industry and the arts of

life. Britain cannot for ever perpetuate the monopoly which is grounded on the secrets of her superior skill, or on the superior habits of her population. Other countries must at length come nearer to us, both in respect of their machinery and of their men, so as to supply themselves, and likewise their neighbours, with many of our commodities cheaper than we can. It is because the workmanship of human hands is so much more transportable than the sustenance of human bodies, that the interchanges of commerce lie far more in manufactured goods than in agricultural produce. The bulkiness of food forms one of those forces in the economic machine which tends to equalize the population of every land with the products of its own agriculture. It does not restrain disproportion and excess in all cases; but in every large state it will be found that wherever an excess obtains, it forms but a very small fraction of the whole population.

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In as far as foreign trade rests on the basis of a home agriculture, the trade may be destroyed—yet on that basis all the people employed in it will continue to be upholden. The export manufacturers will be discarded, no doubt, from their present occupations; yet, supported as they were formerly by a maintenance in the hands of our inland consumers, by that maintenance they will be supported still, only in return for a new service. As we have often said already, there will ultimately be no loss to them, and but the loss of some enjoyment to their virtual maintainers; or rather, the loss of any

difference, if there be a difference of superiority, which the old enjoyment had over the new one. It would greatly mitigate our fears of a calamity, and at least take away all sense of its national importance, could we but perceive of foreign trade that its destruction involved in it no other suffering than this—that is, a certain disappointment to the taste or fancy of consumers; but leaving withal the same amount of well-paid industry in the land, as sufficient a maintenance as before for as large a population. It is different when the foreign trade rests, either in whole or in part, on the basis of a foreign agriculture. There is no disruption between the people and their maintenance by the extinction of the one trade—there is by the extinction of the other. Let an end be put to the first, and our export workmen will still find footing, in some new capacity, on the soil that sustains them—where, in the midst of home resources, they will be sure of a harbour and a landing-place. If an end be put to the second, it will be tantamount to a sentence of decimation on the families of the land—a sentence which exile or famine will carry into effect. The destruction of foreign trade, in a country which subsists itself, may abridge the enjoyments of the community; but it will neither abridge the population, nor the industry of the population, though it changes the direction and the products of that industry. The destruction of foreign trade in a country which has to import agricultural produce would cancel from the land an integral part of its population and its industry.

To depend in part on other countries for enjoyment is but a slight matter, when compared with depending on other countries, for our existence. The effect of a disruption, in the one case, is not to be compared, in point of vast and fearful importance, with the effect of a disruption in the other. Yet from want of a right discrimination, the two are blended and confounded into one. Politicians look with misplaced and exaggerated alarm to the loss of foreign trade in the general—to the loss of all or any foreign trade. The bugbear and the reality are both viewed with one common feeling; and an event which involves but the disappointment of families in respect of luxurious indulgence is regarded with the same apprehension as if it endangered the stability or very being of the nation.

When the excrescent bears a great proportion to the natural population, as it sometimes does in smaller states, and more especially in independent cities—then, when their commerce abandons them, their all, or nearly their all, abandons them. They sustain a mutilation by every abridgment of their foreign trade, seeing that the returns are chiefly made in the first necessaries of life; and that with the disappearance, therefore, of such a commerce, so much of their population and their industry must disappear along with it. In ordinary cases, the discarded population are thrown back on the agricultural basis, which upheld them before, and which is broad enough, and solid enough, to uphold them still. But in this case, a population, dissevered from their maintenance. are thrown

adrift on the wide world; and, with their dispersion, there is a corresponding decline of national strength and national greatness. There is all the difference in the world between that commerce, the annihilation of which would but involve the loss, or rather the change, of luxuries, and that commerce, the annihilation of which would involve the loss of the first necessaries of existence. In the latter circumstances of a country, we are not to wonder at the commercial jealousies which have actuated its governments. To be undersold by neighbours were to them a death warrant, involving, as it does, their exclusion from those markets whence they fetch the very aliment of their being. This accounts well for the fragility and the precarious existence of all such states—of Tyre, and Carthage, and Venice, and the Hanseatic towns of Germany, which pass before us in splendid, but ephemeral succession, as we contemplate the history of past ages. When deserted by their trade, the very foundation on which they rested gave way under them; they having no such foundation in any territory of their own. They, in fact, became as helpless as any inland town of home shops or manufactures when deserted by its country customers. This is enough to account for the speed and splendour of many a mushroom elevation—for the speed of many a helpless and irrecoverable fall—for the decay of commerce in smaller states—and the utter destruction of isolated cities. Hence the desolation of Tyre, and hence the departed glory from the north of Italy.

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This distinction between the natural and the excrescent trade of Britain, when it comes to be understood, will hush the inquietude of our present alarmists. The one is based on a maintenance produced at home, the other on a maintenance imported from abroad. The export manufacturers belonging to the former are a disposable population, labouring in the service, and subsisted by the wealth, of inland consumers. The export manufacturers belonging to the latter both labour in the service, and are subsisted by the wealth, of foreign customers. They are a disposable population too, but at the disposal of landlords at a distance, instead of landlords at home; of men who, in changing the direction of their expenditure, would desert them altogether, instead of men whose change of expenditure would but transfer them to a new service. That is altogether a false analogy, by which Britain is likened to those states of ephemeral glory, whose greatness and power but lasted with their commerce. Our excrescent population and trade bear no such proportion to our natural, as theirs did. Should a disruption take place between ourselves and foreign countries, the excrescent, with us, would speedily be absorbed in the natural. When Venice was separated from her customers, the foundation on which she mainly rested gave way under her. Our foundation is our own territory. Though separated from our customers, we are not therefore separated from the maintenance of our population. There would be a change un-

doubtedly—a change of pursuits to the working, and of enjoyments to the wealthier, classes of our community. But, with this exception, it would be as great and flourishing a community as before—as competent to all the purposes of defence and national independence; and, though shorn of her commerce and colonies, though bereft of these showy appendages, as available, and we think more so, for all the dearest objects of patriotism.

This view, we think, should serve to moderate our commercial ambition, and to quiet one of our great commercial jealousies. So long as Britain can pay cheaper for her imports, by the exportation of manufactured commodities, which are in effective demand abroad, she will never need to export agricultural produce, and so to alienate from her shores the materials of human subsistence wherewith to purchase foreign articles of any kind for her consumers at home. Her peculiar facilities for manufacture will always secure for her this independence; and her only danger is lest her overpassing facilities shall make her independence a precarious one, by landing her in an excrescent population. In which case, the only effect of being undersold by her neighbours is the abridgment of this excrescent population. What a mockery does this lay on the fears of our mercantile statesmen, and on the whole system of their policy. Their great dread is that of being undersold by foreigners; while yet the chief effect of the commercial superiority they are so anxious to preserve is just to enlarge the sale of British exports beyond the possibility of their being paid

for, either by the luxuries, or the other goods not agricultural, that come in return for them from other lands. In which case, there is a surplus of exports that must be paid for in agricultural produce. The population is thereby enlarged beyond the power of the country to feed them from her own stores; or, which is the same thing, the trade is enlarged beyond the limits of her own agricultural basis. There are additions made by this to the weight or dimensions of the superstructure; but without addition either to the strength or amplitude of the foundation. The only effect is to foster an excrescence, which, if not mortal to us as to other commercial states, is just because, with the uttermost of our false and foolish ambition, we cannot overstretch the foreign trade so far as they did, beyond the limits of the home agriculture. By thus seeking to enlarge our pedestal, we make it greatly more tottering and precarious than before; for, like the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, it is composed of different materials, partly of clay and partly of iron. The fabric bulges, as it were, into greater dimensions than before; but while its native and original foundation is of rock, the projecting parts are propped upon quicksand; for the sake of lodging a few additional inmates in which, we would lay the pain of a felt insecurity, if not an actual hazard, upon all the family. We rejoice in the luxuriance of a rank and unwholesome overgrowth; and, mistaking bulk for solidity, do we congratulate ourselves on the formation of an excrescence, which should rather be viewed as the blotch and distemper of our nation.

PRODUCTIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE LABOUR.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. I.)

THE wealth of a country has been defined to consist in the produce, by which is meant the *material* produce, of its land and labour; and they only are regarded as productive labourers who add to the amount of that produce. He only is a productive labourer, by this definition, who adds by his work to the value of some tangible, and, therefore, some vendible commodity; a commodity which might be laid up in a store-house, or exposed for sale in a market. A clergyman is clearly excluded by this definition, unless in so far as he shares in the manufacture of that tangible commodity, a volume of sermons, from the class of productive labourers; and so also is the schoolmaster, and the physician, and the lawyer, and the judge, and the soldier, and the statesman. We may guess from this enumeration what those interests of the commonwealth are, at which many of our economists are disposed to look suspiciously and hardly. But their proscription extends further than this; for menial servants, and musicians, and players, and

all, in fact, whose industry has not impressed some marks of its operation, more or less durable, on some marketable commodity, are ranked by them among the unproductive labourers in society. Some of these are certainly not the most useful and respectable of functionaries; and, associated as they are with the former by the common epithet of unproductive, we are not to wonder if certain of the professions have been viewed with a degree of jealousy by our economic patriots, as creating an obstacle in the way of some great and prosperous enlargement, or as being a heavy deduction from that maximum of good which the country might else have realized.

And yet, to expose the utter futility of this distinction, let us think for a moment how much it amounts to. One man's labour ministers to my enjoyment, through the medium of a tangible commodity; another man's labour ministers to my enjoyment without this intermedium. The confectioner, whose delicious morsel I swallow, is a productive labourer: the musician, whose delicious tune I listen to, is an unproductive labourer. And yet what economic injury is sustained, though I should pay the one as much for his performance as I pay the other for his preparation? The gratification to me is equal, or rather greater in the music than in the eatable, seeing that I preferred it. The maintenance to him who administers the enjoyment is the same, whether I have chosen to spend my custom on the productive or the unproductive labourer. And thus it makes no difference

to the wealth of the country whether the consumers incline more to those gratifications which come through the vehicle of a tangible commodity, or to those which, without such intervention, yield the same, and perhaps a superior enjoyment. The labourers who are supported by the wealth are equally well supported on either supposition; and the proprietor who spends the wealth, by being left to purchase that which he likes best, is only permitted the exercise of a liberty without which wealth would lose part of its value, and cease to be so desirable.

The end of all production is consumption. The *terminus ad quem* of all labour is the enjoyment of those who buy its products, whether these shall be material or immaterial. This last difference is surely, to all purposes of any worth or consideration, a futile one; and it will be found that there is an equal futility in any other difference which can be alleged betwixt them. For example, it has been said of unproductive labour that its effect is momentary, and that all the good of it expires with the performance; whereas, the tangible thing that issues from the other can be laid up in a shop or store-room, and be there appealed to as a solid addition to the annual wealth of the country, or recorded among the items of a national inventory. Now it is very true that when a tune is ended there remains no equivalent for its price. But the same is true of the coat after it has been worn, or of any vendible and substantial commodity after the consumption of it is terminated. In process of

time, there remains no vestige either of the productive or the unproductive labour; and to balance the consideration that the effect of the one is shorter-lived than the other, it should be remembered that this might be made up by the perpetuity or frequency of the service. A suit of clothes may last with me a year; and, during the whole of that time, I have a use and an enjoyment in the wearing of them. But, with their price, I may hire for a year, the attendance of a menial servant; and so experience, for the same length of time, the daily benefit and convenience of his labour. And besides, in point of endurance, there is often a vast superiority in the effects of the unproductive over those of the productive labourer. To the physician, I may owe the continued health of a lifetime—to the lawyer, the preservation of my family estate along a line of successive generations—to the soldier, the independence of my nation for centuries—to the clergyman, the virtue of the people and the imperishable good of their eternity. So that the effect of the one species of labour may be as lasting as that of the other; and there is really nothing in this particular characteristic which at all justifies the distinction that has been made of them.

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The services of a church are mainly performed by unproductive labourers; and from this single circumstance, we can imagine, on the part of a deluded patriotism, many a secret wish and aspiration for its overthrow. It is therefore of all the more importance to expose the futility of the dis-

tinction that has been made upon this subject; and setting aside, as a frivolous and unmeaning accessory, the presence or the want of a tangible intermedium, by which the good of any service is conveyed to us, we would found the question between one distribution of employment and another, wholly and exclusively, on the nature and magnitude of the good itself. We should not be afraid to rest upon this issue the cause of a religious establishment, even though the spoils to be gathered from its overthrow were capable of being diffused, in the form of a secure and permanent increase, to the physical comforts of the population at large. But we hold ourselves to have a far mightier argument on our side, in that the result of such a catastrophe were but the enrichment of our landed proprietors, and that no appropriation of the wealth of the church can prevent this from being the ultimate destination of it. Even though allotted in the first instance to the necessities of the state, and followed up by the remission of taxes, this, after affording scope for a season to the increase of population and capital, would but pour the wealth of our ecclesiastics into the bosom of the landed aristocracy at the last. We have already explained how that scope might be afforded, and yet the church be upholden in all her temporalities; and after this, on weighing the only real terms of the alternative, a moral good to the community against a large accession to the splendour and luxury of our landlords, we cannot hesitate for a moment on the question whether the exchange of the one for

the other would prove a bane or a blessing to our nation.

After all, then, the property of the church has created but a division of wealth, and not a diminution of it. The landed proprietor may still complain of its existence, but with no more reason than the owner of a thousand acres has to complain of the contiguous but separate estate of a hundred acres lying beside him, and which he should have liked to be in his own possession, rather than in that of another man. The clergyman stands in the same relation to the landlord that the small proprietor does to his neighbouring large one; but with this mighty difference to the public good, that his property involves in it an obligation of duty, whereas the other is in a state of simple ownership. There are some who hold that the property of the island is not enough divided, and complain of the large estates that are vested in single individuals or families. The institution of a church, even apart from the service which it renders to society, is at least a mitigation of this alleged evil. But its main vindication is its usefulness. The clergyman is bound to do something for his share in the soil. The proprietor to nothing. The public would be gainers if still more of the country's wealth were placed in the condition of having a duty and a service attached to the possession of it; or, in other words, in opposition to the popular and prevailing cry, we hold that too little of the produce of the land goes to the support of functionaries; and that, of course, the mere proprietors, the *nati*

fruges consumere, are allowed to reserve too much of it.

The united expenditure of the clergy and the landlords gives as great an impulse to trade, and as large a support to labourers, as would the entire expenditure of the landlords, had there been no clergy, and our ecclesiastics been so many small proprietors. That, then, is an interest clearly not affected by the institution of an established church. Apart from such a provision, its revenues would have yielded so much enjoyment to possessors of land; but, in their present state, they yield as much enjoyment to the holders of our ecclesiastical benefices; so that, looking to the subject under this view likewise, there is no loss incurred by the system for which we are contending. But again, landlords are under no positive or prescribed obligation of rendering any service to the community for their share in the produce of the soil. Clergymen are; and though they should fall short of discharging their whole obligation, yet, should they discharge it in part, and so as that some positive balance of good to society is done by them on the whole, to that extent is society benefited by the church, and to that extent would society be a loser should the church be overthrown. Theirs is not, to use the language of some of our economists, unproductive consumption. That of the landlords is. Let immaterial products be included along with material, as Say and others would, in the enumeration of a country's wealth, and the institution of a church may serve not to impoverish, but to enrich a com-

munity. It is the means of turning so much unproductive into productive consumption. Without a church, the whole of our ecclesiastical wealth would have been in the hands of those who give no return for it. With a church, we have the returns of all its usefulness—its theological learning—the protection which it affords against a desolating infidelity—the service which it renders to the morality of the commonwealth—and, above all, to the eternal well-being of the individual members who compose it. These are not the less substantial, that they enter not into the common definition of wealth, as consisting in the tangible produce of land and labour. Let tithes and taxes be but commuted as they ought, and in the hands of a purer church and a purer government it will become quite obvious that they do indeed augment the national wealth, in the best sense which can be annexed to the term —turning that produce, which would otherwise have been idly or unproductively consumed, into an instrument of the highest benefits and blessings to society.

ON THE RENT OF LAND.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. II.)

IT is a signal error in a recent theory of rent, that the difference of quality in soils is the efficient cause of it. The difference between the produce returned for the same labour from a superior soil, and from the one last entered upon, is but the measure, and not the cause of rent. Had there been no gradation of soils, but had all been of the same uniform fertility with any given land which now affords rent, that land would have afforded rent still, and the same rent which it does at present. That land may yield rent, all which is necessary is, that, with the price obtained for its produce, the occupier can more than pay the wages of the labour and the profits of the capital bestowed upon it. It is the overplus which constitutes the rent of this land, and which would have been paid though there had been no land inferior to itself in existence. In affirming that it is the existence of this inferior land which originates the rent, there is a total misapprehension of what may be termed the real dynamics of the subject.

The process is this :—On land of a given quality,

and anterior to its being rented, the produce, or its price, is shared between the workmen who laboured it, and the capitalist by whom it is occupied. But there are two reasons why this state of things might not be stationary—the one connected with the taste and choice of the workmen; the other, with the taste and choice of the capitalist. The workmen may be willing, rather than forego the pleasures of matrimony, to part with some other of their personal enjoyments, by entering soon upon this alliance; even though it should be so soon as that, through the medium of an increased population, they shall have at length to work for less wages than they might have otherwise preserved. And the capitalists may be willing, rather than forego the pleasures of accumulation, to part with some of their personal enjoyments, by sparing what they might have spent, and vesting the produce of their parsimony in business—even though, through the medium of an increased capital, they shall have to trade for less profit than they might otherwise have been able to sustain. Thus, the increase of capital, and the increase of population, are the real impellent causes why the wages and profit, which wont to absorb the whole produce of land of a given quality, do not now absorb it. The competition between the labourers, now in greater number, on the one hand, and the more numerous or greater capitalists, on the other, is such, that less than the whole produce is now shared between them, and the difference, wherever land is appropriated, goes to rent. Farmers, in the existing state of profit,

and wages, and cultivation, are willing to pay this rent for leave to settle on a land which formerly paid none; and should it so happen that there exists inferior land beside that which is rented, and whose produce is just less than that of the other by the difference of the rent, farmers will be equally willing to settle on this inferior land, paying no rent at all. But, most assuredly, it was not the existence of the inferior which originated a rent for the superior soil. It is not because farmers had descended to a worse land, that they are willing to pay rent for a better—but because they were willing to pay rent for the better, if they could have got it, they descended to the worse. The existence of the worse land, so far from originating a rent upon the better, prevented it from rising so rapidly as it would have done—because it afforded an outlet for the excess of population and capital; and thus slackened, for a time, their competition on the better land. The real cause of the rent is this more strenuous competition of labourers and capitalists, now more numerous than before; and this cause, assigned by Dr Smith, ought not to be superseded, as if it were a distinct and different cause, by that which, in fact, is but a consequence from itself. This inversion of the truth has led to vicious conclusions in political economy; and, as is the effect of every false principle, it has mystified the science.

Rent is not a creation by the will of the landlords, but a creation by the collective will of the capitalists and labourers. Wherever there is property in land, it is the unavoidable result of the

one class choosing to multiply, and the other choosing to accumulate, beyond the capacity of the higher soils to sustain them. It can only be done away with by the abolition of that property; or, in other words, by turning the country into a large common, and dissociating all the activities of individual interest and hope from the business of cultivation. Labour would cease to attach itself to any given portion of the territory, if there were no fence of property by which the fruits of this labour might be guarded. This property has been termed monopoly, and all the odium which attaches to monopoly has been cast upon its holders. But the truth is, that the landlords are altogether innocent of the rent, which has flowed in upon them *ab extra*, not at their own bidding, but at the bidding of those who complain of its oppressiveness. The employer of labour would have had his workmen at a higher wage; but another stepped forward and implored to be taken in at a lower wage, who, if refused, would have been in fact the more aggrieved sufferer, or at least the more helpless outcast of the two. The owner of the land would have let his farm at a lower rent; but, in the importunity of capitalists, higher rents were offered; and he, by refusing these, would in fact have disappointed the most eager among the competitors. The landlord is passive under this operation. He is the subject, and not the agent in it. The primary and the moving forces lie with the labourers on the one hand, and with the capitalists on the other; the former, through the medium of an increased population, having brought on a lower

wage than otherwise, by a necessity as irreversible as any law of nature; and the latter, through the medium of an increased capital, having by the same necessity brought on a lower profit than otherwise. The difference goes to rent. The complainers of it are themselves the makers of it. That the origination of rent should be rightly understood is a thing of far mightier interest to the commonwealth than the mere intellectual comprehension of a process. It is an incalculable loss to the working classes, when the real cause of their sufferings is misconceived. It bewilders the friends of humanity from the path of amelioration. And, besides, it provokes a thousand undeserved antipathies — being the fruitful cause of those many heart-burnings and jealousies by which society is so grievously distempered.

Rent is inseparable from property in land, and can only be abolished by all the fences and landmarks of property being swept away from our borders. The effect would be as instant as inevitable. The cultivation of the fields would be abandoned. The population would be broken up into straggling bands,—each prowling in quest of a share in the remaining subsistence for themselves; and, in the mutual contests of rapacity, they would anticipate, by deaths of violence, those still crueller deaths that would ensue in the fearful destitution which awaited them. Yet many would be left whom the sword had spared, but whom famine would not spare—that overwhelming calamity under which a whole nation might ultimately disappear. But a few miserable survivors would dispute the spon-

taneous fruits of the earth with the beasts of the field, who now multiplied and overran that land which had been desolated of its people. And so by a series, every step of which was marked with increasing wretchedness, the transition would at length be made to a thinly scattered tribe of hunters, on what before had been a peopled territory of industrious and cultivated men. Thus, on the abolition of this single law, the fairest and most civilized region of the globe, which at present sustains its millions of families, out of a fertility that now waves over its cultivated, because its appropriated acres, would, on the simple tie of appropriation being broken, lapse in a very few years into a frightful solitude, or, if not bereft of humanity altogether, would at last become as desolate and dreary as a North American wilderness.

We may here advert to a distinction between the produce of agriculture and that of manufactures; or, as some would say, of all other manufactures than the manufacture of food. We think that it will go far to explain the peculiarity of rent, and repel at once the imputations which have been grounded thereupon, both against land and against landlords.

To assimilate the two, and confound all distinction between them, it is said that land is as much a machine, and the preparation of food as much a manufacture, as are the machines and the preparations of any other commodity. Now, without objecting to this, as being a thing of mere nomenclature, there remains one important reality by which to distinguish them. Food is the first necessary;

other commodities are but second necessaries, or the luxuries of life. The increase of food will surely be followed up by an increase of population. The increase of luxuries, or even of second necessaries, will not always, will not necessarily be so followed up. Should corn become permanently more abundant than before, it would in the first instance fall in price; and a fall in such a large and essential branch of family expenditure would, by translating men so much sooner into circumstances of ease and plenty, multiply and hasten on the marriages of labourers. A fall in the price of mere luxuries, such as carpets or pictures, or expensive wines, would have no such effect: and even a fall in the price of second necessaries, as of stockings, for example, would have scarcely any effect, excepting through the medium of agriculture, and by its influence on cultivation in the way that we have already explained. This is the reason why food cannot permanently remain as a drug in the market. It in fact creates a market for itself, which other manufactures do not. The peculiarity of the former commodity lies here, that though its supply may be overdone for a year or two, it cannot be overdone permanently, because there is a virtue in the commodity to extend, and that indefinitely, the demand for itself; so that, let the supply be kept up and augmented as it may, there will, in the necessity of things, spring up an equivalent demand by which to uphold its price in the market. The same thing cannot be said of other manufactured commodities —not even of second necessaries. The supply of

shoes may be overdone year after year, greatly beyond the number of feet that wear them; because there is almost nothing in the mere production of these shoes to multiply the feet. But the supply of loaves cannot be so overdone year after year, because greatly beyond the number of mouths to eat them; for there is everything in the production and increase of these loaves to multiply the mouths. It is true that on that event the feet will be multiplied too; and with the increase of demand for food there will also be an increase of demand for other things, or the products of other manufactures. But these manufactures have to wait the progress of agriculture, which itself has to wait for nothing but the development of its own energies and means. Agriculture has the command of both the terms which enter into the determination of price—immediately of the supply, and mediately, while rapidly, of the demand. Manufactures have but the command of one term; and they, by outdoing its progress, are exposed to the perpetual check of gluts, and bankruptcies, and losing speculations.

Now the rent of land is ascribed by Ricardo and others to a blemish, whereof air and water are altogether free, and which, in consequence, yield no rent. In land there is a descending gradation in the quality of its soils; and the last of these which has been reclaimed, and which is the least fitted for the production of food, is alleged to be the cause of rent upon all the rest. But there is no such descending gradation in the quality of air; no difference, for example, in the strength of its atmos-

pherical pressure at different places, if on the same level, so as to make it more powerful at one place than another for giving impulse to machinery. And hence, according to the advocates of the new theory, there is no air rent. But the great, and indeed only efficient principle of rent is here overlooked. It is very true that if, within the limits of some square miles on the earth's surface, there were air of ten-fold property and power, then, all circumstances being equal, it would afford rent to the proprietors of such a small and favoured territory; and just because all the manufactured commodities that could be produced within limits so narrow did not satisfy the actual demand for them. But grant a certain definite number of these square miles, along with a right local disposition of them, and rent would cease altogether, whatever the descending gradation was in the qualities of the remaining atmosphere. The truth is, that the demand for such commodities as are wrought off through the instrumentality of steam engines is limited by the actual numbers of mankind; and, by means of a very few square miles of the requisite atmospherical pressure, the world could be super-saturated with these commodities; so that all the air over and above this, whether of equal or inferior quality to the former, would lie a useless drug in the hands of those who should seek a rent for the use of it. Whereas, not only is the demand for those commodities which are produced by farms, or land machines, enlarged with every eventual increase in the numbers of mankind, but every addition to these commodities creates an

addition to the numbers. The existence of a land, and the non-existence of an air rent, cannot, with propriety, be referred to any difference between the two elements, in respect of the gradation of their qualities. The difference is altogether resolvable into the nature or virtue of their respective products: the one of limited demand, being straitened within boundaries which itself cannot enlarge; the other widening the boundaries of its demand, and in the very proportion too of every new addition which is made to its own quantity. The simple cause of a land rent is, that the best farms, or the best machines for the manufacture of food, work off an excess of this commodity, over and above that share which the capitalists and labourers employed about it choose to put up with for themselves. That they should so choose is owing to the competition of other capitalists and other labourers, whom the agriculture itself may be said to have brought into existence, and all of whom would be willing to occupy the best machines for the same share, leaving the excess to go in shape of rent to their proprietors. And they of course would be equally willing to be put into occupation of the inferior machines at inferior rents, or of the worst machine that can be wrought with a profit at no rent at all. Rent is not owing to a blemish, but to a superiority in land machines over all others. They, in the first instance, can do what the others cannot; not only satisfy the actual demand of present customers for their produce, but, by every addition to this produce, can proportionally add to the

number of their customers. And the vast majority of them can do what the other species of machines do not—they can work off a greater amount of their own appropriate commodity than will remunerate the capital and labour bestowed upon them; and thus leave a surplus, by which the industry is upheld that works off a thousand blessings to society.

EFFECT OF A TAX ON THE NET RENT OF LAND.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. I.)

THERE is not a more popular topic of declamation than the oppressiveness of taxes, and, more especially, their injurious effect on the condition of the working classes in society. The imagination is that, when laid on the necessaries of life, they trench directly on the comfort and sufficiency of the labourer; and that, when laid on profit, or laid on commodities in general, they trench upon capital, and so upon that power which exists in the country for the remuneration of labour. It is thus that the distresses of the poor, and the straitened condition of the lower orders generally, stand associated in many a mind with the exactions of government. The effect of this opinion is, not only a rancorous politics on the part of the turbulent, but, even among calm philanthropic men, there is the pretty frequent persuasion, that each retrenchment in the expenditure of the state is so much clear gain to the common people; and that, by pressing an indefinite economy upon our rulers, they are on the right way for an indefinite augmentation of personal

comfort, not to particular classes only, but to society at large. It is therefore of importance to investigate the matter; for, if this abridgment of taxes be really not the specific which is to charm away all want and wretchedness from our land, the attention of the patriot may, in the meanwhile, be diverted from the best expedient for the relief and amelioration of its families.

Now, there is one species of tax which, by the consent of all economists, stands exempted from the charge of infringing on the comfort of the working classes. We mean a tax on the net rent of land. The incidence of such a tax is altogether upon the landlord. He is made poorer by it; but no other individual or order of the community needs to be at all affected. A portion of the power which he had to purchase commodities, or to maintain labour, is doubtless taken out of his hands. But it is not annihilated. It is only transferred. After the imposition of the tax, the united expenditure of government and the landlords equals precisely the whole expenditure of the landlords previous to the tax. In the new state of things, there might be just as large a profit to capitalists as before, and just as large a maintenance to workmen as before. By every such tax the power of government to uphold or reward industry is just as much enlarged as the power of the landlords is lessened. A certain part of the disposable population, employed in preparing luxuries for the proprietors of land, are placed by the operation of the tax at the disposal of government. To them it needs be no

other change than a change of masters—a change of employment. From the hands of their new employers they may obtain as large and liberal a support as they did from their old ones. They may have the same support as before, but for a different service. They exchange the service of working up luxuries to private consumers, for the service of the state. They are withdrawn from the business, either of home or export manufactures, by which they minister to the enjoyment of landed proprietors, to the business of manufacturing government stores; or of fabricating the whole material of government service, such as ships, and fortifications, and barracks, and churches, and colleges, and prison-houses; or finally, to the direct business of war, or justice, or public instruction. Artisans may, in thousands, be transferred thereby into soldiers, or into artisans of another species. Master manufacturers may, in tens, or hundreds, be transferred thereby into officers, or judges, or clergymen. And the latter may be upheld in as great splendour, and the former in as great sufficiency as before. The wealth thus transferred into the coffers of government can be discharged with as great liberality and effect on the various servants of government as it formerly could when discharged by the landed proprietors themselves, through the countless channels of trade and manufacturing industry in the land. After this change, we may still behold the spectacle of as large a population, in every way as liberally upholden, with the only difference of being differently employed. There is no effect produced on the reward

of industry, but solely on the distribution of it. They who are paid by the tax may live as well as before. They who pay the tax are the only sufferers. They lose so many of their luxuries—or rather, they exchange them for the objects of the public expenditure; perhaps, through the medium of fleets and armies, for national independence; perhaps, through the medium of schools, and churches, and colleges of justice, for the protection of society from crime and violence, and for the increase of national virtue. Even to them, the tax-payers, it may not be a dead loss, but the substitution of one benefit for another—possibly the substitution of a greater for a lesser benefit.

Yet it may be observed, even of this least obnoxious mode of taxation, that it may be conducted in such a way as to lay an arrest, or even to impress a retrograde movement, on the wealth of the country, and essentially to injure it in all its economic interests. Under a government of capricious despotism, and unmeasured rapacity, even though it confined, which it would not, its exactions to the net rent, and left untouched all the profits of agricultural capital, as well as the capital itself—the cultivation of estates would languish or decay, from the want of consent and of active countenance on the part of the landlords. The proprietor would lose every inducement to patronize an improving tenantry, if he were sure that all the additional rent which accrued to himself was to be absorbed in taxes. Even if he were not sure—if in a state of insecurity whether he was to get any of the addi-

tional rent that is yielded by land on its better cultivation, or of ignorance how much he would be permitted to share of it—there behoved to be, on his part, the feeling of a slackened interest, and so a far less careful and vigilant administration of the property. It is thus that the taxations of a government, which wanted steadfastness of principle and good faith, would relax and retard the agriculture of a country, even though these taxations were restricted to the share which accrued to the landlord in the produce of the soil. But the case is very different when it is a taxation of principle; justified by the urgencies of the occasion; levied alike upon all in like circumstances; not liable to fluctuate, as in Turkey, with the cupidity of the rulers, though liable to be extended with the necessities of the state, of which necessities the landlords themselves, through the organ of a free and representative government, are the effectual arbiters. In these circumstances, there is scarcely any centage of taxation, however great, that would discourage cultivation. Nay, we believe that, in many instances, it has led to the extension of husbandry; and that to the income tax of England, while it lasted, we have to ascribe the breaking up of many a lawn, and pushing forward agriculture to many outfields which had not been entered. The tax, in these cases, stimulated the cultivation. The landlords sought, by a more strenuous agriculture, to compensate for the deprivations which the tax laid on them. They drew upon the land for an additional produce, wherewith to meet the impositions to which they

were subjected; and though this cannot be done indefinitely, yet done it was in many instances, when from negligence or pleasure an estate had not even the average cultivation bestowed upon it. We are aware that under an oppressive and arbitrary system the tax would not operate in this way. In a country where the government could seize on individual property, no man would try to indemnify himself for one imposition by means of an additional produce that might just bring on another imposition. The case is altogether different when the tax, though severe, is equitable, that is, laid in like proportion over the whole country. Each proprietor, feeling that he is safe from any wanton or unlooked-for exaction in future, seeks from the capabilities of his soil, after all the reimbursement which it can afford, for the exactions that already lie upon him. In these circumstances, we really cannot specify to what extent the taxation on net rent may not be carried, because of the discouragement it would give to cultivation. For this purpose, the taxation would need to be not only excessive; but discretionary, partial, at the mercy of a wayard and unprincipled government, and altogether such as left no reasonable security for the enjoyment of any remainder by the landlord. The effect is totally dissimilar, when the landlords are not only the payers, but, through the predominance of their will in parliament, the establishers of the tax. And then, when the question is put, how far might this taxation on themselves be carried, without injury to the economic interests of the nation—it is obvious that it might be carried

indefinitely near to that point, at which, having surrendered all their luxuries, they satisfied themselves for a season with the necessaries of life. This may be regarded as the extreme limit of the taxation on net rent; and by the actual distance of our landlords from this limit, by the degree in which they still can command and enjoy the luxuries of life, do we estimate the power which remains with them of adding to the revenue of the state.

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We admit that by a tax upon net rent the power of the landlord to improve his estate is abridged; and yet, we hold, that the progress of this improvement does not, now-a-days, materially depend either on his capital or on his enterprise. It is not at this time of day that we have to complain of the want of capital for any operation capable of yielding a return, or of replacing the outlay with a profit. We must recollect the opulence of our tenantry, and their ability to enter on improving leases in all parts of the country where improvement is hopeful. Or, if the proprietor behoves to be the improver, we must recollect the perfect facility wherewith he can now borrow to any extent on the security of his lands. When capital is at a loss all round for a profitable investiture of itself, and, labouring under the weight of its own plethoric magnitude, is ever and anon getting the relief which it needs in the bankruptcies attendant on all wild and precarious speculations—we may be very sure that nothing is wanted but the prospect of a safe, though moderate return, for drawing capital to agriculture. In other

words, capital will never be wanting to agriculture, so long as agriculture is able to yield a profit to capital. The truth is, that capital has, in every business, a constant tendency to overshoot itself, by the application of it in larger quantities than the business can replace with a profit. And this is just as much the case in agriculture as in anything else. So that though every landlord were to spend to the uttermost of his power, whether on his own private gratifications, or in the support of government, we have nothing to fear for the progress of cultivation. There is perfect security that, on the one hand, a more productive agriculture will bring on a larger population; and that, on the other, an increasing population will so uphold the demand for food, as to encourage and speed onward the progress of agriculture. Meanwhile, the landlord, though sitting merely as a recipient, if he but give his consent and countenance to the requisite administration, will reap the benefits of a process in which he takes no active share. His rents flow in upon him without exertion on his part. He will be glad to receive the whole—but should government interpose with its taxations, he will not reject the part which remains to him. The man of a thousand a year will be glad of an additional hundred—but not more so than a man of five hundred a year is of an additional fifty. A tax then of fifty per cent. on the net income of landlords would still leave them in possession of as zealous an interest as heretofore in the improvement of their property. And should government but leave the profits of capital and

the wages of labour untouched by their exactions, we are not able to say when it is that the share which government appropriates of the net rent becomes so large as, by its adverse influence on the mind of the proprietor, to arrest or even to retard the progress of cultivation.

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A territorial impost, any where short of the net land-rent of the kingdom, would but trench on the luxury of landlords, without at all trenching on the livelihood of the other classes. And to speak of our yet touching on the limit of our resources, or even being within sight of it—when the equipage, and the splendour, and the thousand effeminacies of luxurious expenditure, are so paraded before our eyes! We are aware that the national debt falls with the weight of a mortgage on every estate in the island; a weight, too, that has of late become more oppressive by the change which has taken place in the value of money. But, looking comprehensively at the matter, these mortgages should be regarded in the light of landed proprietors. By the national debt, there has virtually been a division between them and the land-owners of the territory of the empire. Regarding, then, both the land and the stock-holders, as in fact proprietors of the soil, and as sharing between them the net rent which accrues from it; who will deny, that between these two classes there is at this moment a greater fund for taxation and for the exigencies of the state, than there ever was in any former period of the British history?

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The notion is very prevalent, both among economists and statesmen, that commerce and manufactures are the fountain-heads of the public revenue; and that if, by any chance, these are obstructed or dried up, the great source whence a government obtains its supplies is dried up along with them. The tax on a commodity forms a fraction of its price; so that when the commodity ceases to be produced or sold, when no price is given for it, the tax, in its present form, necessarily disappears; and it would therefore seem as if, with the cessation of the trade, government were to lose part of its income. It requires, we should think, no great stretch of vision to perceive, that the manufacture is not the originator of a revenue to government, but only the occasion, or the channel, through which government reaches the purchaser of the manufactured commodity; and that, though the manufacture were destroyed, the wonted ability of the purchaser is not therefore destroyed. The truth is that, by means of a direct impost, government could draw from him the whole price of the article in question, instead of a fraction of that price by means of a tax on the article. It is neither the sugar, nor the tea, nor the wine trade, which produces a revenue to government. These produce nothing but sugar, tea, and wine; and did the nation consent to the sacrifice of these luxuries, government might receive the whole price now given for them, instead of a proportional part in the shape of duty. What else, but an undue sense of the virtue which resides in trade

and manufactures, could have led Dr. Smith to assert that a commercial country, like ours, could afford no more than a hundredth part of its population for the business of war; else its commerce, deemed by him the very source of those finances by which war is supported, would go into languishment and decay—whereas, though the whole of that immense commerce, which is busied in providing the superfluities of life were this instant to be annihilated, it would still leave in the hands of the consumers the maintenance of the whole disposable population, out of whom a ten-fold greater military strength might be made to arise than our illustrious economist dared to contemplate. And how else can we explain the egregious error of Mr. Pitt, who confidently foretold the overthrow of France, because, in the ruin of her trade, he conceived that her means of defence and of warfare were utterly exterminated? The truth is, that it was the wreck of her commerce which created her armies. Her disposable population, disbanded from their former pacific employments, flocked in myriads to the standard of independence, and at length of aggression and conquest over all her enemies. Their old employments failed them, but their maintenance did not fail them. It remained in the hands of those who wont to be their customers; and, when surrendered by them, at the call of patriotism, or the bidding of an energetic government, for the necessities of the state, it was made available for the support of the same population, now transferred from the business of trade to the business of war. This destruction of their trade,

on which Pitt founded his calculations of their downfall, was the very thing which made them the scourge and the terror of all Europe. It transformed millions of artisans into soldiers; and in very proportion to their decay as a manufacturing was their extension and their growth as a military nation. Their fancied weakness turned out to be their real and formidable strength; and in that mighty re-action, which took place on the breaking up of the old system of their affairs, have the principles which we now try to expound received, from the finger of history, their most signal and conclusive demonstration.

We gather, from this argument, that there might be a misplaced antipathy to taxation. We could understand the sentiment, and would also share in it, should it be made to appear of any tax that it dries up the springs of our economic prosperity, or trenches, in the slightest degree, on the comforts of the poor man and the labourer. But if, on unravelling the mechanism of human society, it becomes evident that there is but the semblance of this effect without the reality, it ought to mitigate our indignation, and in certain cases, perhaps, to transfer our generous and patriotic sensibilities to the opposite side. A tax on the net rent of land is clearly of this description; abridging nothing, by its operation, but the luxuries of the wealthier classes; and appropriated, as its produce may be, to the extension of the best interests of the commonwealth. The popular representation of the matter is that, in virtue of our enormous taxes, the minions of government are allowed to fatten on the spoils of the nation, to the further

hardship and oppression of its starving multitudes. We believe the juster representation to be, that, in virtue of a sweeping and blindfold retrenchment, the affluent proprietor is enabled to live in greater splendour and delicacy; and that by a farther reduction on the hard-won earnings of those who are the public's most useful and laborious servants. The monarchy is shorn of its splendour; the great offices of the state are stripped of their graceful and becoming dignity; the system of public instruction is stinted of its needful allowances; the requisite agency for the business of government is crippled in all its departments; our gallant warriors pine in sordid destitution; science, in the Gothic barbarity of our times, is unfostered and unrewarded; in a word, the glory and substantial interests of the nation are sacrificed,—and all with no other effect, than so to ease the landed and the funded aristocracy, that they may be more delicately regaled, or more magnificently attired and attended. The tax, we repeat, does not trench on the livelihood of the poor, but on the luxuries of the rich; and statesmen, misled by a false political economy, or looking only at the surface of things, have made surrender, to a very phantom, of the highest objects of patriotism.

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An enlightened political economy would not only do away much of the jealousy which springs up among different nations; but would do away much of the jealousy and hostile feeling which are still so prevalent between the different orders of a state. For example, if the real incidence of the taxes be upon

land, what a world of misconception and of malignant passion would be saved, were taxes laid ostensibly as well as virtually upon the landlords. Or, if not prepared to act on a conclusion still so remote from all the ordinary notions upon the subject, what a practical reconciliation it would effect between the wealthier and the poorer classes were taxes universally removed from the necessaries of life, and universally laid on income or on unquestionable luxuries. We believe that though the whole of our public revenue were raised by means of a territorial impost, it would ultimately add nothing to the burden which now lies on the proprietors of the land; and that they, when fighting against such a commutation, are fighting in defence of an imaginary interest. We believe that the same observation applies to the abolition of the corn laws; and that if both the commercial and the financial reforms were gradually, but at length completely and conclusively effected, the lords of the soil would find their wealth unimpaired, and their influence prodigiously raised by it. When once divested altogether of the character of monopolists, and, still more, when declaredly and obviously the only tax-payers in the kingdom; we can scarcely imagine the vast moral ascendancy which they would henceforth acquire in all the affairs and deliberations of the commonwealth. Such would be their substantial gain, and we honestly think without the deduction of one farthing from their revenues, though they should both quit the monopoly, and take upon themselves the whole burden of the taxes. And what a death-blow would

be thus inflicted on the vocation of demagogues! What a sweetening influence it would have on British society, after the false medium was dissipated, through which the high and the low now look on each other as natural enemies! Such a political economy as this, had it preceded, would also have superseded all those tempestuous politics which are now in agitation. Parliamentary reform, left without any ulterior object, would have been felt as if uncalled for; or at least the rancour, the exasperation, and bitterness, now connected with the prosecution of it, would have been completely done away.

The landed aristocracy have partly brought this upon themselves by their blind resistance to all innovation, and by their tenacious adherence to what they imagine, but falsely imagine, to be their own indispensable interest. Had they paid all taxes, and left all trade unfettered, there would have no political sacrifice been required of them; and they would have remained in the undisturbed possession of their natural, their rightful inheritance, as lords of the commonwealth. But the democracy of England, fired by a sense of injury, have now made head against them; and may, perhaps, wrest from them, by force, that which ought to have been freely and willingly conceded in the spirit of an enlightened policy. We should rejoice in such a compromise between the two parties, as that both a full commutation of the taxes, and the full establishment of commercial liberty, unshackled by impositions or restraints of any sort, were at length effected, but effected gradually. What we

fear in the present spirit of reform is its impetuosity, and that it may not only, without the necessary delay, precipitate right changes, but, without the necessary discrimination, may hurry a new legislature into wrong changes. There lies a noble field of improvement before them, in rightly shifting the burden of taxes; in emancipating trade, and that without reserve or limitation; above all, in providing, amply and liberally providing, both for the Christian and literary education of the people.

EMIGRATION.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. II.)

WHENEVER emigration prevails, it is the evidence of a country where the population presses on the means of subsistence, from which pressure it seeks to be relieved by successive discharges. We believe that a regular system of emigration would certainly bring on and perpetuate such a state; and surely far more desirable, than that a people should thus press on the limit of their own home resources, were it, that they kept comfortably and somewhat largely within the limit. The effect of emigration has been compared to that of a safety-valve. But a safety-valve in the boiler implies a great force of distension within; and surely it were better for every land, that the distension were prevented, than that it were only relieved, and kept down to a certain maximum, which cannot be sustained, without a strongly felt violence and discomfort within the borders of the territory. The alternative may be stated within a short compass. It were better that the population should not be carried up to the extreme of what the country can bear by the recklessness of the people,

than that it should be kept down to that point by emigration. We may be sure that every country is throughout in a suffering condition, which requires to be disgorged, from year to year, of its redundant families. There may be a few spirits, alive to the charms and the romance of adventure, to whom emigration would prove a lure rather than a terror. But, averagely speaking, there must be a great experience of distress and destitution to account for the voluntary exile of thousands from the land of their forefathers. It must be no light evil from which they are making their escape, when, in the act of doing so, they forego all the recollections of their boyhood, the scene and the dwelling-place of their dearest intimacies. Now, in respect of the economic condition of a people, it may be said, with peculiar justness, that if one member suffer, all the members suffer along with it. The destitution which forces a certain number, though it should be a proportionally small one, from the land of their nativity, is the symptom of a general destitution and distress through the country at large, or at least in the profession to which they belong. And rather, infinitely rather than a system of things, which encourages a population up to the necessity of emigrating, would we prefer that, in virtue of smaller numbers, the population fell somewhat beneath the employment which remunerates, or the food that sustains them.

We believe it to be strictly demonstrable, that wherever a sure and systematic, and withal, a permanent and generally known provision is made for

the excess of labourers in a land, this, of itself, must depress the condition and circumstances of the whole body. This it does through intervention of the principle of population; by which it sustains, in perpetual being, the very overplus which it is its object to dispose of. For, mark the effect on general wages of the mere existence of such an overplus. We believe, that nowhere can the provision in question be so comfortable, as would be a situation of well-paid industry in any of the regular trades or employments. Ere the former, then, will be sought after, there must be an excessive, and so a disappointed or defeated competition for the latter; a competition which, though proceeding from a very small surplus of labourers, must, by an infallible law, effect a very great reduction in the price of labour. It is easy to present a beautiful sketch of home-colonization, and tell, for example, of the thousands who, in this way, have found a harbour and an establishment in Holland. But the real question by which the policy of such an institution is determined is, whether it has operated any sensible relief on the mass of society, or does not rather tend to bring down tens and hundreds of thousands to that minimum state, in which they are hardly detained at their own occupation; and that, by but a hair-breadth of preference over the state of a pauper agriculturist.

In like manner, the system of English charity has encouraged an overflow of population, who fill up the asylum provided for them in their numerous poor-houses; but not without first inflicting a sore de-

gradation on the price of labour, and, what is worse, continuing to overhang, as by a perpetual load, the labour market; thus depressing, and that permanently, the comfort and sufficiency of the whole body of labourers. And the very same, we predict, would be the consequence of a regular and extensive plan of emigration. It would at all times encourage into being a certain fractional excess of people beyond the number who can be accommodated in decent sufficiency within the borders of their own land. And so the alternative would need to be entertained, whether they will prefer an exile abroad, or the pittance of a scanty remuneration for their industry at home. But it is an alternative not confined to them. There are not two rates of wages; one for the overplus, whom, indeed, it were impossible specifically and individually to single out; and another for the general mass of the operatives in society. All are brought down equally; and, as in the other instances, this attempt regularly and systematically to provide for a small aliquot part ends in the infliction of a universal calamity. So utterly powerless, or rather, so positively mischievous, is every expedient for the amelioration of the people that but adds, through the medium of their own improvidence, to the excess of their numbers. The high road to their collective comfort and independence, and there is no other, is their collective virtue, and intelligence, and worth. Off from this, both they and the patriots, or philanthropists who care for them, will find themselves alike helpless and bewildered. They may insti-

tute a thousand devices — schemes of benignant promise — smiling charities of goodly pretension and gracious aspect. They will all terminate in nothing, or worse than nothing. They smile but to betray.

REPEAL OF COMBINATION LAWS.

(*Policy of a Nation*, Vol. II.)

THE repeal of the combination laws in England has been attended with consequences which strongly remind us of the consequences that ensued, after the Revolution, from the repeal of the game laws in France. The whole population, thrown agog by their new privilege, poured forth upon the country, and, variously accoutred, made war, in grotesque and unpractised style, upon the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. In a few months, however, the extravagance subsided, and the people returned to their old quiescent habits and natural occupations. We feel assured that, in like manner, this delirium of a newly-awakened faculty among our British workmen will speedily pass away. They will at length become wise and temperate in the use of it. Neither party, in fact, well understand how to proceed in the unwonted relation wherein they now stand to each other. There is indefinite demand upon the one side; upon the other there are distrust, and a most sensitive dread of encroachment. They have not yet completed their trial of strength; and just because, in ignorance of each other's powers, there

are yet the effort, and the excitation, and the busy rivalship, of a still undetermined conflict. If parliament would but suffer the great principle upon which its repeal has been founded to have full and unfettered swing in the country, we have no doubt that, after a very few vibrations, the matter would at length settle down into a right and a comfortable adjustment for all parties. The experience of the evil that results to themselves from an overdone ambition would far more effectually chasten and repress the obstinacy or the daring of workmen than all the terrors of the statute-book; and a harmony would soon be established in a natural way between those parties whom the laws of the state had only set at variance.

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The great principle of law upon this, and upon every other subject, is, that it should quadrate as much as it can possibly be made to do, with obvious morality. It is most desirable that whatever the legislature shall ordain to be a crime, and liable to punishment, should be felt as a crime by man's natural conscience. In every case when there is a want of sympathy between the enactments of the statute-book, and the dictates of natural virtue, there is an expenditure and loss of strength incurred by the government of a country, when it either ordains such enactments, or carries them into effect. It is sure to lose ground thereby in public or popular estimation; —and when the arbitrary regulations of a state are thus made to thwart and run counter to the independent feelings and judgments of men, this is certain

to infuse an element of weakness into the body politic. The heart-burnings of him who suffers the penalty, meet with powerful reinforcement in the sympathy of all his fellows. He feels himself to be a martyr or a hero, and not a criminal; and, if treated as a criminal, this only puts a generous indignancy into his heart, in which he is supported by a kindred sentiment among all the free and noble spirits of the land. It is thus that the stability of government, and with it the cause of public order and tranquillity, is put to hazard by every law which squares not with the jurisprudence of Nature—and that some strong case of expediency would need to be made out ere that should be held a crime in the eye of the law which is not a crime in the eye of Nature also.

On the other hand, let law be on the side of clear and unquestionable morality—let that which it reckons with as a delinquency be regarded as a delinquency by every unsophisticated conscience—let the offence against which its penalties are directed be felt as an offence against the natural dictates of humanity and rectitude—let its voice of rebuke or of threatening be at one with the voice of the heart, insomuch that all the denunciations of the statute-book are echoed to by the universal sense of justice in society; and every act of such a legislation will inconceivably strengthen the authority from which it emanates. Even though a very numerous class of the community should be thwarted by it in some favourite but iniquitous design, any discontent of theirs would be overborne by the general and concurrent feeling of the whole community besides.

Nothing could withstand the force of law if thus aided by the force of public opinion; and any government whose deeds are responded to by this natural sense of equity among men may surely count on such support and sympathy through the land as shall make its authority to be qute irresistible.

Now, we fear that there have been times when both these principles were traversed by Government in its management of combinations. For, first, there seems nothing criminal in the act of a man ceasing to work at the expiry of his engagement, because not satisfied with his present wage, and desirous of a higher; or in the act of men confederated and doing jointly, or together, the same thing. On the contrary, it seems altogether fair, that each should make as much as he can of his own labour; and that just as dealers of the same description meet and hold consultations for the purpose of enhancing the price of their commodity, so it should be equally competent for workmen to deliberate, and fix on any common, if it be not a criminal agreement, and that to enhance, if they can, the price of their own services. There really is nothing morally wrong in all this; and however a man may be treated on account of it as a delinquent by the law, he certainly is not regarded as a delinquent in the eye of natural conscience. It was because of this discrepancy between nature and the law that we held it a good thing when, by the repeal act, it was expunged from the statute-book—and we hope that no subsequent act will again restore it. It is true, that while the whole

statute law against combinations has been abrogated, they, by the last act of parliament, have again been made liable as before to prosecution and punishment under the common law. Yet we fondly trust that even the application of common law to the practice in question will fall into desuetude, as a thing not suited to the spirit of the age—an expiring relict of the barbarity of other times. And accordingly, in almost all the prosecutions which have taken place ever since the repeal act was modified, and in part done away, it is not the simple deed of combination which is proceeded against, but certain obvious and undoubted criminalities which are charged upon the promoters or the agents of combination.

But, secondly, while Government on the one hand, by its penalties against the simple act of combination, put forth a rigour far beyond the natural dimensions of this alleged enormity, they, on the other hand, have not been declared and rigorous enough against those real enormities, which are often attendant on combinations. If, in the one way, they have greatly outrun the sympathies of the country—in the other way, they, for a time, perhaps, as greatly fell short of them. A mere combination among those who are unwilling to work is not in the eye of morality a crime. But the members of a combination proceed to a very great and undeniable crime when they put forth a hand, or even utter dark and terrifying threats of violence to those who are willing to work. This is the point against which the whole force of legislation ought to be directed; and though the public cannot go along with those severities of im-

prisonment and exile, which law has inflicted for the naked offence of combination, yet they will go most readily along with far greater severities than have ever yet been inflicted for the outrage done to those who refuse to enter them.

This then is the point at which the legislature should put forth all their rigour—even to protect those who abide in their employment, or who have newly entered, from the hostility and violence of those who have abandoned it. In consistency with their own great and glorious principle of freedom, they should guard to the uttermost the freedom of those who are willing, from the tyranny and violence of those who are not willing to work. It was in the spirit of kindness to the working classes that the act for the repeal of the combination laws was passed; and it would appear, as if in the exuberance of this spirit, that an unwonted gentleness and forbearance had been made to run through all the provisions of it. The punishment, whether for forcing, by violence, their fellow-workmen to combinations along with them—or for forcing, by violence, their masters into a compliance with their own prescriptions, is a great deal too small. By a *prosecution under this act,* no violence to person or property, no destruction of machinery, tools, goods, wares, or work, is liable to any greater penalty than that of two months' imprisonment and hard labour. It is true that by the subsequent clauses the penalty is extended to three months' imprisonment and hard labour. And it is also true that all these offences are liable to prosecution and punishment under the

severer laws that were previously in operation. But it may help to account in part for the recent popular ebullitions, that the repeal act held out a more mild and merciful aspect than the law ever held out before to the very offences which itself was calculated to provoke. It was to this act that workmen naturally looked, and by which they measured the hardships and the criminalities of all the violence which they might use to enforce their combinations. To them, in the first instance, then, it may be said to have offered a temptation to such violence; nor are we to wonder, if anterior to their experience of those heavier penalties, which this act did not bring into view, they heedlessly broke forth into outrages that were alike hurtful to the interest of their employers, and to the interest of their fellow-workmen.

It would help to clear and to facilitate the determination of this whole problem were it extricated from that confusion of sentiment, in virtue of which the right and the wrong of combinations have been blended together into one object of contemplation. The public indignation has been very much fostered against the cause of natural liberty in workmen by the shameful outrages of which associated workmen have been guilty in many parts of the land. It is thus that we are hurried into a desire for the abridgment of that liberty by barring with legal penalties the very act of combination. Whereas, in fact, it is by the perfecting and extending of natural liberty that all the mischiefs of combination are most effectively neutralised. But

legislators themselves participate in this confusion, and forget that, after they have resolved to leave untouched the freedom of those who are not willing to work, there lies with them the remaining duty of shielding to the uttermost the freedom of those who are willing. In such a career of legislation they do not need to relinquish for a moment that fine aspect of liberality which characterised the outset of it. They do not need to recall any part of that boon which they granted to the labouring classes; but only to add to the boon of protection from the alleged tyranny of their masters the further boon of protection from the far more severe and substantial tyranny which, if not restrained, they would exercise on each other. In the prosecution of this walk, they will find, how much it is that sound morality and sound legislation harmonize. There is nought, either in the joint or separate resolutions of workmen, not to work for their masters under certain wages, that should be enacted against; for in such resolutions there is truly nothing wrong. But there is a most glaring moral evil in the threats, or the annoyances, or the assaults that have been committed by them against their fellows; and, to put these down, the whole strength and wisdom of Government should be called into operation.

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Nevertheless, and although it is by a process altogether independent of combinations that the state of the working population is to be elevated, yet for reasons, which have in part been already given, we should deprecate any return, however

slight, to a law against combinations. The whole mischief of them will at length be wrought away in the violence of their own fermentation. It is right, too, that all the occasional violence which has attended combinations should be repressed by the utmost force of legislation; and this is a legislation which, however severely it may bear on the radicals or the ringleaders of a popular tumult, will at length have the full consent and acquiescence even of the popular understanding to go along with it. A government never does excite any permanent or wide-spread hostility against itself by those laws which recommend themselves to our natural principles of equity; and it is only when the equity is not very obvious that a sense of oppression rankles in the hearts of the people, and carries them forth to proceedings of turbulence and disorder. Now, the equity of a law of protection for all who are willing to work is obvious. The equity of a law of compulsion against any, even although in concert and joint deliberation, who are not willing to work, is not obvious. Let the latter law, therefore, be expunged, but the former be instated in full authority, and have the weightiest sanctions to uphold it. After this, workmen might, with all safety, be left to themselves. They will soon feel their way to the evil of combinations, and make discovery that, apart from them altogether, there is a secure and a peaceful road by which the people might help themselves onward to a state of greater sufficiency. It is a great lesson to teach them that this is the only road;—a lesson

which they never can be taught, so long as law debars them from any other expedient which possesses a virtue in their imagination. It were the most precious fruit of their liberty that this imagination should be dissipated, and that so they should be shut up by their own experience, that most authoritative of all schoolmasters, to the only remaining expedient which can avail them. It is well for them to know that it is the weight of their own numbers, and nothing else, which degrades and depresses them; and that the cause of all their sufferings does not lie in the want of protection from the legislature, or of kindness from their masters, but in the want of prudence and economy among themselves.

And, for ourselves, we confess it to be a cheering anticipation that the labouring classes shall, not by a midway passage of anarchy and misrule, but by a tranquil process of amelioration in their character and habits, make steady amelioration at the same time in their outward circumstances. We believe it to be in reserve for society that, of the three component ingredients of value, the wages of labour shall at length rise to a permanently higher proportion than they now have, either to the profit of stock or the rent of land; and that thus workmen will share more equally than they do at present, with capitalists and proprietors of the soil, in the comforts and even the elegancies of life. But this will not be the achievement of desperadoes. It will be come at through a more peaceful medium, through the medium of a growing worth and growing intelligence among the people.

It will bless and beautify that coming period, when a generation, humanised by letters, and elevated by the light of Christianity, shall, in virtue of a higher taste and a larger capacity than they now possess, cease to grovel as they do at present among the sensualities of a reckless dissipation. This dissipation stands often associated with a stout and a sullen defiance; and the two together characterize a large class of the mechanics of our present day. But these are not the men who are to accomplish the enlargement of that order to which they belong; —at one time on the brink of starvation by their own extravagance, and then lying prostrate at the dictation of their employers; at another, in some season of fitful prosperity, made giddy with ambition, and breaking forth in the complaints and the clamours of an appetency which is never satisfied. It is not by such a process of starts and convulsions as this that our working classes are to be borne upwards to that place of security and strength which, nevertheless, we believe to be awaiting them. But there is no other foundation than that of their own sobriety and good principle on which it can solidly be reared. And the process in this way may be easily apprehended. In proportion as man becomes more reflective and virtuous, in that proportion does he seek for something higher than the mere gratifications of his animal nature. His desires take a wider range; and he will not be satisfied but with a wider range of enjoyment. There is a growing demand for certain objects of taste and decency; and even the mind will come to

require a leisure and a literature for the indulgence of its nobler appetites, now brought into play by means of a diffused education. Altogether, under such a regimen as this, the heart of a workman is made to aspire after greater things than before; and in perfect keeping and harmony with a soul, now awakened to the charms of that philosophy which is brought down to his understanding in a mechanic school, is it that he should hold, as indispensable to his comfort, a better style of accommodation than his forefathers, whether in apparel, or furniture, or lodging. And it is just by means of a more elevated standard than before that marriages become later and less frequent than before. This we deem to be the precise ligament which binds together an improvement in the character with an improvement in the comfort of our peasantry; and makes a taste for certain conveniences the very stepping-stone by which a people do arrive at them. It is enough that these conveniences should be regarded as among the essential ingredients of maintenance; and then will a sense of their importance come to operate with effect, as a counteractive to the temptations of precipitate or imprudent matrimony. The man who counts it enough for himself and his family that they have rags, and potatoes, and a hovel, will rush more improvidently, and therefore more early, into the married state, than he who feels that, without a better provision and a better prospect than these, he should offend his own self-respect, and compromise all his notions of what is decent, or dignified, or desirable. We

are aware of the exceeding difference between one individual and another in the same country; but this does not prevent a certain average standard of enjoyment in each country; and thus, in respect of this average standard, may the difference be very great between one country and another. And, if we except the case of still youthful colonies, we shall be sure to find that, corresponding to this difference in the average standard of enjoyment, is there a difference in the average period of marriage. The higher the one is, the later the other is. The greater the demand for family comforts, the smaller and the fewer are the families. The larger the ambition of labourers, the less is the number of labourers; and sure consequence of this, the greater are the means in the hand of each for satisfying his ambition. This is one of those felicitous cases in which the desire of good things is at length followed up by the power of obtaining them. It is thus that workmen can enforce their demand for higher wages. Those distempered outbreakings which approach to the character of rebellion will retard instead of forwarding their cause. But nothing can arrest the march of light among the people; and when this light is conjoined with virtue it will guide their ascending way to a vantage ground, where they will make good the precise status to which their worth shall entitle them—a status for all whose comforts and accommodations they will then be in circumstances to prefer their demand with a small and a still, but yet an irresistible voice.

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What all economists admit to be of some importance, we pronounce to be of supreme importance: That moral worth, which they regard as but helpful, we regard as indispensable, to the economic well-being of the people.

While we would leave the elevated parts of our social fabric untouched, all our fondest wishes are on the side of the common people. It is our belief, that through the medium, not of a political change in the state, but of a moral and personal change upon themselves, there is not one desirable amelioration which they might not mount their way to. The combination laws, those engines of a systematic injustice against the rights of far the most important order in the community, are now done away; and it only remains, that by the tacit, yet effectual combination of their own virtue, and economy, and prudence, they shall take that path of onward and indefinite advancement which now lies before them. The condition to which they might hopefully aspire—and it is the part of every honest and enlightened philanthropist to help them forward to it—is that of less work and higher wages; and this, not only that they might participate more largely in the physical enjoyments of life, but that, in exemption from oppressive toil, and with the command of dignified leisure, there might be full opportunity and scope for the development of their nobler faculties in the prosecution of all the higher objects of a rational and immortal existence. There is but one practicable opening, we hold, to such an enlargement for the working

classes, and which can only be made good by the strength of their own moral determination—when, after the spectacle of cheerful and well-paid industry has been fully realized, we shall at length behold them emancipated from their sore bondage, and these brethren of our common nature transformed into lettered, and humanized, and companionable men.

ON HOME COLONIZATION.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. II.)

THERE are very few countries which do not present large tracts of land, on which the experiment of home-colonization may be tried. The question then is, Why are they at present unoccupied? There can be no doubt, that in such a country of law, and security, and enterprise as our own, they would have been cultivated, could they, at the existing rate of profit, have remunerated the farmers. This is an object which may, with all safety, be left to the guidance of personal interest, and to the sharp-sighted intelligence of men calculating and scheming for their own individual advantage. It is not the want of capital which accounts for the non-cultivation of land in any country teeming with capital like our own; but an apprehension, either on the part of occupiers or of money-lenders, that if capital were embarked on the cultivation, it would not be returned with an adequate profit, and perhaps even be lost partially or altogether. And if individuals would find it a losing speculation, we have no reason to believe that

corporations, still less the largest corporation of all, the government, would find it a safe one. We may rest assured that, down to such land as will barely remunerate the outlay and expenses of its cultivation, the capital in the hands of individuals has not only reached this limit, but is pressing upon it closely, and is even wasting itself on vain attempts to pass beyond it. And so we may safely assume, that in any old country, which has long been in favourable circumstances of peace, and civilization, and order, for the development of its natural resources, if land hitherto uncultivated has been pitched upon for the purpose of home-colonization, it is land of a lower fertility than what can repay the expenses of its own husbandry with a fair profit to the cultivator.

But passing over the element of profit, which forms but an inconsiderable fraction of the whole return, it may be said of the soil which is entered by home-colonization, that it is not able to feed its agricultural labourers with their secondaries; and that, therefore, a full complement of labourers cannot be applied to such land, without a lessening of the disposable population. Not but that, in country parishes, a sufficient, an overflowing number of agrarian workmen might be had for the enterprise; but, supported as it must be by a tax, the produce of which formerly went to the purchase of luxuries, there of consequence must eventually be so many of the disposable population thrown out of employment. Still, in spite of this

circumstance, there would be a relief afforded upon the whole by such a measure, to the general pressure under which the community laboured from the excess of its own numbers. For the disposable labourers thrown out of employment would form but a fraction, and in the first instance it might be a small fraction, of the whole number enlisted in the undertaking. If the land they began with yielded subsistence for nine-tenths of the essential labourers connected with it, then, on the supposition of a hundred men being employed, only ten would need to be transferred from the disposable class to the agricultural or secondary; and the return yielded would form a clear addition, in the food of ninety labourers, to the previous means of subsistence in the land. This number of idlers would be translated, not into what can rightly be termed profitable employment, but into employment that, with the help of a tax providing for one-tenth of their maintenance, enables them to make out and complete the whole of it. The advantage of such a scheme over that of all other charity-work is quite obvious. The forcing of a manufacture beyond its natural limit produces no food; and by edging in, as it were, to a share of the pre-existent food, so many of the superfluous population, it but condemns the whole population, each to a scantier portion than before. The forcing of agriculture beyond its natural limit does create a clear addition to the food of the country; and if carried to a great extent, it may for a season, and before the population have had

time to overtake it, yield, in the cheapening of the first necessaries of life, a sensible relief to the community at large.

This holds forth an inviting outset for the scheme; but it is well to mark its progress, and, if indefinitely carried forward, the final result of it. Once the natural limit is broken, and the *deficient* soils are entered on, the cultivation cannot proceed downwards, but by an increasing tax on the wealthy, and larger and larger drafts on the disposable population. At each successive descent, a temporary relief may be experienced; but with the same recklessness and relaxation of habit on the part of labourers, the pressure of a redundancy in our numbers will ever and anon recur with the same intensity and feeling of straitness as before. We should at length touch on the ultimate and impassable boundary of such a process, when, for the purpose of upholding it, the wealthy had to be taxed till they were reduced to the necessaries of life, and the last man of the disposable population to be withdrawn, in order to make out the requisite labour on the last, and therefore most deficient soils which had been entered on. We should then be landed in a more populous nation, yet not have a single disposable individual within its confines. Each would labour for his own essential maintenance; and all the interest or enjoyment connected with the services of a disposable population, behoved to be abandoned. This is what may be termed the extreme possibility of the system; but it would never be realized. It would

surely break up, and that long anterior to such a consummation. Landlords, subject to an indefinite and ever-growing taxation, would at length cease to feel an interest in the administration of their own property. They would not continue to be the receivers of rents, when this was so nearly tantamount to being the mere organs of transmission, through whom the surplus produce of the superior found its way to the deficient soils, and was there absorbed in the expenses of a profitless and ungrateful cultivation. It is fearful to contemplate the issues, after that property had thus been undermined, and the ancient ties had been dissevered which connected the soil with its original possessors. The occupiers of the barren, might then turn in fierceness to the occupiers of the fertile land, on the wonted channel of conveyance, in the person of the landlord, having at length given way. A lax sense, or an imperfect arrangement of property, in a country yet but thinly inhabited, and of unbroken capabilities, is still so prolific of disorder, as to verify the maxim, that a state of nature is a state of war; but this disorder must be thickened and aggravated tenfold, should the same dissolution take place in a country of teeming population, and whose very deserts now swarmed with a host of colonized paupers that had overflown the natural limits of the agriculture. In the scramble that ensues, we shall perhaps have to witness another of those dread calamities which may be awaiting us, and which we fear nothing will avert but a timely

moral and Christian education of the people, along with the gradual abandonment of certain inveterate errors which have been suffered to distemper the social economy of our land.

Such being the natural outgoings of the system of home-colonization, this alternative should be carefully weighed at the commencement of it,—Whether it is better that the people should, by a right preventive check on their own number, have room and sufficiency within the natural limit of the agriculture, or should be encouraged to multiply beyond that limit by a scheme, the proposal of which has met with great acceptance from many patriots and philanthropists in our day? It is utterly a vain hope, that we shall ever, by means of such settlements, escape from the pressure of a redundant population; and a momentary slackening of the pressure is the most that we can expect from it. And this descent among the deficient soils to make room for a surplus population, is sure to be accompanied by a descent in the circumstances of the general population. The very circumstance of the soils being deficient, implies the necessity of a charitable intervention, in order to complete the maintenance of those who are there colonized. But, generally speaking, when the hand of charity is stretched forth, and more especially in behalf of a whole multitude, it is not for the purpose of upholding them in that state of average sufficiency which obtains among labourers, but only for the purpose of saving them from starvation; not to keep them in comfort, but to

keep them in existence. These home-colonists, if the system be carried to any sensible extent, will not be on the footing of independent labourers earning a respectable wage, but on the footing rather of paupers, or the dependants of a vestry, who have their supplementary allowances doled out to them, with that niggardly reluctance which usually marks the proceedings of an organized system of relief. Here, then, we have a population encouraged and virtually called into being, who are constrained by their situation to live beneath the par of human comfort and subsistence, and whose very presence in the land will act as an incubus with overhanging pressure on the general condition of our peasantry. They form a body of reserve, from whom masters may indefinitely draw, in every question of wages between themselves and their servants; and by means of whom, therefore, they can, as in a market overstocked with labour, bring down indefinitely its remuneration.

We hold then, in addition to every other evil of the system, that, once it is entered on and continues to be extended, the working classes will be sealed thereby to irrecoverable degradation. It is at its outset, then, that every enlightened philanthropist should take his stand, and at once proclaim that nothing will serve the exigencies of a land brought to such extremity as this, but a vigorous application of moral causes. We hold it as being of inestimable benefit to all the classes of society, that cultivation should stop with the last

land which yields a profit to the farmer, after having fed both its direct and secondary labourers. The momentous question is, Shall we step beyond this limit, or keep within it? By the former, we enter on a headlong process of degradation, through which we obtain, no doubt, a larger, but withal a more wretched peasantry. By the latter, we restrict ourselves to a smaller produce, and a smaller population, keeping the disposable class entire, but leaving it possible, by indefinite moral and literary cultivation, indefinitely to raise the comfort and condition of all the classes. There is a beautiful harmony here, between the interest of the landed proprietors and the interest of the general community. Landlords, on the one hand, would be left in full possession of their rents, and in full command of the disposable population. The general population, on the other, would be retained within the boundaries of a soil, fully able, even at its worst extreme, to maintain the families who laboured it. It is a big alternative; and the most opposite results are suspended on it. Either the population would be restrained within the natural limits of the agriculture, and might be raised by moral culture into higher and higher states of sufficiency; in which case the rent of landlords would be kept up, or if encroached on at all, (and we should rejoice in such an encroachment,) it would be by the higher wage of a now improved and independent peasantry. Or this rent would be wrested from them by the necessities of a pauper peasantry; in which case there would, along

with a letting down of the revenue of the landlords, be a letting forth of the population on deficient soils; and so, a landing both of the higher and lower classes of society in one common degradation.

THE ECONOMIC AND CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SOCIETY.

(*Polity of a Nation*, Vol. I.)

NEXT in importance to those truths which are directly religious, do we hold those which relate to the connexion between the Moral and Economic well-being of Society. But it must be premised that we look on the good moral condition of human beings as hopeless, save by the instrumentality of religion—and then, this being admitted, those temporal blessings which form the unfailing inheritance of a virtuous and well-taught peasantry, the diffused comfort and sufficiency which are the sure attendants of a people's worth along with a people's intelligence, should be regarded as exemplifications of the scripture sayings, that if we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness all other things shall be added unto us, and that godliness hath the promise of the life which now is as well as of that which is to come.

But this dependence of comfort upon character, or the connexion between the two terms of this great sequence, is the result of certain economic laws, the contemplation of which is quite familiar to the

disciples of Political Economy. But no two classes of men stand more apart from each other than those economists whose office it is to investigate the law of dependence between character and comfort; and those clergymen whose office it is efficiently, by their prayers and labours among the people, to build up a high average character in society. While prosecuting their respective employments, they are completely beyond the sight and recognition of each other—the former very generally not cognizant, nay sometimes even contemptuous of the latter; and the latter quite unconscious that any function or exercise of theirs can at all expedite the objects of the former. Nevertheless it is not the less true, that between a high tone of character and a high rate of wages there is a most intimate alliance; and, while it is for the economists alone to speculate aright on the action and reaction of these two elements—it is for the ministers of the gospel alone, by the influence of that faith which they teach, to elevate the morality of the common people, and so to carry into practical fulfilment that glorious connexion which is ever found to obtain between a well-principled and a well-conditioned peasantry.

The walk to which we now point has been little explored; nor, as far as our experience goes, does it form a very inviting one to the general, or even to the literary public. It would seem as if the economists repudiate the moral ingredient as of vastly too ethereal a nature for their science—while moralists and divines, on the other hand, are often

found to recoil from Political Economy, as they would from a system of gross utilitarianism. From a late conversation with Mr. Guizot I could infer, that the affinity between these two subjects was still almost an entire novelty in France. In truth, it is nearly as little studied in England—though it be amply conceded by the philosophical statesman whom I have now named, that it is only in this quarter of speculation where we shall meet with the solution of the most arduous problems in the art of government, or rather where the great problem of society can be fully and satisfactorily resolved.

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The disciples of political science, however wisely they may speculate upon this question, are, if without the element of character among the general population, in a state of impotency as to the practical effect of their speculation. So long as the people remain either depraved or unenlightened, the country never will attain a healthful condition in respect of one of the great branches of her policy. This is an obstacle which stands uncontrollably opposed to the power of every other expedient for the purpose of mitigating the evils of a redundant population; and, till this be removed, legislatures may devise, and economists may demonstrate as they will, they want one of the data, indispensable to the right solution of a problem, which, however clear in theory, will, upon trial, mock the vain endeavours of those who overlook the moral principles of man, or despise the mysteries of that faith which can alone inspire them.

ON THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. II.)

WE have laboured to demonstrate the futility of every expedient, which a mere political economy can suggest for the permanent well-being of a community. At best, they but tend to enlarge the absolute wealth of a country, without enlarging the relative comfort of the people who live in it. They may conduct to a larger, but not, on that account, to a happier society. They may tell on the condition of families, during those brief and evanescent seasons, when the population is somewhat in rear of the wealth; but, on the moment that this distance is overtaken, there will be the same straitness and discomfort as before. In new countries there might be a career of sensible advancement for centuries to come. But in old countries, if we count only on external resources, or the increase of means for the support of a population, leaving their numbers to proceed as they may, there is positively nothing which can save us from the habitual state of felt insufficiency and narrowness. There may be gleams of prosperity during the

fluctuations, or the few short and successive stretches of enlargement which are yet in reserve for us. But all round, and in every possible direction, there is a besetting limit, which the mighty tide of an advancing population tends to overpass, and which, being impassable, throws the tide back again upon general society; charged, as it were, with a distress and a disorder that are extensively felt throughout the old countries of the civilized world. The only question remains then, Is there no way by which the tide can be arrested, before it comes into contact and collision with the barrier that repels it? Or, can the redundancy be prevented by a moral and pacific influence, rather than checked by the evils of extreme poverty, or that destroying turbulence which so often results from the distress and destitution of an overpeopled land?

The high road, then, to a stable sufficiency and comfort among the people, is through the medium of their character; and this effectuated by other lessons altogether than those of political economy. We object not to the utmost possible illumination of the popular mind; nor do we share in the antipathies of those who would refuse science to the multitude. It is not, however, by the instructions of the economic, but by those of a higher school, that the best economic condition of society will at length be realized. It is possible for men to bear an essential part in the workings of a mechanism, of whose principles and whose theory they are altogether unconscious—just as the planetary masses are unconscious of the magnificent regu-

larity to which their own movements have given rise. The moving force, that is to advance the general multitude to a better and higher condition than they now occupy, will not be brought to bear upon them by the demonstrations, however just, of any theory; and, in fact, the right impulse, and the right habit, have often been exemplified, and by large classes of peasantry, before the theory of population was ever heard of. It is so in Norway; and, most assuredly, without any inoculation of principle from the school of Malthus. It was so in Scotland, long before the promulgation of his doctrines. In both countries, they realized, in practice, what, in system and philosophy, they did not understand. A moral and intelligent peasantry, imbued with a taste for the respectabilities of life, mixing prudence and foresight with every great practical step in the history of their doings, holding it discreditable to enter upon marriage without the likelihood of provision for a family—such a peasantry have more than once been exhibited in the annals of the world, and may be made to re-appear. If, by any means, the elements of such a character can again be put together, and made general in society, we should behold the exemplification of the Malthusian doctrine, with or without the comprehension of its principles. It is not, most assuredly, the study of these principles that will germinate the character; and it is from another quarter altogether, than the demonstrations of political economy, that we are to obtain the fulfilment of those blessings to society which

the science can only point out without being able to realize.

On no other subject does Christianity more evince its immense importance to the well-being of society. In the first place, it is quite palpable that they are its earnest and devoted teachers, who have the greatest power in drawing the multitude to their lessons, and establishing for themselves that most secure and deeply-seated of all popularity, which is grounded on the sacredness of their office, and on the subserviency of its faithful ministrations to the comfort, and the virtue, and the dearest interests of families. The mere disciples of a general literature or politics, little reflect on the prodigious force of that moral ascendancy which is possessed by a parish clergyman, who superadds, to the attraction of his pulpit, the charm and the efficacy of his household services; and who, by the countless attentions of an unwearied Christian benevolence, has ingratiated both his person and his cause with the hearts of those among whom he expatiates. His direct aim is neither to purchase a reputation for himself, nor even to advance the temporal comfort of his people. It is to prepare them for immortality; yet, in the single-hearted prosecution of this object, he becomes the all-powerful, though, perhaps, the unconscious instrument of those secondary, those subordinate blessings which form the only ones that a mere worldly philanthropist cares for. The truth is, that the lessons of the gospel which he teaches, are all on the side of reflection, and sobriety, and that lofti-

ness of character which consists in the predominance of the moral over the animal nature of man. A disciple of the New Testament, whose views are sublimed by its doctrines and its hopes, has gotten a superiority over the passions; a certain nobility of soul; a reach of perspective to distant consequences, whether on this, or the other side of the grave; an ascendancy of sentiment over sense; and, withal, a refinement and elevation of taste, which, though caught at first from converse with spiritual and eternal things, still adheres to him, even when busied with the interests and concerns of the present life: and these, altogether, form the best guarantees against that impetuous appetency, which first leads to early marriages, and afterwards lands, in squalid destitution, the teeming families that spring from them. And, besides, in that book there are so many pointed admonitions, that each should provide for himself, and for his own household; such a preference for the single state, when the married endangers a man's Christianity; or his performance of its duties; such great examples, as well as precepts of independence—especially by Paul, who says, that "if a man will not work, neither should he eat," and who himself laboured, with his own hands, for the supply of his own necessities, rather than be burdensome; that, as the undoubted effect upon the whole, the honest and frequent perusal of Scripture by a Christian people, does associate, in their minds, both the present and the prospective cares of a family with the solemn duties of religion. This is not a picture, but a

reality, often exemplified in the abode of a cottage patriarch—where, along with his Christianity, we may witness a sufficiency, and a cast of elevation, not to be found in the houses of the irreligious and the unholy. The very library of old and favourite authors upon his shelves, is but in keeping with the general fulness of a tenement, usually better stocked and provided than that of any of his fellows. The Christianity of the man has engendered a wisdom, and a consistency, and a self-command, that led him to begin well in his entrance upon a family; and so to build up a respectable sufficiency, which, with a reckless and precipitate commencement, he could never have attained. An individual Christian is generally in better comfort and condition than other men. A whole parish of Christians would be a parish of well-conditioned families.

But here it is of importance to remark, that, for the production of a general economic effect, we have not to wait the production of a general Christianity. When expatiating on the connection between these two elements, we have often to encounter a certain shrewd incredulity, as if an expectation of a more elevated state for the majority hung on the fulfilment of a prior expectation, which is in itself Utopian—even that the majority shall be converted. The imagination is, that, for the purpose of any great or sensible effect in this way, the religious character must be of coextensive magnitude with the economic improvement; whereas there is no truth, of which the most faithful and experienced of our clergymen have a

firmer, though it be a melancholy assurance, than the exceeding rarity of conversion—there being many streets in our cities, many parishes in our land, where, in the high sense and significancy of the term, the number of real Christians might not reach to one in fifty. And the question therefore is, How can we anticipate either a general economic, or a general moral effect, through the medium of a Christianity which, in respect of its saving and spiritual influence, makes such little way among the families? But here it is not adverted to—and we admit it is indispensable to the force of our argument—that the secondary influence of Christianity goes a great way farther than its primary or direct influence. For every individual whom it converts, it may, by its reflex operation, civilize a hundred. We have the palpable exemplification of this in Sabbath-schools, where, in a few weeks from their commencement, we may perceive a decency, and a docility, and an improved habit of cleanliness and order, long before there is ground for the assurance that even so much as one of the pupils has yet been Christianized. And what is true of children in a school, is alike true of grown-up people in a parish—where the regularities of Sabbath observation, and the humanizing influence of ministerial attentions, and the general recognition of what is right, and reputable, and seemly, have all been in force, perhaps a century ago, and been handed down, with increasing effect, from generation to generation. It is of the utmost argumentative value upon this subject, that one man of

decided piety, in a little vicinage, will impress, if not his own piety, at least the respectability of his habits and appearance, on the greater number of its families. They can admire, and even imitate, the graces of his character; they can aspire after, and even realize, the decencies of his condition; without so much as comprehending, or far less sharing, the unseen principle which has germinated them all. It is thus that Christianity has elevated the general standard of morals; and so spread a beneficent influence, far and wide, among the many, beyond the limit of its own proper and peculiar influence upon the few. It is this which gives it the property of a purifying and preserving salt in every community of human beings; and that, not merely in respect of those virtues which enter into the moral character, but also in respect of those virtues which are essential to the economic well-being of a people. Ten righteous men among the thousands of Sodom would have saved that city from destruction; and a like proportion would, in our modern day, save the thousands of general society from that utter debasement of profligacy and wretchedness, into which, without the presence of Christianity in the midst of them, they will inevitably fall.

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A common-place politician is mainly ignorant of the connection which obtains between the religion of a people, and the various civil and economical blessings which follow in its train. This single lesson, if but prized and proceeded on as it

ought, were to him the greatest enlargement of political wisdom; and numerous are the practical corollaries which flow from it. More especially, would it lead him to uphold an ecclesiastical establishment; but on very different grounds from those on which, in the spirit either of high-state toryism, or of high-church intolerance, it is so often contended for. There is with a class of thinkers, whom we have now in our eye, the vague imagination of a certain security derived from the connexion between church and state; insomuch that, if this connexion were dissolved, they would apprehend the immediate downfall of all our social institutions. And we have no doubt, that if any of the church establishments in our empire is to be exterminated, it will be in the spirit of a general undirected frenzy, that will not be satiated on any terms short of a wasteful and widespread overthrow. They will share in a common fate, because the objects of a common hostility. But this still leaves unexplained the precise connexion, in the way of cause and consequence, between the existence of a religious establishment and the stability of the general order of things. It is not because, through the lordly dispensation of its patronage, the higher orders are conciliated; or because, through the hereditary veneration of which it is the object, the lower orders are conciliated. These will be found but frail securities, on a day of wild and lawless innovation; and, without the revival of a diffused Christianity in our land, that day will speedily overtake us. It is thus that a religious

establishment is of no value, but as an instrument of Christian good; and it is this, and this alone, which should recommend it, either to the politician or the patriot. It is simply, as the best machine for the extensive Christianization of the families of a land, that it is at all worthy of being upholden; and it is obvious that, to this effect, a reckless, unprincipled, and unholy patronage makes it altogether useless, perhaps worse than useless. It is our conscientious belief that an establishment is an indispensable safeguard against a desolating flood of irreligion, but only in as far as that establishment is virtuously patronised. In other words, without the demolition of our existing machinery, but through its means, and provided that right and efficient men be appointed to work it, we hold that the country may still be saved. And, humanly speaking, its Christian instructors will be its only saviours. These reformers of our national morality will be the only reformers that will do us good. This is the great specific for the people's well-being; and, however derided by the liberalism of our age, or undervalued in the estimation of a merely secular politics, still, it is with the Christianity of our towns and parishes that the country is to stand or fall.

Our ecclesiastics are too little versant, and have therefore too little respect for the importance of political economy. And our economists stand at fully as wide a distance from things ecclesiastical. Both seem alike unconscious of the strong intermediate link that is between them, seeing that the

chief objects of the one can only be accomplished through the successful exertions of the other. It was for the economists to have discovered the connexion between a virtuous peasantry, and, through the consequent effect on population and wages, the greater sufficiency of their means, and their higher status in the commonwealth. But, while it was for them to perceive and point out this connexion, it is for the practical educationists alone, and pre-eminently for the Christian educationists, to make it good. The one may demonstrate what the essential condition is, on which the economic well-being of the common people turns; but it is for the others, and for them only, to realize the condition. It is for them principally, or rather for them exclusively, to supply that element, wanting which, there is an utter impotency and failure, in all the doings and all the devisings of our politicians, either to bring about or to uphold a prosperous society. No enlargement in the means of subsistence can be of any possible avail, if so rapidly followed up as heretofore, and still more if exceeded by the irrepressible advances of the population. At this rate, a larger community would be but a larger mass of wretchedness, a wider field of heartless and sickening contemplation to every lover of the species. What he longs to rest and regale his eye upon, is the joyous spectacle, not of overcrowded, but through the medium of cheerful, because well-paid industry, of comfortable families, substantially fed, respectably attired, and as respectably lodged in their snug and decent habitations. There is room, and there

are resources in the country, not for an indefinite, but for a certain, and that a very large, yea, for a constantly, though not a quickly, increasing number of such families. Beyond this number, we have no taste for mere multitude, for a swarm of human creatures, for a reckless and ragamuffin crew, overborne by that most grievous of all oppressions, the oppression of their own redundancy. If such be the general *morale* of the working classes, it is vain to look either for peace or plenty within our borders. The object will bid defiance to all agriculture and all commerce. At most, these can but stretch out the wealth of a country, but without any sensible enlargement, if there be a stretching out of the population proportionably thereto. Each successive expansion will, in this case, be but a temporary shift, a brief postponement of the evil day, the support or suspension, for a moment, by some frail tenicle, ere the nation is precipitated into a gulf of wretchedness or anarchy. It would seem to argue a growing sense of desperation among our public men, that their schemes of patriotism and philanthropy are so thickening of late upon us; while but a semblance of relief, or, at the best, a short-lived respite will be all the result of them. It is by the efficacy of moral means, working a moral transformation, and by that alone, that our deliverance will be effected; and little do the mere advocates of retrenchment, and colonization, and public works, and poor-laws, and other merely political expedients for the amelioration of the people—little do they know how utterly powerless

all these enterprises are, while the Christianity of the land is unprovided for, and its Christian institutions are left inoperative, from the want of zealous and energetic labourers to fill them.

And perhaps this indifference or incredulity, on the part of politicians and political economists, lies much deeper than we have yet ventured to say. It may be something still more hopeless than ignorance. We fear that with many of them it may be distaste and antipathy. There is a certain style of Christianity, a lifeless, inert, and meagre style of it, which is tolerated in general society. But when it comes to be Christianity in earnest, the Christianity that speaketh urgently and importunately to the consciences of men, the uncompromising Christianity that enjoins the holiness of the New Testament in all its spirituality and extent, and asserts the doctrine of the New Testament in all its depth and all its peculiarity—such a Christianity has been very generally denounced as fanaticism; and its faithful evangelical expounders have very generally had a stigma affixed to them, and been outcasts from the patronage of the state. And yet this is the only Christianity that will either attract or moralize the population; and that, not because of its deceitful adaptation to vulgar prejudices, but because of its truly divine adaptation to the actual workings of the human mind, and the felt necessities of human nature. While this enmity to the truth as it is in Jesus operates in the hearts of our rulers, it is perhaps a vain expectation that the civil and political importance of its being

sounded forth from the pulpits of our land shall come to be recognised by them. On this subject they may have been struck with judicial blindness; and ere Christianity shall manifest its power to regenerate our social condition, and overspread the land with prosperous and contented families, perhaps it will first vindicate itself on our ungodly nation, in the utter dissolution of an economy which disowns it, in the vengeance of some fearful overthrow.

APPEAL TO CHURCHMEN.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. I.)

WE cannot bid adieu to political economy without an earnest recommendation of its lessons to all those who enter upon the ecclesiastical vocation. They are our churchmen, in fact, who could best carry the most important of these lessons into practical effect. If sufficiently enlightened on the question of pauperism, they might with the greatest ease in Scotland clear away this moral leprosy from their respective parishes. And, standing at the head of Christian education, they are the alone effectual dispensers of all those civil and economical blessings which would follow in its train.

We are not sanguine either of a general or of an instant reception for the doctrines of our work. Its novelties may long be disregarded or derided as paradoxes. And it is not the achievement of a day to overturn the principles of a reigning school.

And if not very hopeful of an instant acquiescence in our principles, far less do we look for the instant adoption of our practical suggestions. The urgencies of the country may perhaps speed onwards the commutation of tithes, and the measure

of a universal education. The commutation of taxes into a territorial impost will be the work of a later age; though we should rejoice even now, did we witness a commencement however humble, an approximation however slow, to this great political and economical reform.

May God of His infinite mercy grant that whatever the coming changes in the state and history of this nation may be, they shall not be the result of a sweeping and headlong anarchy; but rather, in the pacific march of improvement, may they anticipate this tremendous evil, and avert it from our borders. There is a general impression upon all spirits that something must de done. But to be done well, it must not be by the hand of violence, but by the authority of legitimate power under the guidance of principle; by a government having both the wisdom and righteousness to direct, and the strength to execute. Amid the conflicts and agitations of our social state, it will be the heart's desire of every Christian, the fondest prayer of every true patriot, that Religion and Reason may ever preside over the destinies of our beloved land.

SECTION II.

CHARITY AND THE POOR LAW.

Over the mountain-growths disease and sorrow
An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering,
High in the purer, happier air.....

From imperfection's murkiest cloud
Darts always forth one ray of perfect light,
One flash of heaven's glory.....

To fashion's, custom's discord,
To the mad Babel-din, the deafening orgies,
Soothing each lull a strain is heard, just heard,
From some far shore the final chorus sounding.....

O the blest eyes, the happy hearts,
That see, that know the guiding thread so fine,
Along the mighty labyrinth.....

WALT WHITMAN.

THE RIGHT TO EXISTENCE.

(*Polity of a Nation*, Preface.)

ONE of the greatest difficulties, both in the management and philosophy of human affairs, is presented to us by the question of Pauperism; and a large proportion of the following pages is dedicated to the elucidation of that question. We have long thought that by a legal provision for indigence, two principles of our moral nature have been confounded, which are radically distinct from each other—distinct both objectively in the ethical system of virtue, and subjectively in the laws and workings of the human constitution. These two principles are humanity and justice, whereof the latter is the only proper object of legislation—which, by attempting the enforcement of the former, has overstepped altogether its own rightful boundaries. It is right that justice should be enforced by law, but compassion ought to have been left free; and the mischief that has practically ensued from the violation of this obvious propriety, strikingly evinces the harmony of the abstract with the concrete in the constitution of our actual world—insomuch that derangement and disorder will inevitably

follow, whenever the natural laws of that microcosm which each man carries in his own heart are thwarted by the dissonancy of those civil or political laws by which it is often so vainly attempted to improve on the designs of the Great Architect, when the inventions of man are suffered to supersede the great principles of truth and nature in the mechanism of human society.

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Pauperism in so far as sustained on the principle that each man, simply because he exists, holds a right on other men or on society for existence, is a thing not to be regulated but destroyed. Any attempt to amend the system which reposes on such a basis will present us with but another modification of that which is radically and essentially evil. Whatever the calls be, which the poverty of a human being may have on the compassion of his fellows—it has no claims whatever upon their justice. The confusion of these two virtues in the ethical system will tend to actual confusion and disorder, when introduced into the laws and administrations of human society. The proper remedy, or remedy of nature, for the wretchedness of the few, is the kindness of the many. But when the heterogeneous imagination of a right is introduced into this department of human affairs, and the imagination is sanctioned by the laws of the country, then one of two things must follow—Either an indefinite encroachment on property, so as ultimately to reduce to a sort of agrarian level all the families of the land; or, if to postpone this consequence a rigid dispensa-

tion be adopted, the disappointment of a people who have been taught to feel themselves aggrieved, the innumerable heart-burnings which law itself has conjured up, and no administration of that law, however skilful, can appease.

If the many thousand applicants for public charity in England really do have a right to the relief of their wants—why should not that right, as a right, be fully and openly and cheerfully conceded to them? Why should they be scared away from the assertion of this right, by any circumstances of hardship or degradation, or violence to the affections of nature, being associated therewith? Should the avenue to justice be obstructed, and that too by the very pains and penalties which are laid on those who trample justice under foot? Yet every approximation of an alms-house to a gaol, of a house of charity to a house of correction, but exemplifies this grievous paralogism; nor can we wonder, when the rulers of England have led its people so grievously astray, that elements of conflict are now afloat, which destroy the well-being, and even threaten the stability of society.

It is playing fast and loose with a people—first to make a declaration of their right, and then to plant obstacles in the way of their making it good. There is an utter incongruity here of the practice with the principle, which betrays a secret misgiving, as if the principle was not felt to be a sound one. The truth is that it is such a principle as will not bear to be fully and consistently acted upon—a pretty decisive evidence of something

radically wrong in the whole system. The economy of a legal provision for the poor can only be upheld in a country by a compensation of errors—an expedient which might do in mathematics, but which can never be made to do prosperously or well in the management of human nature.

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If the body of pauperism is, as we believe it, an artificial excrescence—then it admits of indefinite reduction, whenever the pressure of an energetic administration from without is brought to bear upon it. Now such an administration is never more likely to address itself with resolution and strenuousness to its task, than at the commencement of some very sanguine attempt to rectify and remodel the whole system. And accordingly the great reforming Acts of Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Sturges Bourne were signalised during the first years of their operation by the practical triumph of large and marvellous retrenchments in a goodly number of the parishes. But it was at length found, that the unnatural tension of a very strict and vigilant and of course unpopular management could not always be sustained; and so, on the moment of consequent relaxation, the pauperism, in virtue of its own native elasticity, speedily resumed, nay, exceeded the greatest amount which it had formerly arrived at.

Even though a rigorous style of administration should be persevered in, there is reason to apprehend that this may not permanently keep down the expenses of their pauperism. By aggravating the

restraints or the humiliations and sacrifices which are attached to the system, they may scare away from it those of a finer and better spirit among the peasantry of England. But on the other hand the very effect of the system may be, so to degrade and harden the general feeling of the commonalty, as shall open the way to the same if not to a greater pressure of applications than before. If the people are revolted by the hardships and annoyances of the present work-house system, this may save the economic pressure—but at the heavy expense of a great moral calamity—even a turbulent and dissatisfied feeling throughout the labouring classes of society. But if on the other hand the people shall be so far reconciled as to brook these annoyances, this will recommit the parishes of England to their wonted expenditure; and without even the comfort of any economic saving, there will still be the great moral injury of a population more blunted in all their delicacies, more insensible to all the feelings whether of honour or of natural affection than heretofore.

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It is on the strength of these considerations, that we have resolved to present anew those views and reasonings on the subject of Pauperism, which we gave to the public eighteen years ago. The late reform of English pauperism bears more the semblance than the reality of an approximation to that system which we have all along advocated. With them there is little or no change of principle, admitting, as they still do, the right of the destitute to relief

—but, along with this, a large and instant change of practical administration. With us again there is a total diversity of principle from the other, in that we deny the right—but along with this a very gradual movement in that executive process by which we would carry our principle into effect. In single parishes we propose to get rid of the old pauperism, not by any sudden or violent dismissal of the actual paupers, who, for aught we care, may be sustained through life in the sufficiency of their present allowances—but by our treatment of the new applications, and which we think may be easily so disposed of, as at length to exchange the heavy expenditure of a legal for the light expenditure of a gratuitous economy. And in carrying this reformation over the country at large, we would proceed not by a simultaneous but by a successive operation—just as the inclosure of commons passes onward from parish to parish under the authority of a permissive law. If the present reform shall turn out to be a failure, and add one more to the list of abortions which have gone before it,—then at length may it come to be acknowledged, that it is vain to look for any permanent deliverance from this sore mischief, by the mere modification of that which is radically and essentially evil. It has long been the obstinate imagination in England, that the error lies not in the essence of their poor-law, but in the accidents of its administration. This error will probably never be dislodged, but by means of a long and varied experience, by a series of disappointments in one fruitless expedient after another—

when their eyes at last may open to the truth, that nothing short of a process of eradication will conclusively relieve them, from the manifold evils of a system which ought not to be regulated but destroyed.

POVERTY AND PAUPERISM.

(*Polity of a Nation*, Vol. I.)

WE are able to affirm, on the highest of all authorities, that the poor shall be with us always —or, in other words, that it is vain to look for the extinction of poverty from the world. And yet we hold it both desirable and practicable to accomplish the extinction of pauperism: so that between the state of poverty and that of pauperism there must be a distinction, which, to save confusion, ought to be kept in mind, and to be clearly apprehended.

The epithet poor has a far wider range of application than among the lower orders of the community. We may speak, and speak rightly, of a poor nobleman, or a poor bishop, or a poor baronet. It is enough to bring down the epithet on any individual, that out of his earnings or property he is not able to maintain himself in the average style of comfort that obtains throughout the class of society to which he belongs. The earl who cannot afford a carriage, and the labourers who cannot afford the fare and the clothing of our general peasantry, however different their claims to our sympathy may be,

by being currently termed poor, are both made to share alike in this designation.

To be poor is primarily to be in want;—and even though the want should be surely provided for, by the kindness of neighbours, yet is the epithet still made to rest on the individual who originally wore it. The aged female householder, who is both destitute and diseased, may, in virtue of the notice that she has attracted, be upheld in greater abundance than any occupier in the humble alley of her habitation. And yet it may with truth be said, that she is the poorest of them all—poor in respect of her own capacity for her own support, though comfortable in respect of the support that is actually administered to her. She, even after the charitable provision that has thus been attached to her lot, is always termed poor, and in this sense do we understand the prophecy of our Saviour, that the poor shall be with us always. She, in the midst of her comforts, still exemplifies the prediction; and we doubt not, that there will be such exemplifications to the end of time. She is poor, and yet she is not in want. The condition of poverty, arising from a defect of power or of means on the part of him who occupies it, will ever, we apprehend, be a frequent circumstance in society; while the wants of poverty, arising from a defect in the care of relatives, or in the humanity of friends and observers, will, we trust, at length be exclusively done away. So that even after the charity of the millennial age shall have taken full possession of our species, may the prophecy still find its verification under an economy of things

where the state of poverty shall be at times exemplified; but where the sufferings of poverty, from the vigilance and promptitude of such sympathies as are quickened and kept alive by the influence of the gospel, shall be for ever unknown.

It was with the benevolent purpose of hastening so desirable a consummation, that poor rates were instituted in England. A fund is raised in each of the parishes, by a legal and compulsory operation; out of which a certain quantity of aliment is distributed among those residents who can substantiate the plea of their wants, to the satisfaction of its administrators. A man is, or ought to be poor, and that referably too, not to any of the higher classes of society, as a poor clergyman or a poor gentleman, but referably to the labouring classes of society; or, he ought, in respect of his own personal means, to be beneath the average condition of our peasantry, ere he is admitted upon the poor's fund. When so admitted he comes under the denomination of a pauper. A poor man is a man in want of adequate means for his own subsistence. A pauper is a man who has this want supplemented in whole or in part, out of a legal and compulsory provision. He would not be a pauper by having the whole want supplied to him out of the kindness of neighbours, or from the gratuitous allowance of an old master, or from any of the sources of voluntary charity. It is by having relief legally awarded to him, out of money legally raised, that he becomes a pauper. We are just now occupied with the mere business of definitions, but this is a business which

is often necessary: and we therefore repeat it, that the state of poverty is that state in which the occupier is unable of himself to uphold the average subsistence of his family; and the state of pauperism is that state in which the occupier has the ability either entirely, or in part, made up to him out of a public and constitutional fund.

But the truth is, that the invention of pauperism, had it been successful, would have gone to annihilate the state of poverty as well as its sufferings. A man cannot be called poor who has a legal right, on the moment that he touches the borders of indigence, to demand that there his descending progress shall be arrested, and he shall be upheld in a sufficiency of aliment for himself and his family. The law, in fact, has vested him with a property in the land, which he can turn to account, so soon as he treads on the confines of poverty: and had this desire been as effective as was hoped and intended, a state of poverty would have been impossible. A man may retain the designation of poor who has been relieved from all the discomforts of want by the generosity of another; but this epithet ought not to fall upon any who can ward off these discomforts by means of a rightful application for that which is constitutionally his own. So that had this great political expedient been as prosperous in accomplishment as it was mighty in promise, there would have remained no individual to whom the designation of poverty had been applicable—and the wisdom of man would have defeated the prophecy of God. But though the wisdom of man cannot make head

against the state of poverty, the charity of man may make head against its sufferings. The truth is, that pauperism has neither done away the condition of poverty, nor alleviated the evils of it. This attempt of legislation to provide all with a right of protection from the miseries of want, has proved vain and impotent; and leaves a strong likelihood behind it, that a more real protection would have been afforded, had the case been abandoned to the unforced sympathies of our nature; and had it been left to human compassion to soften the wretchedness of a state, against the existence of which no artifice of human policy seems to be at all available.

THE FOUR FOUNTAINS.

(*Polity of a Nation*, Vol. I.)

CONNECTED with the question of pauperism there are certain strong and urgent natural principles; some of which are powerfully operated upon by the Christian local economy that we would recommend, and all of which tend to hasten the extinction of pauperism, at a rate of far greater velocity than the progress of essential Christianity among the people. So much, indeed, is this our feeling, that while we look on a good Christian economy as eminently fitted both to sweeten and to accelerate the transition from the charity of human laws to the charity of human kindness, yet we do not think it indispensable to this effect; but that on the simple abolition of a compulsory assessment for the relief of new applicants, there would instantly break forth from innumerable fountains, now frozen or locked up by the hand of legislation, so many refreshing rills on all the places that had been left dry and destitute, by the withdrawment from them of public charity, as would spread a far more equal and smiling abundance than before over the face of society.

The first, and by far the most productive of these fountains, is situated among the habits and economies of the people themselves. It is impossible but that an established system of pauperism must induce a great relaxation on the frugality and providential habits of our labouring classes. It is impossible but that it must undermine the incentives to accumulation; and, by leading the people to repose that interest on a public provision, which would else have been secured by the effects of their own prudence and their own watchfulness, it has dried up far more abundant resources in one quarter than it has opened in another. We know not a more urgent principle of our constitution than self-preservation; and it is a principle which not only shrinks from present suffering, but which looks onward to futurity, and holds up a defence against the apprehended wants and difficulties of the years that are to come. Were the great reservoir of public charity, for the town at large, to be shut, there would soon be struck out many family reservoirs, fed by the thrift and sobriety, which necessity would then stimulate, but which now the system of pauperism so long has superseded; —and from these there would emanate a more copious supply than is at present ministered out of poor rates, to aliment the evening of plebeian life, and to equalise all the vicissitudes of its history.

The second fountain which pauperism has a tendency to shut, and which its abolition would reopen, is the kindness of relatives. One of the most palpable, and at the same time most grievous effects of this artificial system, is the dissolution which it has

made of the ties and feelings of relationship. It is this which gives rise to the melancholy list of runaway parents, wherewith whole columns of the provincial newspapers of England are oftentimes filled. And then, as if in retaliation, there is the cruel abandonment of parents, by their own offspring, to the cold and reluctant hand of public charity. In some cases, there may not be the requisite ability; but the actual expense on the part of labourers, for luxuries that might be dispensed with, demonstrates that, in most cases, there is that ability. But it is altogether the effect of pauperism to deaden the inclination. It has poisoned the strongest affections of nature; and turned inwardly, towards the indulgences of an absorbent selfishness, that stream which else would have flowed out on the needy of our own blood and our own kindred. It has shut those many avenues of domestic kindliness by which, but for its deadening and disturbing influence, a far better and more copious circulation of needful supplies would have been kept up throughout the mass of society. We believe, that were the first fountain restored to its natural play, there would be discharged, from it alone, in the greatest number of instances, a competency for the closing years of the labourer;—and did this resource fail, that the second fountain would come in aid, and send forth on the decaying parentage of every grown up and working generation more than would replace the dispensations of pauperism.

A third fountain, on which pauperism has set one of its strongest seals, and which would instantly be

unlocked on the abolition of the system, is the sympathy of the wealthier for the poorer classes of society. It has transformed the whole character of charity, by turning a matter of love into a matter of litigation: and so, has seared and shut many a heart out of which the spontaneous emanations of good-will would have gone plentifully forth among the abodes of the destitute. We know not how a more freezing arrest can be laid on the current of benevolence, than when it is met in the tone of a rightful, and perhaps indignant demand for that, wherewith it was ready, on its own proper impulse, to pour refreshment and relief over the whole field of ascertained wretchedness. There is a mighty difference of effect between an imperative and an imploring application. The one calls out the jealousy of our nature, and puts us upon the attitude of surly and determined resistance. The other calls out the compassion of our nature, and inclines us to the free and willing movements of generosity. It is in the former attitude that, under a system of overgrown pauperism, we now, generally speaking, behold the wealthy in reference to the working classes of England. They stand to each other in a grim array of hostility—the one thankless and dissatisfied, and stoutly challenging as its due, what the other reluctantly yields, and that as sparingly as possible. Had such been a right state of things, then pity would have been more a superfluous feeling in our constitution, as its functions would have been nearly superseded by the operation of law and justice. And the truth is, that this sweetener of the ills of life has been greatly

stifled by legislation; while the amount of actual and unrelieved wretchedness among the peasantry of England, too plainly demonstrates that the economy of pauperism has failed to provide an adequate substitute in its room. Were this economy simply broken up, and the fountain of human sympathy again left free to be operated upon by its wonted excitements, and to send out its wonted streams throughout those manifold subordinations by which the various classes of society are bound and amalgamated together—we doubt not that from this alone a more abundant, or, at least, a far more efficient and better-spread tide of charity would be diffused throughout the habitations of indigence.

But there is still another fountain, that we hold to be greatly more productive even than the last, both in respect to the amount of relief that is yielded by it, and also in respect of the more fit and timely accommodation wherewith it suits itself to the ever varying accidents and misfortunes of our common humanity. There is a local distance between the wealthy and the poor, which is unfavourable to the operation of the last fountain, but this is amply compensated in the one we are about to specify;—and some may be surprised when we intimate, that of far superior importance to the sympathy of the rich for the poor, do we hold to be the sympathy of the poor for one another. In the veriest depths of unmixed and extended plebeianism, and where, for many streets together, not one house is to be seen which indicates more than the rank of a common labourer, are there feelings of mutual kindness, and

capabilities of mutual aid, that greatly outstrip the conceptions of a hurried and superficial observer: And, but for pauperism, which has released immediate neighbours from the feeling they would otherwise have had, that in truth the most important benefactors of the poor are the poor themselves—there has been a busy internal operation of charity in these crowded lanes, and densely peopled recesses, that would have proved a more effectual guarantee against the starvation of any individual, than ever can be reared by any of the artifices of human policy. One who has narrowly looked to some of these vicinities; and witnessed the small but numerous contributions that pour in upon a family whose distresses have attracted observation; and seen how food, and service, and fuel are rendered in littles, from neighbours that have been drawn, by a kind of moral gravitation, to the spot where disease and destitution hold out their most impressive aspect; and has arithmetic withal for comparing the amount of these unnoticed items with the whole produce of that more visible beneficence which is imported from abroad, and scattered, by the hand of affluence, over the district,—We say that such an observer will be sure to conclude that, after all, the best safeguards against the horrors of extreme poverty have been planted by the hand of Nature in the very region of poverty itself—that the numerous though scanty rivulets which have their rise within its confines, do more for the refreshment of its more desolate places, than would the broad streams that may be sent forth upon it, from the great reservoir

of pauperism: And, if it be true, that it is just the stream which has dried up the streamlets, and caused them to disappear from the face of a territory, over which they would else have diffused a healthful and kindly irrigation—then should pauperism be abolished, let but humanity abide, in all the wonted attributes and sympathies which belong to her, and we may be sure, that for the supplies which issued from the storehouse of public charity, there would be ample compensation, in the breaking out of those manifold lesser charities, that never fail to be evolved, when human suffering is brought into contact with human observation.

There is a more constantly plying address to their sympathies, in the disease or helplessness of a next-door neighbour, than even in the weekly recurrence of a visitor for their humble contribution. There is a common feeling among the men of the operative classes, inspired by the very condition which they in common occupy; for fellowship with one in his lot is felt as a sort of claim to fellowship with him in his love and liberality. In these, and in many other principles of our nature, there are daily and most powerful excitements to charity, which, if never interfered with by pauperism, would have yielded a far more abundant produce to the cause, than ever descended upon it, in golden showers, from all the rich, and mighty, and noble of the nation put together. It is the little, combined with the numerous and the often, which explains this mystery. Each offering is small—but there is an unknown multitude of offerers, and under incessant application too, from

the near and the constant exhibition of suffering at their very door. Had art not attempted to supersede nature, or the wisdom of man to improve upon that wisdom which poured into the human heart those sympathies that serve to oil and to uphold the mechanism of human society, there would have emerged out of this state of things a far more plenteous dispensation of relief than the wealthy have ever given, or even, perhaps, than the wealthy could afford; whose occasional benefactions come far short, in the quantity of aid, of those kind offices which are rendered, and those humble meals which are served up, and those nameless little participations into which a poor householder is admitted with the contiguous families, and all that unrevealed good which circulates, unseen, throughout every neighbourhood where the native play of human feeling is not disturbed by the foreign and adventitious influences of a perverse human policy.

DIFFICULTIES TO ABOLITION OF PAUPERISM.

(*Polity of a Nation*, Vol. II.)

THE difficulties of removing such a great national evil as pauperism are of two classes, which are wholly distinct the one from the other; and it would clear away much of its darkness and perplexity from the question were these difficulties kept by the inquirer as separate in thought as they are separate in reality. The first difficulties are those which are presented by the economic condition of the lower orders. They are such difficulties as have their seat among the circumstances and necessities of the people. It is the imagination of many, that to do away a legal provision for indigence would be to abandon a large population to a destitution and distress that were most revolting to humanity; and in as far as this imagination is true, it offers a most formidable difficulty, and one, indeed, which should foreclose the question altogether. The population ought not to be so abandoned; and if, in virtue of the abolition of pauperism, they shall become worse either in comfort or character than before, then this abolition ceases to be

desirable. We happen to think that no such consequences would ensue, and that, on the supplies of public charity being withdrawn, there would not only be much less of actual want in the country, but that this want would be sure to find relief, and in a way greatly more consistent both with the comfort and virtue of families. In other words, we happen to think that the first difficulties have no real or substantive existence whatever—that if any portion of the British territory were submitted, in a right way, to the trial, they would, one and all of them, vanish before the touch of experience—and therefore that, by a series of distinct and successive operations on each of the portions, the whole of our land might at length be made to emerge from this sore evil. In as far as the needs and habits of the population are concerned, we hold the problem to be manageable, and most easily manageable; and, such being our conviction, we have long deemed it a worthy object of our most strenuous endeavours to prove it so by argument, or, what is still better, to evince it so by actual exhibition.

But one cannot be long engaged in the prosecution of such a task without coming into contact with other difficulties which are wholly distinct from the former, and which may be termed the factitious or political difficulties of the question. Even though there should be, as we believe, no essential or natural difficulties at all, yet the difficulties of this second class are enough, in themselves, to retard the progress of light and of sound doctrine upon the subject, and far more to retard the accomplishment

of any sound practical reformation. It is a very possible thing, both that certain views should be just and well-founded, and yet that those whose co-operation is indispensable to give effect to these views should be very long of giving their consent to them. One might feel no difficulty in ridding any specified district of its pauperism, after that he has been permitted to take his own way, and pursue his own measures, with its families—while, at the same time, he may feel the uttermost difficulty in gaining the permission. They who have the constitutional right, either to arrest his proceedings, or to allow of them, must first be satisfied; and whether from honest conviction, or from the tenacity of a wedded adherence to old and existing methods, they may stand in the way of all innovation. Ere he come into contact with the human nature of the question among the poor themselves, he may have far greater obstacles against him in the law of the question, and in the obstinate prejudice or wilfulness of those men with whom the right is vested of adjudging or administering for the poor. We should like the reader's clear apprehension of the utter difference and dissimilarity which there is between these two sets of difficulties. The place of encounter with the one is in the parish and among the applicants for relief from the parish. The place of encounter with the other may be in the vestry, where men have assembled to act upon the law; or in the quarter sessions, where men have assembled to pronounce upon, and to enforce the law; or, finally, within the walls of parliament, where the proposal

is submitted to repeal or to rectify the law. It may be true that there is a system of utmost facility which, if adopted, shall be of omnipotent effect to expel pauperism from a parish, and with less of want and wretchedness among its families than before; and also true that there shall be a weary struggle with the incredulity and perverse misconceptions of influential men ere the system shall be suffered to have a trial. It might so be that there is a method which, after that it is established, shall be found of easy and effective operation amongst the poor, but which, before that it is established, shall have to encounter many years of formidable resistance amongst the present guides and governors of the poor. And this is enough to make the problem of pauperism a difficult problem. But still it is of importance precisely to see where the difficulty lies—and not to confound the natural difficulties which are inherent in the subject of management with the political difficulties by which the way of the philanthropist is beset when he comes into collision with the prejudices or partialities of those who at present have the right or the power of management.

At the same time it ought to be remembered, that if the natural difficulties of the problem be indeed so very light and conquerable, its political difficulties must, of necessity, subside, and at length vanish altogether. It is the imagination, in fact, of the greatness of its essential difficulties that mainly gives rise to the opposition of our influential men, or to what is still more hopeless than their

active opposition, the listlessness and apathy of their despair. Could we succeed in proving that there is really nothing in the condition of the lower orders which presents an insuperable barrier to the abolition of pauperism, the barrier of prejudice and dislike, on the part of the higher orders, to any radical change must finally give way. Truth may be withstood long, but it cannot be withstood eternally. The provisions of Law will at length be made to accord with the principles of Nature; and whatever shall be found by experience, in the human nature of the question, to be most wholesome for the people, the law of the question must, in time, be moulded into a conformity therewith. The voice of wisdom will ascend from the parish to the parliament; and the light which is struck out among the details and verifications of but an humble district in the land will ultimately force all those inveteracies that now barricade the hall of legislation.

Let me now give one or two specimens of the way in which both sound opinion and sound policy may be baffled, and, for a time, arrested; and that, in virtue of certain impediments, to which even the most enlightened views on the question of pauperism stand peculiarly exposed.

There is, first, then, an incredulity which is sure to be immediately lighted up on the mention of so great an achievement as the deliverance of a whole empire from its legal and compulsory pauperism. The very hopelessness of a result so mighty and marvellous induces a heedlessness of every explanation that can be offered regarding it. The thing

looks so utterly impracticable, as to carry, in the mere announcement of it, its own refutation. The apparent romance and unlikelihood of the whole speculation beget a certain arch incredulity on the part of the hearer, and this is the most unfortunate posture that can well be imagined for the entertainment of any demonstration in its favour. And there is really so much of empiricism in the world—the public ear has been so repeatedly assailed by the crudity, and the nostrum, and the splendid imagination, of successive adventurers—so manifold have been the promising theories which have passed, one after another, before the view of British society, and then passed away into utter abortiveness, that truly we cannot wonder if the general infidelity be now so strong as to have settled down into the attitude, not merely of determined unbelief, but of downright listlessness. This is the kind of outset that we have to encounter at the very opening of our proposals on the subject of pauperism; and the more surely because of the magnitude of that change after which we aspire. It is this magnitude which stamps an aspect of extravagance and wildness on the whole speculation; insomuch, that the only treatment that is held meet for it, by many, is a rejection as summary and contemptuous as if it were one of the visions of Utopia.

Now, to meet this impression, and to overcome the incredulity which is founded upon it, it can be urged, that though suddenly a very great achievement may be impracticable, yet that gradually it may not be so—that a way may be devised of break-

ing it into distinct and successive steps, each of which is most easily practicable—that though the proposed transition is far too gigantic to be accomplished at once, yet that piece-meal, and by inches, the whole of it may be described in time, with no other than every-day instruments, and no other help than that of ordinary men—that though the mischief cannot be exterminated by a blow, it may by a process: And so, the whole of our demand is not for a sublime power that shall inflict the one, but for a sober-minded patience that shall wait the result of the other. This is the very nature of our proposal for the extinction of pauperism. We have no mystic charm to propose that shall work an instant extermination. We would go over the ground, not by flights but by footsteps—insomuch, that the deliverance of a single parish is not completed but by the disappearance of its whole existing generation of paupers; and the deliverance of the whole empire is not completed but by this separate operation being repeated upon each, till it has overtaken all the parishes. We are not aware of one impracticable link or stepping-stone in the whole of that consecutive series, by which, at length, the evil, in its last vestiges, may be utterly swept away; and what we should like to press into this service is not the enthusiasm that will impel to a lofty and magnificent daring after some enterprise which is great, but the assiduity that will work its way through a course or succession of littles, and, without any straining or impetuosity whatever, will wait for the termination of it.

But no sooner do we get rid of one antipathy than we are instantly met by another. The very men who have no credit for what is great may have no value for what is gradual. When, to get the better of their incredulity about the efficacy of our process, we tell them how slow it is, then we have just as hard an encounter as before with their indifference. There is the substitution of one mental prejudice or perversity for another ; and in making our escape from the first we run into a conflict with the second. In the first instance there is the same unbelief in the possibility of all pauperism being done away as they would have in a magical performance ; and in the second instance, whatever is to be done in the way of reformation has no charm for them unless it can be done with a rapidity that would be altogether magical. We do not see how it is possible to suit the taste of such people with any acceptable speculation on the subject of pauperism—sceptical as they are of any relief being practicable, and, at the same time, impatient as they are for that relief being immediate. We cannot devise for them a scheme that shall at once be moderate enough in its aim to suit the narrowness of their apprehensions, and at the same time speedy enough in its operation to suit the extravagance of their wishes. When they hear the promise of a total deliverance, they spurn it away from them as romantic. When the romance is mitigated, by the proposal that the deliverance shall be very gradual, they spurn it away from them as tardy. It is not more beyond the limits of human strength to do what is great in a great time, then to do what is small in a

small time; but they will not allow these elements to be properly sorted together. They first quarrel with the greatness of the achievement as the thing which makes it to be hopeless; and then they quarrel with the greatness of the time which is required for doing it as the thing which makes it to be worthless. After all, those are the more egregiously romantic who would have nothing to be done, unless it can be brought about with the quickness of legerdemain; and theirs is the imagination which, of all others, outruns the soberness both of arithmetic and experience. It is not uncommon that the same individual should feel distrust in the possibility of some given accomplishment because of a greatness that threw over it an air of the marvellous, and, at the same time, an utter disregard for the accomplishment at all, unless it could be done with a velocity which would indeed make it marvellous. This incredulity on the one hand, and impatience on the other, are frequently attributes of the same mind, although as frequently, perhaps, each is realised separately on two distinct classes; and it is between those who are hopeless, and those who are precipitate, that it is so difficult to extricate a nation from the evils of a wrong domestic economy.

REFLECTIONS ON PAUPERISM.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. II.)

AN advocate for charity, in any of its forms, has always, at first sight, much to recommend him to the partiality of his auditors. He is doing something for the interest of humanity in the shape of a positive service. He is making a movement, to which he is prompted, in all appearance, by an impulse of kindliness. He is exercising his thoughts, and lifting his voice in behalf of distress; and there is something in the mere aspect of such an exhibition that is calculated to prepossess his observers, and to hold him out in a light of very advantageous contrast, either with the selfishly indifferent, who care not about his projects, or with the actively hostile, who oppose them.

On the other hand, an opponent, not of charity, but of some of its particular forms, has often much in the shape of initiatory dislike and prejudice to struggle with. However much he may prevail in the argument, and, at the conclusion of it, may vindicate his character as an enlightened friend of the species, he has not unfrequently to brave the hazard and the resistance of a most unpopular outset.

The public are apt to be revolted by that array of hardihood which a mere reasoning philanthropist is so likely to throw around his speculations; and, should he at length succeed in carrying their acquiescence along with him, this is an object for which he must fight his way at one time through the gentler remonstrances of an alarmed delicacy; and, at another, through the clamour of a boisterous and reproachful indignation.

This, in no one instance, has been so strikingly exemplified as in those speculations about the nature of charity, which were in a great measure originated by Mr. Malthus; and from which many have been led to infer, that every public and proclaimed provision, for the relief of general indigence, is not only utterly incompetent to the attainment of its object, but has the effect of perpetuating and extending the very distress which it proposes to alleviate; and that, therefore, it had been better could the sufferings of poverty have been left to the hands of private charity altogether. In opposition to this, the actual cases of want are brought out in full enumeration; and all the circumstances of pathos, by which they are accompanied, are impressively dwelt upon; and the direct and visible relief they obtain from our existing institutions is too apparent to escape the commonest observation; and the fact, the unquestionable fact, is at all times appealed to, and set up in resistance to the fearful uncertainty of committing such cases to such accidental impulses of compassion as they may awaken in the neighbourhood where they occur: And thus it is that the antagonists of this new

doctrine are, in the estimation of a very large part of the community, placed on the vantage ground, both of feeling and of historical example; while its friends are looked upon as having nothing else to urge in their behalf than the plausibilities of a barbarous and untried theory.

To temper the force of these execrations it is alleged by the followers of Malthus that many of the cases in question are the product of the charity itself; that, after a public institution has done its uttermost, it leaves a surplus of unreached and unrelieved wretchedness greater in amount than it met with at the outset of its operations; that it never rescues the *whole* field of human suffering from the hand of private charity, and then brings it under a better and more effective management than before; that at each step of its progress it only works on a part of the actual field, and meanwhile sends forth a pestilential influence on every side of it among the sound part of the population; that on the outside as it were of all the space which it occupies there ever lies an unreclaimed waste of poverty, which recedes and broadens, and that, too, in proportion as public charity proclaims and multiplies her doings: And, therefore, so far from acting the part of a more efficient substitute for private charity, she has, in truth, left benevolent individuals more to do than ever, and aggravated all the duties and all the difficulties which originally lay upon them.

Now, without offering to decide this controversy at present, we are led, by the publication before us, to attach ourselves to an object, on the practical

importance of which all the parties in it are most cordially agreed. The object is to reduce the heavy expenses of pauperism; and, at the same time, to relieve the miseries of the poor. We observe in the present, and in many of the other English publications upon this subject, frequent appeals to the case of Scotland, and a kind of mysterious charm ascribed to that peculiar mode of treatment, which still obtains in the greater number of our parishes. We hold ourselves to be discharging one of the most appropriate of our functions when we are attempting to furnish our Southern neighbours with such information as our opportunities can supply; and we do think that much important principle may be educed from the present aspect of Scotland, in so far as it respects the question of Poor's Rates.

Whatever differences may obtain on the philosophy of the subject, we believe that there are two points on which there is now a very wide and general agreement. The first is, that the ills of Poverty will never be banished from the world by the mere positive administrations of Beneficence. The days have gone by when the relief of Poverty could be looked upon as nothing more than the simple process of filling up a vacancy, or of directing towards that quarter of society where there was want a stream of supply from that other quarter where there was fulness. This indeed was the first and most obvious expedient; and it was natural to think that in this way a sufficiency could be obtained for all the needs and sufferings of our species—and a more equal rate of enjoyment be diffused over the

neighbourhood; while the rich by the act of giving, and the poor by the act of receiving, would come nearer to each other in the degree at which they participated of the bounties and the provisions of nature. This experiment, however, has been repeated in a thousand forms; and even when conducted on the largest and most conspicuous scale, the result has been a glaring mockery of these anticipations. Liberality has put forth her abundant stores in many a town and in many a neighbourhood; and no such scene of fine or delightful promise has ever been realized. And even when, with the feeling that her present sacrifices were not yet enough, she has put forth a greater stretch of exertion than before—she has always found that her powerless aim fell short of that accomplishment to which she directed all the earnestness of her wishes, and the strenuousness of her most honest and diligent endeavours—and has at length arrived at the sure mortification of knowing that the object of her pursuit is ever receding from her advances—and that, let her multiply her offerings as she may, there will still lie before her the unquelled aspect of a clamorous, dissatisfied, and actually suffering population.

This is a point, then, upon which we are not called to provoke the antipathies of any set of men by linking it with the doctrines of Malthus or any other system of economical speculation. People have found their way to it with nothing else to guide them than a kind of gross and general experience. Put the case of a wealthy citizen leaving the fortune he has amassed in some second-rate town of the empire

to the object of alleviating the general indigence of its people, and let its interest form a clear addition to all the anterior charities of the place. There are many who, with no system and no generalisation in their heads about it, could, on the strength of something like an instinctive sagacity, pronounce on the utter futility of such a destination. They could tell us that this additional sum, if it amounted to ten thousand a year, would just go to augment the numbers of the poor, without reducing the miseries of poverty; and that if, by way of making a still more decisive stroke at the mischief, the ten thousand were made twenty, the mischief would still rise upon us, and hold out as obstinate and inextirpable a character as ever. In short, there are hundreds of practical men who, though totally unfurnished with science or any thing like it, have got a thorough hold of the truth of the matter; who see, and see with a most discerning justness, that the right management of poverty is truly the darkest and most unresolvable of all problems; and that, in the face of all which the combined charity and wisdom of man can devise to banish them from the world, there appears to exist some mysterious necessity for the accomplishment of the saying, "that we shall have the poor with us always."

And indeed, without entering into the theory of population at all, it seems pretty evident, that should I retrench my own enjoyments, and give the produce of all this economy to the poor, I should only give to one set of human beings what I am withholding from another. The sum now expended in the relief of

poverty was formerly expended in payments for the articles of my own accommodation,—in the shape of support to those who supplied these articles,—or of remuneration to those who had vested their capital, or bestowed their industry upon the preparation of them. And thus it appears that wherever a great mass of wealth is directed to the maintenance of the poor, this is done by a great withdrawment of wealth from its former channels of distribution; by a great impoverishment of those who were formerly upheld by this wealth in the exercise of their callings; and, in fact, by the creation of poor in one quarter, just as you divert money away from those who were industriously earning the price of your articles of consumption to the relief of poverty already existing in some other quarter. And hence it may be seen how, if all the men of wealth in the country were to reduce themselves to the mere necessaries of life, they would just dismiss from their service a mighty train of dependent artificers and workmen; they would just, without forwarding by a single inch the cause of human enjoyment, exchange an industrious for a beggarly population.

Without making any further attempts at present to unravel the intricacy of this mechanism, we now hasten to another position, in the truth of which, also, there is a pretty general agreement between the disciples of philosophy and practice. It is, that no power of inquisition can protect a public charity from unfair demands upon it, and demands, too, of such weight and plausibility as must, in fact, be acceded to, and have the effect of wasting a large and ever in-

creasing proportion of the fund on those who are not the rightful or the legitimate objects of it. We speak not merely of the arts by which ever claimant can disguise his actual circumstances. We shall suppose that this point can be most rigidly ascertained—that a precise inventory can be taken of all his means and possessions—that every latent source of maintenance can be fully detected, and brought before the view of the guardians and distributers of charity—and that a correct judgment can at all times be formed on the question, whether the present situation of the applicant be such as might entitle the public to leave him to himself. This is the only question which the dispensers of a legal charity ever do take up, and, what is more, it is the only question which they are able to resolve. The question of the previous habits of the applicant for relief they do not entertain; and, if they did entertain it, they would find that its satisfactory solution was far beyond the reach of all their expedients of vigilance and inquiry. The most galling police that ever was devised, or put into action, by the fiercest despotism on earth, could not accomplish this object.

There is not a labourer in the country, however well paid he may be, who might not become a pauper at the first moment of his decaying strength or of his declining wages; and that just by such a relaxation of his previous economy as could not be detected by the most watchful guardianship of men appointed to preside over this department of the public interest. They could not go over the whole previous expenditure of his family. They could not limit or modify

the multifarious details of his personal and domestic economy. They could not enter his house and prune away all the superfluities of indulgence that go on in it. They might as well think of employing agents to sweeten the tea of every breakfast table throughout all the lanes and intricacies of a great city as think of keeping up the tone of the people's economy, and that, too, in the face of open and widely known provisions for the relief of indigence. The truth is, that it is this provision which has relaxed their economy; and we may now see how speedily and, at the same time, how imperceptibly, a double provision would be followed up by a double relaxation. The dispensers of charity are in a state of utter powerlessness over that very element which it is of most essential importance to control. And let them be as multitudinous as they may, and completely provided with all the forms of strict inquiry, and prying inspection, and skilfully constructed schedules, and bodies of men arranged into a curious assortment of committees and subcommittees; in short, let them get up an apparatus of defence and of distribution as ingenious as they may, they will, in every one of their objects, be counterwrought and prevailed over by a still more ingenious population.

There can be no difficulty now in perceiving how every extension of the poor's fund is in general sure to be followed up by a more than proportional increase of actual poverty. We greatly underrate the alertness and the sharpsightedness of the lower orders of society, if we think that their attention is not all awake on the proclaimed existence of a revenue for

their eventual wants, or that they do not admit this fact as an element of computation that tells, and with great practical certainty, upon all their habits of indulgence and expense. It were well, indeed, if they kept within the bounds of accuracy in these computations. But the truth is, that they greatly overrate the power of every public charity; or, in other words, the relaxation of the providential and economical habits is always sure to go much beyond the capability of every instituted fund to meet the effects of this relaxation. And hence it is, that a public charity necessarily creates more poverty than it provides for; that a feeling of pressure or of deficiency haunts every footstep of its operations; and that the evil which it tries to overtake swells and magnifies, and retires upon all its advances: and surely, when the good to be done thus mocks our utmost efforts at approximation, and we see the vision of distress we want to scare away rising into more tremendous dimensions, and, in the language of the devouring grave, telling us, on every addition to her spoils, that it is not yet enough,—surely there is something in all this that may well perplex and alarm us. Nor is it to be wondered at, that it should have done so much to check the stream of sympathy, or to shut its hand, or to stint the offering which flows from it.

If actual want be the only qualification required, this can be easily come at without any painful accompaniment on the part of the applicant, or even without any such glaring improvidency as shall decisively fasten upon him a criminal or a disgraceful imputation. To relax the industry by a

very little, or to let down to a small and imperceptible extent, the economical habits, or to regale the appetite with a few secret and scarcely unallowable delicacies,—these are the simple expedients by which, when once the mighty hold of self-dependence is loosened and done away, the daily increasing thousands of a city population may, in the shape of famished wives, or ragged children, or destitute old men, inundate the amplest charity that ever was reared to the full extent of its capabilities and its funds. The recipients will ever multiply, without any further limitation than the revenue of the institution; and the dispensers be mortified to find, that all the vigilance they can employ, and all the inquisitorial jealousy they can exercise in the cases and applications which come before them, will be a frail defence against the invasion of such numbers as shall devour the whole produce of the charity, and leave a mortifying surplus of broiling discontent and unappeased clamour, and actual unrelieved poverty behind it.

And here it may be proper to mention, as one of the worst effects of such a system, that mutual acerbity of feeling which is thereby engendered between the higher and the lower orders of society. On the one hand, there is the harassing suspicion, that with every surrender they make they are doing no good; that they are feeding a mischief they can never quell; that they are throwing oil upon a flame, which no art, and no management, can extinguish; and that at every new concession of liberality they are to be mortified by some new

exhibition of insatiableness or of ingratitude on the part of its objects. On the other hand, there is the obstinate and determined sentiment that no gratitude is due;—there is a feeling of right to buy up the nurselings of Pauperism, under all the degradations it is conceived to bring along with it;—there is the provocation of scanty allowance, to feed their discontents, and to sooth, or even to elevate their minds, by something like the movements of a generous indignancy; and in all these ways is there established a strong feeling of repulsion between the rich and the poor,—most injurious, we are sure, to the individual character of both,—and most menacing to the peace and good order of the commonwealth.

This view of the matter should help, we think, to redeem the speculations of Mr. Malthus from a certain species of sentimental abhorrence that is often expressed towards it. There are many who think that his doctrine has an air of irrefragable demonstration, but that it also has to the full as great an air of barbarity. While they admit his conclusions to be those of an argument on which reason and truth have stamped their irresistible authority, they feel them to be painful, and revolting, and melancholy. They conceive, that upon this subject they cannot follow the dictates of their judgment, without inflicting a wound upon their sensibilities; nor act their parts as men of understanding, unless they stifle every delicacy of their nature, and be prepared to weep the departure of every softer charity from the world.

This is a gross misconception. A disciple of Mr.

Malthus need not be the enemy of Beneficence. All he proposes is to change the direction of it. He looks on the constitution of our nature as affording, in the pain it annexes to the sensations of hunger and cold, an immutable guarantee against the starvation of those who can earn a subsistence; and as to those who cannot, he leaves them to the kindness and the watchfulness of private charity; believing that every legalized provision musters up a competition against the claims of real and unquestionable distress, in the unjustifiable demands of those whom the very existence of such a provision has tempted to resign their industrious habits, and voluntarily to crowd that avenue which leads to a degrading and wide-wasting Pauperism.

If this belief be well founded, then does every disciple of Malthus stand upon lofty vantage ground for retorting back on sentimentalism all her own execrations. He has nothing to do but to proclaim that his partialities are on the side of individual and unknown Benevolence; that it is there only that he meets with this virtue in all its tenderness on the one side, and in all its gratitude on the other; and that, in the ministration of a public and proclaimed charity, there is not one feature of kindliness which can draw his regards to it. And when he looks at the scowling jealousy and discontent which ever accompany its operations; at the manifest hostility of feeling which rankles in the bosoms, both of the receivers and dispensers; at the sums extorted by clamour, and given with reproach; at the scene of angry contention, on

which suspicion and resentment, and selfishness, and all the worst passions of our nature, make up one most odious and revolting exhibition:— When he couples this with the fact that there are countries in Europe where there is no legalized charity at all, and where want and wretchedness are yet as little known as in ours,—how can he feel that he incurs the guilt of barbarity in befriending a system which offers to restore to Benevolence all its lovely and endearing attributes, without robbing it of one particle of its efficacy; which is for guiding the footsteps of the wealthy to those haunts where poverty is to be found in meek and modest retirement; which is for dispensing the treasures of charity, through the secrecies of personal and confidential intercourse; and would have her to expatiate on that unseen theatre, where there is no eye but the eye of Omniscience to witness her doings, and no book but the book of Heaven to record them.

ASSIMILATING A TOWN TO A COUNTRY PARISH.

(*Polity of a Nation*, Vol. I.)

WE hold the possibility, and we cannot doubt the advantage of assimilating a town to a country parish. We think that the same moral regimen which, under the parochial and ecclesiastical system of Scotland, has been set up, and with so much effect, in her country parishes, may, by a few simple and attainable processes, be introduced into the most crowded of her cities, and with as signal and conspicuous an effect on the whole habit and character of their population—that the simple relationship which obtains between a minister and his people in the former situation may be kept up with all the purity and entireness of its influences in the latter situation; and be equally available to the formation of a well-conditioned peasantry; in a word, that there is no such dissimilarity between town and country as to prevent the great national superiority of Scotland, in respect of her well-principled and well-educated people, being just as observable in Glasgow or Edinburgh, for example, as it is in the most retired of her districts, and

these under the most diligent process of moral and religious cultivation. So that, while the profligacy which obtains in every crowded and concentrated mass of human beings is looked upon by many a philanthropist as one of those helpless and irreclaimable distempers of the body politic, for which there is no remedy—do we maintain that there are certain practicable arrangements which, under the blessing of God, will stay this growing calamity, and would, by the perseverance of a few years, land us in a purer and better generation.

One most essential step towards so desirable an assimilation in a large city parish is a numerous and well-appointed agency. The assimilation does not lie here in the external framework; for, in a small country parish, the minister alone, or with a very few coadjutors of a small session, may bring the personal influence of his kind and Christian attentions to bear upon all the families. Among the ten thousand of a city parish this is impossible; and, therefore, what he cannot do but partially and superficially in his own person must, if done substantially, be done in the person of others. And he, by dividing his parish into small manageable districts—and assigning one or more of his friends, in some capacity or other, to each of them—and vesting them with such a right, either of superintendance or of inquiry, as will always be found to be gratefully met by the population—and so raising, as it were, a ready intermedium of communication between himself and the inhabitants of his parish, may at length attain an assimilation in point of

result to a country parish, though not in the means by which he arrived at it. He can in his own person maintain at least a pretty close and habitual intercourse with the more remarkable cases; and as for the moral charm of cordial and Christian acquaintanceship, he can spread it abroad by deputation over that part of the city which has been assigned to him. In this way, an influence, long unfelt in towns, may be speedily restored to them; and they, we affirm, know nothing of this department of our nature who are blind to the truth of the position—that out of the simple elements of attention, and advice, and civility, and good will, conveyed through the tenements of the poor by men a little more elevated in rank than themselves, a far more purifying and even more gracious operation can be made to descend upon them than ever will be achieved by any other of the ministrations of charity.

And here let it be remarked that just as the material apparatus of schools subserves the civic as well as the Christian economy of a nation, by its operating as a medium for other good influences than those which are purely sacred—so this eminently holds true of every such arrangement as multiplies the topics and the occurrences of intercourse between the higher and the lower orders of society. There is no large city which would not soon experience the benefit of such an arrangement. But when that city is purely commercial, it is just the arrangement which, of all others, is most fitted to repair a peculiar disadvantage under

which it labours. In a provincial capital the great mass of the population are retained in kindly and immediate dependence on the wealthy residenters of the place. It is the resort of annuitants, and landed proprietors, and members of the law, and other learned professions, who give impulse to a great amount of domestic industry by their expenditure; and, on inquiring into the sources of maintenance and employment for the labouring classes there, it will be found that they are chiefly engaged in the immediate service of ministering to the wants and luxuries of the higher classes in the city. This brings the two extreme orders of society into that sort of relationship which is highly favourable to the general blandness and tranquillity of the whole population. In a manufacturing town, on the other hand, the poor and the wealthy stand more disjoined from each other. It is true they often meet, but they meet more on an arena of contest than on a field where the patronage and custom of the one party are met by the gratitude and good will of the other. When a rich customer calls a workman into his presence for the purpose of giving him some employment connected with his own personal accommodation, the general feeling of the latter must be altogether different from what it would be were he called into the presence of a trading capitalist for the purpose of cheapening his work, and being dismissed for another, should there not be an agreement in their terms. We do not aim at the most distant reflection against the manufacturers of our land; but it must be quite

obvious, from the nature of the case, that their intercourse with the labouring classes is greatly more an intercourse of collision, and greatly less an intercourse of kindliness, than is that of the higher orders in such towns as Bath, or Oxford, or Edinburgh. In this way there is a mighty unfilled space interposed between the high and the low of every large manufacturing city, in consequence of which they are mutually blind to the real cordialities and attractions which belong to each of them; and a resentful feeling is apt to be fostered, either of disdain or defiance, which it will require all the expedients of an enlightened charity effectually to do away. Nor can we guess at a likelier or a more immediate arrangement for this purpose, than to multiply the agents of Christianity amongst us, whose delight it may be to go forth among the people on no other errand than that of pure goodwill, and with no other ministrations than those of respect and tenderness.

There is one lesson that we need not teach, for experience has already taught it, and that is, the kindly influence which the mere presence of a human being has upon his fellows. Let the attention bestowed upon another be the genuine emanation of good will, and there is only one thing more to make it irresistible. The readiest way of finding access to a man's heart is to go into his house, and there to perform the deed of kindness, or to acquit ourselves of the wonted and the looked for acknowledgment. By putting ourselves under the roof of a poor neighbour we in a manner put our-

selves under his protection—we render him for the time our superior—we throw our reception on his generosity, and we may be assured that it is a confidence which will almost never fail us. If Christianity be the errand on which the movement is made, it will open the door of every family; and even the profane and the profligate will come to recognise the worth of that principle which prompts the unwearied assiduity of such services. By every circuit which is made amongst them there is attained a higher vantage-ground of moral and spiritual influence; and, in spite of all that has been said of the ferocity of a city population, in such rounds of visitation there is none of it to be met with, even among the lowest receptacles of human worthlessness. This is the home walk in which is earned, if not a proud, at least a peaceful popularity—the popularity of the heart—the greetings of men, who, touched even by the cheapest and easiest services of kindness, have nothing to give but their wishes of kindness back again; but, in giving these, have crowned such pious attentions with the only popularity that is worth the aspiring after—the popularity that is won in the bosom of families and at the side of death-beds.

IMPORTANCE OF SMALL SPHERE OF USEFULNESS.

(*Polity of a Nation*, Vol. I.)

THERE are so many philanthropists in this our day, that if each of them who is qualified were to betake himself, in his own line of usefulness, to one given locality, it would soon work a great and visible effect upon society. One great security for such an arrangement being propagated is the actual comfort which is experienced by each after he has entered on his own separate portion of it. But there is, at the same time, a temporary hindrance to it in the prevailing spirit of the times. The truth is that a task so isolated as that which we are now prescribing does not suit with the present rage for generalising. There is an appetite for designs of magnificence. There is an impatience of every thing short of a universal scheme, landing in a universal result. Nothing will serve but a mighty organization, with the promise of mighty consequences; and let any single person be infected with this spirit, and he may decline from the work of a single court or lane in a city as an object far too limited for his contemplation. He may like to

share, with others, in the enterprise of subordinating a whole city to the power of some great and combined operation. And we may often have to deliver a man from this ambitious tendency ere we can prevail upon him to sit humbly and perseveringly down to his task—ere we can lead him to forget the whole, and practically give himself to one of its particulars—ere we can satisfy him that, should he moralise one district of three hundred people, he will not have lived in vain—ere we can get him to pervade his locality and quit his speculation.

This spirit has restrained the march of philanthropy as effectually as, in other days, it did that of philosophy. In the taste for splendid generalities, it was long ere the detail and the drudgery of experimental science were entered upon. There is a sound and inductive method of philanthropy, as well as a sound and inductive method of philosophising. A few patient disciples of the experimental school have constructed a far nobler and more enduring fabric of truth than all the old schoolmen put together could have reared. And could we prevail on those who are unwearied in well-doing each to take his own separate slip, or portion of the vast territory that lies before us; and to go forth upon it with the one preparation of common sense and common sympathy; and, resigning his more extended imaginations, actually to work with the materials that are put into his hand—would we, in this inductive way of it, arrive at a far more solid, as well as striking consummation, than ever

can be realised by any society of wide and lofty undertakings.

The individual who thus sits soberly down to a work that is commensurate with the real mediocrity of the human powers will soon meet with much to reconcile him to the enterprise. He will not fail to contrast the impotency of every general management, in reference to the whole, with the efficacy of his own special management, in reference to a part. His feeling of the superior comfort of his own walk, and his conviction of its superior productiveness, will soon make up to him for the loss of those more comprehensive surveys that are offered to his notice by Societies, which, however gigantic in their aim, are so inefficient in their performance. He loses a splendid deception, and he gets, in exchange for it, a solid reality, and a reality, too, which will at length grow and brighten into splendour by the simple apposition of other districts to his own—by the mere summation of particulars—by each philanthropist betaking himself to the same path of exertion, and following out an example that is sure to become more alluring by every new act of experience.

There is an impatience on the part of many a raw and sanguine philanthropist for doing something great; and, akin to this, there is an impatience for doing that great thing speedily. They spurn the condition of drivelling amongst littles; and unless there be a redeeming magnificence in the whole operation, of which they bear a part, are there some who could not be satisfied with a humble

and detached allotment in the great vineyard of human usefulness.

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The result will at length be arrived at, not by the working of one mighty organization for the achievement of great things, but by the accumulation of small things—not by men whose taste it is to contemplate what is splendid in philanthropy, but by men whose practical talent it is to do what is substantial in philanthropy; not by men who eye, with imaginative transport, the broad and boundless expanse of humanity, but by men who can work in drudgery and in detail at the separate portions of it. The glory of establishing in our world that universal reign of truth and of righteousness which is coming will not be the glory of any one man, but it will be the glory of Him who sitteth above, and plieth His many millions of instruments for bringing about this magnificent result. It is enough for each of us to be one of these instruments, to contribute his little item to the cause, and look for the sum total as the product of innumerable contributions, each of them as meritorious, and many of them, perhaps, far more splendid and important than his own.

PLEA FOR RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

(*Polity of a Nation*, Vol. I.)

IT is perhaps the best among all our more general arguments for a religious establishment in a country, that the spontaneous demand of human beings for religion is far short of the actual interest which they have in it. This is not so with their demand for food and raiment, or any article which ministers to the necessities of our physical nature. The more destitute we are of these articles, the greater is our desire after them. In every case where the want of anything serves to whet our appetite, instead of weakening it, the supply of that thing may be left, with all safety to the native and powerful demand for it, among the people themselves. The sensation of hunger is a sufficient guarantee for their being as many bakers in a country as it is good and necessary for the country to have, without any national establishment of bakers. This order of men will come forth in number enough at the mere bidding of the people; and it never can be for want of them that society will languish under the want of aliment for the human body. It is wise in government to leave

the care of the public good, wherever it can be left safely, to the workings of individual nature; and, saving for the administration of justice between man and man, it were better that she never put out her hand either with a view to regulate or to foster any of the operations of common merchandise.

But the case is widely different when the appetite for any good is short of the degree in which that good is useful or necessary; and, above all, when just in proportion to our want of it is the decay of our appetite towards it. Now this is, generally speaking, the case with religious instruction. The less we have of it, the less we desire to have of it. It is not with the aliment of the soul as it is with the aliment of the body. The latter will be sought after; the former must be offered to a people whose spiritual appetite is in a state of dormancy, and with whom it is just as necessary to create a hunger as it is to minister a positive supply. In these circumstances it were vain to wait for any original movement on the part of the receivers. It must be made on the part of the dispensers. Nor does it follow, that because government may wisely abandon to the operation of the principle of demand and supply all those interests where the desires of our nature, and the necessities of our nature, are adequate the one to the other—she ought, therefore, to abandon all care of our interest when the desire, on the part of our species, is but rare, and feeble, and inoperative; while the necessity is of such a deep and awful character that there is not one of

the concerns of earthliness which ought, for a moment, to be compared to it.

This we hold to be the chief ground upon which to plead for the advantage of a religious establishment. With it, a church is built, and a teacher is provided, in every little district of the land. Without it, we should have no other security for the rearing of such an apparatus than the native desire and demand of the people for Christianity, from one generation to another. In this state of things, we fear that Christian cultivation would only be found in rare and occasional spots over the face of extended territories; and instead of that uniform distribution of the word and ordinances, which it is the tendency of an establishment to secure, do we conceive that in every empire of Christendom would there be dreary, unprovided blanks, where no regular supply of instruction was to be had, and where there was no desire after it, on the part of an untaught and neglected population.

We are quite aware that a pulpit may be corruptly filled, and that there may be made to emanate from it the evil influence of a false or mitigated Christianity on its surrounding neighbourhood. This is an argument not against the good of an establishment, but for the good of toleration. There is no frame-work reared by human wisdom which is proof against the frequent incursions of human depravity. But if there do exist a great moral incapacity on the part of our species, in virtue of which, if the lessons of Christianity be not constantly obtruded upon them, they are sure to decline

in taste and in desire for the lessons of Christianity; and if an establishment be a good device for overcoming this evil tendency of our nature, it were hard to visit, with the mischief of its overthrow, the future race either of a parish or of a country, for the guilt of one incumbency, or for the unprincipled patronage of one generation. We trust, therefore, in the face of every corruption which has been alleged against them, that our parochial establishments will stand, so as that churches shall be kept in repair, and ministers in constant succession shall be provided for them. At the same time, we hope that no restriction whatever will be laid on the zeal and exertion of dissenters; and that any legal disability under which they still labour will at length be done away. The truth is, that we know not a better remedy against the temporary and incidental evils of an establishment than a free, entire, and unexpected toleration; nor how an endowed church can be more effectually preserved, either from stagnation or decay, than by being ever stimulated and kept on the alert, through the talent, and energy, and even occasional malignity and injustice of private adventurers.

CHARITY *v.* THE POOR LAW.

(*Parochial System.*)

SECTION I.—*On the encouragements for holding intercourse with the common people, and the various ways of doing them good.*

THERE is a certain political antipathy, the characteristic of a whole class, which disposes many to look coldly and adversely on the differences of rank in the world; and which has also misled them into a wrong philosophy when speculating on the principles and the mechanism of human society. The homage which is generally if not universally felt towards men simply as the holders of wealth, or station, or family distinction, is treated by such not merely as a pusillanimous affection, but as a prejudice—an illusion of the fancy which it is the prerogative of reason to expose and to dissipate—an arbitrary or factitious sentiment, which, in the progress of light and of larger views in the world, will at length be extirpated from all breasts by a sounder and better education than that which now enthrals the spirits of our race, and holds it in still remaining bondage to the senilities of an older period at length wearing fast away. It is thus that

deference to rank is held by them to be rather a conventional feeling than an attribute of the species—having no place of stability either as a primary law, or even as a necessary result of laws in the constitution of our nature.

This is fortunately one of those speculations which Nature is too strong for—who asserts her own supremacy, and visits the transgressor with her obvious displeasure, when the wayward resistance is made to any instinct or tendency which her own hand has implanted. This is never done with impunity; and so all history demonstrates the evils and sufferings, which, in the shape of so many chastisements, come upon society—when, broken loose from her ancient holds, the distinctions of social order are set at nought; and a universal lawlessness of spirit becomes the precursor of a universal anarchy. It is with political as with physical theories when the lessons of experience are disregarded, that experience, always steadfast and true to her own processes, gives forth a practical refutation of both. But when the hypothesis is of inanimate matter, all the harm of the disappointment might be the mockery of a confident anticipation. Not so when the hypothesis is of men, to be acted on or carried into effect by a change in the framework of human society—the misgiving of which might be followed up by a general derangement and distress in the unfortunate community that has been made the subject of some headlong adventure, some rash and reckless experiment. Such is the invariable result when any of the

special affections of humanity are uprooted, or rather, when in some period of epidemic frenzy, they for the time are kept in abeyance. The inequalities of condition in life are often spoken of as artificial. But in truth they are most thoroughly natural; and it would require the violence of a perpetual stress on the spontaneous tendencies of every society in the world to repress or overbear them. The superiority of one man to another in certain outward circumstances of his state is not artificial but natural; and the consideration in which the occupiers of the higher state are held is natural also —insomuch that the public feeling of reverence for the grandee of a neighbourhood has an ingredient of nature in it, as well as the domestic feeling of reverence for the father of a family. Now what we affirm is, that neither of these affections can with impunity be violated, or without injury being done —in the one instance to the good order of a household, in the other to the good order of a commonwealth. More especially of the social affection do we aver—that when superseded in its operation, one main buttress of the social and political edifice is thereby damaged or destroyed—a lesson which the finger of history has often recorded in characters of blood; and chiefly in those seasons of revolutionary uproar, when, in the absence of this wholesome and balancing restraint, society vibrates between the fitful excesses of popular tumult and the severities of a grinding despotism.

There is a very general foreboding in our day —that, even now, we are fast ripening for such a

catastrophe; and we will not say that they are the common people of our land who are altogether to blame for it. It is true that on their part there might be a criminal dislike and defiance to superiors; but it is just as true that these superiors, on the other hand, might deserve the forfeiture of all that influence and respect which their place and their circumstances could otherwise have both gotten and maintained for them. For though a reverence towards the holders of rank be natural, the resentment of their oppression is also natural; and so even would be the return of this pained and irritated feeling, though there were no higher provocative than their mere indifference or neglect. The very distance at which the rich keep themselves from the poor were enough of itself to engender a hostile feeling in the bosoms of the latter, and to fill them with all rankling and suspicious imaginations. The alienation becomes mutual; and even though on the one side there should be nothing more or nothing worse than the habitual inattention of minds otherwise taken up, this might bear to the general eye the aspect of a lordly or aristocratic scorn; and if so interpreted, will separate by a still wider moral interval the patrician and plebeian orders of the community from each other. It is true that this reverence of which we have spoken forms part of man's nature. But his is a compound nature, made up not of a single but of various affections—any one of which, as the affection of rank, might be neutralized, even prevailed against, by the operation of the rest. The deference for

rank is by itself so strong, that, when not overborne by other influences, it mightily conduces to the stability of our social system; and for this beneficial end is inserted, we have no doubt, as a principle in the human constitution, by the author of our frame. Yet it is not so strong, but that it might be nullified, nay reversed, by passions stronger than itself; and it is of vast account therefore to the peace and well-being of society whether a tendency so wholesome shall be thwarted by conflicting or aided by conspiring forces—a difference this, for which the upper classes themselves are deeply responsible. Were all great men good men—were the natural respect for station at all times harmonized with by the natural respect for virtue—were the homage spontaneously given to every holder of superior rank strengthened by the homage given as spontaneously to the intelligence or the accomplishments of superior education, and still more by the gratitude which substantial kindness or even but the passing attentions of frank and honest affability never fail to awaken—With such a concurrence of the natural influences all on the side of order and good will, there might still by a series of pacific changes be the progressive amelioration of human society; so as that all anarchy and tumult might be banished from the land, and a revolution become a moral impossibility.

Should there ensue such a crisis then, it will not be the multitude who are alone to blame for it; but the holders of fortune and rank will have their full share of responsibility for its atrocities and its

horrors. The truth is, that people of humble estate are most feelingly and gratefully alive to the notice of those whom Providence has placed in a more elevated station than their own; and never does this principle stand more demonstrably forth as a real ingredient in the constitution of our nature, than in the superior charm of those recognitions or personal kindnesses which descend from the occupiers of a higher sphere on the children of poverty and toil. Even a passing smile of courtesy on the street is not thrown away, but has in it a certain influence or power of graciousness; and this is enhanced tenfold when any son or daughter of affluence enters the houses of the poor, and is sure to find in consequence a readier access into their hearts. It is in the power of any to make the trial and satisfy himself of the truth of this averment. Let him go at random to the lowliest of their tenements, though with nothing but a question on which he wants to be resolved, and therefore not to serve them but to serve himself with the information which he is seeking at their hands; and see whether his interrogation, if but put in the language of courtesy, is not followed up by the language of respect and of kindness back again. This, however, is but a first and faint intimation, the outset signal as it were of a disposition which might afterwards be cultivated into a most close and beneficial alliance. Instead of a question of indifference let it be a question of family interest—relating for example to the education of children, and bespeaking a kind desirousness on your part to ascertain their scholarship and

stimulate them onward to a higher proficiency than heretofore—we say there is not one in a hundred who would not welcome, and that most cordially, such an approximation for such an object; and with whom it might not ripen into an intercourse of charity or mutual good will, between them of the lower and you of the middle or higher classes of society. On their part there is an open door. It is for us to make it a "great and effectual door" * of usefulness. If our commonwealth is to fall by the dark and angry passions of the multitude, there will be something more in that coming tempest than the ferocity of a misguided, there will be also in it the vengeance of a neglected, population.

One fears to indulge so far as to give, though no more than an adequate description, of this intercourse with the common people and its attendant results—lest he should be charged with luxuriating in the picturesque, and carrying his readers through a sort of moral fairy-land greatly too beautiful for this our rough and actual world. It is all the more fortunate that the means and materials for observation are within our reach—so that any man may test and ascertain for himself what, in sober earnest, the experimental truth of the thing in question really is. Let him assume then for the enterprise on which we would set him, a given population, say of the worst and poorest —for the lower down, both in the moral and the economical scale, the better for the purpose of a substantial verification. Let the number not exceed

* 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

what any lay office-bearer of the church might easily and beneficially overtake. Let him however not be afraid of three hundred as too many for either the strength or time he may have to bestow on this undertaking. But we must provide him with an errand which might explain and justify his entrance into every house of this his special and selected territory; and we shall only at present single out one from the many, wherewith, in the course of his growing intimacy with the people, he might afterwards charge himself. Let us suppose it then to be his resolute aim so to influence and control the habit of all the families, as that each boy within its limits shall learn to read, and each girl to sew. For carrying this benevolent purpose into effect, let him look out the best and nearest seminaries which might suit the convenience of the children; and then let him try all which can be effected by counsel and persuasion for gaining the consent of parents—and never desisting from the prosecution of his self-imposed task so long as there remained any exceptions in his district to a universal attendance on the means of education. He will be astonished to find how near he shall have gotten to a full accomplishment of his object; and it will greatly expedite his success if he make a study of the best and most judicious methods for helping it forward. A little personal trouble on his part will be of prevailing force with the parents in the way of securing their co-operation. In particular it is not to be told how kindly it will be taken, should he give an occasional half hour of an even-

ing to inspect and examine the scholarship of his juvenile clients—whether in single families, or in little groups from a few of the contiguous households. I will say nothing now of pecuniary advances—whether in presents of books, or prizes, or the payment of fees. One of the most pleasing discoveries perhaps which awaits him is to find how marvellously little he need be called upon for any sacrifice of this kind; and what I want you to understand is the influence for good that might be obtained by nothing more than a series of cheap and easy attentions—involving the occasional appearance of himself in the dwelling-places, and occasional acts of converse and companionship with the inmates. Let any man who delights in doing good, and has a taste for the cordialities of human intercourse, but embark in the walk which I have now pointed out for him; and he will not miss, even of a present reward, in the reciprocations of confidence and kindness which meet him on his path. But on this we must not expatiate—else we shall provoke the incredulity of those hard and heartless utilitarians who imagine that nothing can be true which is beautiful, and that nothing can be beautiful which is true. They will suspect us of dealing in fancy pictures; and, merely because they are realities which are pleasing to look at, or admit of being feelingly told—would they repudiate them as so many glittering imaginations fit only for the poet's pen—instead of being, what in plain earnest they are, the realities of truth and soberness.

In this question the experimental is all on our

side, and the ideal all on the side of our antagonists. When they think of the plebeian swarms who are huddled together in wretched tenements, throughout the lanes and alleys, the dark and dismal and putrid recesses of a large city, there is the apprehension in their minds of something so thoroughly outlandish, that they are positively afraid of entering these unexplored habitations—standing in the same terror of their inmates that they would of unknown animals. It was in 1822 that I made a round among the poorest houses which we took at random in the parish of St. Giles, London, along with Mr. Joseph Butterworth, of Russell Square, who told me that it was only a few months before since they had made the discovery of the movement being safe. We met the same reception that we should experience everywhere—one of perfect civility, even though on our part we had nothing more substantial than civility to offer—a mere question respecting the state of their health, the comfort of their houses, or the scholarship of their children. Instead of ours being the imaginations of poetry, theirs are the imaginations of fear—the great difference in point of authority betwixt us being, that theirs are the fancies of men who keep at a distance; ours the findings of men who have come close to the subject of contemplation, and, on our repeated and personal encounter therewith, tell what we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears. We affirm nothing so fantastic or sentimental as that our first appearance is to operate like a spell on the affections of

the natives; or with something like the instant force of love at first sight, to bind us together by an affinity of trusty and sworn companionship. We speak not yet of their companionable virtues, but of their companionable manners; and that what is kindly meant on our part will be kindly taken upon theirs. It is to the initial facilities that we are now attending, by which the common people encourage and open up a way for our future household intercourse with themselves and their families—leading to an acquaintanceship convertible, if made to overspread the whole community, into the best results, both on the economics and the morals of the general population. In other words, the barrier in the way of this hopeful and beneficial interchange does not lie in any unwillingness or in aught that is ungainly and repulsive on their part; but in our own selfish indolence, our own callous insensibility to the considerations and the calls of Christian patriotism. And we repeat, that, should the fearful crisis of a sweeping and destructive anarchy be now awaiting us, it will lie as much, we think culpably and inexcusably more so, at the door of the higher as of the lower orders in the commonwealth.

Having now said enough of the access which there is to familiar converse with the common people, and that in virtue of a welcome and willingness from themselves—having, we trust, convinced the reader that this is not a romance of Arcadia, but a thing of as firm and home-bred staple as any of the every-day occurrences in human

life—let us now, with all plainness and brevity, unfold our own views of the account to which this intimacy, strengthening by every new visit to a family, or every new movement through an appointed district of families, might be turned. We suppose our philanthropist to have charged himself with a population of from two to three hundred, or somewhere about fifty families; and we shall now specify what a few of the various concerns are on which, with a very little personal trouble and with almost no perceptible expense of time or money, he might prove of substantial use to them.

We have already instanced the topic of education, as forming one of the most profitable occasions for this sort of intercourse. It branches into a great variety of distinct objects, all of which might be advocated on the same principle; and which, with certain precautions to be explained afterwards, might be presented without alloy, to the unmingled good of the people among whom you expatiate. We have already spoken of the week-day scholarship, both in reading and sewing, which it were well to foster till the habit had become universal. This applies chiefly to the young —among whom I have recommended it as your endeavour to promote a general school-going. But there is another and higher scholarship applicable to the men and women of all ages—wherewith even the secular philanthropist, who leaves the higher department of spiritual usefulness to others, might properly and beneficially charge

himself. We mean the scholarship of Christian instruction; and for the advancement of which he might at least do all that in him lies to promote a habit of universal church-going. He will find at the outset of his connexion with such a territory as that in which we have placed him, that the great majority of the people go nowhere; and should there be a preaching station or a new church provided for their vicinity, he will find that the same influential suasion which told on the attendance of the children at school will not be altogether inoperative when brought to bear on the adult population, with a view to their Sabbath attendance on the lessons of Christianity. It is true that the subject of our present argument is on the best and likeliest means for helping forward the interest of the common people in things temporal—the well-being of their present life. But aware of the prodigious efficacy, even for these secular objects, which lies in the operation of moral causes—we should say of the functionary who hath chosen this, the secular good of the people, for his appropriate walk—that he is not out of place when he lends a helping hand, both toward the erection of a church for the people of his charge, and the forming of a congregation out of their families. And on the same principle of its being quite in character that he should help forward a church though he does not preach in it, might he help forward a Sabbath-school though he should not teach it. He might set the little institute agoing. He might provide the services of a teacher. He might stimu-

late the attendance of the young; or even of the parents, should the readings and the addresses promise to be of wholesome effect on their own consciences and the order of their households. And many are the nameless other services, of object akin to education; and by which, through the medium of books, he might raise the standard of intelligence and worth throughout the families of his vineyard. If he be not enough of an ecclesiastical functionary to press home the lessons of the Bible on their hearts, he may at least see that in every house there shall be a Bible. He may circulate tracts whether or not he should expound and urge the subject of them. Nor is it necessary that the humble literature in which he deals should be all of a sacred character. He might, and by the instrumentality of popular authorship, be most usefully employed in adding to the resources and enjoyments of the life that now is—as by means of a district library, in which I should rejoice to find works of household and cottage economy, works of civil and natural history, works explanatory of the various processes of artisanship, works of travel and miscellaneous information purified of all that was fitted to vitiate either the principles or the taste, even works of science as far as it could be made palpable and that was fitted to enlarge and elevate the plebeian understanding. An increasing demand for such as these would afford the pleasing evidence of an increasing sobriety—a substitution for the concourse of evening parties in haunts of low and sordid indulgence, of a better habitude among the

people—a growing taste for the rational and social firesides of their now more virtuous and happier homes.

We know not, we shall not say a more proud, but a more pleasing triumph, or one that gives truer delight to the feelings and well exercised faculties of a benevolent mind, than what may be called the prosperous management of human nature. We before spoke of a school for sewing. A humble seminary of this sort might be taught by one of the female householders, and held in her own apartment. A most beautiful supplement to this education is that each scholar in her turn should have the care and keeping of this apartment, and with the special object that the home of her own parents should have the benefit of those habits in respect of cleanliness and good order which she had herself acquired. I had this management introduced into little institutes of my own within my city parish in Glasgow, and with the effect of a great and visible improvement in the interior of many of its plebeian habitations. Now this is a service which if he but lay himself out for it could be efficiently done by our visitor of a district. He could take cognizance of every such amelioration in the economy of his households, and give it the encouragement of his applause. His habitual calls might give rise to a habitual preparation for receiving him; and in this way may he be the instrument of raising the taste and comfort of the families. And whatever made for the health as well as comfort of the inmates might

come most properly within the scope of his benevolent consideration. By his influence with landlords, or a little outlay on his own part, or the aid and co-operation of a medical friend, he might carry useful alterations into effect at the doors of the houses or in the tenements themselves—or by some such signal service as helping on the drainage of a street, or the removal of obstructions and nuisances, may earn for himself throughout the little vicinity the credit of a public benefactor. A deal of substantive good might be done in this way—which, as being the manifestation and evidence of his undoubted good-will, will place him on vantage-ground for a still higher good, and arm his future persuasions with a moral force which in many instances will prove irresistible.

What as yet we have mainly required of our philanthropist is the sacrifice of his time and trouble —for with one slight exception, that of a pecuniary advance for the public health of his district, we have not yet spoken of his liberalities in money. Now then, it may be said, is the first time in which this element makes its appearance; and it may perhaps awaken your surprise—it may seem to your eyes like a reversal of the ordinary process—that I introduce it to your notice, not as passing from the pocket of the visitor into the hands of the people, but as passing in the opposite direction or from the pockets of the people into the hands of the visitor. It may not perhaps be the first thing he does; but the first thing we tell him to do is not to give, but to get from them—an advice which

we could offer fearlessly and unblushingly, even in the poorest districts to which we have ever had access, whether in town or country. We shall explain afterwards wherein it is that the great healthfulness of our process lies; but meanwhile we may give a few instances, in which, while devising to the best of our judgment for their good, we, instead of lavishing upon them from our own means, draw on the capabilities of the people themselves. We do so when we exact a payment, it may be in small monthly or weekly pittances, for their education. We do so when we collect at Sabbath-schools for the expenses of the concern. We do so when we seek their contributions in pennies or halfpennies a-week for the formation and maintenance of a library which we make their own. But this is only teaching them to help themselves—a most useful lesson, however—though we need not stop at this, for by right management we shall find in them an equal readiness, and not only a prompt but productive liberality in helping others also. For example, we can make an effective appeal to them in behalf of missions, in behalf of church or school extension, or any other of the best and likeliest schemes of Christian philanthropy which are now afloat in the world. We shall have no difficulty in obtaining their consent to organize an association amongst them, which, on the system of small and frequent payments, will, from the number of individual contributions, yield a far larger amount than is generally counted on. Their interest in these things could easily be kept up

and extended by monthly meetings, at which might be read in their hearing all the information of chief moment which comes out periodically; and this, of itself, is eminently fitted to beget a higher cast of sentiment, and altogether to exalt the popular intelligence—by supplying it with larger and loftier contemplations than before. One most precious effect of such arrangements is, that, instead of recipients, the people become donors and dispensers of charity—and that too in the highest of its walks —an invaluable habit, not only as a moral barrier against certain degeneracies, but as the guarantee of other habits, in themselves the main ingredients of plebeian virtue, and which powerfully subserve the blessed result of a well-principled and well-conditioned population.

It may be felt that we are now going beyond the limits of a strict secular philanthropy; and, doubtless, such as the close alliance between the moral and the economical—such the intimate dependence which the comfort of a people has upon their character—that we cannot bestow a full entertainment on the one topic without trenching upon the other, and so as to establish a line of continuity in our argument from things earthly to things spiritual. Nevertheless, as there is a real distinction between the two services—so is it of great importance to the well-being of a people, that in their behalf they should be undertaken by separate and distinct agents; or, that in the arrangements of a benevolent association, as of a church devising for the whole good of the families in a

given neighbourhood—they should be vested in distinct office-bearers. But this is a matter which will fall to be adjusted afterwards; and, meanwhile, we can confidently aver of the philanthropist who limits himself to the services which we have now assigned for him, or who even acquits himself well and in the spirit of kindness of greatly fewer than these—that he will earn by it a mighty influence for good over the people whom he has thus selected as the objects of his care. They will not look unmoved on these his labours of love. It is not in nature that they should; for there is a spell and a sway in human kindness, if it but give the unequivocal tokens of its reality, which even the hardiest and most ungainly of our race feel to be irresistible. This is a law which has been mainly lost sight of in the innumerable projects of our day for the amelioration of society—the sweetening effect of mere acquaintanceship, though it should amount to no more than courtesy, between the men of higher and men of humbler rank in the commonwealth; and still more should it rise to cordiality, when it will be found that there are a moral action and reaction in the world of spirits, which, like the reciprocities of the material system, have been established by an all-wise Creator, to maintain the harmony and stability of the whole.

But we were going to omit one of the best services, at least of the secular class, which our little community could possibly receive at the hands of a benefactor—a service too in which money is concerned—not yet, however, money passing from

the philanthropists to the people, but money belonging to the people and passing from them into the keeping and care of philanthropists. We mean the help and encouragement which should be given to a habit of accumulation, and more especially by providing for all its little proceeds a place of secure custody in a savings' bank. We may afterwards state, though it must be in the briefest possible manner, the effect of this habit, should it become general, in elevating, and that permanently, the condition of labourers, by its sure influence on the wages of labour. Its moral benefits are palpable both as a counteractive to dissipation and connected with the high qualities of foresight, sobriety, and self-command; and also as begetting a sense of property, and so giving them to feel a stake and an interest in the cause of social order, in the peace and stability of the commonwealth—thereby providing for their good citizenship, as well as for the respectability and comfort of their families. Certain it is that notwithstanding the absolute amount of such deposits over the whole empire, if one inquire piecemeal, whether among workmen congregated in villages or in the streets of our larger towns, he will find that the habit is very far from general; and can only be made so by the attentions of the benevolent being given piecemeal, each to his own separate group of contiguous families. It were no difficult achievement for each to make it general within the limits of his own selected walk —and to spread it from household to household, by making the example of one neighbour tell in

argument on the practice of another. As it is, we have but rare and scattered instances of such economy among the common people. They have been too much left to find their own way to these most useful depositories for their humble savings. The district visitor could bring the aggressive principle to bear on the habit of repairing to a savings' bank as well as on the habit of attendance on schools or churches —and we are sure with a tenfold greater result than before, so as to make it nearly universal within his own portion of the territory.

But let us now resume the consideration of that in which, after all, the great power of our philanthropist lies. There is immense material benefit rendered to the people by the various services which we have now specified; but these he could not have done without their own co-operation, and this it had been impossible to carry without a certain mastery over their affections. He had no authority to force, save that moral authority, which has gained for itself a willing obedience, at once spontaneous and sure. It is his good will which has earned for him their good will. His attentions, the time and trouble which he takes, are the simple expedients, by which he gets his ascendancy over them. They indicate his kind feeling toward themselves and their families; and herein lies the great secret of his power. It may be difficult to explain, but easy to perceive, how this power should become tenfold more effective, by the concentration of these various good offices on the *contiguous* households of one and the

same locality. There is in it somewhat like the strength of an epidemic influence, which spreads by infection, and more amalgamates the people both with him and with each other. We wonder not that Lord Melbourne in one of his speeches should have expressed such jealousy of these household visitations—for though he misconceived the object of them, as if it had been to poison the inmates with a feeling of hostility to government, he did not in the least overrate their power—the power not by which a demagogue, whose element is agitation, inflames the passions of a restless and excited multitude whom he has lured from their occupations and their homes, but the power of Christian charity over human hearts; and which if once made to pervade, by the assumption of district after district, the great bulk and body of a population, would, in the privacies of domestic life, lay a deep foundation of peace and righteousness, not to be unsettled by those fiery spirits who now live by the impostures which they practise on a deluded and misled because a neglected commonalty—who are an easy prey to the bad, only because the good have not yet found their way to them. And it is incalculable by how little a sacrifice each may acquire for himself a lordship for good, and the best of all, because over the hearts of his own little community. I will not tell him beforehand, but leave him to the surprise of his own experience, when he finds by how few hours in the week, or such odd half hours of the time as he may have at his own disposal, he may obtain that mastery, which

will open a way for him to the fulfilment of all his wishes. The passing run even of a few minutes among the households is not without its efficacy. Let him ever and anon be making presentation of himself to the same eyes; and he will be the talk of people on the same stair—the object of a common reference and recognition among the inmates of his own locality. And a common object does beget a common sympathy. It is thus that the same numerical amount of attentions and good offices done to fifty families far apart from each other does not tell with half the influence they have when discharged upon them in a state of juxtaposition—concentrated, as it were, within the limits of one and the same territory. It is marvellous how soon at this rate he might become the familiar of all, and even the friend, the intimate and confidential friend of a few, and these the best among the families of this little neighbourhood; and so it is that all the bland and beneficent influences of a village economy can be most easily set up in the moral wilderness of a city, in the very heart and deepest interior of a crowded metropolis.

What we most desiderate in an agent of charity is to have one with the taste and the inclinations of a thorough localist—one who rejoices in a home-walk, and would like better that it should be pervaded thoroughly, than that he should scatter his regards among the thousand objects of a wide and distant philanthropy. I would rather that he restrained his ambition for what is great, so as that he might give himself wholly to the little

which he can fully overtake. Better do one thing completely and well, than a hundred things partially and superficially. It is not to the magnificent survey of him, whose eyes, like those of Solomon's fool, are on all the ends of the earth, that I would look for any solid contribution to the amelioration of our species; but to the humble pains-taking of many single labourers, each giving himself duteously and devotedly to his own manageable sphere, and satisfied that he has not lived in vain, if he have raised the tone of character, or added to the comfort by rectifying and improving the habits of fifty families. The result universal is made up of many items, and can only be arrived at by a summation of particulars. For the book of philanthropy, like that of philosophy, is a book of many pages; and it is not to universalists that we look for the completion of either, but to the manifold assiduities of those, who, whether by patient study on the one field or persevering action on the other, each fill up a single leaf or a single line of them. It is not by one great simultaneous effort, that even a single city is to be overtaken; but by the piece-meal and successive efforts of men engaged in the humbler but more practicable task of making out one district after another, and one parish after another—each labouring unseen by the general eye on his own little domain; but where the want of eclat and magnitude is amply repaired by the nearer approach which can be made to the objects of our benevolence, and so the more intense because the less divided affection—

like that which plays in secret within the bosom of families and homes. We read in the New Testament parables that each possessor of so many talents who turned them to full account was rewarded by the charge of as many cities. Certain it is, as we have already said, that there is a delight, one of the best and purest we can enjoy, in the prosperous management of human nature; and it looks as if this, one of the pleasures of the good here, were followed up by a larger enjoyment of the same in the realms of light and blessedness hereafter. We know that there will be service there. And if they who turn others into righteousness shall shine as the stars in the firmament, we may guess from this, their sightlier elevation, that there will be superintendence there—as if the little that was well done on earth were to be followed up by larger powers and opportunities of well-doing in that region on high where charity never faileth.

SECTION II.—*On the Difficulties and Duties of him who undertakes the office of Almoner to a given Population.*

Hitherto, and in our description of the good offices which might be rendered to a people, when we introduced the element of money, it was not of money given to, but received from themselves—either as contributors for their own behoof to a savings' bank, or as the helpers in small and frequent offerings of a charitable scheme. But the

philanthropist when he becomes an almoner reverses this process. He gives instead of takes; and one should like to know the duties, and as well the difficulties, attendant on his ministrations in this capacity.

But first let me premise the obligation which lies upon all, of giving according to their means—either to relieve the want, or help forward in any other way the well-being of their fellows. Let us speculate on plans of benevolence as we may, benevolence itself will ever abide a stable category in the ethical system, and maintain its own place as the highest of the virtues. The great use of wealth is to do good with it; and though in the spirit of a practical atheism we may call it our own, every thought of the original fountain whence it comes, of the Parent and the Governor above who put it into our hands, should remind us that it is not a property but a stewardship. It is true that when compassion is given way to as a heedless and headlong impulse, it often does mischief. But to regulate is not to destroy; and when told that it is blessed to *consider* the poor, we are not to interpret this into a call upon the understanding to overbear the heart—but a call to bethink ourselves, not how to do little—but how to do the most, or how to do the best for them. And it will sometimes turn out that the best thing is to give, and with an unsparing hand—when benevolence may take to itself a free and full indulgence. In matters of philanthropy, it is not the office of consideration to damp the benevolence,

but of benevolence to prompt the consideration. Some are jealous of all thought in the business of charity, as if it savoured of the coldness and rigidity of calculation; but let us remind them that it is the part of the liberal man not only to do, but to devise liberal things—and that in the very soul or actuating spirit of liberality —not the spirit of that avarice which withholds, but of that wisdom which can devise the way that is most prolific of blessings to the poor—and which rejoices therein, not because the least expensive, but because the most effective method of well-doing. His guiding principle, whatever may be the aspect of his proceedings, or the interpretation put upon them, is not to give the least but to do the most for the happiness of the species—and it is thus, when performing his little rounds of humanity in the sphere that we have imagined for him, that he exemplifies in miniature the virtue of his great master, who went about doing good continually.

We believe that the surest method of avoiding all practical inconvenience in the conduct of life, and most of all in the conduct of charity, is a fearless committal of ourselves to the guidance, or a compliance as literal as may be with the counsels and commands of Scripture. That its morality is on the side of giving, and that too in the spirit of a most liberal and unsparing generosity, is a lesson which stands forth upon its pages in clear and uneffaceable characters, for the admonition of all ages—not to be explained away by the pretended discoveries of any science; and, in particular, not to be overborne

or froze into utter heartlessness by the demonstrations and maxims of political economy. Let us in particular take the Bible for our directory in the matter of almsgiving, with all the terms and qualifications which it annexes to the precept, and with all the light thrown upon it by the examples and other precepts of the sacred volume. More especially, let us not forget the secrecy wherewith it tells that our alms should be performed—not with the sound of a trumpet—not to be seen of men; but that our left hand should not know what our right hand doeth, or they on our left should not know what we are doing to those on our right. Now all this is violated, or at least virtually disregarded, by him who goes forth on his district, the territory of his benevolent operations, in the *ostensible* capacity of an almoner. He may acquit himself as such, without showing himself as such—that is, be a giver of alms to such needy as he meets on his progress through the families of his charge, without its being known beyond their dwelling-places, without, if possible, its being anywhere guessed at throughout the main body and bulk of his population. On the principle of a readiness unto all good works, he may act incidentally as an almoner, with the few who require or would be the better of such a ministration. But this need not be the general and far less the avowed character in which he appears amongst them. His moving principle we have all along supposed to be the doing of that which is best for the good of his fellows—that in particular which is most for the real happiness and well-being of the little community within which he expatiates. At this

rate, he is not called upon to stand forth in the general aspect of an almoner, but rather in the general aspect of a friend—and so coming under the notice and recognition of the families, at one time in the character of an educationist who has to do with schools, at another as an economist who has to do with popular banks, at a third of a moral or even medical overseer who concerns himself with the health and habits of the people. These are doings out of doors, and in which he cannot avoid being seen of men; but alms, like prayers, should be done in secret, when doors are shut, and the two or three who are met together are only seen by their Father who is in heaven.

As there is a present reward in the keeping of the commandments, so often is there a present chastisement in the breaking of them; and never is this more strikingly exemplified than when the law of secrecy in our alms is violated. Our philanthropist would be making a most injudicious outset did he go forth on the field of his operations in the avowed or generally known capacity of a dispenser of money. We are not inquiring whether it be in the spirit of ostentation, or from the imprudent neglect of certain precautions for the concealment of his benevolence, that he should have become a recognised almoner among the families. We are but reasoning on the consequence; and feel assured that if this be their general understanding, it will give an altogether different result to his progress, and land him in difficulties which he will soon find to be inextricable. When once the secret of his liberalities breaks out, it will lead to a sudden expansion throughout his

district, of a desire or an expectation to share in them; and many are the families who should have welcomed his visits on any of the errands which we have already specified, and never once obtruded their necessities upon him, who, on this new errand of relief for indigence, will become the keen competitors for his bounty. It would have been altogether different, had he gone forth in another character or given forth to the people another understanding of his object—as, for example, that his main design was to promote the education of their children, or their own Christian good, or the health and cleanliness of their confined and perhaps overcrowded streets, or the internal comfort and right order of their own special domiciles, or the accumulation of their little savings in a provident bank; or, lastly, to receive at their hands their own little contributions to some scheme of usefulness whether in the cause of religion or humanity. Did he but restrict himself at least visibly and avowedly to some one or other of these objects, or rather did he charge himself with them all put together, he might have sped satisfactorily with every one of them, and had the gratification of seeing that each of these benevolent designs prospered and made distinct progress under him. We do not say that no poverty, whether real or pretended, would ever cross his path. Among his fifty families there might be applications from some two or three per cent. of his whole number—landing him in a far more manageable task truly, than as if by open proclamation he had summoned one-third or half around him to make their endless draughts

upon his liberality. He has himself to blame for the consequent difficulties which will surely come upon him, and the heartless discouraging embarrassments which will multiply around him, and will probably overset his experiment altogether. It is he, not the people, who is responsible for all the clamour and confusion which now beset his person, and perhaps lay daily and regular siege to his dwelling-place. It was he who by his trumpet-call or money-giving errand made as patent to every eye by the whole style of his proceedings as if it had been placarded upon his forehead who first set their rapacity agoing; and which may in all probability grow into such strength, and rise in such a flood upon him as to drive him from the field. It is he and not they who should be reckoned with for the irrepressible host of sordid and mercenary expectations now sure to be lighted up by every movement which he makes amongst them. Instead of calling it their fault, I would call it a most natural reaction on his own folly.

We utterly mistake the common people, and are led to think of them most ungenerously, just from the absurd way in which we ourselves deal with them. Let any man place himself in a conspicuous station on a street or on a highway, and thence scatter money for half an hour among the passengers—we are not to wonder though in a few minutes many hundreds should throng around him, and join in the scramble or uproar which he has himself created. And the very same exhibition will be made of our nature, should a district visitor

virtually though not directly or literally announce himself as a scatterer—whether of money, or of things purchased by money, among the habitations. There are many ways in which the intelligence can be given; and if once given it will soon spread. A distribution of coals will do it—laid down in visible deposits, by carts or half-carts, here and there at the doors of certain selected householders. Or a general parting of old clothes will do it—made up of cast-off suits from the benevolent in all parts of the town, and piled together in some well-known rendezvous for one of its destitute parishes. Or the notification sometimes made from a shop window will do it—of ladies' work taken in here, and hence given forth in behalf of the poor. Or the local missionary will do it, whom some wealthy philanthropist be it male or female has intrusted with money for any necessitous he might meet with in his rounds, and who for the credit of his employers lets out the secret of their liberality. We are not to marvel, if, in the train of such indiscretions, there should ensue among the people a general restlessness—an appetency and demand which never would have arisen spontaneously from among themselves, and which owe all their urgency to the cause *ab extra* that has excited them—a disturbing force that has unsettled many of the families, who, now agog from their wonted quiescence, are plying such claims and applications for relief, as otherwise they never should have dreamed of. It is not to be told how much this new element, of agitation it may well be called, is fitted to embarrass the

operations of the philanthropist. In all the other ways of well-doing which we have ventured to prescribe for him he could have made satisfactory progress—progress in the number of deposits made to his savings' bank—progress in the number of juvenile attendants upon his schools—progress in the number of contributors to his benevolent associations and the yearly amount of their offerings—progress in the style and keeping of their dress and houses and furniture; and as the general result of the whole, even though not one farthing had been bestowed on indigence, a more plentiful enjoyment among the families than heretofore of the comforts and necessaries of life. If such a result have never been known to arise from the operations of the mere money-giver—if he have taken a district in hand, and is mortified to find that, with all his liberalities, he has utterly failed to spread over it the face of a larger sufficiency or contentment than before—if envy and ingratitude and clamour and rapacity insatiable be all the returns he has met with, and without any sensible abatement of the raggedness and filth and other symptoms of penury which first lured him to this enterprise—then let him be made to understand that, for the purpose of doing ought like substantial or permanent good, something more is necessary than to *compassionate* the poor, he must also *consider* them; and let him learn at length that there is indeed a more excellent way of charity than that to which his own headlong sensibilities have impelled him.

But we were speaking in vindication of the

common people, and to the higher points of their character if they were but rightly dealt with. The envy, the ingratitude, the clamour of which we have just made mention are not so chargeable on them as on the unwise friends who have done all they could to tempt and to evoke the worst feelings or phases of our nature. Another treatment would have called forth another and finer exhibition of those whom, distinctively and not disparagingly, we designate the lower orders—by which we assuredly mean nothing else than that they are of humbler condition, or that Providence has assigned to them an inferior place in the scale of income or society to ourselves. They are fully our equals in all the essential characteristics of humanity; and more especially, on the subject of their wants, may we often observe a high-toned delicacy for which they do not receive the credit that rightfully belongs to them. It all depends on the style of our approach, or the character in which we hold converse with them. If we do not, by our offers and inquiries, obtrude the topic of their necessities upon them—the household visitor will be astonished to find how seldom, or in how small a number of cases, they will obtrude the topic upon us. If we on entering into talk with them but place ourselves on the level of that equal and reciprocal courtesy which should pass between man and man, they will not often, not generally, step beneath that level by descending to the attitude of a supplicant for our bounty. Most sensible we are that we are not speaking the experience of a distributor or agent for an almsgiving society—whether it be in the

shape of money or fuel or soup or clothing. But we speak the experience of those who go forth on other and we will say higher grounds than those of common-place charity—some of which we have already specified, though for the most full and decisive verification of what we now affirm respecting the common people we should look most of all to the experience of him who goes forth among them on the best and highest of all errands, or in the capacity of a religionist, and who at the same time has the good sense not to mix up the two ministrations—that on the one hand for their temporal, and that on the other for their spiritual necessities. If there be one topic more than another which puts the distinctions of rank out of view, and places high and low on the same even platform, it is that Christianity which tells of the common guilt and the common salvation, of the death which awaits all, and the glorious immortality alike held forth in the gospel for the acceptance of all. The man who, intent on the souls of the people, plies them with arguments such as these is upon high vantage-ground for testing the position that we now seek to establish. So long as they mistake him for an almoner, and if they have been much tampered with beforehand by ill-timed or uncalled for appliances, it is not in nature but that he will hear of their necessities—and more especially, if they have the imagination, either of his own unbounded wealth, or, which were still more fitted to excite their appetency, if they conceived that, without a personal sacrifice on his part, he could give indefinitely to them, because he could draw indefinitely on the

wealth and liberality of employers whose agent he was. But once that this understanding is dissipated, he will be in fair circumstances for verifying the truth of our principle; and it will astonish him to find the almost instant subsidency of those hints and importunities which assailed the outset of his path. The truth is, that he who speaks religion to them lets himself down to their own level, or rather brings them up to his—where they meet on the equal footing of the same hopes, the same liabilities, the same interests, as fellow-travellers to the same inheritance beyond the grave, and with the high preferments of eternity alike open to them. When two parties thus come together on the ground of their common humanity, neither will make the voluntary descent which is implied in the act of becoming a petitioner or dependant upon the other. The influence of which we now speak might perhaps appear of too shadowy or ethereal a character for the mere statist; and certain it is that it does not admit of being expressed in arithmetic, or in that form of numerical registration which he most relishes, and by which the results of experience become most palpable to his understanding. It is a matter of plain reality notwithstanding, and for this we could make a confident appeal to all who have made full trial of it. Let any friend of the common people go forth on the errand of Christianizing them, and even with the disadvantage of a reputed affluence, let him but keep by his topic, and urge on them the consideration of their spiritual wants; and but for his own mismanagement, what we affirm is, that seldom or

never will they in return urge upon him the consideration of their temporal wants, back again. For example, we would ask Lord Roden whether he was exposed to any ungenerous reaction of this sort, in virtue of the Sabbath morning addresses which he was in the habit of delivering to an assembled peasantry? And Mr Cuninghame of Lainshaw, if the Sabbath-school which he instituted and himself taught in the populous village at his door laid him open, though lord of the manor, to that host of applications for the relief of their temporal wants which his appearance amongst them in another character would infallibly have called forth, and to which his simple juxtaposition had before exposed him? We know what their delightful experience was, and it tallied fully with my own. On my first movements through the poorest parish in Glasgow I was thronged by urgencies innumerable, because of my official connection with the secular charities of the place, and which did invest me with the character of an almoner in the eyes of the general population. It was a connection therefore, which, when I had made the discovery, I resolved to abandon; and I will not forget the instant effect of this proceeding when it came to be understood—the complete exemption which it gave me from the claims and competitions of a whole host of aspirants, who crowded around me for a share in the dispensations of some one or other benevolent trust or endowment of other days; and yet the cordial welcomes I continued to meet with, when after I had shaken loose of all these, I was received and recognised by the people on the simple

footing of their Christian friend, who took cognizance of their souls, and gave himself chiefly to do with the scholarship of their young and the religious state of their sick and their aged and their dying. This was an experience which impressed me with the profound wisdom of the saying, "Who made me a judge and a divider over you?" and let me add with a profound respect for the delicacy and correct feeling of the common people. And this will be found even on lower walks of philanthropy than professionally and by office belongs to a clergyman. The mere economist who busies himself with but the matters of secondary improvement or comfort will find an open field in any aggregate of plebeian households, for the accomplishment of all that his heart is set upon; and, if he go rightly about it, without any of those distractions or perplexities which annoy the path and are sure at length to upset the enterprise of a mere almoner, who, if he will treat the people as paupers, must not be surprised at the noise and confusion and often the outcries both of unreasonable demand and as unreasonable disappointment which they have brought about his ears.

But are there not cases of real necessity, which, without the utmost hardihood, even cruelty, it were impossible to pass by? Because there is much of counterfeit, is there no actual distress? When we read the denunciations of Scripture upon the one hand on those who shut up their bowels of compassion against the needy, and on the other are certified by the same Scripture that the poor shall never cease out of the land—are we, in the face of these authorita-

tive testimonies, are we to give forth an interdict, not on the virtue of benevolence, but on that special modification of it, the virtue of almsgiving? And does not the Bible expressly tell us to give to him that asketh, to give even to the evil and the unthankful—nay, most specific of all, to give *alms* of such things as we have? We are aware that to enjoin secret almsgiving is not to proscribe all almsgiving, and we accept of this qualification; but there is such an aspect of cold-bloodedness in the whole speculation of these foes to public charity, that we should like a distinct statement from themselves of what that is which we owe to humanity, when a case of distinct undeniable suffering and want comes in authentic exhibition before us.

There should be no blinking of this question; and it were the symptom of a weak or a worthless cause, did we seek to evade it. We desire no exemption for our philanthropist from any of those moral obligations which, whether morally or Christianly, are alike binding upon all; and all we claim for him is the privilege of ascertaining the real state of every applicant who lays the case of his necessities before him. It is surely no unfair demand that when one man places himself in the relation of a supplicant to another, that other should be entitled to place himself in the relation of an inquisitor over him; and when we make use of this term, we do not mean that the inquiry should be conducted with harshness or insolence; for, on the principle of rendering honour to all men, it ought to be conducted with the most perfect kindness and courteousness and delicacy.

All that we insist for is, that he who seeks of another's bounty shall also submit to another's scrutiny. In the denunciation just quoted upon him who steels himself against a brother's imploring cry, it is presupposed that he knows the cry to be a true one—"If he seeth his brother have need." Give him then a sight of the necessity, that he may know what he is doing; and when once it is made to stand unquestionably and unequivocally before him, it were a violence to every principle whether of humanity or religion, should we deny that if he indeed have of this world's good, it is his duty, his clearly imperative and incumbent duty, not to stifle the impulses of compassion, but freely and fully to give way to them—to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry, and provide accommodation for the houseless and homeless wanderer.

It may be thought that by these concessions we beset our philanthropist, that is our district visitor, with difficulties inextricable; but in truth we have placed him on firm and high vantage-ground. He of all the adventurers in charity is in circumstances for knowing best what he is doing; and thereby escapes the discomfort of those, who, in almost every application that is made to them, are exposed to the necessity of giving in the dark. Instead of lying open to the solicitations whether of real or pretended poverty, from all points of the compass and at all distances, he has assumed a definite and manageable field of observation, and can make himself daily more familiar with the habits and condition of the families who occupy his own home-

walk—approximating almost to certainty regarding the effect of his operations—either as to the risk of evil, or the real good that might be done by them. Surely he who gives of his own substance, of that which belongs to himself, has at least the right of knowing what he is about; and it is by becoming the cultivator of a district, and making it his chief and special charity to be the benefactor of its families, that he takes the best way of making it good. Once let him be possessed of their confidence and good will, which he may soon acquire, and he will be at no loss for the guidance of his proceedings on every tale of distress which he may be called upon to aid or to sympathise with. All we ask for him is that he shall have time to verify before that he shall be expected to relieve it. And he has means and opportunities without which the mere general philanthropist finds himself altogether helpless. He can inquire at the mouth of the most respectable next-door neighbours whose favour, even whose friendship, we might well suppose that he has already gained, and who would be as much scandalized as himself by an expenditure of that money on imposture and worthlessness which should be reserved for the alleviation of genuine distress. It is thus that in each instance of application from his district he can obtain a full and intelligent view of the case; and should he authenticate it as a case of real unequivocal necessity, still more if merit and misfortune stand conjoined in the same individual or the same family—we would divest him of neither the feel-

ings of a man nor the duties of a Christian—it will be at once his obligation and his pleasure to be liberal up to his power, to give according to the ability which God hath given him.

We should hope that this our household visitor is a Bible Christian, and if so he must be willing to distribute, ready to communicate. Yet to be the agent of substantial and enduring good among his people, he must not be hurried into acts of almsgiving, but have the privilege first of a searching scrutiny into the state of every asker, and then of a full consideration of what is best as well for his moral as his economic well-being. We have already said that if he avoid the error of going forth at the outset as a professed almoner, he will be exposed to vastly fewer applications than if he made this the known errand of his search and entry into the habitations. And as a further experience he will have fewer still, if it be his determined habit to follow up each application by the inquiries which we now recommend to him. This will be the fruit of his nearer inspection, and growing acquaintance with the real circumstances of the people. His first impressions of their helpless and hopeless indigence will be greatly reduced by it. Let him fearlessly enter on the task—in the steadfast prosecution of it, let him face all its difficulties and imaginary dangers—let him not blink a single application or hide himself from his own flesh, but from him that would either ask or borrow, let him not turn away—And the exaggerations, whether of a vice or a misery irreme-

diable, which haunted his outset, will soon be dissipated. He will be astonished to find, as the effect of a proper wisdom and wariness on his part, that one or two simple and manageable cases are all which are left to him. Indeed one of the greatest beauties and benefits of this district system is that it gives such advantage for a thorough discrimination ; and so, while it relieves from the counterfeit, it enables one more and more to concentrate his attentions on the actual and the deserving poor—in beneficence to whom there is enjoyment of the highest sort, the happiness and exquisite luxury of doing good. And, beside the enjoyment, we promise that he will be astonished at the lightness and facility of his task—so as at the end of the year, and after having rightly acquitted himself among two or three hundred human beings, and that in the most unlikely and outlandish territory which he chooses to select, he will realize in the little history of his proceedings Hannah More's exclamation—" O how cheap is charity, O how expensive is vanity."

And it follows not, even though, as the fruit of a previous discretion, his task as an almoner should have been reduced to the needful supply of one or two families—it follows not that the whole burden of these should fall upon himself. It is his duty, as their friend and consulting for their best interest, to point out the other resources on which they should draw, apart from and if possible anterior to his own liberality—as, first and foremost, to stimulate their own industry, or suggest how they might abridge their own expenditure—thus

teaching them how far they can help themselves; and secondly, if this be insufficient, to seek after their relatives, and with all proper delicacy on the one hand yet frankness and fidelity on the other recommend the case to them—telling them how right it is that one should help those of his own kindred; and thirdly, if there be a shortness and insufficiency still, and so as yet to exceed either the means or inclination of our visitor fully to provide for, to seek for aid in this work of charity from the benevolence of neighbours, and specially from those whose confidence he has won, and whose moral weight in their own little vicinity might secure a general approval and willing co-operation for all his views. By these few and simple expedients he will achieve, and that chiefly from the home capabilities and resources of his own little territory, a conquest over all the difficulties of its right and prosperous management. So soon as he has enlisted on his side the kind regards of its families, and earned the credit of being their friend, the experiment is carried. There is not a case of distress or helplessness that he will find too much for him. Should he offer to head a little subscription for any casualty that might have occurred within his borders, it needs but the nearness and so the known certainty of the event to obtain a large concurrence throughout his population both of sympathies and substantial offerings; and should it be a case of recognised merit, as well as signal misfortune, should he be a reputable and well-liked neighbour whom some visitation of calamity has befallen, the

impulse could easily be given by which through the medium of a universal feeling to provide for the calamity and even to overpass it. It is thus that even though not able of his own means to relieve a tithe of the necessities in his district, there are both able and willing helpers within its limits by whose aid he will succeed in overtaking them. Their number makes up for the smallness of their individual offerings—by which I mean, not merely the formal contributions which are sometimes made in money, but the nameless daily unreckoned supplies of food and service which pass and repass between next-door neighbours by an internal process of charity among themselves. The amount no doubt in incalculable of these little unseen gifts and liberalities; but, as the fruit of very general observation, we can with all confidence affirm that it is incalculably great. It of course varies with the popularity of the individual sufferer, or in right proportion to the estimation in which he is held by the vigilant and sharp-sighted observers who are immediately around him—of those who have known him perhaps intimately and long, and are therefore capable of a far more wholesome and effectual surveillance than can possibly be exercised by the paid inspectors of a poor's house. The degree of this spontaneous charity, kept up among the contiguous householders of every neighbourhood, may be regarded as a test of the reality of that distress which calls it forth,—a charity to which belongs the invaluable property of suiting itself, as if by a sort of self-regulating power, at once to the wants

and the merits of its object. Under its efficient guardianship, and more especially in a district organized as we would have it, there is the moral certainty that none would be left to starve, and all would experience as the day came that the provision of the day came along with it.

Such is our confidence in these various expedients of anticipation as they may be termed, that we should deem it no marvellous achievement, if, in any aggregate of human beings in any town of Scotland, the formal allowances of public charity were in virtue of their operation, wholly superseded. And it marks at least our own sense of the internal capabilities which are to be found within the limits of such a district that we should feel surer of a prosperous result were it in the hands of an intelligent pious and well-principled overseer, conversant in the habitudes of the working classes and himself scarcely if at all elevated above them—than if it were in the hands of one known to be wealthy, and so far removed from the common people as to be without the experience either of their wants or their ways. For the purpose of bringing the people into a right economic condition, we should rather that the management of the former than that the opulence of the latter were brought to bear upon them. It was our own experience in the poorest and most populous parish of Glasgow that the applications for public relief were fewer from sections under the superintendence of a clerk or even a mechanic, than from some that were under the superintendence of an affluent and

prosperous citizen—the former intercepting such applications by finding a way to those internal and surely better resources which he knew how to draw upon, the latter finding it easier to meet the alleged necessity by liberalities of his own. It was instructive to observe that the public or sessional fund was not the better but the worse of such liberality—being exposed thereby to the demands of that still unsatiated rapacity which itself had excited and set agoing, and which but for it had never been called forth. Yet we should be unwilling to dissociate the rich from these undertakings, from such works and labours of love as we have now been specifying. There is a right style of management by which even they might neutralize the evil which often springs from the imagination of their unbounded affluence. In the first place it is the more special duty of a visitor in this condition of life, when he does give, to give in secret. But in the second place, it were well to let the object of his bounty know that what he does give is at his own expense, therefore with a personal sacrifice on his part, and not as the agent of a society or an almoner for others. They utterly misconceive the poor who do not understand how this simple revelation should call forth a delicacy on their part which operates as a check on their else indefinite demands and expectations. And there are other and most legitimate expedients by which still further to strengthen this barrier of protection against that rapacity, which, whetted by every new success that its extortions meet with,

is never satiated. He should tell them frankly and fearlessly both of their duty and of his own—and that it is as much their part to be moderate in their demands as it is his to be liberal in his dispensations of charity. He should lecture them well on the virtue of not being burdensome to others; and not be sparing of his most serious remonstrances, when he comes to observe that they have been practising on the simplicity of the benevolent, that they have been making a trade of their alleged poverty, and that the ill-gotten money thus obtained by them they have spent worthlessly or even carelessly. Let them know that you will not by your heedless and indiscriminate giving counteract the wholesome discipline of nature; and that if they will persist in being lazy epicures or irreclaimable drunkards, they must just be left to the fruit of their own ways, or to feel the weight of those chastisements which both indolence and dissipation are sure to meet with, and rightly, at the school of experience. Proclaim in their hearing, that while you wish yours to be a beneficent, you wish still more anxiously that it should be a moral administration; and that seeing the great use of money is to do good with it, it shall be one of your prime concerns that you shan't do evil with it, by ministering to the vicious habits or propensities of those whose part it is, ere they draw on the help of others, to strive how much they can help themselves by doing their uttermost to labour diligently and live soberly. They know nothing at all of the common people who think that

they will not bear to be told of these things; nay, that they do not look approvingly on, when they see one of their suppliant but rather ill-doing neighbours thus treated by the visitor of their district with the freedom and fidelity of an honest friend. The man who deals in this peculiar, but certainly most rational and healthful style of philanthropy, is sure to carry in full the popular conscience and sense of right along with him; and there is one way in which he might earn golden opinions, even from those whose applications he may feel it his duty to set aside. He might crave their indulgence. He might represent the other and more urgent demands upon him. He might state what the objects of general utility are which he should like to provide for, and what the cases which are greatly more helpless and destitute than their own. He might point to a poorer family beside them, with its dumb or deranged or otherwise impotent and disabled children; and make it palpable, that the less they draw upon him, the more will he have to bestow on the children of a still heavier misfortune than themselves—and so, that by their forbearance, instead of dependents upon charity, they become fellow-helpers in its cause,—noble-hearted contributors for the relief of a poverty more abject and pitiable than any which has yet visited their own habitations. Such an appeal he will have the happiness of finding to be often irresistible; and that many under the force of it will not only forego their own complaints and claims upon his liberality, but even in the shape of positive offerings out of

their own scanty means will evince a willingness to be his auxiliaries in the cause of humanity, instead of being drawbacks or obstacles in his way. There is no saying how far this principle of most beautiful as well as beneficent operation could be carried downward. We are sure it could be carried so far as not only to arrest the tide but to turn it—and so as to get more from the people of our district for the purposes of benevolence than we should be called upon to give for the relief of all the indigence that is within its borders.

It is of the utmost practical importance, however—essential indeed to the maintenance of his ascendancy for good amongst them—that our philanthropist should stand accredited for consistency and truth of character in the eyes of his population; and that, for this purpose, he should make full and satisfying acquittal of his Christianity in the midst of them. More particularly, if he want to preserve that moral weight, and that hold on their confidence and good opinion which form the real secret of his power, it must be his care not to incur the character of a selfish narrow close-fisted pretender to benevolence, and who belies all his professions of it, whenever he is brought to the trial, and any surrender of money is required at his hands—an impression this which even the most liberal almsgiving, if conducted with inviolable secrecy, is not fitted to dissipate. According to the policy that we have recommended, his refusals may be greatly more manifest than his compliances; and therefore unless it can be made to

appear that there is a principle in his refusals, he may suffer greatly in estimation—a thing to be chiefly deprecated because he would proportionally suffer in his influence over them, and so as to bereave of all their virtue his most honest and disinterested attempts for the well-being of his families. It is therefore well that the same Bible which enjoins a secret almsgiving, also bids us make our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, not however for the sake of our own glory, but for the glory of our Father in Heaven. While then there are occasions on which the strictest concealment of our beneficence is called for, there must be occasions too on which it is desirable that it should become manifest to all men—not of course for the purpose of display, but at least for the purpose of vindication. And it is fortunate that we need be at no loss for such opportunities of well-doing as might admirably serve this latter purpose. The education of some dumb boy it may be in one or other of his families,—the promise, and that by purchase if necessary, of a place in an asylum for one of their blind—the pensioning, when there is no such asylum to receive them, of a poor cripple or idiot or in any way helpless victim of accident or disease—the generous subscription, which if it meet not the whole necessity, might lead the way to others and so enlist the charity of the little neighbourhood for the mitigation of some disaster, that, in the shape of a burning, or the fall of a crazy tenement, or the death of his horse, may have befallen one of the poorest

of the householders—We say it is well that our philanthropist can in these various ways make full proof of his liberality, and without the mischief attendant on the publicity of every scheme which is set on foot for the relief of general indigence. And there are countless other occasions of a beneficence at once prolific of good and harmless, so as to be without alloy—and in which if he can afford it our visitor might indulge in a largehearted munificence, which even though charged with prodigality, at least brings no corruption along with it, nay, might subserve the direct and unquestionable good of all in his locality—As in the erection and endowment of a church, or district school, or hall for a library and savings' bank and well regulated News room, where lectures too might occasionally be given, and social meetings be held free of all that can repel the attendance of the virtuous, but rather such as to invite the frequent presence of the best and wisest in the parish. A thousand other things might be specified—a well, a pavement, a sewer; if in the country a little commodious bridge for the benefit of the lieges, or the opening of a play-ground for their young, and many other sorts of liberal devices, which would soon dissipate every mistake among the people as to the character and views of the humane Christian and kind-hearted gentleman who had assumed the benevolent charge of them; and at the same time invest him with authority to resist and rebuke that spirit of sordidness which is sure to get up amongst them, and be fostered into greater strength

of appetency every day, by a profuse and patent and indiscriminate almsgiving.

With these cautions, we should think that a poor district might be safe even in the hands of a rich man. In the hands of a superintendent much poorer than he, as of a decent tradesman or clerk, or even well-conditioned and intelligent mechanic, we should not only feel no doubt of its safety—but firmly believe that out of its own home capabilities alone, he could with a management conducted on the principles that we have now explained, bring it into a state of economic independence, nay of growing comfort, so as that it should gradually rise from year to year to greater heights than before above the level of the destitution in which he found it. Yet in subjecting a whole parish to this sort of secular superintendence, we should like a mixture of all the classes of society in the agency among whom we parcelled out its various districts—with a preference most certainly in favour of the more plebeian office-bearer who resided within or near to his assigned locality, always supposing him a person of good sense as well as Christian piety. There are many respects in which he could acquit himself better than the wealthy patrician at a distance, who, beside being extra-parochial, is yet devoid of all experience or habits of converse with the common people. Still we desiderate a few such, though not, it is our earnest assurance to each, for the sake of his money wherewith to relieve the general indigence of their families; but for the moral effects of his presence in the midst

of them, and for our desire to see a closer and kindlier amalgamation among the various ranks and orders of our commonwealth. His money in fact will make a right management in his hands an affair of altogether greater wisdom and difficulty; and instead of facilitating, as vulgar thinkers apprehend, may, if not given with care and consideration, endanger the success of his benevolent enterprise. Let him lavish it as he may on educational and medical institutes, and so as that the people under his charge may have the full benefit of both; but let there be selection and secrecy and strenuous investigation of cases in all the measures which he adopts for the relief of poverty. Its chief danger at the outset will arise from a tacit comparison in his mind between his own standard of comfort and theirs, and whence he may be precipitated into a strong and exaggerated view of the destitution or even positive wretchedness of the people. He must just take this general standard of comfort as he finds it, and never once think of the herculean attempt, an attempt which never could succeed in that way, to raise the standard by the profusion of his largesses for better food or furniture or dress than that to which they have been habituated. It is not thus that we shall ever elevate the style or enjoyments of the common people—a consummation only to be gained by the gradual rise and refinement of their tastes, which nothing can more effectually speed forward than—not the money of their wealthy visitor, but —his frequent converse with them, and the moral-

izing influence of those schools and churches, which his money might help to set a-going. We would therefore cordially invite his co-operation in this good work. We promise him a rich harvest of gratification in this precious walk of home charity; the comfort of knowing what he is about; and a perfect contrast in point of satisfaction, between the certainty of that good which is sure to spring up under a system of safe and wise ministrations conducted on a field of benevolent exertion subject to his own immediate eye, and the doubtful or with far greater likelihood the pernicious effects of a miscellaneous liberality called forth at random by applications from all points and all distances. And let him not be alarmed at the amount of time or trouble, far more formidable to his imagination than the amount of money, which it may require at his hands. We hope to satisfy him afterwards that by the sacrifice of a very few hours in the week or even in the month, he may rid his territory of all its wretched pauperism, and establish a far more kindly and beneficent system in its place. Or if this time don't satisfy himself, if he find that pleasure in the work which we have no doubt he will, he may by his various devices of liberality be the instrument of a great progressive advancement in the habits and condition of his families. We should not wonder though it became at length to him the most grateful, as it will be the cheapest of all his amusements—a new method opened up to him, by which to purchase the greatest enjoyment for the least money. He will doubly rejoice

in it, that it is an operation twice blest—blessing him who gives and him who takes.

SECT. III.—*Supposition that the Visitor of a District enters on the walk which we have assigned to him, and appears before its population in the capacity of an Office-Bearer in the Church.*

But before we proceed further with our argument, we must remove a serious impediment in its way from the minds of those who may be thinking all the while that, as we spoke of the people in a district being taught to help themselves, or to help each other—we presumed an aggregate sufficiency within its limits which does not exist, and so have reasoned on a nonentity. And certain it is, that when we do propose to commit an applicant for relief—either to his own economy, this should imply that he has something to save; or to his relatives, that they have something to give; or to his kindness of neighbours, that the means and materials are in their hands, wherewith to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. But is this true in fact? We have selected as the field of our enterprise a congeries of the poorest households in town, and then tell of its own capabilities for a surplus there by which a process of internal charity might be kept agoing. Now, where in the name of wonder, and of all that is incredible, is this surplus to be found? Can it have any real substantive being among these very poorest of the poor? We admit them to be possessors of

the same humanity with ourselves, and as such must be subject to the working of its various laws —the law of self-preservation, and of relative affection, and of sympathy between man and man. There are hearts to feel amongst them; and we should gladly add hands to give, if, while we see the hands, we could also see as palpably where or how it is that they can have ought to give away. We dispute not the existence of the requisite *morale* amongst them. But the *matériel* is indispensable also; and, wanting this, it is poetry and nothing more to talk of a healthful interior circulation, with its ducts of conveyance running along in fancied lines of beauty, from household to household as well as from heart to heart, or from kindred to kindred, to children and parents and sisters and brothers and uncles and as far on as to remotest cousinship. One might be made in this way to figure a system of empty tubes; but the inconceivable thing is a stream to fill them, and without this a process of home charity in such a mass of destitution is but an aerial speculation. And whence it is asked is the aliment to be had by which alone a body or a substance can be given to it; and apart from which we but listen to a dream, or look on a gaudy picture drawn by a man of glowing imagination.

And yet it will be found that the imagination is all on the side of our incredulous objector. The first, the capital illusion into which they have fallen, is that there exists, in this country at least, or we could almost venture to say in the civilized

world, an aggregate of two or three hundred human beings living in their own habitations and presenting to view a dead level of the alike helpless and irremediable poverty. There is no such thing. There is a gradation and an inequality everywhere. I know of magnates in the Cowgate of Edinburgh; and scarcely an assemblage of fifty contiguous tenements in the poorest region of Glasgow, where along with operatives who earned for the time but five shillings a week, there were not others intermingled who were earning from twenty to sometimes fifty shillings a week. If these our contemptuous judges, instead of reproaching others with theory, would but enter on the work of exploration and become observers themselves, they would soon find that they too had imaginations to be corrected, certain spectral notions of their own which a little experience, if they but knew how to profit by its lessons, would speedily dissipate. But to come at once to our proof, it can, not only be grasped at conjecturally, but ascertained and stated arithmetically, how much the people of any given town, or even with a sufficient approximation to the truth, how much the people of any given parish or district in it annually expend on intoxicating liquors; and to make it more applicable for our argument, on such liquors as are used in greatest proportion by the common people. For example, Sheriff Alison of Glasgow, in his recent work on Population, calculates on certain specific data that in that town and suburbs of about 250,000 inhabitants, there is spent no less a sum on whisky

than twelve hundred thousand pounds annually. We suspect a possible, nay a likely exaggeration in his reckoning, and were ourselves in the habit, on very moderate data however, of reasoning on the consumption of a yearly half million—which in deference to the judgment of Mr. Alison we shall now assume to be eight hundred thousand, or fully three pounds a-head for each unit of the population. This accords with the experience of many other places. In our Cowgate alone there are upwards of thirty public houses upheld chiefly by the demand of next-door customers, and implying a consumption of more than six thousand a year. It would keep our argument entire, though the yearly expenditure were taken at half of this sum —more especially as it seems agreed on all hands that the consumption of spirits increases with the descent in the scale of society—so as to be proportionally far greater among the lower than among the upper or middle classes. But this is not the only article of indulgence on which the means of the people might be economized or diverted to other and better objects. We are authoritatively told of the enormous profits of pawnbrokers—amounting it is said to half a million a year in Glasgow; and which with a little benevolent care and attention might all be committed back again to the parties from whom it had been extracted—another mighty enlargement then to the comfort and sufficiency of the common people. But there are many other items of extravagance and mismanagement beside these; and which all taken

together bespeak an immense internal fund the real and rightful property of the people themselves; and which if recalled from its present useless, or even pernicious direction, would mightily conduce—not to the present comfort alone, but to the independence and future elevation of the working classes in society. The largest sum yet specified for a poor rate in Scotland is eight hundred thousand a year, being nearly six hundred a year for each two thousand of the population. But if, instead of this relief coming to them from without, we can find no less a sum than six thousand a year amongst themselves, now squandered to their hurt but capable of being recovered for a better and happier destination—the achievement of this latter enterprise were surely a far greater boon to the families, and a truer benevolence on the part of their friends.

And here it may be felt, that, in thus laying open so large and worthless an expenditure, we speak harshly of the common people. To this we reply that we know of no exemption for any class of society from honest and fearless remonstrance, when the members of it, be they few or many, call it forth, by glaring misconduct, or the degeneracy of their habits. It is not by flattery or falsehood that any cause of righteousness can be carried; and we shall never achieve a general good for the working classes, if restrained from telling them the truth or laying on our merited rebuke—whether by the dread of popular hatred, or by a sickly tenderness of feeling towards them. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not

respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour." These are times which call for the intrepidity of an old prophet; and whether in dealing with high or low, it should be alike freely and alike fearlessly with both. The poor, on the one hand, must bear to be told that they do very very ill—but not without telling the rich on the other that they have done much worse. The truth is that the greatest palliation for the misconduct of the poor, for their recklessness, their ruinous squanderings, their low and loathsome dissipations, is the cruel neglect and abandonment of them by the upper ranks of society. It is chiefly in towns where the greatest moral injustice has been done to them—abandoned wholesale to ignorance and vice—dispossessed of all their moral privileges, whether in schools for their young or in churches for their general population —spoiled of their parochial inheritance which had come down from their forefathers by a griping magistracy who have seized on their places in the house of God, and thus made merchandise of their souls to the highest bidder—the most monstrous and, with all deference to our demagogues and political declaimers, far the worst encroachment ever made by lordly aristocrats on the rights and immunities of the people. No wonder that, thus driven from the ordinances of the gospel and abandoned to Sabbath profanation, a general week-day profligacy should have followed in its train; and that families thus made worthless should

have soon become wretched; and that filth and poverty and all moral and physical abominations should have accumulated in all plebeian quarters of the town, whose inhabitants, literally cast off by their superiors with whom they wont to have associated as fellow-worshippers in the temple of their God, have sunk beneath the level of our common humanity—with every wild and outlandish habit of gypsies, and only without their locomotion. And to stem the tide of this degeneracy, or rather, for a moral and Christian reform of our people is scarcely in all their thoughts, to lay an arrest on the growing and gathering destitution which must keep pace with it—it is thought enough by many to scatter among their habitations the wretched pittances of an alms-house—as if the hurried inquiries or cursory surveillance of a few paid inspectors could reach the deeply seated mischief, which festers like a moral gangrene in the hearts and habits of the people, and can only be met by moral remedies alone. There is a more excellent way, of surer efficacy and far nobler results. There is a sore and inveterate disease—let not the healing of it be gone about superficially. It is not a slight medicine that will suffice; nor must we think it an adequate compensation for the injury done by us to the common people, that we dole out the allowances of public charity among a few of their most conspicuous sufferers, or of those who in virtue of long neglect have sunk the lowest and sustained the greatest degradation and misery at our hands. It is not enough that we appease the cry of distress

where it is loudest, or produce for ourselves a momentary respite by dealing with it in shreds and scantlings. The whole head is sick, the whole heart is sore. The malady against which we have to contend is not that of particular cases, to be treated or disposed of piecemeal and individually as they occur. It is the malady of a system—a radical and generating virus, which we have to go forth and work hard against—only to be counter-worked and extirpated by a searching and sanative influence, which shall reach to the inner depths of the popular mind, and pervade the whole bulk and body of the population.

We have already explained how it is that even one individual might undertake for fifty families; and by what footsteps he could with the utmost facility to himself, and far greater success than many have the least notion of, so raise the habit and condition of the whole, as mightily to improve the economics of his district. It were well if this experiment were multiplied by the spontaneous enterprises of the benevolent; and that too in all various localities—more especially where the poverty was most extreme; and the population, both in character and circumstances were the most unpromising and unlikely. The result, and were the right methods taken and persevered in we can have no doubt of its prosperity, would furnish a body of experience, and experience too at first hand—which might at length open the eyes of the most incredulous to the only solution of a problem that has hitherto exercised and baffled the ingenuity of many speculators—espe-

cially those most egregious of all speculators, who, under the title of practical men, and with a professed abjuration of all theory, have precipitated a legislation that traverses all the lights of history, and all the laws and tendencies of that nature which God hath given to us.

What a single philanthropist could do on a small, a single church with its parish of two thousand people, and there ought never to be more even in towns, might do on a larger scale. And this were no novelty in Scotland. It would be a recurrence, in fact, to the practice and usage of the olden time—when each church had a distinct body of office-bearers whose special duty it was to manage for the relief of the poor. These were the deacons of other days, who laboured in their more secular vocation apart from the elders whose higher office it was to minister in holy things, and be the spiritual assistants of the clergyman, in caring for the souls of the people. Such a parish, if divided into six or ten parts, would furnish the very objects and occupations which we have been employed in describing, to as many members of the congregation. Our visitor, of whom we have hitherto supposed that he worked on his own account, or for the gratification of his own taste and benevolence, now becomes the functionary or office-bearer of a church. He appears in a new character before the eyes of the people—clothed in that certain authority which ever stands associated in the imaginations of men, with the place which one holds in any corporate system of management that is sanctioned by law; and more especially

if it receive the designation of a court, whether civil or ecclesiastical. The very title which he now wears makes him a different person from before; and at all events, he is now in different circumstances, which might either be of favourable or adverse operation, depending on the style and policy of his administration. What these new circumstances are, and what the consequent policy or peculiar conduct and method of acting is which they demand of him, we now proceed to explain.

There is one very obvious respect in which a parish deacon differs from a private volunteer in the work of benevolence. We have spoken of the secrecy wherewith the latter should conduct his alms-giving; and that this ought not to be his ostensible, not even his chief errand, when he goes forth among the householders of his district. But a deacon has no choice in this particular. By office and designation he stands out as the dispenser of the alms of the church. This is his known business; and he cannot though he would disguise it, whatever the sordid or mercenary expectations might be which the very sight of him shall awaken, either among the poorer or more worthless families of his charge. His therefore is a position of all the greater difficulty; and yet it is a difficulty far from insuperable—nay, which might be more than countervailed by other influences not at the command of the spontaneous and unofficial philanthropist.

Let him therefore make no mystery of his profession as administrator of the church alms among the families of his district; but openly proclaim the

system on which he means to acquit himself of its duties. Let there be a full understanding on this matter between him and them; and he will feel no difficulty in soon carrying the consent and approval of his little community, as well as their intelligence along with him. Every thing must at length command the willing homage and concurrence of a population which has a basis of right to rest upon. He will speedily enlist their consciences upon his side; and once that this is done, he will feel no difficulty in carrying his views into effect. The people themselves will prove his best auxiliaries; and that too with a help so powerful and so productive as to astonish even himself—when he comes to perceive how smoothly and prosperously, and at how moderate a *public* expense withal, he can meet and dispose as he ought of all the real and thoroughly ascertained necessities on account of which application has been made to him. It is true that he stands out amongst them in the known capacity of an almoner; and this forms one great distinction between the deacon and the visitor—exposing him it may be thought to a greater force and frequency of applications. And it is also true that what is thus sought, will, if granted, be not at his own personal expense; and so he loses the protection of a certain delicacy, which only they who are profoundly ignorant of the common people give them no credit for. But along with this certain delicacy there is a certain sense of dignity too; and which is capable of being fostered into a strong repugnance to aught like a visible dependence on the ministrations of a poor's fund. It is further-

more true, that the popular imagination of this fund is often greatly beyond its real amount; but even this false arithmetic can be rectified by explanation. In a word, let there be a full and friendly communion between the deacon and his families, and a common feeling between him and them will speedily be the result of it. He will find that by frequent household intercourse, or in the bland and intimate converse of private acquaintanceship, the people are vastly more pliant and malleable, as if of different temper altogether, than when sisted before the tribunal and called to take a part in the argumentations of a parish vestry—often fierce and insolent, and charged as in angry litigation with the spirit of mutual disdain and defiance. In the amenities of social companionship at their own houses, he will breathe amongst them a far milder yet clearer atmosphere—for as the fruit of his nearer and narrower inspection, his will be a tenfold more thorough knowledge and discernment of every particular case than is at all attainable by the formal inquiries, and columnar specifications, set forth with goodly order and array in the schedules of public charity—the administrators of which, albeit they think not so, have a greatly more superficial acquaintance with the subject of their unwieldy management than the visitor of a little district, even after he has become a deacon, and so is transformed into an official personage like themselves. In very truth, there is from the place where they sit a wide gulf, a mighty distance between them and the population—and this too filled by a medium not only cold and unkindly,

but dark and often turbid, so as both to obscure and distort their vision—a disadvantage this which they cannot repair or get the better of—even with the help of their inspectors, whose office it is to radiate across the interval and reconnoitre the case and circumstances of every applicant, and bring their formulary of particulars, all in right place and arrangement back again. With all their pains and all their possible regulations, let us assure these administrators of charity for a whole city that they will never reach not even approximate to our deacon, in that minute and thorough intelligence of every case which his frequent visits, and the constantly growing familiarity of months perhaps years with the families of his own little vineyard, enable him to acquire—far less in the tact and adaptation and flexibility wherewith he can fit himself, precisely as is best in the ever varying circumstances, to the necessities and the condition of every new applicant. The starch uniformity of procedure which is characteristic, because unavoidable, in the affairs of a large superintendence, does not and cannot admit of those manifold adjustments to each individual peculiarity, which the member of a small parochial court, within the limits of his own subdivision, can so easily practise, in the exercise of a discretion becoming sounder with the experience of every day—who, on the other hand, will be delighted to find that what looks so formidable in the bulk, and when seen from a distance, vanishes like any other bugbear when we enter upon immediate contact with it; and that when encountered by littles, or in separate and small

enough localities, it indeed becomes a very facile and practicable affair.

But let us descend more into particulars. And first let it be a settled maxim, that, while every case of want and suffering must be attended to, of all the expedients for its relief it shall come the last, and only be resorted to after that all the other and better expedients have failed—to provide for it from the poor's money of the parish. This should in every instance of mere poverty be looked on as the "dernier ressort"—a sort of necessary evil which one submits to because he cannot otherwise help it, and not till every right method has failed by which to anticipate and avoid it. What the shifts are which ought to be tried, ere the descent is made, or the name of the applicant goes down on the list of dependents on the public charity, we have already in part explained. First, having ascertained a destitution, if possible to stimulate the industry of the applicant, and see what more he might earn—Second, or to improve his economy, and see what the things are upon which he might save—Thirdly, to seek after his relatives, and see what they will give—Fourthly, to make the case known among neighbours, and see whether the necessity might not be got over by one joint effort of liberality; or even whether there is not a willingness amongst them to keep off for an indefinite time the stigma of pauperism from one who is so far a favourite throughout his little vicinity that hearts and hands may yet be open to him. It is not known how effectual these shifts might be made, how prolific of relief are these natural and spontaneous

resources—all of which ought certainly to be attempted and drawn upon, ere the case shall be suffered to appear in court, or submitted to the board of parochial administrators. It should be the distinct aim of each deacon to provide for the wants of his district in a more excellent way, and so as to intercept if he can every application before it reaches the door of the parish vestry. That deacon, in fact, does his duty best who gives his court of deacons the least to do. Such ought to be the reigning principle, the *esprit de corps*, among the members of the body. And what is better still, it were a possible, nay an easy thing, for each deacon to awaken an *esprit de corps* akin to this among the families of his own district or his own deaconry—insomuch that each might collectively feel it as their distinction and their glory to have few or even no paupers within their borders—and either because the hands of all have ministered to their own necessities, or because, through the ready and generous help of all, every child of misfortune in the midst of them has been saved from the humiliations of public charity. Whatever quadrates with the natural conscience can practically be carried or made to take effect in any community; and more especially if enforced and exemplified by him who is vested with an official direction over it. It speaks so home to their own sense of right, that each man should work and save for himself rather than be burdensome to others, and that relatives and neighbours should be helpful to each other—as to make it impossible for any management founded on these principles to be either unpopular, or to fail in the

accomplishment of its own high and virtuous objects. And there is one advantage which the deacon has over the visitor, when labouring to dispose of any case or application in the way that we recommend. The money thereby saved is not saved to himself—it is only saved to the poor's fund of which he is the guardian and the administrator. His proceedings do not expose him to the suspicion of his own personal avarice. Nay he may at any time repel, even reverse this suspicion, by taking the ostensible lead in any joint enterprise of good either for his district at large, or for some one of its more unfortunate families. It is incalculable how few and how light the cheap and simple attentions are by which any deacon, if but a creditable and companionable man, might carry the fellow-feeling and confidence of all along with him.

But there is still another advantage which the deacon has over the visitor. His walk is distinct from that of the clergyman or elder; but still in that walk he is the office-bearer and so the representative of a church—in which capacity it not only becomes him, but he will speak with all the greater authority, when, called to the work of argument with his people and sometimes of remonstrance or rebuke, he deals forth among them the sacred lessons of the gospel. It is peculiarly his part to yield at all times an incorrupt moral testimony—nor ever to flinch when the occasion requires that he should act as the fearless reprover of their indolence, or their vicious habits, or their beggarly meanness of spirit; or, if able, but unwilling to interpose in behalf of some helpless relative, to lift

his indignant protest against the unfeeling selfishness that is shut to the distress or degradation of even one's own kindred, of those who are flesh of his own flesh and bone of his own bone. It is not to be endured that we should have to succumb to the clamours or even to the claims of alleged want, when they can be clearly made out to be the claims of worthlessness, which should ever be met, not by a different testimony alone but a different treatment, from that bestowed on those deserving poor whom it is both the duty and delight of all who feel as they ought to sympathize with and succour to the uttermost. Let these be cherished and cared for with all liberality and tenderness, while the others are kept at bay—and so as to make it manifest that the regimen of our parochial charity is at the same time a regimen of virtue. They utterly mistake the common people who apprehend of this style of administration that it must be unpopular. In the long run it will be quite the reverse. It will find an echo in their own consciences. They will know how to discriminate between on the one hand an injurious harshness, and on the other the firm and consistent procedure of him who, armed with intrepidity and force of principle, acquits himself in the midst of them as the declared enemy of imposture and worthlessness. Such a man will be sure to elevate the tone of his families, and to enlist them upon his side; and though his should be one of the poorest districts in town, even he himself will be astonished at the number of months perhaps of years which may elapse ere the necessity lies upon him of making a

single draught on the parish fund for the relief of any of his people.

For prior to this, and even after he has found the stimulated industry and economy of the applicant, and the stimulated duty of his relatives, and the stimulated sympathy of his neighbours, to be all inadequate for the necessities of the case—there still remains another expedient, which we mention the last because really the least in the order of importance; and of which we should never wish to avail ourselves, save on the tried and found insufficiency of all the previous expedients, each of which we hold preferable to the one that we are now to propose, though it again be preferable to the final and conclusive step in the series—we mean the entry of a new and another name or person on the lists of the public and parochial charity. As the last, if it should be the only remaining effort to save him from this, we recommend that his circumstances should be made known to one or more wealthy friends, though not of the parish, who, whether by a small and regular pension, or by a single gratuity, might interpose for the rescue of some struggling family from the fall of their visible descent on a platform humbler than any which they have yet occupied—we mean that of a recorded pauperism. And in the great bulk of instances this, we affirm, can be done with a facility that is quite marvellous—often by a timely guinea or half guinea given but once, say to help out a deficient rent or meet some other occasion of embarrassment, through which if the applicant be carried and so as to weather it for the coming week

or fortnight, you may never hear afterwards or at least for years of the necessities or hardships of his condition—thereby warding off a permanent burden from the poor's fund; and what is of far more importance, warding off a permanent deterioration of habit and principle from the man himself, who starts anew on the walk of industry and honest independence. We should indeed wonder if in any well-managed parish, after the full introduction and establishment of our system—half-a-dozen such examples of a resort to gentlemen for some slight pecuniary aid were required or called for in the course of a twelvemonth. And when we compare the small number of such cases with the great number of such gentlemen in every large town, all most liberally disposed for the public good, if they but knew how to go about it—we, in the name of public virtue and of the people's best interests, would put the question—whether it is not better that our domestic and parochial treatment of the poor should not first be tried and have full experimental justice done to it, ere Scotland shall be precipitated into that economy of general and legalized pauperism, which cannot fulfil its own promises without beggaring the whole population; and cannot regulate or restrain its allowances without mocking the expectations which itself had awakened; and so by placing the two great divisions of society, the payers and receivers in hostile array against each other, spreading dissatisfaction, even to the danger of tumults and popular outbreaks, all over the land.

And it were further well, if what we have re-

commended as the last step in favour of the applicant, before his case is submitted to the parochial court, should, in every fit instance, be *their* first step; and so as to precede, nay if possible to prevent, the introduction of his name into their record, as forming one of the regular paupers on the roll. When any application must be deferred to, it is good policy to consider—whether it may not be treated as a casualty to be provided for by a single donation, and recorded under the general head of casualties, without the name of the person who is relieved by it. The spirit that shrinks from such an exposure ought to be upheld as long as possible; and we again repeat with all confidence, that the deacon who acts on such a system will be astonished to find at the end of the year with what perfect facility and cheapness he can dispose of all his cases, even the most seemingly formidable amongst them. That bugbear, which looks a gigantic hydra when seen in the bulk or from a distance, vanishes into nothing when dealt with at close quarters, or piecemeal, and in small separate sections. We ourselves should not marvel though under such a regimen not one farthing was drawn for years from the parish fund for the relief of mere indigence; and it is our firm unbroken confidence that the smallest public fund of the poorest parish in Scotland would in ordinary times form a sufficient landing place for every application that could not be otherwise and better disposed of than by an allowance from either a kirk session or a charity workhouse. And we count on such a result. —First, because we look for a resuscitation and in-

crease of private charity, as the sure effect of every abridgment in the legal or visible displays of it; and, secondly, because we look to the dormant capabilities of the people themselves, by which a wise and experienced deaconship could indefinitely raise the standard both of comfort and character throughout the community at large.

And to obtain the services of such a deaconship we have only to repair a breach which has been made in the original constitution of the Church of Scotland—to replace a dilapidation which its venerable fabric has suffered in the course of ages. The framers of our ecclesiastical polity, those wisest and most enlightened of all modern reformers, who knew well how to discriminate things secular from sacred, and how best to provide for both—they instituted a special and distinct order, whose office it should be to look after the collection and distribution of all the needful temporalities, whether for the maintenance of churches and schools or for the relief and sustenance of the poor. A national provision for the first objects has so far superseded the necessity for the former of these services, save in those towns and parishes where church or school extension is required; and whenever the order shall come to be revived, the best methods by which a further provision might be obtained for these great public blessings would fall most appropriately under the cognizance and care of the newly set up deacons in our modern day. On the other hand, the latter of these services, the official management of the poor, should be all their care—when by the few simple steps

which we have tried to explain they will find that what they have to give as office-bearers might be indefinitely lessened by the working of those natural principles which only require being appealed to and guided to right objects, that each parochial community might be brought to the best economic state of which it is capable. We know of no other expedient for the right solution of this great problem. We have no faith in a national board that undertakes for the pauperism of a whole empire, or in a provincial board that undertakes for the pauperism of a whole county, or in a city board that undertakes for the pauperism of a whole township, or in a union with its arrangements however skilful for the pauperism of a whole cluster of parishes. But with all our helplessness in these, we have the greatest confidence in the perfect facility and success wherewith every deacon possessed of kindly feelings and common sense could manage aright the pauperism of fifty families; and on this stepping-stone, not by adventuring on what is new but by a simple recurrence to what is old—we mean by a system of deaconship, comprising six or eight or ten members, we can see our way to a right economy of pauperism for a whole parish. We shall not meddle with matters too high for us; nor do we profess to understand by what mechanism it is that one body of general administration and surveillance can achieve aught so magnificent as the right apportionment of relief for all the manifold varieties of want and wretchedness in the thousand homes that lie scattered in a territory, where tens of thousands of human

beings are congregated—whether in large cities or extended provinces. But we do understand how an intelligent and well-principled man can, in a given locality of some few hundred people, so operate on the springs or principles of human feeling and human action as to maintain in that economic condition which is the best possible all the families who are within its confines. We do not know what the one process is by which the result universal can be reached, of a right economy of pauperism for the millions of a whole nation. But we do know what the one process is by which the result particular can be reached, of a right economy of pauperism for the as many scores or fifties of a whole district. And as we have somewhere said already, our result universal is arrived at by the summation of these particulars. Give us a sufficient number of deaconries for each parish, and a sufficient number of parishes for an empire; and by the cheap and simple attentions of as many men, each performing a most light and practicable task within his own little sphere, shall we make good piecemeal and in items the full accomplishment of that object which, dealt with as an unwieldy whole, has hitherto exercised and baffled the ingenuity of all our statesmen.

In nothing have the fathers of the Scottish church evinced a profounder discernment of our nature, than in the separation which they made between the deaconship and the eldership—assigning respectively the duties of each to two distinct classes of functionaries. It is true that in so doing they acted on their own views of the scriptural model as set before us

more particularly in the Acts of the Apostles; but it is furthermore evident that they also saw the fitness of the separation, and that too on the principle sanctioned by the Saviour Himself, when, on being applied for to arbitrate and decide in a matter of secular interest, He replied, "Who made me a judge and a divider over you?" The truth is, that though the duties of the deaconship have now in practice been generally merged into those of the eldership —the two together make the most incongruous of all pluralities. We can only afford one or two brief sentences for the explanation of what that is wherein the incongruity lies. For a right acquittal of the deaconship there ought to be a wholesome rigour of investigation in every case that is brought before the secular functionary, and also a wholesome rigour of treatment when the worthless and undeserving come forth to urge in our hearing their necessities or their claims. But the spiritual functionary, the elder, whose office it is to deal with the people in things spiritual, should never thus be brought into conflict with them on any question which relates to their merely secular interests and concerns. It is not for elders, if they wish to maintain their ecclesiastical character, or to preserve their ecclesiastical usefulness among the families—it is not for the elders, and far less for the clergyman, to be implicated with a management in which the exhibition of a quality so alienating and unpopular as that of rigour is at all called for—we mean, of course, not the rigour of church discipline, but the rigour which first scrutinizes, and then when it finds cause withstands,

the solicitations of *alleged* poverty for a share in church allowances, or, as they have been sometimes termed, in the charities of the faithful. Such an exhibition on their part must create at least a strong initial barrier in the way of any good effect, from their spiritual ministrations; and if for the purpose of removing this barrier—while still having to do with the administration of the poor's money—they choose to make an opposite exhibition, to substitute facility in place of rigour, to be yielding and blindly profuse in the style of their dispensations—then from another quarter comes there a vitiating blight on that Christian and moralizing influence which should ever be kept intact and unviolated in their hands. The people are thus tempted to make a gain of godliness; to play the hypocrite with the man who thus deals at one and the same time in prayers and payments; to chime in with the spiritual for the sake of a readier admittance into the benefits of the temporal ministration; and so altogether to lose that singleness of eye which is so essential to the clearness of one's Christian intelligence, as well as to the simplicity and godly sincerity of his Christian character. It were infinitely better that such a contest of adverse and heterogeneous influences should be conclusively put an end to; and for this purpose, or to maintain in its own full and proper weight the moral ascendancy both of ministers and elders, it is truly most desirable, that any *official* management of pauperism should be altogether out of their hands—Yet not therefore out of the hands of the church's office-bearers; but placed, as far

as all personal dealing with the applicants is concerned, entirely and exclusively with the deacons composing another and a distinct class of functionaries. The elders for obvious reasons, which we have elsewhere stated at length, ought never, we mean officially, to descend among things secular. But there is no necessary or permanent obstacle in the way of deacons ascending to things spiritual. The barrier of which we have spoken may only be temporary, and in the course of experience will, under the right acquittal of the duties of the office, at length give way. The families perhaps revolted at the first by a certain sternness of administration, will at last discover both its moral tendencies, and the moral principle in which it originates; and after the deacon has made full manifestation of himself, as the substantial friend of the poor, while the unfaltering enemy of their vices and the consistent patron of truth and sobriety and all righteousness in the midst of them, will then speak influentially and with an authoritative voice when he presses home upon them the lessons of the gospel. The truth is that if a Christian man, he is in the best possible school for the qualifications of a higher Christian office than the one which he at present occupies. It is thus that the court of deacons might become the best and most prolific nursery from which to supply the vacancies, or still further extend the court of elders—in beautiful accordance with the apostolic saying, that "they who have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

But in conclusion we must not omit to mention the vast importance to a deacon, should he have a taste and ability for the services which in our second section we have recommended to the private or voluntary philanthropist. If he but give himself up to the general good of his district, and take an interest in all that can advance the health and the education and the moral well-being and the economic improvement of its families, he will soon annihilate, not its poverty it may be, but at least its pauperism. The poverty may still exist, but it will be met and mitigated in a far kindlier way than by the ministrations of public charity. The people themselves will at length take it off his hands; and his friendly attentions, in the various ways that we have pointed out, will earn for him such a confidence and ascendency in the midst of them—that his official dispensations will be well nigh superseded by their own thrift and good management on the one hand; and, on the other, when unavoidable misfortune has made inroad upon any of the households, by the timely forthgivings of aid and sympathy from that neighbourhood, within which all the bland and beneficent habits of a village economy have been fostered and grown up under his care.

THE ONLY WAY.

(*Political Economy*, Vol. II.)

WE cannot bid adieu to our argument without making the strenuous avowal that all our wishes, and all our partialities, are on the side of the common people. We should rejoice in a larger secondary, and a smaller disposable population; or, which is tantamount to this, in higher wages to the labourers, and lower rents to the landlords. But this cannot be effected save by the people themselves—and that not with violence on their part, or by any assertion, however successful, of a political equality with the other orders of the state. There is no other way of achieving for them a better economical condition than by means of a more advantageous proportion between the food of the country and the number of its inhabitants; and no other way of securing this proportion than by the growth of prudence and principle among themselves. It will be the aggregate effect of a higher taste, a higher intelligence, and, above all, a widespread Christianity, throughout the mass of the population; and thus the most efficient ministers of that gospel which opens to them the door of heaven will be also the most

efficient ministers of their temporal comfort and prosperity upon earth. Next to the salvation of their souls, one of our fondest aspirations in behalf of the general peasantry is, that they shall be admitted to a larger share of this world's abundance than now falls to their lot. But we feel assured that there is no method by which this can be wrested from the hands of the wealthier classes. It can only be won from them by the insensible growth of their own virtue. The triumph will be a glorious, but, to be effectual and enduring, it must be a pacific one, achieved not on the field of blood, or amid the uproar of a furious, discordant politics. It will be a sure but a silent victory, the fruit of a moral warfare, whose weapons are not carnal, but spiritual; and which shall at length come to a prosperous termination, not in strife and anarchy and commotion, but in showers of grace from on high upon the prayers and labours of the good. Each several clergyman who labours piously and conscientiously in the home-walk of his own parish helps forward this great consummation, till, by means of a universal blessing, peace and plenty will become alike universal throughout the families of a regenerated world.

THE DISPAUPERISATION OF ST. JOHN'S PARISH.

A Great Experiment.

(*Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers.*)

"I THINK it right to state," said Dr. Chalmers, "that my great inducement to the acceptance of the parish of St. John's was my hope thereby to obtain a separate and independent management of the poor, which I felt it extremely difficult to obtain in my former parish from the way in which we were dovetailed and implicated with a number of distinct bodies." The desired extrication being once fairly effected, he proposed to relinquish for the future all claim upon the fund raised by assessment, and to conduct a population of 10,000, the cost of whose pauperism averaged £1,400 annually, into the condition of an unassessed country parish, and to provide for all its indigence out of the fund raised by voluntary contributions at the church-doors. The experiment was almost universally regarded as chimerical; but as severe censures had been passed by its proposer on the existing mode of pauper management, and as sanguine expectations were

expressed by him as to the result, there was a general desire in all the public bodies that full scope and opportunity for working it should be afforded. The magistrates of the city consented that the entire and exclusive control of the church-door collections in St. John's should be vested in the kirk session of that parish. The General Session relinquished all claim to interfere, while the Town Hospital readily acquiesced in the proposal submitted to it by Dr. Chalmers. Its own pensioners, out-door and in-door, connected with the parish of St. John's, the Town Hospital was to continue to maintain, permitting the kirk session of that parish to retain all its own funds, on condition that it took up all the new cases that should occur; that it bore the charge of all the existing cases of sessional poor; and that henceforth neither from the one class nor from the other should a single pauper be sent to the Town Hospital, or become chargeable on the general assessment for the city. The annual outlay upon the sessional poor whose claim to parochial relief had already been admitted, was £225. The yearly collections at the church-doors amounted to £400 received at the forenoon and afternoon services, and £80 at the evening service. With a balance therefore of £225 per annum, all new cases were to be permanently provided for, and all the old cases, however aggravated, were to be prevented from passing into the Town Hospital. A generation of paupers is so short-lived that the obvious result of this arrangement would have been that in the course of a few years what had previously cost

£1,400 annually, would be intrusted to a body of management who had only £480 annually at its disposal. The reduction, however, of pauper expenditure from the larger of these sums to the smaller, was far short of the extraordinary result which was actually accomplished.

The new applications for relief were committed for investigation to the deacons. Confident that a comparatively small sum would be adequate, and jealous of mismanagement should a larger sum be allotted for the purpose, Dr. Chalmers gave into their hands the evening collection alone, the available surplus of the two day-collections being reserved for other parochial purposes. All depended on the watchful vigilance of those who, stationed at the outposts, opened or closed the entry which led from poverty to pauperism. The instructions issued for their guidance were few but compendious. "When one applies for admittance through his deacon upon our funds, the first thing to be inquired into is, if there be any kind of work that he can yet do so as either to keep him altogether off, or as to make a partial allowance serve for his necessities; the second, what his relatives and friends are willing to do for him; the third, whether he is a hearer in any dissenting place of worship, and whether its session will contribute to his relief. And if after these previous inquiries it be found that further relief is necessary, then there must be a strict ascertainment of his term of residence in Glasgow, and whether he be yet on the funds of the Town Hospital, or is obtaining relief from any other parish. If,

upon all these points being ascertained, the deacon of the proportion where he resides still conceives him an object for our assistance, he will inquire whether a small temporary aid will meet the occasion, and state this to the first ordinary meeting. But if, instead of this, he conceives him a fit subject for a regular allowance, he will receive the assistance of another deacon to complete and confirm his inquiries by the next ordinary meeting thereafter, at which time the applicant, if they still think him a fit object, is brought before us, and received upon the fund at such a rate of allowance as upon all the circumstances of the case the meeting of deacons shall judge proper. Of course, pending these examinations, the deacon is empowered to grant the same sort of discretionary aid that is customary in other parishes."

To a deacon just entering upon office Dr. Chalmers wrote,* "I had three applications from your district yesterday, each of which will afford a distinct opportunity for introducing you into a habit by the perfecting of which what you now feel to be a laborious business will soon be felt a very easy, manageable, and at the same time interesting task. There is a distinction to be observed between one sort of application and another. The first is for relief grounded on age or bodily infirmity, in virtue of which those applying are not able to work;—this furnishes the cases for ordinary pauperism. The second is for relief granted on the want of work or defect in wages;—this it is not understood that by

* Letter addressed to Campbell Nasmyth, Esq., dated December 1, 1819.

the law of Scotland we are obliged to meet or to provide for, and therefore ought never to be so met out of the ordinary funds. Your present applications are all of the second order, and the likelihood is that you will be able to meet them by work alone, or if this will not suffice, by a small temporary donation, which will be paid by Mr. Brown, our treasurer, when you render your account to him. In prosecuting the second sort of applications, you have to ascertain, in the first instance, whether the applicants have resided three years in Glasgow; and secondly, what are the profits coming into the family from their various sources and employments. Now, what I would earnestly recommend to you, is a thorough examination of these matters in the three present instances, were it for nothing but your own improvement in a business in which you will soon acquire an expertness that will give a facility and pleasure to all your future operations. Be kind and courteous to the people, while firm in your investigations about them; and just in proportion to the care with which you investigate will be the rarity of the applications that are made to you. The evidence for residence is had either by the receipts of rents from landlords, or by the oral testimony whether of these landlords or of creditable neighbours; the evidence for income, by inquiring at the people who furnish them with work. It may serve you as a sort of criterion of the adequacy of the means if you take along with you the fact that many are now working on the Green for 6s. a week, and are struggling with this as a temporary expedient for wearing through

with their families—far from being a comfortable provision, we admit; but in times like the present, the burden is not all transferred from the poor to the rich, but is shared between them: it should be a compromise between the endurance of the one and the liberality of the other. N.B.—If drunkenness be a habit with the applicants, this in itself is an evidence of means, and the most firm discouragement should be put upon every application in these circumstances. Many applications will end in your refusal of them in the first instance, because, till they have had experience of your vigilance, the most undeserving are very apt to obtrude themselves; but even with them show good will, maintain calmness, take every way of promoting the interest of their families, and gain, if possible, their confidence and regard by your friendly advice and the cordial interest that you take in all that belongs to them. It is a mighty element in all your inquiries, the character of the applicant, and hence the good of a growing familiarity with your district."

Furnished with the general instructions, and occasionally guided and stimulated by such private letters of advice as the one now given, the deacons of St. John's commenced their interesting work. That work was at first somewhat delicate and difficult. A few hours could carry each through the territory allotted to him, and make him familiar with the limited number of families which it contained, but the applications for relief were numerous. The first imagination of the people was, that, as a new and better system had been instituted

under Dr. Chalmers, liberal allowances were to be more freely and generously distributed. It was not long till this misconception was rectified, nor was it difficult to carry the whole mind and feeling of the general community in favour of the methods and objects which these zealous agents set themselves to explain, to recommend, and to accomplish. The scrutiny to which each case was subjected was patiently, minutely, and most searchingly conducted. It was soon perceived that the very last thing which a deacon would allow was that any family in the parish should sink into the degraded condition of being chargeable on the parish funds. The drunken were told to give up their drunkenness, and that until they did so their case would not even be considered; the idle were told to set instantly to work, and if they complained that work could not be gotten, by kindly applications to employers they were helped to obtain it; the improvident were warned that if, with such sources of income as they had, or might have, they chose to squander and bring themselves to want, they must just bear the misery of their own procuring. A vast number of the primary applications melted into nothing under the pressure of a searching investigation. Deceptions of all kinds were attempted, and until experience had quickened incredulity, and made detection easier, were frequently successful. "In acting," says Mr. Kettle, "as a substitute for a friend, who had gone to the coast, I repeatedly assisted a poor woman from his district who had four children (one in her arms), and whose husband was in the Infir-

mary. On detecting her, and putting her into the hands of the police, it turned out that her husband was an industrious weaver, she a drunken slut, and their domicile nearly a mile out of the parish.—A brother deacon had a case still more flagrant. A poor woman in tears applied to him to bury a grown-up daughter who had died that day. He refused, notwithstanding much importunity and reference to another deacon, in whose district she had lately been, until he made a personal visit. This he did, but could find no such person. She applied next day, and on sending a young man with her, she disappeared in a crowd by the way. In stating the matter to her former deacon, he wondered if her husband, whom he had been at the expense of burying some six months before, was really dead. The two went in quest of the family, and found the buried husband and the dead daughter performing all the usual functions of life. I need hardly say that the woman was a drunkard. Such cases of deception were, however, rare, as the surveillance in general was very complete."

When the difficulties and distress of the applicants were patent and indubitable, every argument was employed and every facility was afforded to induce them to relieve themselves by their own efforts and their own industry. The father and mother of a family composed of six children both died: three of the children were earning wages, three were unable to work. The three elder applied to have the three younger admitted to the Town Hospital. They were remonstrated with; the evil of breaking up

the family—the loss to the younger children—the disgrace that would be incurred by consigning them to pauperism, and the small additional sum required to keep them all together, were pointed out. The offer was made of a small quarterly allowance if they would continue together. They yielded to a suggestion wisely, kindly, but firmly urged. The quarterly allowance was only twice required. The Town Hospital was saved a sum fifty times greater than was expended upon the children at home, and that home was made fifty times happier and more blessed. "Who is there," says Dr. Chalmers, after recording an incident of which he made frequent use, "that does not applaud the advice that was given, and rejoice in the ultimate effect of it? We could have no sympathy either with the heart or understanding of him who could censure such a style of proceeding; and our conceptions lie in an inverse order from his altogether of the good and the better and the best in the treatment of human nature."

But the applicants were often absolutely helpless. They might have near relations, however, able to assist, or their neighbours, touched by the sympathies which former acquaintance or felt proximity to distress beget, might be willing to aid.—In one district two young families were deserted by their parents. Had the children been taken at once upon the parochial funds, the unnatural purpose of the parents would have been promoted, and the parochial authorities would have become patrons of one of the worst of crimes. The families were

left to lie helplessly on the hands of the neighbourhood, the deacon meanwhile making every endeavour to detect the fugitives. One of the parents was discovered and brought back; the other, finding his object frustrated, voluntarily returned.—An old and altogether helpless man sought parish aid. It was ascertained that he had very near relatives living in affluence, to whom his circumstances were represented, and into whose unwilling hands, compelled to do their proper work, he was summarily committed.—Typhus fever made its deadly inroads into a weaver's family, who, though he had sixpence a day as a pensioner, was reduced to obvious and extreme distress. The case was reported to Dr. Chalmers, but no movement towards any sessional relief was made; entire confidence was cherished in the kind offices of the immediate neighbourhood. A cry, however, of neglect was raised; an actual investigation of what the man had received during the period of his distress was undertaken, and it was found that ten times more than any legal fund would have allowed him had been supplied willingly and without any sacrifice whatever to the offerers.—A mother and daughter, sole occupiers of a single room, were both afflicted with cancer, for which the one had to undergo an operation; the other was incurable. Nothing would have been easier than to have brought the liberalities of the rich to bear upon such a case; but this was rendered unnecessary by the willing contributions of food and service and cordials of those living around this habitation of distress. "Were it right," asks Dr.

Chalmers, " that any legal charity whatever should arrest a process so beautiful ? " " I never, during my whole experience in Glasgow, knew a single instance of distress which was not followed up by the most timely forthgoings of aid and of sympathy from the neighbours ; I could state a number of instances to that effect. I remember going into one of the deepest and most wretched recesses in all Glasgow, where a very appalling case of distress met my observation—that of a widow, whose two grown-up children had died within a day or two of each other. I remember distinctly seeing both their corpses on the same table : it was in my own parish. I was quite sure that such a case could not escape the observations of neighbours. I always liked to see what amount of kindness came spontaneously forth upon such occasions, and I was very much gratified to learn a few days after, that the immediate neighbours occupying that little alley or court laid together their little contributions, and got her completely over her Martinmas difficulties. I never found it otherwise, though I have often distinctly observed that whenever there was ostensible relief obtruded upon the eyes of the population, they did feel themselves discharged from a responsibility for each other's wants, and released from the duty of being one another's keepers ; and this particular case of distress met the observation of the Female Society at Glasgow, which Society bears upon the general population, and with a revenue of some hundreds a year, from which it can afford very little in each individual instance,

besides the impossibility of having that minute and thorough acquaintance with the cases that obtains under a local management. I remember having heard that a lady, an agent of that Society, went up stairs to relieve this widow, and gave all that the Female Society empowered her to give, which was just five shillings. The people observing this movement felt that the poor woman was in sufficient hands, and that they were now discharged from all further responsibility; so that the opening up of this ostensible source of relief closed up far more effectual sources that I am sure would never have failed her."

By patient inquiries imposture was thus detected, and the deserving and the undeserving poor were carefully distinguished from each other. By kindly counsel and temporary aid habits of industry and the spirit of self-reliance were fostered. By diligent application at all the natural and ordinary sources of relief, relations and friends and neighbours were stimulated to the fulfilment of obligations binding in themselves, and most beneficial to society in their discharge; and all this was done by men who held a far different kind of intercourse with the poor from that of the cold official, who, ignorant of everything but the application made, presents himself in no other than the repulsive attitude of rejecting it if he can, or reducing the allowance to its lowest limits. The St. John's deaconry—employed as it was to promote the education as well as to manage the indigence of the parish—mingling as it did familiarly with all the families, and prov-

ing itself, by word and deed, the true but enlightened friend of all, did far more to prevent pauperism than to provide for it.

The results of these operations during the three years and nine months that Dr. Chalmers personally presided over them was most striking and instructive. The whole number of new cases admitted on the roll was twenty, the annual cost of whose maintenance was £66. Of these twenty cases, however, one was that of a lunatic, one of a deaf and dumb person, two of illegitimate children, and three of families where the husband had run away, so that there were only thirteen admitted on the ground of general indigence, the yearly expense incurred on their behalf amounting to no more than £32.

The number of sessional poor (that is, of poor who had been on the session's roll of one or other of the three parishes from sections of which St. John's had been composed) originally committed to Dr. Chalmers, after deducting those transferred to the session of St. James's, was ninety-eight, of whom, in the course of the period above indicated, twenty-eight had died and thirteen had been displaced in consequence of a scrutiny, leaving thus fifty-seven on the roll, the cost of whose yearly maintenance was £190. Their prosperous financial condition induced the session of St. John's, in the second year of their operations, to take the whole of the Town Hospital paupers connected with their parish off that institution, involving themselves in an additional expense of £90 a year. So that all the old pauperism which had not originated under their management—and

which they had every reason to estimate as much larger than under that management it should have been—and all the new pauperism which had arisen was now managed at a yearly cost of £280. From one-tenth of the city, and that part composed of the poorest of its population, the whole flow of pauperism into the Town Hospital had been intercepted, and an expenditure which had amounted to £1,400 per annum was reduced to £280.

"By very many," says Dr. Chalmers, "our scheme was viewed with a hostility which proved to be relentless and persevering; and by many more, who looked to it with good-natured complacency, it was regarded as at best an airy, perhaps a beautiful idealism, the fond and sanguine speculation of a mere student, whose closet abstractions would never stand when brought into collision with the practical wisdom of practical men. We appeal to the still abiding recollection of more than twenty years back, if, mixed with no little derision and disdain, our proposal was not met with an incredulity which was all but universal.

It was sagely predicted at the outset of this experiment that it was sure to misgive, from the inability of any city parish of such a kind and extent of population to maintain its own poor from its own church-door collections. Nearly four years had now elapsed, and after defraying the expenses of all that they had originally undertaken, and assuming an additional annual burden of £90, the session of St. John's had £900 of surplus, of which, with the consent of the Magistrates and Council, £500 had

been appropriated for the perpetual endowment of one of their parochial schools. Such unbounded prosperity might be attributed to the singular liberality which Dr. Chalmers' ministrations had called forth, and to the large amount which his church-door collections annually realized. He was apprehensive from the beginning that his success might be attributed to such a cause, and it was partly because of this, and partly because he desired to deliver his deacons from the temptation which the command of large and expansive funds is apt to produce, that he intrusted them only with the pence of the poor—the small collection of £80, received from the evening congregation. And now the singular and significant result was held up before the eyes of the incredulous, that even with so small a sum as this all the pauperism of 10,000 people, emerging during the course of nearly four years, could be adequately met, if at the first rightly dealt with. But there was still another suggestion which, in anticipation of some appearance of success in an enterprise which they regarded as wholly Utopian, had been made at a very early stage by the opponents of the scheme. Dr. Chalmers, it was said, might succeed in reducing his pauper expenditure within sufficiently narrow limits by starving the poor out of his own parish and driving them into the parishes adjoining. So fully open was his eye to this objection, and so well grounded was his confidence that the actual result would be precisely the opposite of that which the objectors had anticipated, that the reader may have already noticed that in his letter

to the Lord Provost, Dr. Chalmers strongly urged that the free interchange then suffered between the poor of the different city parishes should cease, and that a law of residence, the same as that which subsisted between different country parishes, should be established between them. His impression was, that the poor themselves would be so much better pleased with a system which, while it would do nothing for the idle and the dissolute, brought human sympathy and kindness, and all friendly aids to industry into the dwellings of those who were in real want —that instead of an efflux out of his parish there would be an influx into it, or, to use his own phrase, his conviction was, that his imports would exceed his exports. And it remains as one out of many evidences of his practical sagacity and foresight that it turned out exactly as he had conjectured. At the beginning of March 1823, fifteen of the St. John's poor had removed to other parishes, and twenty-nine from other parishes had been received, the imports being thus about double the exports, a sum of £28 having thus been added to the natural and proper parochial expenditure.

Driven from their first positions, and forced by the evidence of figures to confess that a remarkable result had been realized, the opponents of the scheme now began to attribute it to the extraordinary eloquence and zeal of its author, and to the strenuous management of that select body of agents which he had gathered from all quarters of the city, and whom by his presence and his impulsive energy he had kept working at a rate of vigilant activity

altogether unprecedented. It would need, they said, another Dr. Chalmers, and another agency such as he only could assemble and inspire, to accomplish in any other parish a like result. It was in vain alleged by Dr. Chalmers that the result which had awakened such wonder was mainly attributable neither to him nor to his agency, but to the workings of nature's own simple mechanism, from which they had done little more than remove the encumbering check which had been laid upon it, so as to allow free scope for its own spontaneous evolutions. It was in vain that in proof of this he pointed to the unassessed suburb of the Gorbals,* where, upon a population of 20,000, as poor as any within the city, the whole annual expenditure for pauperism was £350, but which nevertheless was found to be in so much better a condition than the assessed districts to which it lay contiguous, that when in 1817 an extraordinary expenditure of £10,000, raised to meet the existing distress, came to be distributed, it was found that instead of requiring more this parish

* In 1819, in the Royalty of Glasgow (assessed) there was one pauper to every twenty-seven persons; in the Gorbals parish (unassessed) there was one pauper to every one hundred and seventy-eight persons. In the Royalty, supposing each person to pay an equal share of it, the sum expended on the poor amounted to three shillings and elevenpence halfpenny per head; in the Gorbals parish to *threepence halfpenny* per head. See Cleland's *Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the City of Glasgow*, etc., p. 33; Glasgow, 1820. It is curious to compare with this the information given in the Third Report of the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland, bearing date August 1848. It appears from this Report that in 1848 there was one pauper to every 11.51 of the population, and that the cost amounted to four shillings and a penny three-farthings per head.

required three or four times less than its own proportion of the sum. The idea had seized the public mind that some magic charm belonged to the chief operator and his chosen agents, by whom the parish of St. John's had been conducted to its existing condition;—and much *was* due to Dr. Chalmers, and much to his zealous band of coadjutors. It was his instinctive perception that much of the idleness and immorality of the lower classes was due to a legal security of support, and his strong intuitive faith in the power of a few primary principles of our nature to make a better provision for human want than law had made, which prompted him to try the experiment. And it was his singular power over others, both to convince and to inspirit, which surrounded him with fellow-workers without whose aid it could not have been successful. Great confidence in his wisdom was required. "At my first outset," says one of his agents, "in surveying my proportion, I found so many families, and even clusters of families, without any visible means of support, that I could hardly sleep at night thinking of their starving condition, but after more matured observation I found out secret springs of supply, and became more easy in my mind." In each deacon's first visitation of his district, in acquainting himself familiarly with all its families, in his inquiries and efforts connected with the education of all its children—in his thorough sifting of all cases of alleged want presented to him—in his firm refusal of all aid to the undeserving, much time and much energy were undoubtedly consumed. Still, however, it

was true that the main difficulty had lain, and the chief expenditure of strength had been put forth, in carrying the parish over that obstacle which the assessment had created. Once brought into the condition of an ordinary unassessed country parish, the management was very simple. From answers drawn up in reply to a series of questions put to them by Dr. Chalmers, it appears that the time spent by each of his deacons on the pauperism of the parish did not on an average exceed three hours a month. Even the forcing of the passage, arduous for the first adventurer and the gallant crew who accompanied him, was made comparatively easy for all who should come after, while, by the subdivision of parishes, the initial difficulties admitted of being indefinitely lessened. The public mind, however, remained unconvinced. The system had succeeded, it was said, in Dr. Chalmers' hands, but it would fail in any other. His removal from Glasgow in 1823 put this assertion fairly to trial. It would be seen when he had withdrawn how much of the success had been due to his presence and power. Instead of giving way and falling speedily to the ground, the system survived unhurt the shock of his departure as well as of the lengthened vacancy in the parish which ensued. His successor, the Rev. Dr. Macfarlane, has left us the following testimony as to the manner in which it wrought during his incumbency:—"The experience of sixteen months, during which I was minister of St. John's, confirmed the favourable opinion which I previously entertained of the system; it worked

well in all respects. With an income from collections not much exceeding £300, we kept down the pauperism of a parish containing a population of 10,000; and I know from actual observation that the poor were in better condition, and excepting the worthless and profligate who applied and were refused assistance, were more contented and happy than the poor in the other parishes of Glasgow. I was also agreeably disappointed at finding that Dr. Chalmers was not the only person having sufficient influence to obtain the aid of the respectable members of his congregation in administering the affairs of the poor; I had not the smallest difficulty in procuring a sufficient number of deacons for that purpose." In 1830, ten years from the commencement of the undertaking, Dr. Chalmers informed the Committee of the House of Commons, before which he was examined, that the whole annual expense of St. John's pauperism for the preceding year had been £384, or, deducting the expense for lunatics and for deserted children, which, owing to peculiar circumstances, had come to press heavily upon the parish, was £232. At the end of the year 1833 an English Poor Law Commissioner, E. C. Tufnell, Esq., visited Glasgow, and after careful inquiry as to the state of matters in St. John's, drew up a report, from which we take the following extract:—"This system has been attended with the most triumphant success; it is now in perfect operation, and not a doubt is expressed by its managers of its continuing to remain so. . . . Its chief virtue seems to consist in the closer investiga-

tion which each new case of pauperism receives, by which means the parish is prevented from being imposed on; and as it is well known by the poor that this severe scrutiny is never omitted, attempts at imposition are less frequently practised. The laxity of the old management and utility of this investigation may be exemplified by what occurred when it was first put in practice. As all the St. John's sessional poor were closely examined, it was thought unfair not to bring their outdoor hospital poor, which the old system had left, to the same scrutiny, when it was discovered that many persons were receiving relief who had no claim to it, and who were consequently instantly struck off the roll. One man was found in the receipt of a weekly allowance who had eight workmen under him. . . . In spite, however, of this success, the lovers of the old system still oppose the new as keenly as ever, and there seems to be as much difference of opinion in Glasgow at present respecting its merits as when it was first established. Amid these conflicting statements it would be presumptuous in a stranger to give an opinion, except so far as it is drawn from facts, and these, it seems, are all in favour of it. . . . The essence of the St. John's management consists in the superior system of inspection which it establishes; this is brought about by causing the applicants for aid to address themselves, in the first instance, to persons of station and character, whose sole parochial duty consists in examining into their condition, and who are always ready to pay a kind attention to their complaints. This personal

attention of the rich to the poor seems to be one of the most efficient modes of preventing pauperism. It is a subject of perpetual complaint that the poor do not receive the charities of the rich with gratitude. The reason of this appears to be that the donation of a few shillings from a rich man to a poor man is no subtraction from the giver's comforts, and consequently is no proof of his interest in the other's welfare. If the rich give their time to the poor, they part with a commodity which the poor see is valuable to the givers, and consequently esteem the attention the more, as it implies an interest in their prosperity; and a feeling seems to be engendered in their minds of unwillingness to press on the kindness of those who thus prove themselves ready to sympathize with them in distress, and to do their utmost to relieve it. This feeling acts as a spur to the exertions of the poor; their efforts to depend on their own resources are greater, and consequently the chance of their becoming dependent on the bounty of others less."

But though sufficient to elicit such a testimony from a stranger, thirteen years' experience of its success was not sufficient to obtain for this system the countenance and support of the civic authorities of Glasgow. From the very outset of the enterprise, there were two conditions laid down by Dr. Chalmers as essential to final and permanent success. The first was, that a law of residence should be established between the different parishes of the city. The equity of this was apparent, as otherwise a parish might to a great extent become burdened

with a pauperism which it had done nothing to create. The second condition was, that a parish which had ceased to receive from the assessment fund should be no longer forced to contribute to it; and in the case at least of such parishes as (like St. John's) saved the fund far more than they yielded to it, the equity of this condition was equally clear. Though urgently pressed, neither of these conditions was acceded to. The St. John's deaconry were burdened with a load not of their own making, which it was peculiarly irksome to bear; and their parish, having cost the city nothing for so many years, had to contribute its share to the central fund. The required conditions remaining unfulfilled, all public countenance being withheld, their expenditure for lunatics and exposed children growing upon them at a much greater rate than the population of their parish, and the funds of a chapel with which their pauper management was implicated falling into an unprosperous condition, it did not surprise Dr. Chalmers that the managers of St. John's should finally, in 1837, have voluntarily relinquished their office, and suffered their parish to lapse into the general system of Glasgow. That intelligent and devoted member of this management, to whom in later years, and after long experience of his ability and zeal, Dr. Chalmers was in the habit of specially referring in all matters connected with St. John's, informed him "that as the scheme did not receive the countenance which we all thought it well deserved, both from the authorities and the sessions generally, we were discouraged, and did

give it up. At the same time, we were all satisfied that it was a scheme quite practicable even in St. John's, increased as it was in population from 8,000 to 12,000, and had proved this to a demonstration after eighteen years' experience." It did, however, both surprise and grieve Dr. Chalmers exceedingly to find that under such circumstances the voluntary relinquishment of an enterprise, hampered and discouraged throughout, should be publicly held up and generally regarded as a conspicuous evidence of its failure; and that those whose very want of faith in its success had contributed so largely to the relinquishment should plead that relinquishment as a justification of their want of faith. It endured, through all vicissitudes, for eighteen years. The accounts of its receipts and disbursements throughout this period show that its whole expenditure on pauperism was upwards of a thousand pounds less than the produce of the church-door collections; that if the expense for lunatics and foundlings and illegitimate children and the families of runaway parents be deducted, the balance in favour of the experiment amounts to upwards of £2,000; that never in any year was there a pauper expenditure higher than at the rate of £50 for each thousand, and that the average expenditure for the eighteen years was at the rate of £30 for each thousand of the population. I shall have occasion hereafter to refer to the general question of poor-laws and pauper management, but I cannot close this account of the triumphant experiment of St. John's without saying that if Glasgow had but

received the lesson which upwards of thirty years ago was given to her—had she promoted the scheme which was executed under her own eyes, and within her own domain—had those feeble imitations of the operations of St. John's which were commenced in others of her parishes been fostered into maturity, instead of being allowed, as they were, to wither into decay and extinction—had her unwieldy parishes been broken up, and her intelligent citizens been invited, under public patronage, to follow in the track which the deaconry of Dr. Chalmers had opened up—the cost of her present pauperism, instead of the enormous sum of £120,000, might have stood at the moderate sum of £12,000 *—more than £100,000 a year would have been saved to her, whilst her poor would have been better cared for; and her citizens, engaged to such extent in kindly offices among them, would have linked all classes of her community together in closer and blander ties. The instructive example, however, was not followed. A policy directly the reverse of that counselled by Dr. Chalmers was pursued—the voluntary mode of exercising charity was discountenanced—the legalized mode of enforcing it was favoured, till the assessed finally swallowed up all the unassessed parishes. The different boards established under the recent Poor-law have diligently carried out

* Estimating the present population of Glasgow at 400,000, and taking the rate at which, for eighteen years, the poor were supported in St. John's—namely £30 per 1000 of the population—the whole expenditure would amount to £12,000. The actual expenditure, supposing it to be reduced to £100,000, is at the rate of £250 for each thousand.

the principle and spirit of that Act, with the result, that during the last ten years the cost of pauperism has increased in a twenty-fold higher ratio than the population,* amounting for one year to the enormous sum of £150,000. In the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1822, when engaged in his first public explanation and defence of St. John's operations, and when threatened with a measure which would have driven him back upon his course, Dr. Chalmers said, "Do with the first adventurer what you will—order him back again to the place from which he had departed—compel his bark out of its present secure and quiet landing-place, or let her be scuttled if you so choose, and sunk to the bottom; still, not to magnify our doings, but to illustrate them, we must remind you that the discovery survives the loss of the discovery ship; for if discovery it must be called, the discovery has been made—a safe and easy navigation has been ascertained from the charity of law to the charity of kindness; and, therefore, be it now reviled, or be it now disregarded as it may, we have no doubt upon our spirits, whether we look to the depraving pauperism or to the burdened agriculture of our land, that the days are soon coming when men, looking for a way of escape from these sore evils, will be glad to own our enterprise, and be fain to follow it."

* Dr. R. Buchanan, after giving the cost of pauperism in Glasgow as it stood in 1840 and 1849, adds, "It thus appears, that, while the population had increased between August 1840 and May 1849 about 20 per cent., the cost of pauperism had, during the same interval, increased about 430 per cent."—See *The Schoolmaster in the Wynds; or, How to Educate the Masses.* Glasgow, 1850.

CONCLUSION.

TWO forces led to the abandonment of the ecclesiastical management of the poor in Scotland and the general establishment of a compulsory assessment. The first was the able, persistent, and long continued advocacy of public relief by Dr. Alison, Professor of the Institutes of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh. Dr. Alison was widely known and greatly esteemed as a philanthropist, and as one who had an intimate knowledge of the poor. He was convinced and convinced many others that, apart from St. John's and the few parishes which had adopted Dr. Chalmers' system, the Church management had proved itself insufficient to grapple with the needs of the poor—not only in the large centres of population, but in the country districts. On his initiative an association was formed in Edinburgh to induce the Government to pass a Poor Law Bill in Scotland similar to the English Act. Dr. Alison argued that the terrible havoc periodically made at that time in Scotland by fever was due not so much to the want of proper drainage, and to the wretched housing and overcrowding, as to the low physical condition of the people, caused by extreme poverty.

The second force was the Disruption of the Church

of Scotland in 1843, when more than half the ministers left the Established Church and formed themselves into the Free Church, owing to the refusal of Parliament to grant the Established Church that spiritual independence which was claimed as a right. As we have noticed, Dr. Chalmers led the Disruption party, and thus shattered the instrument by which he had repelled, and hoped to continue to repel, the general adoption into Scotland of an assessment for the maintenance of the poor. There is no more remarkable testimony to the influence of Chalmers than the fact that he should have been able to prevent the introduction of a new Poor Law into Scotland for so many years. The growing number of dissenting Churches, the failure of the Church to answer to his initiative, the pressure from outside associations, and the ever-present inclination of Parliament to assimilate the laws of the two countries united in making a new Poor Law inevitable.

In 1843 Parliament appointed a Royal Commission to take evidence on the relief of the poor in Scotland; and in 1845 the new Poor Law Act was passed, and that Act, with very little amendment, still remains in force. By the Act of 1845, power was given to establish a Parochial Board, consisting of heritors and elected ratepayers, in every parish. Provision was made for the appointment of an Inspector of Poor; and the whole were under the control of a Government Board of Supervision. Since 1894 all members of Parish Councils are elected by the ratepayers.

In Glasgow the advent of the new Act caused a great upheaval. Poor people of all kinds thought they were now provided for life. One thousand to thirteen hundred individuals besieged the office each day of the week, demanding relief, hundreds of them waiting till midnight before their cases could be examined. The sight of such a multitude was deplorable, consisting as it did of all kinds of characters—the aged, the infirm, the drunkard and idler, children in arms and at the feet, all mixed up in one motley multitude. Pauperism in the city increased at the rate of 10,000 a year, and this at a time when employment was good, provisions cheap, and the general health quite ordinary. This lapse from the principle of independence and self-reliance was greatly augmented by a rush of people from Ireland, who thought the new poor rate had turned Glasgow into an "El Dorado." In the month of January 1847 no fewer than 4,541 Irish people were relieved. In the following month the number rose to 6,000. Before the new Act the assessment in Glasgow amounted to £11,000. In 1847 it was £48,000, and in the following year it rose to £90,000. An assessment of 1s. 9d. per pound was insufficient to meet the needs of the poor, and an extra levy of 6d. per pound had to be made. The finances of the parish broke down under the strain. In 1850 the arrears of rates amounted to £53,000, and the inspector reported that he was without funds to pay the poor.

In 1850 the poor enrolled numbered 23,000. All attempts to reduce this artificial pauperism by refusing relief in certain cases were frustrated by a

misguided outside association, which was imbued with the delusion that poverty could be banished by public relief, and which engaged a lawyer to appeal to the sheriff in cases of refusal; each appeal costing the parish 14s. The Parochial Board, however, ultimately obtained command of the situation by offering admission to the poor-house in all unsuitable cases, and, as the sheriff had no jurisdiction under such an offer, the number of paupers sank in a few years to between 5,000 and 6,000, which was considered normal.*

In Scotland pauperism rose gradually till 1868, when it reached its high-water mark. In that year the outdoor sane poor, including dependents, numbered 121,647, and the indoor poor 8,794, making together a pauperism of 40 per thousand of the population; while on the last year published—1911—the figures for outdoor poor are 76,426, and for indoor poor 13,761, or a pauperism of 19 per thousand of population. The lunatics chargeable in 1868 were 5,790, or 1.8 per thousand of population; while in 1911 the number had risen to 16,064, or 3.3 per thousand of population. It will be noticed that these figures show a considerable and gratifying fall in the number of outdoor poor, but any congratulation is checked by the knowledge that, since 1893, there has been an almost steady increase, as in that year the number was 72,178.

Confining our observation to ordinary pauperism, we see that in the last forty years the number of poor-house inmates has increased 87 per cent. This might

* Dempster's *Parochial Law*.

be explained by the increase in the population; but the tables show that, between 1868 and 1891, there were slight fluctuations, till in the latter year the number fell to 8,160; so that since 1891 there has been an increase of 69 per cent. in the number of poor-house inmates. This increase is accounted for, partly, by the fact that, since 1891, the system of trained nursing has come largely into vogue, and many of our poor-houses have become auxiliaries, if not rivals, of our infirmaries. It may also be that the new and splendid buildings, which have of late years been erected at a cost per bed greatly exceeding what can be afforded by well-to-do people for their private houses, and the improved comfort, have become sources of attraction.

One phase of Poor Law relief which parish councils take great pride in is the boarding out of orphan children. For many years it has been the custom to send these children to the country to board in families till they are ready for work, and good results have been obtained in the way of rescuing them from slum life. The houses they are sent to are, as a rule, the homes of the labouring and crofting class, where one or two extra children in the household are not felt an added burden, as the chief staples of food are grown on the premises, while the allowance for aliment helps materially towards paying the rent. Occasionally an application may be received and entertained for the adoption of a child, but this way of bringing up these children has never been advocated. Families in good circumstances will not, as a rule, apply for children as boarders from the parish.

There must, however, be multitudes of people all over the country who could be readily persuaded to adopt the best of these children. This practice is prevalent in America. If it became prevalent here it would make a great difference in the lives of the children. Their upbringing would be better. They would start their working life on a higher plane, and their after life would be free from the reflection that they had been brought up by the parish. In the days to come, when a serious attempt is made to free our respectable poor from the degrading influence of pauperism, a pleasant duty will be the absorption of these children into the home life of the nation.

More than sixty years have passed since the new Poor Law was introduced into Scotland, and again a Royal Commission has been taking evidence and has issued a Report on its operation, and has made proposals for its amendment. Confining our observations chiefly to the question of outdoor relief, we find that the commissioners are of opinion that the administration of it has shown glaring defects. There has been a tendency in many quarters for authorities to grant relief without proper inquiry or discrimination or oversight.

All the evil predicted by Dr. Chalmers as likely to result from the general adoption of a public provision of outdoor relief has been amply verified. The spirit of independence among the poor has been seriously undermined; family patriotism has to a large extent been destroyed; the old helpful relationships of friends and neighbours have been greatly interrupted; while the Church, which formerly ac-

cepted the chief responsibility for the care of the poor, shows now a frequent anxiety to have its poor put on the parish roll.

On the other hand, it cannot be claimed that the ever-increasing sums spent on outdoor relief have yielded satisfaction or met the need as was anticipated. Applicants cannot be roughly divided into two classes of good and bad. The gradations of character are numerous, and it is really difficult to discriminate. It is in the very nature of public relief that discontent flows from its acceptance. No matter what aliment is given, there is a strong tendency for recipients and their friends to believe that it ought to be larger. This feeling constantly finds expression in a demand for a larger expenditure, and it, and also the principle of public relief, have reached their logical conclusion in the Minority Report of the Royal Commission, recently issued.

This demand for expansion has been met by a plea for the abolition of outdoor relief on the part of the most thoughtful and experienced minds that have given the problem serious consideration.* It has been shown that the most lavish expenditure has had no effect in diminishing poverty, but has seduced people from the ranks of independence. On the other hand, where outdoor relief has been greatly restricted or abolished, it has been proved that the equivalents relied on by Dr. Chalmers have been sufficient, and that the economic condition of a dis-

* W. Chance, *The Better Administration of the Poor Law;* Thomas Mackay, *Public Relief of the Poor;* J. R. Prettyman, *Dispauperisation;* Henry Fawcett, *Pauperism.*

trict has improved. Periodically, official warnings have been issued by the Local Government Board to parish authorities that their action in the direction of outdoor relief was proving a serious danger to the country at large. In 1869, when Mr. Goschen was in charge of the Local Government Board of England, he had to call attention to the alarming increase of pauperism, owing to the readiness with which outdoor relief was granted in that country; and the result was a general policy of restriction. Two striking verifications of Chalmers' experience are found in the action of the unions of Whitechapel and Bradfield. In the former the policy of abolishing outdoor relief was begun in 1870, in which year there were 5,339 on that roll. To-day, outdoor relief is practically discontinued, and it is found that organized voluntary agencies are sufficient to grapple with ordinary indigence. In Bradfield, an outdoor pauperism of 999 in 1870 has been practically abolished without any ill effects.

Where a policy of restricting outdoor relief has been pursued, it did not follow that people entered the workhouse in greater numbers. It has rather been proved that a lavish and indiscriminate administration of outdoor relief has generally been accompanied by increased admissions to institutions. It would thus appear that any weakening of the belief that there is an ability in the poor to be independent of public relief is followed by a growing dependence on such help in every possible direction.

It should be borne in mind that Chalmers held that there was no danger in an assessment for institutional

poor, but only for the general indigent, or outside poor. He argued that people would not enter hospitals unless they required to do so; but that on the other hand it was impossible to give outside relief without destroying personal and social habits, which, if left to themselves or properly developed, were sufficient to render poor people independent of a poor rate.

The commissioners had before them the experience of these English unions. They had also submitted to them a long and sympathetic account of Dr. Chalmers' principles and scheme of St. John's, which they print in their report for Scotland.

Mr. Motion, Inspector of Poor, Glasgow, gave evidence to the effect that, in his opinion, existing charitable agencies were sufficient to meet the requirements of the outdoor poor.* The commissioners were not prepared, however, to recommend the abolition of outdoor relief. They did not think that the glaring defects which were shown to accompany outdoor relief were inseparable from the system, but that they were largely due to bad administration; and so they propose to alter the administration.

Borrowing from Germany, they propose to graft on to our State system the principle of voluntary aid committees, which were introduced into that country by a relative of Dr. Chalmers, in imitation of the St. John's scheme. It is suggested that the funds belonging to the endowed charities, and other voluntary funds, should be at the disposal of the

* Evidence, p. 246.

voluntary committees, and should be the first bulwark to withstand the assault of applicants for outdoor relief. Should these funds be insufficient, public rates are to be available, not only for the chronic cases of pauperism, but also to supplement the resources of the Voluntary Committees, in dealing with outdoor relief in its initial stages.

There is to be a very strict inquiry into all applications, and a more constant supervision than at present. The present parish councils are to be for the most part swept away; and in their place new burgh and county boards of administration are to be substituted, in the hope that a new board of management will be able to turn its back on old methods and errors of administration. It is believed that this will be a cheaper process than that presently in vogue, and that better results will ensue.

The weakness of this scheme lies in the power of these voluntary committees to rely on the support of the rates to an indefinite extent. There would be a strong tendency for private contributions to decrease, and for an ever-increasing dependence on State aid. This has been strikingly manifested in the matter of Distress Committee work. Before the passing of the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 it was customary for communities to meet distress, during periods of exceptional unemployment, by voluntary contributions. It was specified in the Act that these contributions were still to be depended on, but the rates were to be used in supplementation.

In 1909 the Poor Law Commissioners report on

this Act as follows: "Charitable contributions have practically ceased; and a further object-lesson has been afforded of the truth that the charitable public will not easily or largely contribute towards purposes for which money is compulsorily taken from them by means of rates or taxes."

In this dual dependence on charity and rates, proposed by the commissioners, they have lost sight of their own finding in regard to the relief of distress—that, if you appeal to the pity or superfluity of the public with the support of the rates behind, charity immediately dries up.

There is also a material difference in the plan of operation proposed by the commissioners and that of the deacons of St. John's. The former are recognised chiefly, if not solely, as the official dispensers of public charity. Chalmers' deacon was in charge of a limited district. He knew the circumstances of each family; took an interest in their welfare; was their adviser and friend, and finally, if they required assistance, he saw that they obtained it from a voluntary source.

The minority reporters of the Royal Commission have come nearer Chalmers' ideal, and at the same time gone further from it. They practically recommend a forcible inspection of every home, for the purpose of providing every one with an economic sufficiency at the cost of the rates. This claim to relieve, not destitution, but poverty, by public doles is perhaps the most startling proposal that has been made in the history of economics; and one cannot see how it can be carried out, except at such

a cost as would bring the country to the financial condition of England in 1833.

These drastic proposals are in a sense a severe censure on our present economic condition.

Chalmers held that it was for the State to enact just laws, and that charity was the province of the individual. This is a dictum which should receive the earnest consideration of all who are interested in social betterment, especially of those who represent labour.

It is, beyond question, better for a nation and for the labouring classes if the laws are such that working people can easily attain economic sufficiency by their own efforts, than that such should be attempted by an elaborate and costly system of State relief; and working-men should view with aversion any system of relief which will have the tendency of delaying that economic evolution through which true progress can alone be made. Nor should Chalmers' declaration be forgotten that there is no hope of any emergence from the slough of pauperism and poverty apart from a radical improvement in the moral habits of the people.

Chalmers' appeal was to the Church to take up this moral and social crusade on behalf of the working-classes. In his day dissent was new, and Churches thought mostly of their points of difference. The spirit of social service was also weak and undeveloped. To-day, Churches are thinking chiefly of their points of agreement; and there is a general movement in favour of union; while social service has become a science, supported by books and periodicals and congresses.

The Church has borne a great part in this social warfare. It has inspired all movements of social amelioration. There is a tendency in some of these agencies to adopt an attitude of lukewarmness and even of hostility towards the Church, forgetting the rock from which they were hewn.

The Poor Law is again in the balance; and it is the duty of every one with experience or responsibility in the matter of the care of the poor to consider what new course should be adopted.

No one has spoken on this question with such intimate knowledge, such clear intelligence and compassion, as Dr. Chalmers, and it is with the hope that his words will not be without an audience at this critical time that these pages are printed.

THE END.

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