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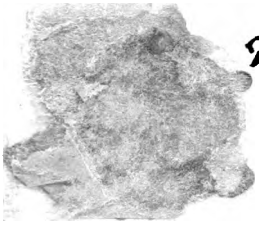

J. Dalton.

# READINGS

IN

# FORS CLAVIGERA

# READINGS

IN

## JOHN RUSKIN'S

# FORS CLAVIGERA

1871–1884

*THIRD THOUSAND*

LONDON
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# PREFACE

THIS series of passages from 'Fors Clavigera' has been compiled with the aim of opening its message to all sorts and conditions of men for whom it may be practically inaccessible by reason of its difficulty, length, and costliness. The workers here addressed, and many genuine students of the master, are often poor, unleisured, unlettered. They are the "little ones" of wisdom; they have not won strength to overcome, patience to endure, power to rule fortune, like the three 'Fors' heroes.

And those readers also within whose reach the whole book lies, may, like myself, find much advantage in having its essential and permanent elements sifted, separated, and summed up, and so made to stand out in stronger relief. If ever selection is to be justified, surely it is here. The ninety-six Letters cover a period of thirteen years (1871–1884), and deal with an immense range of subjects and interests; they were written in many places and many moods, sometimes under severest strain, and composed in a style which holds the solid purpose of the author, as it were, in solution, while they are still further complicated by the practical experiment in which he sought to embody his scheme of social reform. It is a literature rather than a book, the 'Confessions' of a man of genius as well as 'Letters to Workmen.' All these strange characteristics constitute its rare

quality and charm for lovers of literature and of the master, but we cannot afford to relegate this unique work to the curious in things literary or the undiscriminating 'Ruskinian.' The influence of Ruskin's life and work culminates in his social teaching, and of that teaching 'Fors Clavigera' is the crown and climax. It completes his development from the art-critic to the critic of life, drawing to a focus his radiant wisdom and the Christ-like love of men, which

"White of heat, awakes to flame."

Without it the student cannot thoroughly grasp his system, nor perceive the unity underlying his life, thought, and conduct. And above all, this—the last of his five chief works, as he himself counts them—is indispensable for the workers and the thinkers, those who are in travail for that new birth of society of which it is at once a prophecy and a sign.

I have tried to set aside everything except the directly ethical or social teaching, to keep on the whole to principles, avoiding applications and illustrations; the story of St. George's Company, and much besides of deep interest or beauty, is therefore passed over. But this little volume does not claim to represent the cream of the bowl; its purpose will best be fulfilled if the nature of its contents—fragmentary though 'more golden than gold'—should make the reader go seek for himself in the treasury out of which they have been collected.

CAROLINE A. WURTZBURG.

SCARBOROUGH, *July* 1899.

# CONTENTS



## SECTIONS

### I. PRELIMINARY



### II. ETHIC

## III. ECONOMIC



## IV. DIDACTIC

## THE ST. GEORGE'S CREED

I. I trust in the Living God, Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things and creatures visible and invisible.

I trust in the kindness of His law, and the goodness of His work.

And I will strive to love Him, and keep His law, and see His work, while I live.

II. I trust in the nobleness of human nature, in the majesty of its faculties, the fulness of its mercy, and the joy of its love.

And I will strive to love my neighbour as myself, and, even when I cannot, will act as if I did.

III. I will labour, with such strength and opportunity as God gives me, for my own daily bread; and all that my hand finds to do, I will do with my might.

IV. I will not deceive, or cause to be deceived, any human being for my gain or pleasure; nor hurt, or cause to be hurt, any human being for my gain or pleasure; nor rob, or cause to be robbed, any human being for my gain or pleasure.

V. I will not kill nor hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing, but will strive to save and comfort all gentle life, and guard and perfect all natural beauty, upon the earth.

VI. I will strive to raise my own body and soul daily into higher powers of duty and happiness; not in rivalship or contention with others, but for the help, delight, and honour of others, and for the joy and peace of my own life.

VII. I will obey all the laws of my country faithfully; and the orders of its monarch, and of all persons appointed to be in authority under its monarch, so far as such laws or commands are consistent with what I suppose to be the law of God; and when they are not, or seem in anywise to need change, I will oppose them loyally and deliberately, not with malicious, concealed, or disorderly violence.

VIII. And with the same faithfulness, and under the limits of the same obedience, which I render to the laws of my country, and the commands of its rulers, I will obey the laws of the Society called of St. George, into which I am this day received; and the orders of its masters, and of all persons appointed to be in authority under its masters, so long as I remain a Companion, called of St. George. (*Letter* 58.)

# I

# PRELIMINARY

# I.—PRELIMINARY

## PASSAGES 1–5

# READINGS IN
# FORS CLAVIGERA

## I
## PRELIMINARY

### 1. The Social State.

I have listened to many ingenious persons, who say we are better off now than ever we were before. I do not know how well off we were before; but I know positively that many very deserving persons of my acquaintance have great difficulty in living under these improved circumstances: also, that my desk is full of begging letters, eloquently written either by distressed or dishonest people; and that we cannot be called, as a nation, well off, while so many of us are either living in honest or in villainous beggary.

For my own part, I will put up with this state of things, passively, not an hour longer. I am not an unselfish person, nor an Evangelical one; I have no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, when

there is any—which is seldom, now-a-days, near London—has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of, where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly. (*Letter* 1.)

## 2. The Author's Purpose.

None of my readers must think of me as setting myself up either for a champion or a leader. If they will look back to the first letter of this book, they will find it is expressly written to quit myself of public responsibility in pursuing my private work. Its purpose is to state clearly what must be done by all of us, as we can, in our place; and to fulfil what duty I personally acknowledge to the State; also I have promised, if I live, to show some example of what I know to be necessary, if no more able person will show it first. That is a very different thing from pretending to leadership in a movement which must one day be as wide as the world. Nay, even my marching days may perhaps soon be over, and the best that I can make of myself be a faithful signpost. But what I am, or what I fail to be, is of no moment to the cause. The two facts which I have to teach, or sign, though alone, as it seems, at present, in the signature, that food can only be got out of the ground, and happiness only out of honesty, are not altogether dependent on any one's championship, for recognition among mankind. (*Letter* 30.)

The current and continual purpose of Fors Clavigera is to explain the powers of Chance, or Fortune (Fors), as she offers to men the conditions of

prosperity; and as these conditions are accepted or refused, nails down and fastens their fate for ever, being thus 'Clavigera,'—'nail-bearing.' The image is one familiar in mythology: my own conception of it was first got from Horace, and developed by steady effort to read history with impartiality, and to observe the lives of men around me with charity. "How you may make your fortune, or mar it," is the expansion of the title.

Certain authoritative conditions of life, of its happiness, and its honour, are therefore stated, in this book, as far as they may be, conclusively and indisputably, at present known. I do not enter into any debates, nor advance any opinions. With what is debateable I am unconcerned; and when I only have opinions about things, I do not talk about them. I attack only what cannot on any possible ground be defended; and state only what I know to be incontrovertibly true.

You will find, as you read Fors more, that it differs curiously from most modern books in this. Modern fashion is, that the moment a man strikes some little lucifer match, or is hit by any form of fancy, he begins advertising his lucifer match, and fighting for his fancy, totally ignoring the existing sunshine, and the existing substances of things. But I have no matches to sell, no fancies to fight for. All that I have to say is that the day is in heaven, and rock and wood on earth, and that you must see by the one, and work with the other. You have heard as much before, perhaps. I hope you have; I should be ashamed if there were anything in Fors which had not been said before,—and that a thousand times,

and a thousand times of times,—there is nothing in it, nor ever will be in it, but common truths, as clear to honest mankind as their daily sunrise, as necessary as their daily bread; and which the fools who deny can only live, themselves, because other men know and obey. (*Letter* 43.)

Throughout every syllable of Fors hitherto written, the reader will find one consistent purpose, and perfectly conceived system, far more deeply founded than any bruited about under their founders' names; including in its balance one vast department of human skill,—the arts,—which the vulgar economists are wholly incapable of weighing; and a yet more vast realm of human enjoyment—the spiritual affections,—which materialist thinkers are alike incapable of imagining: a system not mine, nor Kant's, nor Comte's;—but that which Heaven has taught every true man's heart, and proved by every true man's work, from the beginning of time to this day.

I use the word 'Heaven' here in an absolutely literal sense, meaning the blue sky, and the light and air of it. Men who live in that light,—"in pure sunshine, not under mixed-up shade,"—and whose actions are open as the air, always arrive at certain conditions of moral and practical loyalty, which are wholly independent of religious opinion. These, it has been the first business of Fors to declare. Whether there be one God or three,—no God, or ten thousand,—children should have enough to eat, and their skins should be washed clean. It is not *I* who say that. Every mother's heart under the sun says that, if she has one.

Again, whether there be saints in Heaven or not,

as long as its stars shine on the sea, and the thunnies swim there—every fisherman who drags a net ashore is bound to say to as many human creatures as he can, 'Come and dine.' And the fishmongers who destroy their fish by cartloads that they may make the poor pay dear for what is left, ought to be flogged round Billingsgate, and out of it. It is not *I* who say that. Every man's heart on sea and shore says that—if he isn't at heart a rascal. Whatever is dictated in Fors is dictated thus by common sense, common equity, common humanity, and common sunshine—not by me.

But farther. I have just now used the word 'Heaven' in a nobler sense also: meaning, Heaven and our Father therein.

And beyond the power of its sunshine, which all men may know, Fors has declared also the power of its Fatherhood,—which only some men know, and others do not,—and, except by rough teaching, may not. For the wise of all the earth have said in their hearts always, "God is, and there is none beside Him;" and the fools of all the earth have said in their hearts always, "I am, and there is none beside me."

Therefore, beyond the assertion of what is visibly salutary, Fors contains also the assertion of what is invisibly salutary, or salvation-bringing, in Heaven, to all men who will receive such health: and beyond this an invitation—passing gradually into an imperious call—to all men who trust in God, that they purge their conscience from dead works, and join together in work separated from the fool's; pure, undefiled, and worthy of Him they trust in. (*Letter* 88.)

## 3. "Fors Clavigera."

'Fors' is the best part of three good English words, Force, Fortitude, and Fortune. I wish you to know the meaning of those three words accurately.

'Force' (in humanity) means power of doing good work. A fool, or a corpse, can do any quantity of mischief; but only a wise and strong man, or, with what true vital force there is in him, a weak one, can do good.

'Fortitude' means the power of bearing necessary pain, or trial of patience, whether by time, or temptation.

'Fortune' means the necessary fate of a man: the ordinance of his life which cannot be changed. To 'make your Fortune' is to rule that appointed fate to the best ends of which it is capable.

Fors is a feminine word; and Clavigera is, therefore, the feminine of 'Claviger.'

Clava means a club. Clavis, a key. Clavus, a nail, or a rudder.

Gero means 'I carry.' It is the root of our word 'gesture' (the way you carry yourself); and, in a curious bye-way, of 'jest.'

Clavigera may mean, therefore, either Club-bearer, Key-bearer, or Nail-bearer.

Each of these three possible meanings of Clavigera corresponds to one of the three meanings of Fors.

Fors, the Club-bearer, means the strength of Hercules, or of Deed.

Fors, the Key-bearer, means the strength of Ulysses, or of Patience.

Fors, the Nail-bearer, means the strength of Lycurgus, or of Law.

I will tell you what you may usefully know of those three Greek persons in a little time. At present, note only of the three powers: 1. That the strength of Hercules is for deed, not misdeed; and that his club—the favourite weapon, also, of the Athenian hero Theseus, whose form is the best inheritance left to us by the greatest of Greek sculptors, (it is in the Elgin room of the British Museum, and I shall have much to tell you of him—especially how he helped Hercules in his utmost need, and how he invented mixed vegetable soup)—was for subduing monsters and cruel persons, and was of olive-wood. 2. That the Second Fors Clavigera is portress at a gate which she cannot open till you have waited long; and that her robe is of the colour of ashes, or dry earth. 3. That the third Fors Clavigera, the power of Lycurgus, is Royal as well as Legal; and that the notablest crown yet existing in Europe of any that have been worn by Christian kings, was—people say—made of a Nail. (*Letter* 2.)

## 4. Putting Things to Rights.

Do you know any honest men who have a will of their own, among your neighbours? If none, set yourself to seek for such; if any, commune with them on this one subject, how a man may have sight of the Earth he was made of, and his bread out of the dust of it—and peace! And find out what it is that hinders you now from having these, and resolve that you will fight it, and put end to it.

If you cannot find out for yourselves, tell me your difficulties, briefly, and I will deal with them for you, as the Second Fors may teach me. Bring you the First with you, and the Third will help us. (*Letter* 16.)

Have you thought, as I prayed you to think, during the days of April, what things they are that will hinder you from being happy on this first of May? Be assured of it, you are meant, to-day, to be as happy as the birds, at least. If you are not, you, or somebody else, or something that you are one or other responsible for, is wrong; and your first business is to set yourself, them, or it, to rights. Of late you have made that your last business; you have thought things would right themselves, or that it was God's business to right them, not yours. Peremptorily it is yours. Not, observe, to get your rights, but to put things to rights. Some eleven in the dozen of the population of the world are occupied earnestly in putting things to wrongs, thinking to benefit themselves thereby. Is it any wonder, then, you are uncomfortable, when already the world, in our part of it, is over-populated, and eleven in the dozen of the over-population doing diligently wrong; and the remaining dozenth expecting God to do their work for them; and consoling themselves with buying two-shilling publications for eighteenpence?

To put things to rights! Do you not know how refreshing it is, even to put one's room to rights, when it has got dusty and decomposed? If no other happiness is to be had, the mere war with decomposition is a kind of happiness. But the war with the Lord of Decomposition, the old Dragon himself, —St. George's war, with a princess to save, and win—

are none of you, my poor friends, proud enough to hope for any part in that battle? (*Letter* 17.)

## 5. The Key-stone.

In rough approximation of date nearest to the completion of the several pieces of my past work, as they are built one on the other,—at twenty, I wrote 'Modern Painters'; at thirty, 'The Stones of Venice'; at forty, 'Unto this Last'; at fifty, the Inaugural Oxford lectures; and—if 'Fors Clavigera' is ever finished as I mean—it will mark the mind I had at sixty; and leave me in my seventh day of life, perhaps—to rest. For the code of all I had to teach will then be, in form, as it is at this hour, in substance, completed. 'Modern Painters' taught the claim of all lower nature on the hearts of men; of the rock, and wave, and herb, as a part of their necessary spirit life; in all that I now bid you to do, to dress the earth and keep it, I am fulfilling what I then began.

The 'Stones of Venice' taught the laws of constructive Art, and the dependence of all human work or edifice, for its beauty, on the happy life of the workman. 'Unto this Last' taught the laws of that life itself, and its dependence on the Sun of Justice: the Inaugural Oxford lectures, the necessity that it should be led, and the gracious laws of beauty and labour recognized, by the upper, no less than the lower, classes of England; and lastly 'Fors Clavigera' has declared the relation of these to each other, and the only possible conditions of peace and honour, for low and high, rich and poor, together, in the holding

of that first Estate, under the only Despot, God, from which whoso falls, angel or man, is kept, not mythically nor disputably, but here in visible horror of chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day: and in keeping which service is perfect freedom, and inheritance of all that a loving Creator can give to His creatures, and an immortal Father to His children. (*Letter* 78.)

# II

# ETHIC

## II.—ETHIC

### PASSAGES 6–35

## II

## ETHIC

### 6. The Three Powers.

You shall consider with me what you can do, or let me, if still living, tell you what I know you can do—those of you, at least, who will promise—(with the help of the three strong Fates), these three things:

1. To do your own work well, whether it be for life or death.

2. To help other people at theirs, when you can, and seek to avenge no injury.

3. To be sure you can obey good laws before you seek to alter bad ones. (*Letter* 2.)

I. You are to do good work, whether you live or die. It may be you will have to die;—well, men have died for their country often, yet doing her no good; be ready to die for her in doing her assured good: her, and all other countries with her. Mind your own business with your absolute heart and soul; but see that it is a good business first.

II. Seek to revenge no injury. You see now—do not you—a little more clearly why I wrote that? what strain there is on the untaught masses of you to revenge themselves, even with insane fire?

Alas, the Taught masses are strained enough also;—have you not just seen a great religious and reformed nation, with its goodly Captains,—philosophical, sentimental, domestic, evangelical-angelical-minded altogether, and with its Lord's Prayer really quite vital to it,—come and take its neighbour nation by the throat, saying, "Pay me that thou owest"?

Seek to revenge no injury: I do not say, seek to punish no crime: look what I hinted about failed bankers. Of that hereafter.

III. Learn to obey good laws; and in a little while you will reach the better learning—how to obey good Men, who are living, breathing, unblinded law; and to subdue base and disloyal ones, recognizing in these the light, and ruling over those in the power, of the Lord of Light and Peace, whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and His Kingdom from generation to generation. (*Letter* 7.)

## 7. "Good Work"—God's Work.

1. You are to do good work, whether you live or die, . . . for if Man be made in God's image, much more is Man's work made to be the image of God's work. So therefore look to your model, very simply stated for you in the nursery tale of Genesis.

*Day First.*—The Making, or letting in, of Light.
*Day Second.*—The Discipline and Firmament of Waters.
*Day Third.*—The Separation of earth from water, and planting the secure earth with trees.

*Day Fourth.*—The Establishment of time and seasons, and of the authority of the stars.

*Day Fifth.*—Filling the water and air with fish and birds.

*Day Sixth.*—Filling the land with beasts; and putting divine life into the clay of one of these, that it may have authority over the others, and over the rest of the Creation. . . .

. . . So the good human work may properly divide itself into the same six branches; and will be a perfectly literal and practical following out of the Divine; and will have opposed to it a correspondent Diabolic force of eternally bad work—as much worse than idleness or death, as good work is better than idleness or death.

Good work, then, will be,—

A. Letting in light where there was darkness; as especially into poor rooms and back streets; and generally guiding and administering the sunshine wherever we can, by all the means in our power.

And the correspondent Diabolic work is putting a tax on windows, and blocking out the sun's light with smoke.

B. Disciplining the falling waters. In the Divine work, this is the ordinance of clouds; in the human it is properly putting the clouds to service; and first stopping the rain where they carry it from the sea, and then keeping it pure as it goes back to the sea again.

And the correspondent Diabolic work is the

arrangement of land so as to throw all the water back to the sea as fast as we can; and putting every sort of filth into the stream as it runs.

C. The separation of earth from water, and planting it with trees. The correspondent human work is especially clearing morasses, and planting desert ground.

The Dutch, in a small way, in their own country, have done a good deal with sand and tulips; also the North Germans. But the most beautiful type of the literal ordinance of dry land in water is the State of Venice, with her sea-canals, restrained, traversed by their bridges, and especially bridges of the Rivo Alto or High Bank, which are, or were till a few years since, symbols of the work of a true Pontifex,—the Pontine Marshes being the opposite symbol.

The correspondent Diabolic work is turning good land and water into mud; and cutting down trees that we may drive steam ploughs, etc., etc.

D. The establishment of times and seasons. The correspondent human work is a due watching of the rise and set of stars, and course of the sun; and due administration and forethought of our own annual labours, preparing for them in hope, and concluding them in joyfulness, according to the laws and gifts of Heaven. Which beautiful order is set forth in symbols on all lordly human buildings round the semicircular arches which are types of the rise and fall of days and years.

And the correspondent Diabolic work is turning night into day with candles, so that we never see the stars; and mixing the seasons up one with

another, and having early strawberries, and green pease and the like.

E. Filling the waters with fish, and air with birds. The correspondent human work is Mr. Frank Buckland's and the like,—of which 'like' I am thankful to have been permitted to do a small piece near Croydon, in the streams to which my mother took me when a child, to play beside. There were more than a dozen of the fattest, shiniest, spottiest, and tamest trout I ever saw in my life, in the pond at Carshalton, the last time I saw it this spring.

The correspondent Diabolic work is poisoning fish, as is done at Coniston, with copper-mining; and catching them for ministerial and other fashionable dinners when they ought not to be caught; and treating birds—as birds are treated, Ministerially and otherwise.

F. Filling the earth with beasts, properly known and cared for by their master, Man; but chiefly breathing into the clayey and brutal nature of Man himself, the Soul, or Love, of God.

The correspondent Diabolic work is shooting and tormenting beasts; and grinding out the soul of man from his flesh, with machine labour; and then grinding down the flesh of him, when nothing else is left, into clay, with machines for that purpose—mitrailleuses, Woolwich infants, and the like.

These are the six main heads of God's and the Devil's work.

And as Wisdom, or Prudentia, is with God, and with His children in the doing,—"There I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight,"—so Folly, or Stultitia, saying, There

is no God, is with the Devil and his children, in the *un*doing. "There she is with them as one brought up with them, and she is daily their delight."

And so comes the great reverse of Creation, and wrath of God, accomplished on the earth by the fiends, and by men their ministers, seen by Jeremy the Prophet: "For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. [Now note the reversed creation.] I beheld the Earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the Heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger."

And so, finally, as the joy and honour of the ancient and divine Man and Woman were in their children, so the grief and dishonour of the modern and diabolic Man and Woman are in their children; and as the Rachel of Bethlehem weeps for her children, and will not be comforted, because they are not, the Rachel of England weeps for her children, and will not be comforted—because they are.

Now, whoever you may be, and how little your power may be, and whatever sort of creature you may be,—man, woman, or child,—you can, according to what discretion of years you may have reached, do something of this Divine work, or *un*do something of this Devil's work, every day. (*Letter* 45.)

## 8. Leave to be Useful.

Of all attainable liberties, then, be sure first to strive for leave to be useful. Independence you had better cease to talk of, for you are dependent not only on every act of people whom you never heard of, who are living round you, but on every past act of what has been dust for a thousand years. So also, does the course of a thousand years to come, depend upon the little perishing strength that is in you.

Little enough, and perishing, often without reward, however well spent. Understand that. Virtue does not consist in doing what will be presently paid, or even paid at all, to you, the virtuous person. It may so chance; or may not. It will be paid, some day; but the vital condition of it, as virtue, is that it shall be content in its own deed, and desirous rather that the pay of it, if any, should be for others; just as it is also the vital condition of vice to be content in its own deed, and desirous that the pay thereof, if any, should be to others. (*Letter* 3.)

## 9. Helping Others.

It surely cannot matter to you whom the thing helps, so long as you are content that it won't, or can't, help *you?* But are you content so? For that is the essential condition of the whole business—I will not speak of it in terms of money—are you content to give work? Will you build a bit of wall, suppose—to serve your neighbour, expecting no good of the wall yourself? If so, you must be satisfied to build the wall for the man who wants

it built; you must not be resolved first to be sure that he is the best man in the village. Help any one, anyhow you can: so, in order, the greatest possible number will be helped; nay, in the end, perhaps, you may get some shelter from the wind under your charitable wall yourself; but do not expect it, nor lean on any promise that you shall find your bread again, once cast away; I can only say that of what I have chosen to cast fairly on the waters myself, I have never yet, after any number of days, found a crumb. Keep what you want; cast what you can, and expect nothing back, once lost, or once given. (*Letter* 19.)

## 10. Givers and Workers.

Now, therefore, my good Companions of the Guild, —all that are, and Companions all, that are to be, —understand this, now and evermore, that you come forward to be Givers, not Receivers, in this human world: that you are to *give* your time, your thoughts, your labour, and the reward of your labour, so far as you can spare it, for the help of the poor and the needy, (they are not the same personages, mind: the 'poor' are in constant, healthy, and accepted relations to you,—the needy, in conditions requiring change); and observe, in the second place, that you are to work, so far as circumstances admit of your doing so, with your own hands, in the production of substantial means of life—food, clothes, house, or fire—and that *only by such* labour can you either make your own living, or anybody else's. One of our lately admitted Companions wrote joyfully and proudly to me the other day that she was 'making

her own living,' meaning that she was no burden to her family, but supported herself by teaching. To whom I answered,—and be the answer now generally understood by all our Companions,—that *nobody* can live by teaching, any more than by learning: that both teaching and learning are proper duties of human life, or pleasures of it, but have nothing whatever to do with the support of it.

Food can only be got out of the ground, or the air, or the sea. What you have done in fishing, fowling, digging, sowing, watering, reaping, milling, shepherding, shearing, spinning, weaving, building, carpentering, slating, coal-carrying, cooking, costermongering, and the like,—that is St. George's *work*, and means of power. All the rest is St. George's play, or his devotion—not his labour.

And the main message St. George brings to you is that *you* will not be degraded by this work nor saddened by it,—*you*, who in righteous will and modest resignation, take it upon you for your servant-yoke, as true servants, no less than children, of your Father in Heaven; but, so far as it *does* mean an acknowledgment that you are not better than the poor, and are content to share their lowliness in that humility, you enter into the very soul and innermost good of sacred monastic life, and have the loveliness and sanctity of it, without the sorrow or the danger; separating yourselves from the world and the flesh, only in their sin and in their pain. Nor, so far as the praise of men may be good and helpful to you, and, above all, good for *them* to give you, will it ever be wanting.

But above all, you separate yourself from the

world in its sorrow. There are no chagrins so venomous as the chagrins of the idle; there are no pangs so sickening as the satieties of pleasure. Nay, the bitterest and most enduring sorrow may be borne through the burden and heat of day bravely to the due time of death, by a true worker. And, indeed, it is this very dayspring and fount of peace in the bosoms of the labouring poor which has till now rendered their oppression possible. Only the idle among *them* revolt against their state;—the brave workers die passively, young and old—and make no sign. It is for you to pity them, for you to stand with them, for you to cherish, and save.

And be sure there are thousands upon thousands already leading such life—who are joined in no recognized fellowship, but each in their own place doing happy service to all men. (*Letter* 93.)

## 11. Practical Christianity.

If you will look back to the 67th page of 'Time and Tide,' you will find the work I am now upon, completely sketched out in it, saying finally that "the action of the devilish or deceiving person is in nothing shown quite so distinctly among us at this day, not even in our commercial dishonesties, or social cruelties, as in its having been able to take away music as an instrument of education altogether, and to enlist it almost wholly in the service of superstition on the one hand, and of sensuality on the other." And then follows the promise that, after explaining, as far as I know it, the significance of the parable of the Prodigal Son, I should "take the three means of human joy

therein stated, fine dress, rich food, and music, and show you how these are meant all alike to be sources of life and means of moral discipline, to all men, and how they have all three been made by the devil the means of guilt, dissoluteness, and death."

This promise I have never fulfilled, and after seven years am only just coming to the point of it. Which is, in few words, that to distribute good food, beautiful dress, and the practical habit of delicate art, is the proper work of the fathers and mothers of every people for help of those who have been lost in guilt and misery: and that only by *direct* doing of these three things can they now act beneficently or helpfully to any soul capable of reformation. Therefore, you who are eating luxurious dinners, call in the tramp from the highway and share them with him,—so gradually you will understand how your brother came to *be* a tramp; and practically make your own dinners plain till the poor man's dinner is rich,—or you are no Christians; and you who are dressing in fine dress, put on blouses and aprons, till you have got your poor dressed with grace and decency,—or you are no Christians; and you who can sing and play on instruments, hang your harps on the pollards above the rivers you have poisoned, or else go down among the mad and vile and deaf things whom you have made, and put melody into the souls of them,—else you are no Christians. (*Letter* 82.)

## 12. True Architecture.

True architecture is a thing which puts its builders to cost—not which pays them dividends. If a society

chose to organize itself to build the most beautiful houses, and the strongest that it could, either for art's sake, or love's; either palaces for itself, or houses for the poor; such a society would build something worth looking at, but not get dividends. True architecture is built by the man who wants a house for himself, and builds it to his own liking, at his own cost; not for his own gain, to the liking of other people.

All orders of houses may be beautiful when they are thus built by their master to his own liking. Three streets from me, at this moment, is one of the sixteenth century. The corner stones of it are ten feet long by three broad, and two thick—fifty courses of such, and the cornice; flawless stones, laid as level as a sea-horizon, so that the walls become one solid mass of unalterable rock,—four grey cliffs set square in mid-Florence, some hundred and twenty feet from cornice to ground. The man who meant to live in it built it so; and Titian painted his little grand-daughter for him. He got no dividend by his building—no profit on his picture. House and picture, absolutely untouched by time, remain to this day.

On the hills about me at Coniston there are also houses built by their owners, according to their means, and pleasure. A few loose stones gathered out of the fields, set one above another to a man's height from the ground; a branch or two of larch, set gable-wise across them,—on these some turf, cut from the next peat moss. It is enough: the owner gets no dividend on his building; but he has covert from wind and rain, and is honourable among the sons of Earth. He has built as best he could, to his own mind.

You think that there ought to be no such differences in habitation: that nobody should live in a palace, and nobody under a heap of turf? But if ever you become educated enough to know something about the arts, you will like to see a palace built in noble manner; and if ever you become educated enough to know something about men, you will love some of them so well as to desire that at least they should live in palaces, though you cannot. But it will be long now before you can know much, either about arts or men. The one point you may be assured of is, that your happiness does not at all depend on the size of your house—(or, if it does, rather on its smallness than largeness); but depends entirely on your having peaceful and safe possession of it—on your habits of keeping it clean and in order—on the materials of it being trustworthy, if they are no more than stone and turf—and on your contentment with it, so that gradually you may mend it to your mind, day by day, and leave it to your children a better house than it was.

To your children, and to theirs, desiring for them that they may live as you have lived; and not strive to forget you, and stammer when any one asks who you were, because, forsooth, they have become fine folks by your help. (*Letter* 21.)

## 13. Mutiny.

I noticed that there was some report of mutiny in the Channel Fleet the other day,—but discredited by the journals in which it appeared, on the ground of the impossibility that men trained as our British

sailors are, should disobey their officers, unless under provocation which no modern conditions of the service could involve. How long is it to be before these virtues of loyalty and obedience shall be conceived as capable of development, no less in employments which have some useful end, and fruitful power, than in those which are simply the moral organization of massacre, and the mechanical reduplication of ruin? (*Letter* 79.)

## 14. Noble Humility.

Never has any great work been accomplished by human creatures, in which instinct was not the principal mental agent, or in which the methods of design could be defined by rule, or apprehended by reason. It is therefore that agency through mechanism destroys the powers of art, and sentiments of religion, together.

And it will be found ultimately by all nations, as it was found long ago by those who have been leaders in human force and intellect, that the initial virtue of the race consists in the acknowledgment of their own lowly nature and submission to the laws of higher being. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," is the first truth we have to learn of ourselves; and to till the earth out of which we were taken, our first duty: in that labour, and in the relations which it establishes between us and the lower animals, are founded the conditions of our highest faculties and felicities: and without that labour, neither reason, art, nor peace, are possible to man.

But in that labour, accepting bodily death, appointed to us in common with the lower creatures, in noble humility; and kindling day by day the spiritual life, granted to us beyond that of the lower creatures, in noble pride, all wisdom, peace, and unselfish hope and love, may be reached, on earth, as in heaven, and our lives indeed be but a little lessened from those of the angels. (*Letter* 53.)

## 15. Chaos?—or Cosmos?

Go out on the seashore when the tide is down, on some flat sand; and take a little sand up into your palm, and separate one grain of it from the rest. Then try to fancy the relation between that single grain and the number in all the shining fields of the far distant shore, and onward shores immeasurable. Your astronomer tells you, your world is such a grain compared with the worlds that are, but that he can see no inhabitants on them, no sign of habitation, or of beneficence. Terror and chance, cold and fire, light struck forth by collision, desolateness of exploding orb and flying meteor. Meantime—you, on your grain of sand—what are you? The little grain is itself mostly uninhabitable; has a damp green belt in the midst of it. In that,—poor small vermin,—you live your span, fighting with each other for food, most of the time; or building—if perchance you are at peace—filthy nests, in which you perish of starvation, phthisis, profligate diseases, or despair. There is a history of civilization for you! briefer than Mr. Buckle's, and more true—when you see the Heavens and Earth without their God.

It is a fearful sight, and a false one. In what manner or way I neither know nor ask; this I know, that if a prophet touched your eyes, you might in an instant see all those eternal spaces filled with the heavenly host; and this also I know, that if you will begin to watch these stars with your human eyes, and learn what noble men have thought of them, and use their light to noble purposes, you will enter into a better joy and better science than ever eye hath seen.

> "Take stars for money—stars, not to be told
> By any art,—yet to be purchased."

I have nothing to do, nor have you, with what is happening in space, (or possibly may happen in time,) we have only to attend to what is happening here—and now. Yonder stars are rising. Have you ever noticed their order, heard their ancient names, thought of what they were, as teachers, 'lecturers,' in that large public hall of the night, to the wisest men of old? Have you ever thought of the direct promise to you yourselves, that you may be like them if you will? "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever."

They that be *wise.* Don't think that means knowing how big the moon is. It means knowing what you ought to do, as man or woman; what your duty to your father is, to your child, to your neighbour, to nations your neighbours. (*Letter* 75.)

## 16. Darkness and Light.

In the first and simple sense, works of darkness are useless, or ill-done, or half-done, things, which

pretend to be good, or to be wholly done; and so mislead or betray.

In the deeper and final sense, a work of darkness is one that seeks concealment, and conceals facts; or even casts disdain and disgrace on facts.

A work of light is one that seeks light, and that, not for its own sake, but to light all men; so that all workers of good work delight in witnesses; only with true desire that the witnesses' pleasure may be greater than theirs; and that the Eternal witnesses—the Cloud around us, and Powers above—may have chief pleasure of all. (*Letter* 63.)

The true miracle, to my mind, would not be in the sun's standing still, but IS in its going on! We are all of us being swept down to death in a sea of miracle; we are drowned in wonder, as gnats in a Rhine whirlpool: unless we are worse,—drowned in pleasure, or sloth, or insolence.

Nevertheless, I do not feel myself in the least called upon to believe that the sun stood still, or the earth either, during that pursuit at Ajalon. Nay, it would not anywise amaze me to find that there never had been any such pursuit—never any Joshua, never any Moses; and that the Jews, "taken generally," as an amiable clerical friend told me from his pulpit a Sunday or two ago, "were a Christian people."

But it does amaze me—almost to helplessness of hand and thought—to find the men and women of these days careless of such issue; and content, so that they can feed and breathe their fill, to eat like cattle, and breathe like plants, questionless of the Spirit that makes the grass to grow for them on the mountains, or the breeze they breathe on them, its

messengers, or the fire that dresses their food, its minister. Desolate souls, for whom the sun—beneath, not above, the horizon—stands still for ever. . . . . All up and down my later books, from 'Unto This Last' to 'Eagle's Nest,' and again and again throughout 'Fors,' you will find references to the practical connection between physical and spiritual light—of which now I would fain state, in the most unmistakable terms, this sum: that you cannot love the real sun, that is to say physical light and colour, rightly, unless you love the spiritual sun, that is to say justice and truth, rightly. That for unjust and untrue persons, there is no real joy in physical light, so that they don't even know what the word means. That the entire system of modern life is so corrupted with the ghastliest forms of injustice and untruth, carried to the point of not recognizing themselves as either—for as long as Bill Sykes knows that he is a robber, and Jeremy Diddler that he is a rascal, there is still some of Heaven's light left for both—but when everybody steals, cheats, and goes to Church, complacently, and the light of their whole body is darkness, how great is that darkness! And that the physical result of that mental vileness is a total carelessness of the beauty of sky, or the cleanness of streams, or the life of animals and flowers: and I believe that the powers of Nature are depressed or perverted, together with the Spirit of Man; and therefore that conditions of storm and of physical darkness, such as never were before in Christian times, are developing themselves, in connection also with forms of loathsome insanity, multiplying through the whole genesis of modern brains. (*Letter* 66.)

## 17. Conscience.

It has been a prevalent notion in the minds of well-disposed persons, that if they acted according to their own conscience, they must, therefore, be doing right.

But they assume, in feeling or asserting this, either that there is no Law of God, or that it cannot be known; but only felt, or conjectured.

"I must do what *I* think right." How often is this sentence uttered and acted on—bravely—nobly—innocently; but always—because of its egotism—erringly. You must not do what you think right, but, whether you or anybody think, or don't think it, what *is* right.

"I must act according to the dictates of my conscience."

By no means, my conscientious friend, unless you are quite sure that yours is not the conscience of an ass.

"I am doing my best—what can man do more?"

You might be doing much less, and yet much better:—perhaps you are doing your best in producing, or doing, an eternally bad thing.

All these three sayings, and the convictions they express, are wise only in the mouths and minds of wise men; they are deadly, and all the deadlier because bearing an image and superscription of virtue, in the mouths and minds of fools.

"But there is every gradation, surely, between wisdom and folly?"

No. The fool, whatever his wit, is the man who doesn't know his master—who has said in his heart—there is no God—no Law.

The wise man knows his master. Less or more

wise, he perceives lower or higher masters; but always some creature larger than himself—some law holier than his own. A law to be sought—learned, loved—obeyed; but in order to its discovery, the obedience must be begun first, to the best one knows. Obey *something;* and you will have a chance some day of finding out what is best to obey. But if you begin by obeying nothing, you will end by obeying Beelzebub and all his seven invited friends. (*Letter* 54.)

## 18. Carlyle's "Force."

Ever since Carlyle wrote that sentence about rights and mights, in his "French Revolution," all blockheads of a benevolent class have been declaiming against him, as a worshipper of force. What else, in the name of the three Magi, *is* to be worshipped? Force of brains, Force of heart, Force of hand;—will you dethrone these, and worship apoplexy?—despise the spirit of Heaven, and worship phthisis? Every condition of idolatry is summed in the one broad wickedness of refusing to worship Force, and resolving to worship No-Force;—denying the Almighty, and bowing down to four-and-twopence with a stamp on it. But Carlyle never meant in that place to refer you to such final truth. He meant but to tell you that before you dispute about what you should get, you would do well to find out first what is to be gotten, which briefly is, for everybody, at last, their deserts, and no more. . . .

Foolish moral writers will tell you that whenever you do wrong you will be punished, and whenever you do right rewarded: which is true, but only half

the truth. And foolish immoral writers will tell you that if you do right, you will get no good; and if you do wrong dexterously, no harm. Which, in their sense of good and harm, is true also, but, even in that sense, only half the truth. The joined and four-square truth is, that every right is exactly rewarded, and every wrong exactly punished; but that, in the midst of this subtle, and, to our impatience, slow, retribution, there is a startlingly separate or counter ordinance of good and evil,—one to this man, and the other to that,—one at this hour of our lives, and the other at that,—ordinance which is entirely beyond our control; and of which the providential law, hitherto, defies investigation. . . .

Setting this Destiny, over which you have no control whatsoever, for the time, out of your thoughts, there remains the symmetrical destiny, over which you have control absolute—namely, that you are ultimately to get—exactly what you are worth.

And your control over this destiny consists, therefore, simply in *being* worth more or less, and not at all in voting that you are worth more or less. (*Letter* 13.)

## 19. Honour of Home.

> "For lo, the winter is past,
> The rain is over and gone,
> The flowers appear on the earth,
> The time of the singing of birds is come.
> Arise, O my fair one, my dove,
> And come."

I have no fear but that you will one day understand all my poor words, — the saddest of them

perhaps too well. But I have great fear that you may never come to understand these written above, which are part of a king's love-song, in one sweet May, of many long since gone.

I fear, that for you the wild winter's rain may never pass,—the flowers never appear on the earth;—that for you no bird may ever sing;—for you no perfect Love arise, and fulfil your life in peace.

"And why not for us, as for others?" will you answer me so, and take my fear for you as an insult?

Nay, it is no insult;—nor am I happier than you. For me, the birds do not sing, nor ever will. But they would, for you, if you cared to have it so. When I told you that you would never understand that love-song, I meant only that you would not desire to understand it.

Are you again indignant with me? Do you think, though you should labour, and grieve, and be trodden down in dishonour all your days, at least you can keep that one joy of Love, and that one honour of Home? Had you, indeed, kept that, you had kept all. But no men yet, in the history of the race, have lost it so piteously. In many a country, and many an age, women have been compelled to labour for their husbands' wealth, or bread; but never until now were they so homeless as to say, like the poor Samaritan, "I have no husband." Women of every country and people have sustained without complaint the labour of fellowship: for the women of the latter days in England it has been reserved to claim the privilege of isolation.

This, then, is the end of your universal education

and civilization, and contempt of the ignorance of the Middle Ages, and of their chivalry. Not only do you declare yourselves too indolent to labour for daughters and wives, and too poor to support them; but you have made the neglected and distracted creatures hold it for an honour to be independent of you, and shriek for some hold of the mattock for themselves. Believe it or not, as you may, there has not been so low a level of thought reached by any race, since they grew to be male and female out of star-fish, or chickweed, or whatever else they have been made from, by natural selection,—according to modern science. (*Letter* 5.)

## 20. Three Great Loves.

You will find that in all my late books (during the last ten years) I have summed the needful virtue of men under the terms of gentleness and justice; gentleness being the virtue which distinguishes gentlemen from churls, and justice that which distinguishes honest men from rogues. Now gentleness may be defined as the Habit or State of Love; and ungentleness or clownishness, the opposite State or Habit of Lust.

Now there are three great loves that rule the souls of men: the love of what is lovely in creatures, and of what is lovely in things, and what is lovely in report. And these three loves have each their relative corruption, a lust—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

And, as I have just said, a gentleman is distinguished from a churl by the purity of sentiment

he can reach in all these three passions: by his imaginative love, as opposed to lust; his imaginative possession of wealth as opposed to avarice; his imaginative desire of honour as opposed to pride.

And it is quite possible for the simplest workman or labourer for whom I write to understand what the feelings of a gentleman are, and share them, if he will; but the crisis and horror of this present time are that its desire of money, and the fulness of luxury dishonestly attainable by common persons, are gradually making churls of all men; and the nobler passions are not merely disbelieved, but even the conception of them seems ludicrous to the impotent churl mind; so that, to take only so poor an instance of them as my own life—because I have passed it in almsgiving, not in fortune-hunting; because I have laboured always for the honour of others, not my own, and have chosen rather to make men look to Turner and Luini, than to form or exhibit the skill of my own hand; because I have lowered my rents, and assured the comfortable lives of my poor tenants, instead of taking from them all I could force for the roofs they needed; because I love a wood walk better than a London street, and would rather watch a seagull fly than shoot it, and rather hear a thrush sing than eat it; finally, because I never disobeyed my mother, because I have honoured all women with solemn worship, and have been kind even to the unthankful and the evil; therefore the hacks of English art and literature wag their heads at me, and the poor wretch who pawns the dirty linen of his soul daily for a bottle of sour wine and a cigar, talks of the "effeminate sentimentality of Ruskin."

Now of these despised sentiments, which in all ages have distinguished the gentleman from the churl, the first is that reverence for womanhood which, even through all the cruelties of the Middle Ages, developed itself with increasing power until the thirteenth century, and became consummated in the imagination of the Madonna, which ruled over all the highest arts and purest thoughts of that age.

To the common Protestant mind the dignities ascribed to the Madonna have been always a violent offence; they are one of the parts of the Catholic faith which are openest to reasonable dispute, and least comprehensible by the average realistic and materialist temper of the Reformation. But after the most careful examination, neither as adversary nor as friend, of the influences of Catholicism for good and evil, I am persuaded that the worship of the Madonna has been one of its noblest and most vital graces, and has never been otherwise than productive of true holiness of life and purity of character. I do not enter into any question as to the truth or fallacy of the idea; I no more wish to defend the historical or theological position of the Madonna than that of St. Michael or St. Christopher; but I am certain that to the habit of reverent belief in, and contemplation of, the character ascribed to the heavenly hierarchies, we must ascribe the highest results yet achieved in human nature, and that it is neither Madonna-worship nor saint-worship, but the evangelical self-worship and hell-worship — gloating, with an imagination as unfounded as it is foul, over the torments of the damned, instead of the glories of the blest,—which have in reality degraded the languid

powers of Christianity to their present state of shame and reproach. There has probably not been an innocent cottage home throughout the length and breadth of Europe during the whole period of vital Christianity, in which the imagined presence of the Madonna has not given sanctity to the humblest duties, and comfort to the sorest trials of the lives of women; and every brightest and loftiest achievement of the arts and strength of manhood has been the fulfilment of the assured prophecy of the poor Israelite maiden, "He that is mighty hath magnified me, and Holy is His name." (*Letter* 41.)

## 21. Fancy and Faith.

No line of modern poetry has been oftener quoted with thoughtless acceptance than Wordsworth's:

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy."

It is wholly untrue in the implied limitation; if life be led under heaven's law, the sense of heaven's nearness only deepens with advancing years, and is assured in death. But the saying is indeed true thus far, that in the dawn of virtuous life every enthusiasm and every perception may be trusted as of divine appointment; and the *maxima reverentia* is due not only to the innocence of children, but to their inspiration.

And it follows that through the ordinary course of mortal failure and misfortune, in the career of nations no less than of men, the error of their intellect, and the hardening of their hearts, may be accurately measured by their denial of spiritual power.

In the life of Scott, beyond comparison the greatest intellectual force manifested in Europe since Shakespeare, the lesson is given us with a clearness as sharp as the incision on a Greek vase. The very first mental effort for which he obtained praise was the passionate recitation of the passage in the 'Eneid,' in which the ghost of Hector appears to Eneas. And the deadliest sign of his own approaching death is in the form of incredulity which dictated to his weary hand the 'Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft.'

Here, for the present, I must leave the subject to your own thought,—only desiring you to notice, for general guidance, the gradations of impression on the feelings of men of strong and well-rounded intellect, by which fancy rises towards faith.

I. The lowest stage is that of wilfully grotesque fancy, which is recognized as false, yet dwelt upon with delight and finished with accuracy, as the symbol or parable of what is true.

Shakespeare's Puck, and the Dwarf Goblin of the 'Lay,' are precisely alike in this first level of the imagination. Shakespeare does not believe in Bottom's translation; neither does Scott that, when the boy Buccleugh passes the drawbridge with the dwarf, the sentinel only saw a terrier and lurcher passing out. Yet both of them permit the fallacy, because they acknowledge the Elfin power in nature, to make things, sometimes for good, sometimes for harm, seem what they are not. Nearly all the grotesque sculpture of the great ages, beginning with the Greek Chimæra, has this nascent form of Faith for its impulse.

II. The ghosts and witches of Shakespeare, and the Bodach Glas and White Lady of Scott, are expressions of real belief, more or less hesitating and obscure. Scott's worldliness too early makes him deny his convictions, and in the end effaces them. But Shakespeare remains sincerely honest in his assertion of the uncomprehended spiritual presence; with this further subtle expression of his knowledge of mankind, that he never permits a spirit to show itself but to men of the highest intellectual power. To Hamlet, to Brutus, to Macbeth, to Richard III.; but the royal Dane does not haunt his own murderer,—neither does Arthur, King John; neither Norfolk, King Richard II.; nor Tybalt, Romeo.

III. The faith of Horace in the spirit of the fountain of Brundusium, in the Faun of his hillside, and in the help of the greater gods, is constant, vital, and practical; yet in some degree still tractable by his imagination, as also that of the great poets and painters of Christian times. In Milton, the tractability is singular; he hews his gods out to his own fancy, and then believes in them; but in Giotto and Dante the art is always subjected to the true vision.

IV. The faith of the saints and prophets, rising into serenity of knowledge, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," is a state of mind of which ordinary men cannot reason; but which in the practical power of it, has always governed the world, and must for ever. No dynamite will ever be invented that can rule;—it can but dissolve and destroy. Only the Word of God and the heart of man can govern. (*Letter* 92.)

## 22. Legends.

It is fatally certain that whenever you begin to seek the real authority for legends, you will generally find that the ugly ones have good foundation, and the beautiful ones none. Be prepared for this; and remember that a lovely legend is all the more precious when it *has* no foundation. Cincinnatus might actually have been found ploughing beside the Tiber fifty times over; and it might have signified little to any one;—least of all to you or me. But if Cincinnatus never was so found, nor ever existed at all in flesh and blood; but the great Roman nation, in its strength of conviction that manual labour in tilling the ground was good and honourable, invented a quite bodiless Cincinnatus; and set him, according to its fancy, in furrows of the field, and put its own words into his mouth, and gave the honour of its ancient deeds into his ghostly hand; *this* fable, which has no foundation;—this precious coinage of the brain and conscience of a mighty people, you and I—believe me—had better read, and know, and take to heart, diligently. (*Letter* 21.)

## 23. Pleasures.

The pleasures of the world are all yours.

God has made man to take pleasure in the use of his eyes, wits, and body. And the foolish creature is continually trying to live without looking at anything, without thinking about anything, and without doing anything. And he thus becomes not only a brute, but the unhappiest of brutes. All the lusts

and lazinesses he can contrive only make him more wretched; and at this moment, if a man walks watchfully the streets of Paris, whence I am now writing to you,—a city in which every invention that science, wit, and wealth can hit upon to provoke and to vary the pleasures of the idle, he will not see one happy or tranquil face, except among the lower and very hard-labouring classes. Every pleasure got otherwise than God meant it—got cheaply, thievingly, and swiftly, when He has ordered that it should be got dearly, honestly, and slowly,—turns into a venomous burden, and, past as a pleasure, remains as a load, increasing day by day its deadly coat of burning mail. The joys of hatred, of battle, of lust, of vain knowledge, of vile luxury, all pass into slow torture: nothing remains to man, nothing is possible to him of true joy, but in the righteous love of his fellows; in the knowledge of the laws and the glory of God, and in the daily use of the faculties of soul and body with which that God has endowed him. (*Letter* 89.)

## 24. Pleasing God.

Now, my religious friends, I continually hear you talk of acting for God's glory, and giving God praise. Might you not, for the present, think less of praising, and more of pleasing Him? He can, perhaps, dispense with your praise; your opinions of His character, even when they come to be held by a large body of the religious press, are not of material importance to Him. He has the hosts of heaven to praise Him, who see more of His ways, it is likely, than you; but you hear that you may be pleasing to

Him, if you try:—that He expected, then, to have some satisfaction in you; and might have even great satisfaction—well-pleasing, as in His own Son, if you tried. The sparrows and the robins, if you give them leave to nest as they choose about your garden, will have their own opinions about your garden; some of them will think it well laid out,—others ill. You are not solicitous about their opinions; but you like them to love each other; to build their nests without stealing each other's sticks, and to trust you to take care of them.

Perhaps, in like manner, if in this garden of the world you would leave off telling its Master your opinions of Him, and, much more, your quarrelling about your opinions of Him; but would simply trust Him, and mind your own business modestly, He might have more satisfaction in you than He has had yet these eighteen hundred and seventy-one years, or than He seems likely to have in the eighteen hundred and seventy-second. (*Letter* 12.)

## 25. The 14th and 15th Psalms.

For those who care to lodge with God, these following are the conditions of character.

They are to walk or deal uprightly with men. They are to work or do justice; or, in sum, do the best they can with their hands. They are to speak the truth to their own hearts, and see they do not persuade themselves they are honest when they ought to know themselves to be knaves; nor persuade themselves they are charitable and kind, when they ought to know themselves to be thieves and murderers.

They are not to bite people with their tongues behind their backs, if they dare not rebuke them face to face. They are not to take up, or catch at, subjects of blame; but they are utterly and absolutely to despise vile persons who fear no God, and think the world was begot by mud, and is fed by money; and they are not to defend a guilty man's cause against an innocent one. Above all, this last verse is written for lawyers, or professed interpreters of justice, who are of all men most villainous, if, knowingly, they take reward against an innocent or rightfully contending person. And on these conditions the promise of God's presence and strength is finally given. He that doeth thus shall not be moved, or shaken: for him, tabernacle and rock are alike safe: no wind shall overthrow them, nor earthquake rend.

That is the meaning of the fourteenth and fifteenth Psalms; and if you so believe them, and obey them, you will find your account in it. And they are the Word of God to you, so far as you have hearts capable of understanding them, or any other such message brought by His servants. But if your heart is dishonest and rebellious, you may read them for ever with lip-service, and all the while be 'men-pleasers,' whose bones are to be broken at the pit's mouth, and so left incapable of breath, brought by any winds of Heaven. (*Letter* 36.)

## 26. The 19th Psalm.

"Cœli enarrant;" the heavens declare—or make clear—the honour of God; which I suppose, in many a windy oratorio, this spring, will be loudly declared

by basses and tenors, to tickle the ears of the public, who don't believe one word of the song all the while!

But it is a true song, none the less; and you must try to understand it before we come to anything else; for these Heavens, so please you, are the real roof, as the earth is the real floor, of God's house for you here, rentless, by His Law. That word 'cœli,' in the first words of the Latin psalm, means the 'hollow place.' It is the great space, or, as we conceive it, vault, of Heaven. It shows the glory of God in the existence of the light by which we live. All force is from the sun.

The firmament is the ordinance of the clouds and sky of the world. It shows the handiwork of God. He daily paints that for you; constructs, as He paints, —beautiful things, if you will look,—terrible things, if you will think. Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind, (cyclone and other) fulfilling His Word. The Word of God, printed in very legible type of gold on lapis-lazuli, needing no translation of yours, no colporteurship. There is no speech nor language where *their* voice is not heard. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their word to the ends of the world. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the Sun, the Lord of Physical Life; in them also, a tabernacle for the Sun of Justice, the Lord of Spiritual Life. And the light of this Sun of the Spirit is divided into this measured Iris of colours :—

I. The Law of the Lord. Which is perfect, converting the soul.

That is the constant law of creation, which breathes life into matter, soul into life.

II. THE TESTIMONIES OF THE LORD. Which are sure,—making wise the simple.

These are what He has told us of His law, by the lips of the prophets,—from Enoch, the seventh from Adam, by Moses, by Hesiod, by David, by Elijah, by Isaiah, by the Delphic Sibyl, by Dante, by Chaucer, by Giotto. Sure testimonies all; their witness agreeing together, making wise the simple—that is to say, all holy and humble men of heart.

III. THE STATUTES OF THE LORD. Which are right, and rejoice the heart.

These are the appointed conditions that govern human life;—that reward virtue, infallibly; punish vice, infallibly;—gladsome to see in operation. The righteous shall be glad when he seeth the vengeance —how much more in the mercy to thousands?

IV. THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD. Which is pure, enlightening the eyes.

This is the written law—under (as we count) ten articles, but in many more, if you will read. Teaching us, in so many words, when we cannot discern it unless we are told, what the will of our Master is.

V. THE FEAR OF THE LORD. Which is clean, enduring for ever.

Fear, or faith,—in this sense one: the human faculty that purifies, and enables us to see this sunshine; and to be warmed by it, and made to live for ever in it.

VI. THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD. Which are true, and righteous altogether.

These are His searchings out and chastisements of our sins; His praise and reward of our battle; the fiery trial that tries us, but is "no strange thing"; the crown that is laid up for all that love His appearing. More to be desired are they than gold;—(David thinks first of these special judgments)—Sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb;—moreover by them is Thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward. Then—pausing—"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from the faults I know not, and keep me from those I know; and let the words of my lips, and the thoughts of my brain, be acceptable in Thy open sight—oh Lord my strength, who hast made me,—my Redeemer, who hast saved."

That is the natural and the spiritual astronomy of the nineteenth Psalm; and now you must turn to the eighth.

For as, in the one, David looking at the sun in his light, passes on to the thought of the Light of God, which is His law, so in the eighth Psalm, looking at the sun on his throne, as the ruler and guide of the state of Heaven, he passes on to the thoughts of the throne and state of man, as the ruler and light of the World: Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,—Thou hast put all things under his feet,—beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl. (*Letter* 75.)

## 27. The 8th Psalm.

The entire purport of the psalm is that the Name, or *knowledge*, of God was admirable to David, and the power and kingship of God recognizable to him, through the power and kingship of man, His vicegerent on the earth, as the angels are in heavenly places. And that final purport of the psalm is evermore infallibly true,—namely, that when men rule the earth rightly, and feel the power of their own souls over it, and its creatures, as a beneficent and authoritative one, they recognize the power of higher spirits also; and the Name of God becomes 'hallowed' to them, admirable and wonderful; but if they abuse the earth and its creatures, and become mere contentious brutes upon it, instead of order-commanding kings, the Name of God ceases to be admirable to them, and His power to be felt; and gradually, license and ignorance prevailing together, even what memories of law or Deity remain to them become intolerable; and in the exact contrary to David's—"My soul thirsteth for God, for the Living God; when shall I come and appear before God?" —you have the consummated desire and conclusive utterance of the modern republican:

"S'il y avait un Dieu, il faudrait le fusiller."

Now, whatever chemical or anatomical facts may appear, to our present scientific intelligences, inconsistent with the Life of God, the historical fact is that no happiness nor power has ever been attained by human creatures unless in that thirst for the presence of a Divine King; and that nothing but

weakness, misery, and death have ever resulted from the desire to destroy their King, and to have thieves and murderers released to them instead. Also this fact is historically certain,—that the Life of God is not to be discovered by reasoning, but by obeying; that on doing what is plainly ordered, the wisdom and presence of the Orderer become manifest; that only so His way can be known on earth, and His saving health among all nations; and that on disobedience always follows darkness, the forerunner of death. . . .

How far the world around us may be yet beyond our control, only because a curse has been brought upon it by our sloth and infidelity, none of us can tell; still less may we dare either to praise or accuse our Master, for the state of the creation over which He appointed us kings, and in which we have chosen to live as swine. One thing we know, or may know, if we will,—that the heart and conscience of man are divine; that in his perception of evil, in his recognition of good, he is himself a God manifest in the flesh; that his joy in love, his agony in anger, his indignation at injustice, his glory in self-sacrifice, are all eternal, indisputable proofs of his unity with a great Spiritual Head; that in these, and not merely in his more availing form, or manifold instinct, he is king over the lower animate world; that, so far as he denies or forfeits these, he dishonours the Name of his Father, and makes it unholy and unadmirable in the earth; that so far as he confesses, and rules by, these, he hallows and makes admirable the Name of his Father, and receives, in his sonship, fulness of power with Him,

whose are the kingdom, the power, and the glory, world without end. (*Letter* 53.)

## 28. Advent Collect.

It is to-day the second Sunday in Advent, and all over England, about the time that I write these words, full congregations will be for the second time saying Amen to the opening collect of the Christian year.

I wonder how many individuals of the enlightened public understand a single word of its first clause:

> "Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life."

How many of them, may it be supposed, have any clear knowledge of what grace is, or of what the works of darkness are which they hope to have grace to cast away; or will feel themselves, in the coming year, armed with any more luminous mail than their customary coats and gowns, hosen and hats? Or again, when they are told to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them,"—what fellowship do they recognize themselves to have guiltily formed; and whom, or what, will they feel now called upon to reprove?

In last Fors, I showed *you* how the works of darkness were unfruitful;—the precise reverse of the fruitful, or creative, works of Light;—but why in this collect, which you pray over and over again all Advent, do you ask for 'armour' instead of

industry? You take your coat off to work in your own gardens; why must you put a coat of mail on, when you are to work in the Garden of God?

Well; because the earthworms in it are big—and have teeth and claws, and venomous tongues. So that the first question for you is indeed, not whether you have a mind to work in it—many a coward has that—but whether you have courage to stand in it, and armour proved enough to stand in.

Suppose you let the consenting bystander who took care of the coats taken off to do that piece of work on St. Stephen, explain to you the pieces out of St. Michael's armoury needful to the husbandman, or Georgos, of God's garden.

> "Stand therefore; having your loins girt about with Truth."

That means, that the strength of your backbone depends on your meaning to do true battle.

> "And having on the breastplate of Justice."

That means, there are to be no partialities in your heart, of anger or pity;—but you must only in justice kill, and only in justice keep alive.

> "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of Peace."

That means, that where your foot pauses, moves, or enters, there shall be peace; and where you can only shake the dust of it on the threshold, mourning.

> "Above all, take the shield of Faith."

Of fidelity or obedience to your captain, showing his bearings, argent, a cross gules; your safety, and

all the army's, being first in the obedience of faith: and all casting of spears vain against such guarded phalanx.

"And take the helmet of Salvation."

Elsewhere, the *hope* of salvation, that being the defence of your intellect against base and sad thoughts, as the shield of fidelity is the defence of your heart against burning and consuming passions.

"And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

That being your weapon of war,—your power of action, whether with sword or ploughshare; according to the saying of St. John of the young soldiers of Christ, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you." The Word by which the heavens were of old; and which, being once only Breath, became in man Flesh, 'quickening it by the spirit' into the life which is, and is to come; and enabling it for all the works nobly done by the quick, and following the dead. (*Letter* 48.)

## 29. Christmas.

To me, standing as it were astonished in the midst of this gaiety of yours, will you tell—what it is all about?

Your little children would answer, doubtless, fearlessly, "Because the Child Christ was born to-day:" but you, wiser than your children, it may be,—at least, it should be,—are you also sure that He was?

And if He was, what is that to you?

I repeat, are you indeed *sure* He was? I mean, with real happening of the strange things you have been told, that the Heavens opened near Him, showing their hosts, and that one of their stars stood still over His head? You are sure of that, you say? I am glad; and wish it were so with me; but I have been so puzzled lately by many matters that once seemed clear to me, that I seldom now feel sure of anything. Still seldomer, however, do I feel sure of the contrary of anything. That people say they saw it, may not prove that it was visible; but that I never saw it cannot prove that it was invisible: and this is a story which I more envy the people who believe on the weakest grounds, than who deny on the strongest. The people whom I envy not at all are those who imagine they believe it, and do not.

For one of two things this story of the Nativity *is* certainly, and without any manner of doubt. It relates either a fact full of power, or a dream full of meaning. It is, at the least, not a cunningly devised fable, but the record of an impression made, by some strange spiritual cause, on the minds of the human race, at the most critical period of their existence:—an impression which has produced, in past ages, the greatest effect on mankind ever yet achieved by an intellectual conception; and which is yet to guide, by the determination of its truth or falsehood, the absolute destiny of ages to come. . . .

. . . . . .

What is this Christmas to you? What Light is there, for your eyes, also, pausing over the place where the Child lay? I will tell you, briefly, what Light there should be;—what lessons and promise are

in this story, at the least. There may be infinitely more than I know; but there is certainly, this.

The Child is born to bring you the promise of new life. Eternal or not, is no matter; pure and redeemed, at least.

He is born twice on your earth; first, from the womb, to the life of toil; then, from the grave, to that of rest.

To His first life He is born in a cattle-shed, the supposed son of a carpenter; and afterwards brought up to a carpenter's craft.

But the circumstances of His second life are, in great part, hidden from us: only note this much of it. The three principal appearances to His disciples are accompanied by giving or receiving of food. He is known at Emmaus in breaking of bread; at Jerusalem He Himself eats fish and honey to show that He is not a spirit; and His charge to Peter is "when they had dined," the food having been obtained under His direction.

But in His first showing Himself to the person who loved Him best, and to whom He had forgiven most, there is a circumstance more singular and significant still. Observe — assuming the accepted belief to be true,—this was the first time when the Maker of men showed Himself to human eyes, risen from the dead, to assure them of immortality. You might have thought He would have shown Himself in some brightly glorified form,—in some sacred and before unimaginable beauty.

He shows Himself in so simple aspect, and dress, that she, who, of all people on the earth, should have known Him best, glancing quickly back through her

tears, does not know Him. Takes Him for "the gardener."

Now, unless absolute orders had been given to us, such as would have rendered error impossible, (which would have altered the entire temper of Christian probation); could we possibly have had more distinct indication of the purpose of the Master —borne first by witness of shepherds, in a cattle-shed, then by witness of the person for whom He had done most, and who loved Him best, in the garden, and in gardener's guise, and not known even by His familiar friends till He gave them bread— could it be told us, I repeat, more definitely by any sign or indication whatsoever, that the noblest human life was appointed to be by the cattle-fold and in the garden; and to be known as noble in breaking of bread?

Now, but a few words more. You will constantly hear foolish and ignoble persons conceitedly proclaiming the text, that "not many wise and not many noble are called."

Nevertheless, of those who are truly wise, and truly noble, all are called that exist. And to sight of this Nativity, you find that, together with the simple persons, near at hand, there were called precisely the wisest men that could be found on earth at that moment.

And these men, for their own part, came—I beg you very earnestly again to note this—not to see, nor talk—but to do reverence. They are neither curious nor talkative, but submissive.

And, so far as they came to teach, they came as teachers of one virtue only: Obedience. For of

this Child, at once Prince and Servant, Shepherd and Lamb, it was written: "See, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. He shall not strive, nor cry, till he shall bring forth Judgment unto Victory."

My friends, of the black country, you may have wondered at my telling you so often,—I tell you nevertheless, once more, in bidding you farewell this year,—that one main purpose of the education I want you to seek is, that you may see the sky, with the stars of it again; and be enabled, in their material light—"riveder le stelle."

But, much more, out of this blackness of the smoke of the Pit, the blindness of heart, in which the children of *Dis*obedience blaspheme God and each other, heaven grant to you the vision of that sacred light, at pause over the place where the young Child was laid; and ordain that more and more in each coming Christmas it may be said of you, "When they saw the Star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." (*Letter* 12.)

## 30. The Lord's Prayer.

Whatever laws you make about your bread—however wise and brave,—you will not get it unless you pray for it. If you would not be fed with stones, by a Father Devil, you must ask for bread from your Father, God. In a word, you must understand the Lord's Prayer—and *pray it;* knowing, and desiring, the Good you ask; knowing also, and abhorring, the Evil you ask to be delivered from. Knowing and obeying your Father who is in Heaven; knowing and wrestling with 'your Destroyer' who is come

down to Earth; and praying and striving also, that your Father's will may be done there,—not his; and your Father's kingdom come there, and not his.

And finally, therefore, in St. George's name, I tell you, you cannot know God, unless also you know His and your adversary, and have no fellowship with the works of that Living Darkness, and put upon you the armour of that Living Light.

'Phrases,—still phrases,' think you? My friends, the Evil Spirit indeed exists; and in so exact contrary power to God's, that as men go straight to God by believing in Him, they go straight to the Devil by disbelieving in Him. Do but fairly rise to fight him, and you will feel him fast enough, and have as much on your hands as you are good for. Act, then. Act—yourselves, waiting for no one. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, to the last farthing in your own power. Whatever the State does with its money, do you that with yours. Bring order into your own accounts, whatever disorder there is in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's; then, when you have got the Devil well under foot in Sheffield, you may begin to stop him from persuading my Lords of the Admiralty that they want a new grant, etc., etc., to make his machines with; and from illuminating Parliament with new and ingenious suggestions concerning the liquor laws. For observe, all taxes put by the rich on the meat or drink of the poor, are *precise* Devil's laws. That is why they are so loud in their talk of national prosperity, indicated by the Excise, because the fiend, who blinds them, sees that he can also blind you, through your lust for drink, into quietly allowing yourselves to pay

fifty millions a year, that the rich may make their machines of blood with, and play at shedding blood.

But patience, my good fellows. Everything must be confirmed by the last, as founded on the first, of the three resolutions I asked of you in the beginning,—"Be sure you can obey good laws before you seek to alter bad ones." No rattening, if you please; no pulling down of park railings; no rioting in the streets. It is the Devil who sets you on that sort of work. Your Father's Servant does not strive, nor cry, nor lift up His voice in the streets. But He will bring forth judgment unto victory; and, doing as He bids you do, you may pray as He bids you pray, sure of answer, because in His Father's gift are all order, strength, and honour, from age to age, for ever. (*Letter* 74.)

## 31. The Lord's Supper (*a letter to a lady*).

You probably will be having a dinner-party to-day; now, please do this, and remember I am quite serious in what I ask you. We all of us, who have any belief in Christianity at all, wish that Christ were alive now. Suppose, then, that He is. I think it very likely that if He were in London, you would be one of the people whom He would take some notice of. Now, suppose He has sent you word that He is coming to dine with you to-day; but that you are not to make any change in your guests on His account; that He wants to meet exactly the party you have; and no other. Suppose you have just received this message, and that St. John has also left word, in passing, with the butler, that his Master will come alone; so that

you won't have any trouble with the Apostles. Now this is what I want you to do. First, determine what you will have for dinner. You are not ordered, observe, to make no changes in your bill of fare. Take a piece of paper, and absolutely *write* fresh orders to your cook,—you can't realise the thing enough without writing. That done, consider how you will arrange your guests—who is to sit next Christ on the other side—who opposite, and so on; finally, consider a little what you will talk about, supposing, which is just possible, that Christ should tell you to go on talking as if He were not there, and never to mind *Him*. You couldn't, you will tell me? Then, my dear lady, how can you in general? Don't you profess—nay, don't you much more than profess—to believe that Christ *is* always there, whether you see Him or not? Why should the seeing make such a difference? (*Letter* 46.)

## 32. Divine Paradoxes.

All the teaching of God, and of the nature He formed round Man, is not only mysterious, but, if received with any warp of mind, deceptive, and intentionally deceptive. The distinct and repeated assertions of this in the conduct and words of Christ are the most wonderful things, it seems to me, and the most terrible, in all the recorded action of the wisdom of Heaven. "To *you*" (His disciples) "it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom,—but to others, in parables, that, hearing, they might *not* understand." Now this is written not for the twelve only, but for all disciples of Christ in all ages,—of

whom the sign is one and unmistakable: "They have forsaken *all* that they have;" while those who "say they are Jews and are not, but do lie," or who say they are Christians and are not, but do lie, try to compromise with Christ,—to give Him a part, and keep back a part;—this being the Lie of lies, the Ananias lie, visited always with spiritual death.

There is a curious chapter on almsgiving, by Miss Yonge, which announces to *her* disciples, that "at least the tenth of their income is God's part." Now, in the name of the Devil, and of Baal to back him,—are nine parts, then, of all we have—our own? or theirs? The tithe may, indeed, be set aside for some special purpose—for the maintenance of a priesthood—or as by the St. George's Company, for distant labour, or any other purpose out of their own immediate range of action. But to the Charity or Alms of men—to Love, and to the God of Love, *all* their substance is due—and all their strength—and all their time. That is the first commandment: Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy strength and soul. Yea, says the false disciple—but not with all my money. And of these it is written, after that thirty-third verse of Luke xiv.: "Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savour, it is neither fit for the land nor the dunghill. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Now in Holbein's great sermon against wealth, the engraving, in the Dance of Death, of the miser and beggar, he chose for the text the verse: "He that stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, and shall not be heard." And he shows that the ear is thus deafened by being filled with a murmuring of its own: and how the ear thus

becomes only as a twisted shell, with the sound of the far-away ocean of Hell in it for ever, he teaches us, in the figure of the fiend which I engraved for you, abortive, fingerless, contemptible, mechanical, incapable;—blowing the winds of death out of its small machine: Behold, *this* is your God, you modern Israel, which has brought you up out of the land of Egypt in which your fathers toiled for bread with their not abortive hands; and set your feet in the large room, of Usury, and in the broad road to Death!

Now the moment that the Mammon devil gets his bellows put in men's ears,—however innocent they may be, however free from actual stain of avarice, they become literally deaf to the teaching of true and noble men. . . .

. . . The Parables of the New Testament are so constructed that to men in this insolent temper, they are *necessarily* misleading. It is very awful that it should be so; but that is the fact. Why prayer should be taught by the story of the unjust judge; use of present opportunity by that of the unjust steward; and use of the gifts of God by that of the hard man who reaped where he had not sown,—there is no human creature wise enough to know;—but there are the traps set; and every slack judge, cheating servant, and gnawing usurer may, if he will, approve himself in these.

"Thou knewest that I was a hard man." Yes—and if God were also a hard God, and reaped where *He* had not sown—the conclusion would be true that earthly usury was right. But which of God's gifts to us are *not* His own?

The meaning of the parable, heard with ears unbesotted, is this:—"*You*, among hard and unjust men, yet suffer their claim to the return of what they never gave; you suffer *them* to reap, where they have not strawed.—But to me, the Just Lord of your life—whose is the breath in your nostrils, whose the fire in your blood, who gave you light and thought, and the fruit of earth and the dew of heaven,—to me, of all this gift, will you return no fruit but only the dust of your bodies, and the wreck of your souls?" (*Letter* 53.)

## 33. Art and Religion.

All my first books, to the end of the 'Stones of Venice,' were written in the simple belief I had been taught as a child; and especially the second volume of 'Modern Painters' was an outcry of enthusiastic praise of religious painting, in which you will find me placing Fra Angelico, (see the closing paragraph of the book,) above all other painters.

But during my work at Venice, I discovered the gigantic power of Tintoret, and found that there was a quite different spirit in that from the spirit of Angelico; and, analysing Venetian work carefully, I found,—and told fearlessly, in spite of my love for the masters,—that there was "no religion whatever in any work of Titian's; and that Tintoret only occasionally forgot himself into religion."—I repeat now, and reaffirm, this statement; but must ask the reader to add to it, what I partly indeed said in other places at the time, that only when Tintoret forgets himself, does he truly find himself.

Now you see that among the four pieces of art I have given you for standards to study, only one is said to be 'perfect,'—Titian's. And ever since the 'Stones of Venice' was written, Titian was given in all my art-teaching as a standard of perfection. Conceive the weight of this problem, then, on my inner mind—how the most perfect work I knew, in my special business, could be done "wholly without religion"!

I set myself to work out that problem thoroughly in 1858, and arrived at the conclusion—which is an entirely sound one, and which did indeed alter, from that time forward, the tone and method of my teaching,—that human work must be done honourably and thoroughly, because we are now Men;—whether we ever expect to be angels, or ever were slugs, being practically no matter. We *are* now Human creatures, and must, at our peril, do Human —that is to say, affectionate, honest, and earnest work.

Farther, I found, and have always since taught, and do teach, and shall teach, I doubt not, till I die, that in resolving to do our work well, is the only sound foundation of any religion whatsoever: and that by that resolution only, and what we have done, and not by our belief, Christ will judge us, as He has plainly told us He will, (though nobody believes Him,) in the Resurrection. (*Letter* 76.)

## 34. Mercy.

My good working readers, I will try to-day to put you more clearly in understanding of this modern

gospel,—of what truth there is in it—for some there is,—and of what pestilent evil.

I call it a modern gospel: in its deepest truth it is as old as Christianity. "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." And it was the most distinctive character of Christianity. Here was a new, astonishing religion indeed; one had heard before of righteousness; before of resurrection;—never before of mercy to sin, or fellowship with it.

But it is only in strictly modern times (that is to say, within the last hundred years) that this has been fixed on, by a large sect of thick-headed persons, as the *essence* of Christianity,—nay, as so much its essence, that to be an extremely sinful sinner is deliberately announced by them as the best of qualifications for becoming an extremely Christian Christian.

But all the teachings of Heaven are given—by sad law—in so obscure, nay, often in so ironical manner, that a blockhead necessarily reads them wrong. Very marvellous it is that Heaven, which really in one sense *is* merciful to sinners, is in no sense merciful to fools, but even lays pitfalls for them, and inevitable snares.

Again and again, in the New Testament, the publican (supposed at once traitor to his country and thief) and the harlot are made the companions of Christ. She out of whom He had cast seven devils, loves Him best, sees Him first, after His resurrection. The sting of that *old* verse, "When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst to him, and hast been partaker with adulterers," seems done away with. Adultery itself uncondemned,—for, behold,

in your hearts is not every one of you alike? "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And so, and so, no more stones shall be cast nowadays; and here, on the top of our epitaph on the Bishop, lies a notice of the questionable sentence which hanged a man for beating his wife to death with a stick. "The jury recommended him strongly to mercy."

They did so, because they knew not, in their own hearts, what mercy meant. They were afraid to do anything so extremely compromising and disagreeable as causing a man to be hanged,—had no 'pity' for any creatures beaten to death—wives, or beasts; but only a cowardly fear of commanding death, where it was due. Your modern conscience will not incur the responsibility of shortening the hourly more guilty life of a single rogue; but will contentedly fire a salvo of mitrailleuses into a regiment of honest men—leaving Providence to guide the shot. But let us fasten on the word they abused, and understand it. Mercy—misericordia: it does not in the least mean forgiveness of sins,—it means pity of sorrows. In that very instance which the Evangelicals are so fond of quoting—the adultery of David—it is not the Passion for which he is to be judged, but the *want* of Passion,—the want of Pity. *This* he is to judge himself for, by his own mouth:—"As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die,—because he hath done this thing, and because he had *no pity*."

And you will find, alike throughout the record of the Law and the promises of the Gospel, that there is, indeed, forgiveness with God, and Christ, for the

passing sins of the hot heart, but none for the eternal and inherent sin of the cold. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy';—find it you written anywhere that the *un*merciful shall? 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.' But have you record of any one's sins being forgiven who loved not at all? . . .

. . . At my present age of fifty-five, in spite of some enlarged observations of what modern philosophers call the Reign of Law, I perceive more distinctly than ever the Reign of a Spirit of Mercy and Truth,—infinite in pardon and purification for its wandering and faultful children, who have yet Love in their hearts; and altogether adverse and implacable to its perverse and lying enemies, who have resolute hatred in their hearts, and resolute falsehood on their lips. (*Letter* 42.)

## 35. The Catholic Prayer.

"Deus, a quo sancta desideria, recta consilia, et justa sunt opera, da servis tuis illam quam mundus dare non potest pacem, ut et corda nostra mandatis tuis, et, hostium sublata formidine, tempora, sint tuâ protectione tranquilla."

"God, from whom are all holy desires, right counsels, and just works, give to Thy servants that peace which the world cannot, that both our hearts, in Thy commandments, and our times, the fear of enemies being taken away, may be calm under Thy guard."

The adulteration of this great Catholic prayer in our English church-service, (as needless as it was

senseless, since the pure form of it contains nothing but absolutely Christian prayer, and is as fit for the most stammering Protestant lips as for Dante's), destroyed all the definite meaning of it,* and left merely the vague expression of desire for peace, on quite unregarded terms. For of the millions of people who utter the prayer at least weekly, there is not one in a thousand who is ever taught, or can for themselves find out, either what a holy desire means, or a right counsel means, or a just work means,—or what the world is, or what the peace is which it cannot give. And half an hour after they have insulted God by praying to Him in this deadest of all dead languages, not understanded of the people, they leave the church, themselves pacified in their perennial determination to put no check on their natural covetousness; to act on their own opinions, be they right or wrong; to do whatever they can make money by, be it just or unjust; and to thrust themselves, with the utmost of their soul and strength, to the highest, by them attainable, pinnacle of the most bedrummed and betrumpeted booth in the Fair of the World.

The prayer, in its pure text, is essentially, indeed, a monastic one; but it is written for the great Monastery of the Servants of God, whom the world hates. It cannot be uttered with honesty but by these; nor can it ever be answered but with the

* Missing, in the phrase 'that our hearts may be set to obey' the entire sense of the balanced clause in the original,—namely, that the Law of God is *given* to be the shield and comfort of the soul against spiritual enemies, as the merciful angels encamp round us against earthly ones.

peace bequeathed to these, 'not as the world giveth.'

Of which peace, the nature is not to be without war, but undisturbed in the midst of war; and not without enemies, but without fear of them. It is a peace without pain, because desiring only what is holy; without anxiety, because it thinks only what is right; without disappointment, because a just work is always successful; without sorrow, because 'great peace have they which love Thy Law, and nothing shall offend them'; and without terror, because the God of all battles is its Guard. (*Letter* 58.)

# III

# ECONOMIC

# III.—ECONOMIC

## PASSAGES 36–75

# III

# ECONOMIC

## 36. Economic Propositions.

PROPOSITION I.—The English nation is beginning another group of ten years, empty in purse, empty in stomach, and in a state of terrified hostility, to every other nation under the sun.

PROPOSITION II.—Of such prosperity I, for one, have seen enough, and will endure it no longer quietly; but will set aside some part of my income to help, if anybody else will join me, in forming a National store instead of a National Debt; and will explain to you as I have time and power, how to avoid such distress in future, by adhering to the elementary principles of Human Economy, which have been of late wilfully entombed under pyramids of falsehood.

PROPOSITION III.—Your redemption from the distress into which you have fallen is in your own hands, and in nowise depends on forms of government or modes of election.

But you must make the most of what forms of government you have got, by choosing honest men to work them (if you choose at all), and preparatorily, by honestly obeying them, and in all possible ways,

making honest men of yourselves; and if it be, indeed, now impossible—as I heard the clergyman declare at Matlock—for any honest man to live by trade in England, amending the methods of English trade in the necessary particulars, until it becomes possible for honest men to live by it again. In the meantime resolving that you, for your part, will do good work, whether you live by it or die.

PROPOSITION IV.—Of present parliaments and governments you have mainly to inquire what they want with your money when they demand it. And that you may do this intelligently, you are to remember that only a certain quantity of money exists at any given time, and that your first business must be to ascertain the available amount of it, and what it is available for. Because you do not put more money into rich people's hands, when you succeed in putting into rich people's heads that they want something to-day which they had no occasion for yesterday. What they pay you for one thing, they cannot for another; and if they now spend their incomes, they can spend no more. Which you will find they do, and always have done, and can, in fact, neither spend more, nor less—this income being indeed the quantity of food their land produces, by which all art and all manufacture must be supported, and of which no art or manufacture, except such as are directly and wisely employed on the land, can produce a morsel.

PROPOSITION V.—You had better take care of your squires. Their land, indeed, only belongs to them, or is said to belong, because they seized it long since by force of hand, and you may think you

have precisely the same right to seize it now, for yourselves, if you can. So you have,—precisely the same right,—that is to say, none. As they had no right to seize it then, neither have you now. The land, by divine right, can be neither theirs nor yours, except under conditions which you will not ascertain by fighting. In the meantime, by the law of England, the land is theirs; and your first duty as Englishmen is to obey the law of England, be it just or unjust, until it is by due and peaceful deliberation altered, if alteration of it be needful; and to be sure that you are able and willing to obey good laws, before you seek to alter unjust ones. For you cannot know whether they are unjust or not until you are just yourselves. Also, your race of squires, considered merely as an animal one, is very precious; and you had better see what use you can make of it, before you let it fall extinct, like the Dodo's. For none other such exists in any part of this round little world: and, once destroyed, it will be long before it develops itself again from Mr. Darwin's germ cells.

PROPOSITION VI.—But, if you can, honestly, you had better become minute squires yourselves. The law of England nowise forbids your buying any land which the squires are willing to part with, for such savings as you may have ready. And the main proposal made to you in this book is that you should so economize till you can indeed become diminutive squires, and develop accordingly into some proportionate fineness of race.

PROPOSITION VII.—But it is perhaps not equally necessary to take care of your capitalists, or so-called

'Employers.' For your real employer is the public; and the so-called employer is only a mediator between the public and you, whose mediation is perhaps more costly than need be, to you both. So that it will be well for you to consider how far, without such intervention, you may succeed in employing *yourselves;* and my seventh proposition is accordingly that some of you, and all, in some proportion, should be diminutive capitalists, as well as diminutive squires, yet under a novel condition, as follows:—

PROPOSITION VIII.—Observe, first, that in the ancient and hitherto existent condition of things, the squire is essentially an idle person who has possession of land, and lends it, but does not use it; and the capitalist is essentially an idle person, who has possession of tools, and lends them, but does not use them; while the labourer, by definition, is a laborious person, and by presumption, a penniless one, who is obliged to borrow both land and tools; and paying, for rent on the one, and profit on the other, what will maintain the squire and capitalist, digs finally a remnant of roots, wherewith to maintain himself. . . .

. . . Land should belong to those who can use *it*, and tools to those who can use *them;* or, as a less revolutionary, and instantly practicable, proposal, that those who have land and tools—should use them.

PROPOSITION IX. and last:—To know the "use" either of land or tools, you must know what useful things can be grown from the one, and made with the other. And therefore to know what is useful, and what useless, and be skilful to provide the one, and wise to scorn the other, is the first need for all

industrious men. Wherefore, I propose that schools should be established, wherein the use of land and tools shall be taught conclusively:—in other words, the sciences of agriculture (with associated river and sea-culture); and the noble arts and exercises of humanity. (*Letter* 22.)

## 37. Essentials of Life.

There are three Material things, not only useful, but essential to Life. No one "knows how to live" till he has got them.

These are, Pure Air, Water, and Earth.

There are three Immaterial things, not only useful, but essential to Life. No one knows how to live till he has got them.

These are, Admiration, Hope, and Love.

Admiration—the power of discerning and taking delight in what is beautiful in visible Form, and lovely in human Character; and, necessarily, striving to produce what is beautiful in form, and to become what is lovely in character.

Hope—the recognition, by true Foresight, of better things to be reached hereafter, whether by ourselves or others; necessarily issuing in the straightforward and undisappointable effort to advance, according to our proper power, the gaining of them.

Love, both of family and neighbour, faithful, and satisfied.

These are the six chiefly useful things to be got by Political Economy, when it *has* become a science. I will briefly tell you what modern Political Economy —the great "savoir mourir"—is doing with them.

The first three, I said, are Pure Air, Water, and Earth.

Heaven gives you the main elements of these. You can destroy them at your pleasure, or increase, almost without limit, the available qualities of them.

You can vitiate the air by your manner of life, and of death, to any extent. You might easily vitiate it so as to bring such a pestilence on the globe as would end all of you. You or your fellows, German and French, are at present busy in vitiating it to the best of your power in every direction; chiefly at this moment with corpses, and animal and vegetable ruin in war: changing men, horses, and garden-stuff into noxious gas. But everywhere, and all day long, you are vitiating it with foul chemical exhalations; and the horrible nests, which you call towns, are little more than laboratories for the distillation into heaven of venomous smokes and smells, mixed with effluvia from decaying animal matter, and infectious miasmata from purulent disease.

On the other hand, your power of purifying the air, by dealing properly and swiftly with all substances in corruption; by absolutely forbidding noxious manufactures; and by planting in all soils the trees which cleanse and invigorate earth and atmosphere,—is literally infinite. You might make every breath of air you draw, food.

Secondly, your power over the rain and river-waters of the earth is infinite. You can bring rain where you will, by planting wisely and tending carefully;—drought where you will, by ravage of woods and neglect of the soil. You might have the rivers of England as pure as the crystal of the rock; beautiful

in falls, in lakes, in living pools; so full of fish that you might take them out with your hands instead of nets. Or you may do always as you have done now, turn every river of England into a common sewer, so that you cannot so much as baptize an English baby but with filth, unless you hold its face out in the rain; and even *that* falls dirty.

Then for the third, Earth,—meant to be nourishing for you, and blossoming. You have learned, about it, that there is no such thing as a flower; and as far as your scientific hands and scientific brains, inventive of explosive and deathful, instead of blossoming and life giving, Dust, can contrive, you have turned the Mother-Earth, Demeter, into the Avenger-Earth, Tisiphone—with the voice of your brother's blood crying out of it, in one wild harmony round all its murderous sphere.

This is what you have done for the three Material Useful Things.

Then for the Three Immaterial Useful Things. For Admiration, you have learnt contempt and conceit. There is no lovely thing ever yet done by man that you care for, or can understand; but you are persuaded you are able to do much finer things yourselves. You gather, and exhibit together, as if equally instructive, what is infinitely bad, with what is infinitely good. You do not know which is which; you instinctively prefer the Bad, and do more of it. You instinctively hate the Good, and destroy it.

Then, secondly, for Hope. You have not so much spirit of it in you as to begin any plan which will not pay for ten years; nor so much intelligence of it in you (either politicians or workmen), as to be able to

form one clear idea of what you would like your country to become.

Then, thirdly, for Love. You were ordered by the Founder of your religion to love your neighbour as yourselves.

You have founded an entire Science of Political Economy, on what you have stated to be the constant instinct of man—the desire to defraud his neighbour.

And you have driven your women mad, so that they ask no more for Love, nor for fellowship with you; but stand against you, and ask for "justice."

Are there any of you who are tired of all this? Any of you, Landlords or Tenants? Employers or Workmen?

Are there any landlords,—any masters,—who would like better to be served by men than by iron devils?

Any tenants, any workmen, who can be true to their leaders and to each other? who can vow to work and to live faithfully, for the sake of the joy of their homes?

Will any such give the tenth of what they have, and of what they earn,—not to emigrate with, but to stay in England with; and do what is in their hands and hearts to make her a happy England? (*Letter* 5.)

## 38. Object of all Work.

The first object of all work—not the principal one, but the first and necessary one—is to get food, clothes, lodging, and fuel.

It is quite possible to have too much of all these things. I know a great many gentlemen, who eat too large dinners; a great many ladies, who have

too many clothes. I know there is lodging to spare in London, for I have several houses there myself, which I can't let. And I know there is fuel to spare everywhere, since we get up steam to pound the roads with, while our men stand idle; or drink till they can't stand, idle, or any otherwise.

Notwithstanding, there is agonizing distress even in this highly favoured England, in some classes, for want of food, clothes, lodging, and fuel. (*Letter* 1.)

## 39. Two Kinds of Labour.

There are, practically, two absolutely opposite kinds of labour going on among men, for ever.

The first, labour supported by Capital, producing nothing.

The second, labour unsupported by Capital, producing all things.

Take two simple and precise instances on a small scale.

A little while since, I was paying a visit in Ireland, and chanced to hear an account of the pleasures of a picnic party, who had gone to see a waterfall. There was of course ample lunch, feasting on the grass, and basketsful of fragments taken up afterwards.

Then the company, feeling themselves dull, gave the fragments that remained to the attendant ragged boys, on condition that they should 'pull each other's hair.'

Here, you see, is, in the most accurate sense, employment of food, or capital, in the support of entirely unproductive labour.

Next, for the second kind. I live at the top of a

short but rather steep hill; at the bottom of which, every day, all the year round, but especially in frost, coal-waggons get stranded, being economically provided with the smallest number of horses that can get them along on level ground.

The other day, when the road, frozen after thaw, was at the worst, my assistant was coming up here, and found three coal-waggons at a lock, helpless; the drivers, as usual, explaining Political Economy to the horses, by beating them over the heads.

There were half a dozen fellows besides, out of work, or not caring to be in it—standing by, looking on. My engraver put his shoulder to a wheel, (at least his hand to a spoke,) and called on the idlers to do as much. They didn't seem to have thought of such a thing, but were ready enough when called on. "And we went up screaming," said Mr. Burgess.

Do you suppose that was one whit less proper human work than going up a hill against a battery, merely because, in that case, half of the men would have gone down, screaming, instead of up; and those who got up would have done no good at the top?

But observe the two opposite kinds of labour. The first lavishly supported by Capital, and producing Nothing. The second, unsupported by any Capital whatsoever,—not having so much as a stick for a tool,—but called, by mere goodwill, out of the vast void of the world's Idleness, and producing the definitely profitable result of moving a weight of fuel some distance towards the place where it was wanted and, sparing the strength of overloaded creatures.

Observe further. The labour producing no useful result was demoralizing. All such labour is.

The labour producing useful result was educational in its influence on the temper. All such labour is.

And the first condition of education, the thing you are all crying out for, is being put to wholesome and useful work. And it is nearly the last conditions of it, too; you need very little more; but, as things go, there will yet be difficulty in getting that. As things have hitherto gone, the difficulty has been to avoid getting the reverse of that.

For, during the last eight hundred years, the upper classes of Europe have been one large Picnic Party. Most of them have been religious also; and in sitting down, by companies, upon the green grass, in parks, gardens, and the like, have considered themselves commanded into that position by Divine authority, and fed with bread from Heaven: of which they duly considered it proper to bestow the fragments in support, and the tithes in tuition, of the poor.

But, without even such small cost, they might have taught the poor many beneficial things. In some places they *have* taught them manners, which is already much. They might have cheaply taught them merriment also: — dancing and singing, for instance. The young English ladies who sit nightly to be instructed, themselves, at some cost, in melodies illustrative of the consumption of La Traviata, and the damnation of Don Juan, might have taught every girl peasant in England to join in costless choirs of innocent song. Here and there, perhaps,

a gentleman might have been found able to teach his peasantry some science and art. Science and fine art don't pay; but they cost little. Tithes—not of the income of the country, but of the income, say, of its brewers—nay, probably the sum devoted annually by England to provide drugs for the adulteration of its own beer,—would have founded lovely little museums, and perfect libraries, in every village. And if here and there an English churchman had been found (such as Dean Stanley) willing to explain to peasants the sculpture of his and their own cathedral, and to read its black-letter inscriptions for them; and, on warm Sundays, when they were too sleepy to attend to anything more proper—to tell them a story about some of the people who had built it, or lay buried in it—we perhaps might have been quite as religious as we are, and yet need not now have been offering prizes for competition in art schools, nor lecturing with tender sentiment on the inimitableness of the works of Fra Angelico.

These things the great Picnic Party might have taught without cost, and with amusement to themselves. One thing, at least, they were bound to teach, whether it amused them or not;—how, day by day, the daily bread they expected their village children to pray to God for, might be earned in accordance with the laws of God. *This* they might have taught, not only without cost, but with great gain. One thing only they *have* taught, and at considerable cost.

They have spent four hundred millions of pounds here in England within the last twenty years!—how much in France and Germany, I will take some

pains to ascertain for you,—and with this initial outlay of capital, have taught the peasants of Europe —to pull each other's hair. (*Letter* 2.)

## 40. Idleness.

"None idle but the dead."—

I beg you to observe that last condition especially. You will debate for many a day to come the causes that have brought this misery upon France, and there are many; but one is chief—chief cause, now and always, of evil everywhere; and I see it at this moment, in its deadliest form, out of the window of my quiet English inn. . . .

. . . The country boy, in his white blouse, leans placidly against the prison wall this bright Sunday morning, little thinking what a luminous sign-post he is making of himself, and living gnomon of sun-dial, of which the shadow points sharply to the subtlest cause of the fall of France, and of England, as is too likely, after her.

Your hands in your own pockets, in the morning. That is the beginning of the last day; your hands in other people's pockets at noon; that is the height of the last day; and the gaol, ornamented or otherwise (assuredly the great gaol of the grave), for the night. That is the history of nations under judgment. (*Letter* 6.)

## 41. Communism.

Will you be at the pains, now, however, to learn rightly and once for all, what Communism is? First,

it means that everybody must work in common, and do common or simple work for his dinner; and that if any man will not do it, he must not have his dinner. . . .

You see, there is never any fear, among us of the old school, of being out of work; but there is great fear, among many of us, lest we should not do the work set us well; for, indeed, we thorough-going Communists make it a part of our daily duty to consider how common we are; and how few of us have any brains or souls worth speaking of, or fit to trust to;—that being the, alas, almost unexceptionable lot of human creatures. Not that we think ourselves, (still less, call ourselves without thinking so,) miserable sinners, for we are not in anywise miserable, but quite comfortable for the most part; and we are not sinners, that we know of; but are leading godly, righteous, and sober lives, to the best of our power, since last Sunday; (on which day some of us were, we regret to be informed, drunk;) but we are of course common creatures enough, the most of us, and thankful if we may be gathered up in St. Peter's sheet, so as not to be uncivilly or unjustly called unclean too. And therefore our chief concern is to find out any among us wiser and of better make than the rest, and to get them, if they will for any persuasion take the trouble, to rule over us, and teach us how to behave, and make the most of what little good is in us.

So much for the first law of old Communism, respecting work. Then the second respects property, and it is that the public, or common, wealth, shall be more and statelier in all its substance than private

or singular wealth; that is to say (to come to my own special business for a moment) that there shall be only cheap and few pictures, if any, in the insides of houses, where nobody but the owner can see them; but costly pictures, and many, on the outsides of houses, where the people can see them: also that the Hôtel-de-Ville, or Hotel of the whole Town, for the transaction of its common business, shall be a magnificent building, much rejoiced in by the people, and with its tower seen far away through the clear air; but that the hotels for private business or pleasure, cafés, taverns, and the like, shall be low, few, plain, and in back streets; more especially such as furnish singular and uncommon drinks and refreshments; but that the fountains which furnish the people's common drink shall be very lovely and stately, and adorned with precious marbles, and the like. Then farther, according to old Communism, the private dwellings of uncommon persons—dukes and lords—are to be very simple, and roughly put together,—such persons being supposed to be above all care for things that please the commonalty; but the buildings for public or common service, more especially schools, almshouses, and workhouses, are to be externally of a majestic character, as being for noble purposes and charities; and in their interiors furnished with many luxuries for the poor and sick. And, finally and chiefly, it is an absolute law of old Communism that the fortunes of private persons should be small, and of little account in the State; but the common treasure of the whole nation should be of superb and precious things in redundant quantity, as pictures, statues, precious books; gold

and silver vessels, preserved from ancient times; gold and silver bullion laid up for use, in case of any chance need of buying anything suddenly from foreign nations; noble horses, cattle, and sheep, on the public lands; and vast spaces of land for culture, exercise, and garden, round the cities, full of flowers, which, being everybody's property, nobody could gather; and of birds which, being everybody's property, nobody could shoot. And, in a word, that instead of a common poverty, or national debt, which every poor person in the nation is taxed annually to fulfil his part of, there should be a common wealth, or national reverse of debt, consisting of pleasant things, which every poor person in the nation should be summoned to receive his dole of, annually; and of pretty things, which every person capable of admiration, foreigners as well as natives, should unfeignedly admire, in an æsthetic, and not a covetous manner (though for my own part I can't understand what it is that I am taxed now to defend, or what foreign nations are supposed to covet, here). But truly, a nation that has got anything to defend of real public interest, can usually hold it. . . .

Now all these laws respecting public and private property, are accepted in the same terms by the entire body of us Communists of the old school; but with respect to the management of both, we old Reds fall into two classes, differing, not indeed in colour of redness, but in depth of tint of it—one class being, as it were, only of a delicately pink, peach-blossom, or dog-rose redness; but the other, to which I myself do partly, and desire wholly to belong, as I told you, reddest of the red. . . .

And between these two sects or shades of us, there is this difference in our way of holding our common faith, (that our neighbour's property is ours, and ours his,) namely, that the rose-red division of us are content in their diligence of care to preserve or guard from injury or loss their neighbours' property, as their own; so that they may be called, not merely dog-rose red, but even 'watch-dog-rose' red; being, indeed, more careful and anxious for the safety of the possessions of other people, (especially their masters,) than for any of their own; and also more sorrowful for any wound or harm suffered by any creature in their sight, than for hurt to themselves. So that they are Communists, even less in their having part in all common well-being of their neighbours, than part in all common pain: being yet, on the whole, infinite gainers; for there is in this world infinitely more joy than pain to be shared, if you will only take your share when it is set for you.

The vermilion, or Tyrian-red sect of us, however, are not content merely with this carefulness and watchfulness over our neighbours' good, but we cannot rest unless we are giving what we can spare of our own; and the more precious it is, the more we want to divide it with somebody. So that above all things, in what we value most of possessions, pleasant sights, and true knowledge, we cannot relish seeing any pretty things unless other people see them also; neither can we be content to know anything for ourselves, but must contrive, somehow, to make it known to others.

And as thus especially we like to give knowledge

away, so we like to have it good to give, (for, as for selling knowledge, thinking it comes by the spirit of Heaven, we hold the selling of it to be only a-way of selling God again, and utterly Iscariot's business;) also, we know that the knowledge made up for sale is apt to be watered and dusted, or even itself good for nothing; and we try, for our part, to get it, and give it, pure: the mere fact that it is to be given away at once to anybody who asks to have it, and immediately wants to use it, is a continual check upon us. . . .

But the point in which we dark-red Communists differ most from other people is, that we dread, above all things, getting miserly of virtue; and if there be any in us, or among us, we try forthwith to get it made common, and would fain hear the mob crying for some of that treasure, where it seems to have accumulated. I say, 'seems,' only: for though, at first, all the finest virtue looks as if it were laid up with the rich, (so that, generally, a millionaire would be much surprised at hearing that his daughter had made a *petroleuse* of herself, or that his son had murdered anybody for the sake of their watch and cravat),—it is not at all clear to us dark-reds that this virtue, proportionate to income, is of the right sort; and we believe that even if it were, the people who keep it thus all to themselves, and leave the so-called *canaille* without any, vitiate what they keep by keeping it, so that it is like manna laid up through the night, which breeds worms in the morning.

You see, also, that we dark-red Communists, since we exist only in giving, must, on the contrary, hate

with a perfect hatred all manner of thieving; and of all thieving, we dislike thieving on trust most. So also, as we think virtue diminishes in the honour and force of it in proportion to income, we think vice increases in the force and shame of it, and is worse in kings and rich people than in poor; and worse on a large scale than on a narrow one; and worse when deliberate than hasty. (*Letter* 7.)

## 42. Modern Slavery.

Freemen, indeed! You are slaves, not to masters of any strength or honour; but to the idlest talkers at that floral end of Westminster bridge. Nay, to countless meaner masters than they. For though, indeed, as early as the year 1102, it was decreed in a council at St. Peter's, Westminster, "that no man for the future should presume to carry on the wicked trade of selling men in the markets, like brute beasts, which hitherto hath been the common custom of England," the no less wicked trade of *under*-selling men in markets has lasted to this day; producing conditions of slavery differing from the ancient ones only in being starved instead of full-fed: and besides this, a state of slavery unheard of among the nations till now, has arisen with us. In all former slaveries, Egyptian, Algerine, Saxon, and American, the slave's complaint has been of compulsory *work*. But the modern Politico-Economic slave is a new and far more injured species, condemned to Compulsory *Idleness*, for fear he should spoil other people's trade; the beautifully logical condition of the national Theory of Economy in this matter being that, if you

are a shoemaker, it is a law of Heaven that you must sell your goods under their price, in order to destroy the trade of other shoemakers; but if you are not a shoemaker, and are going shoeless and lame, it is a law of Heaven that you must not cut yourself a bit of cowhide, to put between your foot and the stones, because that would interfere with the total trade of shoemaking. (*Letter* 3.)

## 43. "An Unpractical Saying."

A year or two ago, a man who had at the time, and has still, important official authority over much of the business of the country, was speaking anxiously to me of the misery increasing in the suburbs and back streets of London, and debating, with the good help of the Oxford Regius Professor of Medicine—who was second in council—what sanitary or moral remedy could be found. The debate languished, however, because of the strong conviction in the minds of all three of us that the misery was inevitable in the suburbs of so vast a city. At last, either the minister or physician, I forget which, expressed the conviction. "Well," I answered, "then you must not have large cities." "That," answered the minister, "is an unpractical saying—you know we *must* have them, under existing circumstances."

I made no reply, feeling that it was vain to assure any man actively concerned in modern parliamentary business, that no measures were "practical" except those which touched the source of the evil opposed. All systems of government—all efforts of benevolence, are vain to repress the natural consequences of

radical error. But any man of influence who had the sense and courage to refuse himself and his family one London season—to stay on his estate, and employ the shopkeepers in his own village, instead of those in Bond Street—would be "practically" dealing with, and conquering, this evil, so far as in him lay; and contributing with his whole might to the thorough and final conquest of it.

Not but that I know how to meet it directly also, if any London landlords choose so to attack it. You are beginning to hear something of what Miss Hill has done in Marylebone, and of the change brought about by her energy and good sense in the centre of one of the worst districts of London. (*Letter* 10.)

## 44. Lords and Ladies.

. . . But the best that can be done in this way will be useless ultimately, unless the deep source of the misery be cut off. While Miss Hill, with intense effort and noble power, has partially moralized a couple of acres in Marylebone, at least fifty square miles of lovely country have been Demoralized outside London, by the increasing itch of the upper classes to live where they can get some gossip in their idleness and show each other their dresses.

That life of theirs must come to an end soon, but to what end, it is, I trust, in their own power still to decide. If they resolve to maintain to the last the present system of spending the rent taken from the rural districts in the dissipation of the capitals, they will not always find they can secure a quiet time, as the other day in Dublin, by withdrawing the police,

nor that park-railings are the only thing which (police being duly withdrawn) will go down. Those favourite castle battlements of mine, their internal "police" withdrawn, will go down also; and I should be sorry to see it;—the lords and ladies, houseless at least in shooting season, perhaps sorrier, though they *did* find the grey turrets dismal in winter time. If they would yet have them for autumn, they must have them for winter. Consider, fair lords and ladies, by the time you marry, and choose your dwelling-places, there are for you but forty or fifty winters more in whose dark days you may see the snow fall and wreathe. There will be no snow in Heaven, I presume—still less elsewhere, (if lords and ladies ever miss of Heaven). (*Letter* 10.)

## 45. Law.

My friends, we have been thinking, perhaps, to-day, more than we ought of our masters' faults,—scarcely enough of our own. If you would have the upper classes do *their* duty, see that you also do yours. See that you can obey good laws, and good lords, or law-wards, if you once get them—that you believe in goodness enough to know what a good law is. A good law is one that holds, whether you recognize and pronounce it or not; a bad law is one that cannot hold, however much you ordain and pronounce it. That is the mighty truth which Carlyle has been telling you for a quarter of a century. . . .

Read your Carlyle, then, with all your heart, and with the best of brain you can give; and you will learn from him first, the eternity of good law, and

the need of obedience to it: then, concerning your own immediate business, you will learn farther this, that the beginning of all good law, and nearly the end of it, is in these two ordinances,—That every man shall do good work for his bread: and secondly, that every man shall have good bread for his work. But the first of these is the only one you have to think of. If you are resolved that the work shall be good, the bread will be sure; if not,—believe me, there is neither steam plough nor steam mill, go they never so glibly, that will win it from the earth long, either for you, or the Ideal Landed Proprietor. (*Letter* 10.)

## 46. Soldiers, Clergy, and Peasants.

I mean by 'peasants,' the producers of food, out of land or water; by 'clergy,' men who live by teaching or exhibition of behaviour; and by 'soldiers,' those who live by fighting, either by robbing wise peasants, or getting themselves paid by foolish ones. Into these three classes the world's multitudes are essentially hitherto divided. The legitimate merchant of course exists, and can exist, only on the small percentage of pay obtainable for the transfer of goods; and the manufacturer and artist are, in healthy society, developed states of the peasant. The morbid power of manufacture and commerce in our own age is an accidental condition of national decrepitude; the injustices connected with it are mainly those of the gambling-house, and quite unworthy of analytical inquiry; but the unjust relations of the soldier, clergyman, and peasant have hitherto been constant

in all great nations;—they are full of mystery and beauty in their iniquity; they require the most subtle, and deserve the most reverent, analysis.

The first root of distinction between the soldier and peasant is in barrenness and fruitfulness of possessed ground; the inhabitant of sands and rocks "redeeming his share" from the inhabitant of corn-bearing ground. The second root of it is delight in athletic exercise, resulting in beauty of person and perfectness of race, and causing men to be content, or even triumphant, in accepting continual risk of death, if by such risk they can escape the injury of servile toil.

Again, the first root of distinction between clergyman and peasant is the greater intelligence, which instinctively desires both to learn and teach, and is content to accept the smallest maintenance, if it may remain so occupied.

The second root of distinction is that which gives rise to the word 'clergy,' properly signifying persons chosen by lot, or in a manner elect, for the practice and exhibition of good behaviour; the visionary or passionate anchorite being content to beg his bread, so only that he may have leave by undisturbed prayer or meditation, to bring himself into closer union with the spiritual world; and the peasant being always content to feed him, on condition of his becoming venerable in that higher state, and, as a peculiarly blessed person, a communicator of blessing.

Now, both these classes of men remain noble, as long as they are content with daily bread, if they may be allowed to live in their own way; but the moment the one of them uses his strength, and the other his

sanctity, to get riches with, or pride of elevation over other men, both of them become tyrants, and capable of any degree of evil. (*Letter* 15.)

## 47. Machinery.

"The wealth in the world practically infinite,"—is it? Then it seems to me, the poor may ask, with more reason than ever before, Why have we not our share of Infinity? We thought, poor ignorants, that we were only the last in the scramble; we submitted, believing that somebody must be last, and somebody first. But if the mass of good things be inexhaustible, and there are horses for everybody,—why is not every beggar on horseback? And, for my own part, why should the question be put to me so often,—which I am sick of answering and answering again,—"How, with our increasing population, are we to live without Machinery?" For if the wealth be already infinite, what need of machinery to make more? Alas, if it *could* make more, what a different world this might be. Arkwright and Stephenson would deserve statues indeed,—as much as St. Paul. If all the steam engines in England, and all the coal in it, with all their horse and ass power put together, could produce —so much as one grain of corn! . . .

. . . . . .

Whatever machinery is needful for human purposes can be driven by wind or water; the Thames alone could drive mills enough to weave velvet and silk for all England. But even mechanical occupation not involving pollution of the atmosphere must be as limited as possible; for it invariably degrades. You

may use your slave in your silver mine, or at your loom, to avoid such labour yourself, if you honestly believe you have brains to be better employed;—or you may yourself, for the service of others, honourably *become* their slave; and, in benevolent degradation, dig silver or weave silk, making yourself semi-spade, or semi-worm. But you must not eventually, for no purpose or motive whatsoever, live amidst smoke and filth, nor allow others to do so; you must see that your slaves are as comfortable and safe as their employment permits, and that they are paid wages high enough to allow them to leave it often for redemption and rest. (*Letter* 44.)

## 48. Land.

In common language, and in vulgar thought, the possession of land is confused with "freedom." But no man is so free as a beggar; and no man is more solemnly a servant to God, the king, and the laws of his country, than an honest land-holder.

The nonsense thought and talked about 'Nationalization of Land,' like other nonsense, must have its day, I suppose,—and I hope, soon, its night. All healthy states from the beginning of the world, living on land, are founded on hereditary tenure, and perish when either the lords or peasants sell their estates, much more when they let them out for hire. The single line of the last words of John of Gaunt to Richard II., "Landlord of England art thou now, not King," expresses the root of the whole matter; and the present weakness of the Peers in their dispute with the Commons is because the Upper House is composed now no more of Seigneurs, but of Landlords.

Possession of land implies the duty of living on it, and by it, if there is enough to live on; then, having got one's own life from it by one's own labour or wise superintendence of labour, if there is more land than is enough for one's self, the duty of making it fruitful and beautiful for as many more as can live on it.

The owner of land, necessarily and justly left in a great measure by the State to do what he will with his own, is nevertheless entirely responsible to the State for the generally beneficial management of his territory; and the sale of his land, or of any portion of it, only allowed under special conditions, and with solemn public registry of the transference to another owner: above all, the landmarks by which estates are described are never to be moved. (*Letter* 95.)

## 49. The British Squire.

And you will see your father the Devil's will done on earth, as it is in hell.

I call him your father, for you have denied your mortal fathers, and the Heavenly One. You have declared, in act and thought, the ways and laws of your sires—obsolete, and of your God—ridiculous; above all, the habits of obedience, and the elements of justice. You were made lords over God's heritage. You thought to make it your own heritage; to be lords of your own land, not of God's land. And to this issue of ownership you are come.

And what a heritage it was, you *had* the lordship over! A land of fruitful vales and pastoral mountains; and a heaven of pleasant sunshine and kindly rain; and times of sweet prolonged summer, and

cheerful transient winter; and a race of pure heart, iron sinew, splendid fame, and constant faith.

All this was yours! the earth with its fair fruits and innocent creatures;—the firmament with its eternal lights and dutiful seasons;—the men, souls and bodies, your fathers' true servants for a thousand years,—their lives, and their children's children's lives given into your hands, to save or to destroy; their food yours,—as the grazing of the sheep is the shepherd's; their thoughts yours,—priest and tutor chosen for them by you; their hearts yours,—if you would but so much as know them by sight and name, and give them the passing grace of your own glance, as you dwelt among them, their king.

And all this monarchy and glory, all this power and love, all this land and its people, you pitifullest, foulest of Iscariots, sopped to choking with the best of the feast from Christ's own fingers, you have deliberately sold to the highest bidder;—Christ, and His Poor, and His Paradise together; and instead of sinning only, like poor natural Adam, gathering of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, you, who don't want to gather it, *touch* it with a vengeance,—cut it down, and sell the timber.

Judases with the big bag—game-bag to wit!—to think how many of your dull Sunday mornings have been spent, for propriety's sake, looking chiefly at those carved angels blowing trumpets above your family vaults; and never one of you has had Christianity enough in him to think that he might as easily have his moors full of angels as of grouse. And now, if ever you did see a real angel before the Day of Judgment, your first thought would be,—to shoot it. (*Letter* 45.)

## 50. Dulce Domum.

The first—not the chief, but the first—piece of good work a man has to do is to find rest for himself,—a place for the sole of his foot; his house, or piece of Holy land; and to *make* it so holy and happy, that if by any chance he receive order to leave it, there may be bitter pain in obedience; and also that to his daughter there may yet one sorrowful sentence be spoken in her day of mirth, "Forget also thy people, and thy father's house."

'But I mean to make money, and have a better and better house, every ten years.'

Yes, I know you do.

If you intend to keep that notion, I have no word more to say to you. Fare you—not well, for you cannot; but as you may.

But if you have sense, and feeling, determine what sort of a house will be fit for you; determine to work for it—to get it—and to die in it, if the Lord will.

'What sort of house will be fit for me?—but of course the biggest and finest I can get will be fittest!'

Again, so says the Devil to you: and if you believe him, he will find you fine lodgings enough,—for rent. But if you don't believe him, consider, I repeat, what sort of house will be fit for you.

'Fit!—but what do you mean by fit?'

I mean, one that you can entirely enjoy and manage; but which you will not be proud of, except as you make it charming in its modesty. If you are proud of it, it is *un*fit for you,—better than a man in your station of life can by simple and sustained

exertion obtain; and it should be rather under such quiet level than above. (*Letter* 47.)

## 51. "Primal Treasures."

Perfectly simple shelter, under the roughest stones and timber that will keep out the weather, is at present the only wholesome condition of private life. Let there be no assumptions of anything, or attempts at anything, but cleanliness, health, and honesty, both in person and possession. Then, whatever you can afford to spend for education in art, give to good masters, and leave them to do the best they can for you: and what you can afford to spend for the splendour of your city, buy grass, flowers, sea, and sky with. No art of man is possible without those primal Treasures of the art of God. (*Letter* 79.)

## 52. Usury.

The dullest of all excuses for usury is that some kind of good is done by the usurer.

Nobody denies the good done; but the principle of Righteous dealing is, that if the good costs you nothing, you must not be paid for doing it. Your friend passes your door on an unexpectedly wet day, unprovided for the occasion. You have the choice of three benevolences to him,—lending him your umbrella, — lending him eighteenpence to pay for a cab,—or letting him stay in your parlour till the rain is over. If you charge him interest on the umbrella, it is profit on capital — if you charge him interest on the eighteenpence, it is ordinary

usury—if you charge him interest on the parlour, it is rent. All three are equally forbidden by Christian law, being actually worse, because more plausible and hypocritical sins, than if you at once plainly refused your friend shelter, umbrella, or pence. You feel yourself to be a brute, in the one case, and may some day repent into grace; in the other you imagine yourself an honest and amiable person, rewarded by Heaven for your charity: and the whole frame of society becomes rotten to its core. Only be clear about what is finally right, whether you can do it or not; and every day you will be more and more able to do it if you try. (*Letter* 80.)

Now the law of Christ about money and other forms of personal wealth, is taught, first in parables, in which He likens Himself to the masters of this world, and explains the conduct which Christians should hold to Him, their heavenly Master, by that which they hold on earth, to earthly ones.

He likens Himself in these stories, several times to unkind or unjust masters, and especially to hard and usurious ones. And the gist of the parables in each case is, "If ye do so, and are thus faithful to hard and cruel masters, in earthly things, how much more should ye be faithful to a merciful Master, in heavenly things?"

Which argument, evil-minded men wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. And instead of reading, for instance, in the parable of the Usurer, the intended lesson of industry in the employment of God's gifts, they read in it a justification of the crime which, in other parts of the same scripture, is directly forbidden. And there is indeed

no doubt that, if the other prophetic parts of the Bible be true, these stories are so worded that they *may* be touchstones of the heart. They are nets, which sift the kindly reader from the selfish. The parable of the Usurer is like a mill sieve:—the fine flour falls through it, bolted finer; the chaff sticks in it.

Therefore, the only way to understand these difficult parts of the Bible, or even to approach them with safety, is first to read and obey the easy ones. Then the difficult ones all become beautiful and clear:—otherwise they remain venomous enigmas, with a Sphinx of destruction, provoking false souls to read them, and ruining them in their own replies.

The orders, "not to lay up treasures for ourselves on earth," and to "sell that we have, and give alms," and to "provide ourselves bags which wax not old," are perfectly direct, unmistakable,—universal; and while we are not at all likely to be blamed by God for not imitating Him as a Judge, we shall assuredly be condemned by Him for not, under Judgment, doing as we were bid. But even if we do not feel able to obey these orders, if we must and will lay up treasures on earth, and provide ourselves bags with holes in them,—God may perhaps still, with scorn, permit us in our weakness, provided we are content with our earthly treasures, when we have got them, and don't oppress our brethren, and grind down their souls with them. We may have our old bag about our neck, if we will, and go to heaven like beggars;—but if we sell our brother also, and put the price of his life in the bag, we need not think to enter

the kingdom of God so loaded. A rich man may, though hardly, enter the kingdom of heaven without repenting him of his riches; but not the thief, without repenting his theft; nor the adulterer, without repenting his adultery; nor the usurer, without repenting his usury.

The nature of which last sin, let us now clearly understand, once for all. . . .

Usury is properly the taking of money for the loan or use of anything, (over and above what pays for wear and tear,) such use involving no care or labour on the part of the lender. It includes all investments of capital whatsoever, returning 'dividends,' as distinguished from labour wages, or profits. Thus anybody who works on a railroad as platelayer, or stoker, has a right to wages for his work; and any inspector of wheels or rails has a right to payment for such inspection; but idle persons who have only paid a hundred pounds towards the road-making, have a right to the return of the hundred pounds,—and no more. If they take a farthing more, they are usurers. They may take fifty pounds for two years, twenty-five for four, five for twenty, or one for a hundred. But the first farthing they take more than their hundred, be it sooner or later, is usury.

Again, when we build a house, and let it, we have a right to as much rent as will return us the wages of our labour, and the sum of our outlay. If, as in ordinary cases, not labouring with our hands or head, we have simply paid—say £1000—to get the house built, we have a right to the £1000 back again at once, if we sell it; or, if we let it, to

£500 rent during two years, or £100 rent during ten years, or £10 rent during a hundred years. But if, sooner or later, we take a pound more than the thousand, we are usurers.

And thus in all other possible or conceivable cases, the moment our capital is 'increased,' by having lent it, be it but in the estimation of a hair, that hair's-breadth of increase is usury, just as much as stealing a farthing is theft, no less than stealing a million.

But usury is worse than theft, in so far as it is obtained either by deceiving people, or distressing them; generally by both: and finally by deceiving the usurer himself, who comes to think that usury is a real increase, and that money can grow of money; whereas all usury is increase to one person only by decrease to another; and every gain of calculated Increment to the Rich, is balanced by its mathematical equivalent of Decrement to the Poor. The Rich have hitherto only counted their gain; but the day is coming, when the Poor will also count their loss,—with political results hitherto unparalleled.

. . . . . .

. . . Any honest and sensible reader, if he chooses, can think out the truth in such matters for himself. If he be dishonest, or foolish, no one can teach him. If he is resolved to find reason or excuse for things as they are, he may find refuge in one lie after another; and, dislodged from each in turn, fly from the last back to the one he began with. But there will not long be need for debate—nor time for it. Not all the lying lips of commercial

Europe can much longer deceive the people in their rapidly increasing distress, nor arrest their straight battle with the cause of it. Through what confused noise and garments rolled in blood,—through what burning and fuel of fire, they will work out their victory,—God only knows, nor what they will do to Barabbas, when they have found out that he *is* a Robber, and not a King. But that discovery of his character and capacity draws very near: and no less change in the world's ways than the former fall of Feudalism itself.

In the meantime, for those of us who are Christians, our own way is plain. We can with perfect ease ascertain what usury is; and in what express terms forbidden.

. . . . . .

"And if thy brother be poor, and powerless with his hands, at thy side, thou shalt take his part upon thee, to help him, as thy proselyte and thy neighbour; and thy brother shall live with thee. Thou shalt take no usury of him, nor anything over and above, and thou shalt fear thy God. I am the Lord, and thy brother shall live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money, for usury; and thou shalt not give him thy food, for increase."

There is the simple law for all of us;—one of those which Christ assuredly came not to destroy, but to fulfil: and there is no national prosperity to be had but in obedience to it.

How we usurers are to live, with the hope of our gains gone, is precisely the old temple of Diana question. How Robin Hood or Cœur de Lion were to live without arrow or axe, would have been

as strange a question to *them*, in their day. And there are many amiable persons who will not directly see their way, any more than I do myself, to an honest life; only, let us be sure that this we are leading now is a dishonest one. (*Letter* 68.)

## 53. Property.

A man's 'Property,' the possession 'proper' to him —his own, rightly so called, and no one else's on any pretence of their's—consists of,

A, The good things,

B, Which he has honestly got,

C, And can skilfully use.

That is the A B C of Property.

A. It must consist of good things—not bad ones. It is rightly called therefore a man's 'Goods,' not a man's 'Bads.'

If you have got a quantity of dung lodged in your drains, a quantity of fleas lodged in your bed, or a quantity of nonsense lodged in your brains,—that is not 'Property,' but the reverse thereof; the value to you of your drains, bed, and brains being thereby diminished, not increased.

Can you understand *that* much, my practical friend?

B. It must be a good thing, honestly got. Nothing that you have stolen or taken by force, nor anything that your fathers stole or took by force, is your property. Nevertheless, the benignant law of Nature concerning any such holding, has always been quite manifestly that you may keep it—if you can,—so only that you acknowledge that and none other to be the condition of tenure.

Can you understand that much more, my practical friend?

C. It must be not only something good, and not only something honestly got, but also something you can skilfully use.

For, as the old proverb, "You can't eat your pudding and have it," is utterly true in its bearing against Usury,—so also this reverse of it is true in confirmation of property—that you can't 'have' your pudding unless you *can* eat it. It may be composed for you of the finest plums, and paid for wholly out of your own pocket; but if you can't stomach it—the pudding is not for *you*. Buy the finest horse on four legs, he is not 'proper' to you if you can't ride him. Buy the best book between boards,—Horace, or Homer, or Dante,—and if you don't know Latin, nor Greek, nor Christianity, the paper and boards are yours indeed, but the books—by no means.

You doubt this, my practical friend?

Try a child with a stick of barley-sugar;—tell him it is his, but he mustn't eat it; his face will express to you the fallaciousness of that principle of property in an unmistakable manner. But by the time he grows as old and stupid as you, perhaps he will buy barley-sugar that he can't taste, to please the public. (*Letter* 70.)

## 54. National Debt.

A national debt, like any other, may be honestly incurred in case of need, and honestly paid in due time. But if a man should be ashamed to borrow,

much more should a people: and if a father holds it his honour to provide for his children, and would be ashamed to borrow from them, and leave, with his blessing, his note of hand, for his grandchildren to pay, much more should a nation be ashamed to borrow, in any case, or in any manner; and if it borrow at all, it is at least in honour bound to borrow from living men, and not indebt itself to its own unborn brats. If it can't provide for them, at least let it not send their cradles to the pawnbroker, and pick the pockets of their first breeches.

A national debt, then, is a foul disgrace, at the best. But it is, as now constituted, also a foul crime. National debts paying interest are simply the purchase, by the rich, of power to tax the poor. (*Letter* 58.)

## 55. Taxation.

I very positively can inform you, the considerablest part of the misery of the world comes of the tricks of unjust taxation. All its evil passions—pride, lust, revenge, malice, and sloth—derive their main deadliness from the facilities of getting hold of other people's money open to the persons they influence. Pay every man for his work,—pay nobody *but* for his work,—and see that the work be sound; and you will find pride, lust, and sloth have little room left for themselves. (*Letter* 16.)

## 56. Money out of Nothing.

At the root of all these follies and iniquities, there lies always one tacit, but infinitely strong persuasion

in the British mind, namely, that somehow money grows out of nothing, if one can only find some expedient to produce an article that must be paid for.

. . . . . .

That is the real impression on the existing popular mind; silent, but deep, and for the present unconquerable.

. . . . . .

That rain and frost of heaven; and the earth which they loose and bind: these, and the labour of your hands to divide them, and subdue, are your wealth, for ever—unincreasable. The fruit of Earth, and its waters, and its light—such as the strength of the pure rock can grow—such as the unthwarted sun in his season brings—these are your inheritance. You can diminish it, but cannot increase: that your barns should be filled with plenty—your presses burst with new wine,—is your blessing; and every year—when it is full—it must be new; and every year, no more.

And this money, which you think so multipliable, is only to be increased in the hands of some, by the loss of others. The sum of it, in the end, represents, and *can* represent, only what is in the barn and winepress. It may represent less, but cannot more. (*Letter* 16.)

## 57. Credit.

It is precisely as great a loss to commerce that every seller has to wait six months for his money, as it is a gain to commerce that every buyer should

keep his money six months in his pocket. In reality there is neither gain nor loss—except by roguery, when the gain is all to the rogue, and the loss to the true man.

In all wise commerce, payment, large or small, should be over the counter. If you can't pay for a thing—don't buy it. If you can't get paid for it—don't sell it. So, you will have calm days, drowsy nights, all the good business you have now, and none of the bad. (*Letter* 26.)

## 58. Master and Servant.

You may shorten your hours of labour as much as you please;—no minute of them will be merry, till you are serving truly: that is to say, until the bond of constant relationship—service to death—is again established between your masters and you. It has been broken by their sin, but may yet be recovered by your virtue. All the best of you cling to the least remnant or shadow of it. I heard but the other day of a foreman, in a large house of business, discharged at a week's warning on account of depression in trade,—who thereupon went to one of the partners, and showed him a letter which he had received a year before, offering him a situation with an increase of his salary by more than a third; which offer he had refused without so much as telling his masters of its being made to him, that he might stay in the old house. He was a Scotchman. . . . I know not how it may be in the south; but I know that in Scotland, and the northern border, there still remains something of the feeling

which fastened the old French word "loial" among the dearest and sweetest of their familiar speech; and that there are some souls yet among them, who, alike in labour or in rest, abide in, or will depart to, the Land of the Leal. (*Letter* 32.)

## 59. The Economic Crisis.

No man ever became, or can become, largely rich merely by labour and economy. All large fortunes (putting treasure-trove and gambling out of consideration) are founded either on occupation of land, usury, or taxation of labour. Whether openly or occultly, the landlord, money-lender, and capital-holding employer, gather into their possession a certain quantity of the means of existence which other people produce by the labour of their hands. The effect of this impost upon the condition of life of the tenant, borrower, and workman, is the first point to be studied.

Secondly, we have to study the effects of the mode in which this impost is spent. The landlord, usurer, or labour-master, does not, and cannot, himself consume all the means of life he collects. He gives them to other persons, whom he employs in his own behalf—growers of champagne; jockeys; footmen; jewellers; builders; painters; musicians; and the like. The diversion of the labour of these persons from the production of food to the production of articles of luxury is very frequently, and, at the present day, very grievously, a cause of famine. But when the luxuries are produced, it becomes a quite separate question who is to have them, and whether

the landlord and capitalist are entirely to monopolize the music, the painting, the architecture, the hand-service, the horse-service, and the sparkling champagne of the world.

And it is gradually, in these days, becoming manifest to the tenants, borrowers, and labourers, that instead of paying these large sums into the hands of the landlords, lenders, and employers, that *they* may purchase music, painting, etc.; the tenants, borrowers, and workers, had better buy a little music and painting for themselves! That, for instance, instead of the capitalist-employer's paying three hundred pounds for a full-length portrait of himself, in the attitude of investing his capital, the united workmen had better themselves pay the three hundred pounds into the hands of the ingenious artist, for a painting, in the antiquated manner of Lionardo or Raphael, of some subject more religiously or historically interesting to *them;* and placed where they can always see it. And again, instead of paying three hundred pounds to the obliging landlord, that he may buy a box at the opera with it, whence to study the refinements of music and dancing, the tenants are beginning to think that they may as well keep their rents partly to themselves, and therewith pay some Wandering Willie to fiddle at their own doors; or bid some grey-haired minstrel

> "Tune, to please a peasant's ear,
> The harp a king had loved to hear."

And similarly the dwellers in the hut of the field, and garret of the city, are beginning to think that, instead of paying half-a-crown for the loan of half a

fireplace, they had better keep their half-crown in their pockets till they can buy for themselves a whole one.

These are the views which are gaining ground among the poor; and it is entirely vain to endeavour to repress them by equivocations. They are founded on eternal laws; and although their recognition will long be refused, and their promulgation, resisted as it will be, partly by force, partly by falsehood, can only take place through incalculable confusion and misery, recognized they must be eventually; and with these three ultimate results:—that the usurer's trade will be abolished utterly;—that the employer will be paid justly for his superintendence of labour, but not for his capital; and the landlord paid for his superintendence of the cultivation of land, when he is able to direct it wisely;—that both he, and the employer of mechanical labour, will be recognized as beloved masters, if they deserve love, and as noble guides when they are capable of giving discreet guidance; but neither will be permitted to establish themselves any more as senseless conduits, through which the strength and riches of their native land are to be poured into the cup of the fornication of its Babylonian 'City of the Plain.' (*Letter* 60.)

## 60. "Upper" and "Lower" Classes.

All my Birmingham friends showed me, and told me, of good, involved yet the main British modern idea that the master and his men should belong to two entirely different classes; perhaps loyally related to and assisting each other; but yet,—the one, on the whole, living in hardship—the other in ease;—

the one uncomfortable—the other in comfort;—the one supported in its dishonourable condition by the hope of labouring through it to the higher one,—the other honourably distinguished by their success, and rejoicing in their escape from a life which must nevertheless be always (as they suppose,) led by a thousand to one * of the British people. Whereas St. George, whether in Agriculture, Architecture, or Manufacture, concerns himself only with the life of the workman,—refers all to that,—measures all by that,—holds the Master, Lord, and King, only as an instrument for the ordering of that; requires of Master, Lord, and King, the entire sharing and understanding of the hardship of that,—and his fellowship with it as the only foundation of his authority over it.

'But we *have* been in it, some of us,—and know it, and have, by our patience——'

'Won your escape from it.' I am rude—but I know what you would say. Does then the Physician —the Artist—the Soldier—the good Priest—labour only for escape from his profession? Is not this manufacturing toil, as compared with all these, a despised one, and a miserable,—by the confession of all your efforts, and the proclamation of all your pride; and will you yet go on, if it may be, to fill England, from sea to sea, with this unhappy race, out of which you have risen?

* I do not use this as a rhetorical expression. Take the lower shopkeepers with the operatives, and add the great army of the merely helpless and miserable; and I believe "a thousand to one" of the disgraced and unhappy poor to the honoured rich will be found a quite temperately expressed proportion.

'But we cannot all be physicians, artists, or soldiers. How are we to live?'

Assuredly not in multitudinous misery. Do you think that the Maker of the world intended all but one in a thousand of His creatures to live in these dark streets; and the one, triumphant over the rest, to go forth alone into the green fields? . . .

. . . My host asked me if I would like to see 'nailing.' "Yes, truly." So he took me into a little cottage where were two women at work,—one about seventeen or eighteen, the other perhaps four or five and thirty; this last intelligent of feature as well could be; and both, gentle and kind,—each with hammer in right hand, pincers in left, (heavier hammer poised over her anvil, and let fall at need by the touch of her foot on a treadle like that of a common grindstone). Between them, a small forge, fed to constant brightness by the draught through the cottage, above whose roof its chimney rose:—in front of it, on a little ledge, the glowing lengths of cut iron rod, to be dealt with at speed. Within easy reach of this, looking up at us in quietly silent question,—stood, each in my sight an ominous Fors, the two Clavigeræ.

At a word, they laboured, with ancient Vulcanian skill. Foot and hand in perfect time: no dance of Muses on Parnassian mead in truer measure;—no sea fairies upon yellow sands more featly footed. Four strokes with the hammer in the hand: one ponderous and momentary blow ordered of the balanced mass by the touch of the foot; and the forged nail fell aside, finished, on its proper heap;—level-headed, wedge-pointed, a thousand lives soon

to depend daily on its driven grip of the iron way.

So wrought they,—the English Matron and Maid; —so was it their darg to labour from morning to evening,—seven to seven,—by the furnace side,— the winds of summer fanning the blast of it. The wages of the Matron Fors, I found, were eight shillings a week; her husband, otherwise and variously employed, could make sixteen. Three shillings a week for rent and taxes, left, as I count, for the guerdon of their united labour, if constant, and its product providently saved, fifty-five pounds a year, on which they had to feed and clothe themselves and their six children; eight souls in their little Worcestershire ark.

Nevertheless, I hear of all my friends pitying the distress I propose to reduce myself to, in living, all alone, upon three hundred and sixty, and doing nothing for it but contemplate the beauties of nature; while these two poor women, with other such, pay what portion of their three shillings a week goes to provide me with my annual dividend.

Yet it was not chiefly their labour in which I pitied them, but rather in that their forge-dress did not well set off their English beauty; nay, that the beauty itself was marred by the labour; so that to most persons, who could not have looked through such veil and shadow, they were as their Master, and had no form nor comeliness. And all the while, as I watched them, I was thinking of two other Englishwomen, of about the same relative ages, with whom, in planning last Fors, I had been standing a little while before Edward Burne Jones's picture of Venus's

Mirror, and mourning in my heart for its dulness, that it, with all its Forget-me-nots, would not forget the images it bore, and take the fairer and nobler reflection of their instant life. Were these then, here,—their sisters; who had only, for Venus's mirror, a heap of ashes; compassed about with no Forget-me-nots, but with the Forgetfulness of all the world?

I said just now that the evil to which the activities of my Birmingham friends tended was in nowise their own fault.

Shall I say now whose fault it is?

. . . . . .

These lovely ladies and the like of them, are the very head and front of mischief;—first, because, as I told them in Queens' Gardens, ages ago, they have it in their power to do whatever they like with men and things, and yet do so little with either; and secondly, because by very reason of their beauty and virtue, they have become the excuse for all the iniquity of our days: it seems so impossible that the social order which produces such creatures should be a wrong one.* (*Letter* 80.)

## 61. Strikes.

Current literature, on this subject, being almost entirely under the command of the Masters, has consisted chiefly in lectures on the guilt and folly of strikes, without in any wise addressing itself to point out to the men any other way of settling the

* 'Would you have us less fair and pure then?' No; but I would have you resolve that your beauty should no more be bought with the disgrace of others, nor your safety with their temptation.

question. "You can't have three shillings a day in such times; but we will give you two and sixpence; you had better take it—and, both on religious and commercial grounds, make no fuss. How much better is two-and-sixpence than nothing! and if once the mill stop—think—where shall we be all then?" "Yes," the men answer, "but if to-day we take two and sixpence, what is to hinder you, to-morrow, from observing to us that two shillings are better than nothing, and we had better take *that* sum on religious and commercial principles, without fuss. And the day after, may not the same pious and moral instructors recommend to us the contented acceptance of eighteenpence? A stand must clearly be made somewhere, and we choose to make it here, and now."

The masters again have reason to rejoin: "True, but if we give you three shillings to-day, how are we to know you will not stand for three and sixpence to-morrow, and for four shillings next week. A stand must be made somewhere, and we choose to make it here, and now."

What solution is there, then? and of what use are any quantity of homilies either to man or master, on their manner of debate, that show them no possible solution in another way? As things are at present, the quarrel can only be practically closed by imminence of starvation on one side, or of bankruptcy on the other: even so, closed only for a moment,—never ended, burning presently forth again, to sink silent only in death;—while, year after year, the agonies of conflict and truces of exhaustion produce, for reward of the total labour, and fiat of the total council of

the people, the minimum of gain for the maximum of misery.

Scattered up and down, through every page I have written on political economy for the last twenty years, the reader will find unfailing reference to a principle of solution in such dispute, which is rarely so much as named by other arbitrators;—or if named, never believed in: yet, this being indeed the only principle of decision, the conscience of it, however repressed, stealthily modifies every arbitrative word.

The men are rebuked, in the magistral homilies, for their ingratitude in striking. Then there must be a law of *Grace*, which at least the masters recognize. The men are mocked in the magistral homilies for their folly in striking. Then there must be a law of *Wisdom*, which at least the masters recognize.

Appeal to *these*, then, for their entire verdict, most virtuous masters, all-gracious and all-wise. These reprobate ones, graceless and senseless, cannot find their way for themselves; you must guide them. That much I told you, years and years ago. You will have to do it, in spite of all your liberty-mongers. Masters, in fact, you must be; not in name.

But, as yet blind; and drivers—not leaders—of the blind, you must pull the beams out of your own eyes, now; and that bravely. Preach your homily to yourselves first. Let me hear once more how it runs, to the men. "Oh foolish and ungrateful ones," you say, "did we not once on a time give you high wages—even so high that you contentedly

drank yourselves to death; and now, oh foolish and forgetful ones, that the time has come for us to give you low wages, will you not contentedly also starve yourselves to death?"

Alas, wolf-shepherds—this is St. George's word to you:—

"In your prosperity you gave these men high wages, not in any kindness to *them*, but in contention for business among yourselves. You allowed the men to spend their wage in drunkenness, and you boasted of that drunkenness by the mouth of your Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in the columns of your leading journal, as a principal sign of the country's prosperity. You have declared again and again, by vociferation of all your orators, that you have wealth so overflowing that you do not know what to do with it. These men who dug the wealth for you, now lie starving at the mouths of the hell-pits you made them dig; yea, their bones lie scattered at the grave's mouth, like as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth. Your boasted wealth —where is it? Is the war between these and you, because you now mercilessly refuse them food, or because all your boasts of wealth were lies, and you have none to give?

"Your boasts of wealth *were* lies. You were working from hand to mouth in your best times; now your work is stopped, and you have nothing in the country to pay for food with; still less any store of food laid by. And how much distress and wrath you will have to bear before you learn the lesson of justice, God only knows. But this is the lesson you *have* to learn." (*Letter* 86.)

## 62. Trade Depression.

There are four quite distinct causes operating in the depression of English,—especially iron,—trade, of which two are our own fault; and the other two, being inevitable, should have been foreseen long since, by even the vulgar sagacity of self-interest.

The first great cause is the separation between masters and men, which is wholly the masters' fault, and the necessary result of the defiance of every moral law of human relation by modern political economy.

The second is the loss of custom, in consequence of bad work—also a result of the teaching of modern political economy.

The third, affecting especially the iron trade, is that the funds which the fools of Europe had at their disposal, with which to build iron bridges instead of wooden ones, put up spike railings instead of palings, and make machines in substitution for their arms and legs, are now in a great degree exhausted; and by the time the rails are all rusty, the bridges snapped, and the machines found to reap and thresh no more corn than arms did, the fools of Europe will have learned a lesson or two which will not be soon forgotten, even by *them;* and the iron trade will be slack enough, thereafter.

The fourth cause of trade depression,—bitter to the hearts of the persons whom Mr. Herbert Spencer calls patriots,—is that the inhabitants of other countries have begun to perceive that they have got hands as well as we—and possibly, in some businesses, even better hands; and that they may just as well make their own wares as buy them of us. Which wholesome

discovery of theirs will in due time mercifully put an end to the British ideal of life in the National Shop; and make it at last plain to the British mind that the cliffs of Dover were not constructed by Providence merely to be made a large counter. (*Letter* 85.)

## 63. Women's Work.

Women's work is,—

I. To please people.
II. To feed them in dainty ways.
III. To clothe them.
IV. To keep them orderly.
V. To teach them.

I. To please.—A woman must be a pleasant creature. Be sure that people like the room better with you in it than out of it; and take all pains to get the power of sympathy, and the habit of it.

II. Can you cook plain meats and dishes economically and savourily? If not, make it your first business to learn, as you find opportunity. When you can, advise, and personally help, any poor woman within your reach who will be glad of help in that matter: always avoiding impertinence or discourtesy of interference. Acquaint yourself with the poor, not as their patroness, but their friend: if then you can modestly recommend a little more water in the pot, or half an hour's more boiling, or a dainty bone they did not know of, you will have been useful indeed.

III. To clothe.—Set aside a quite fixed portion of your time for making strong and pretty articles of dress of the best procurable materials. You may use

a sewing machine; but what work is to be done (in order that it may be entirely sound) with finger and thimble, is to be your especial business.

First-rate material, however costly, sound work, and such prettiness as ingenious choice of colour and adaptation of simple form will admit, are to be your aims. Head-dress may be fantastic, if it be stout, clean, and consistently worn, as a Norman paysanne's cap. And you will be more useful in getting up, ironing, etc., a pretty cap for a poor girl who has not taste or time to do it for herself, than in making flannel petticoats or knitting stockings. But do both, and give (don't be afraid of giving;—Dorcas wasn't raised from the dead that modern clergymen might call her a fool)—the things you make to those who verily need them. What sort of persons these *are*, you have to find out. It is a most important part of your work.

IV. To keep them orderly,—primarily, clean, tidy, regular in habits.—Begin by keeping *things* in order; soon you will be able to keep people, also.

Early rising—on all grounds, is for yourself indispensable. You must be at work by latest at six in summer and seven in winter. (Of course that puts an end to evening parties, and so it is a blessed condition in two directions at once.) Every day do a little bit of housemaid's work in your own house, thoroughly, so as to be a pattern of perfection in that kind. Your actual housemaid will then follow your lead, if there's an atom of woman's spirit in her—(if not, ask your mother to get another). Take a step or two of stair, and a corner of the dining-room, and keep them polished like bits of a Dutch picture.

If you have a garden, spend all spare minutes in it

in actual gardening. If not, get leave to take care of part of some friend's, a poor person's, but always out of doors. Have nothing to do with greenhouses, still less with hothouses.

When there are no flowers to be looked after, there are dead leaves to be gathered, snow to be swept, or matting to be nailed, and the like.

V. Teach—yourself first—to read with attention, and to remember with affection, what deserves both, and nothing else. Never read borrowed books. To be without books of your own is the abyss of penury. Don't endure it. And when you've to buy them, you'll think whether they're worth reading; which you had better, on all accounts. (*Letter* 34.)

## 64. Women's Dress.

Now mind you dress always charmingly; it is the first duty of a girl to be charming, and she cannot be charming if she is not charmingly dressed.

And it is quite the first of firsts in the duties of girls in high position, nowadays, to set an example of beautiful dress without extravagance,—that is to say, without waste, or unnecessary splendour.

On great occasions they may be a blaze of jewels, if they like, and can; but only when they are part of a great show or ceremony. In their daily life, and ordinary social relations, they ought *at present* to dress with marked simplicity, to put down the curses of luxury and waste which are consuming England.

Women usually apologize to themselves for their pride and vanity, by saying, 'It is good for trade.'

Now you may soon convince yourself, and everybody about you, of the monstrous folly of this, by a very simple piece of definite action.

Wear, yourself, becoming, pleasantly varied, but simple dress, of the best possible material.

What you think necessary to buy (beyond this) 'for the good of trade,' buy, and immediately *burn*.

Even your dullest friends will see the folly of that proceeding. You can then explain to them that by wearing what they don't want (instead of burning it) for the good of trade, they are merely adding insolence and vulgarity to absurdity. (*Letter* 38.)

## 65. Lost Jewels.

The first principle of my political economy will be found again and again reiterated in all my books,—that the material wealth of any country is the portion of its possessions which feeds and educates good men and women in it; the connected principle of national policy being that the strength and power of a country depends absolutely on the quantity of good men and women in the territory of it, and not at all on the extent of the territory—still less on the number of vile or stupid inhabitants. A good crew in a good ship, however small, is a power; but a bad crew in the biggest ship—none,—and the best crew in a ship cut in half by a collision in a hurry, not much the better for their numbers.

Following out these two principles, I have farther, and always, taught that, briefly, the wealth of a country *is in* its good men and women, and in nothing else: that the riches of England are good

Englishmen; of Scotland, good Scotchmen; of Ireland, good Irishmen. This is first, and more or less eloquently, stated in the close of the chapter called the Veins of Wealth, of 'Unto this Last'; and is scientifically, and in sifted terms, explained and enforced in 'Munera Pulveris.' I have a word or two yet to add to what I have written, which I will try to keep very plain and unfigurative.

It is taught, with all the faculty I am possessed of, in 'Sesame and Lilies,' that in a state of society in which men and women are as good as they can be, (under mortal limitation,) the women will be the guiding and purifying power. In savage and embryo countries, they are openly oppressed, as animals of burden; in corrupted and fallen countries, more secretly and terribly. I am not careful concerning the oppression which they are able to announce themselves, forming anti-feminine-slavery colleges and institutes, etc.; but of the oppression which they cannot resist, ending in their destruction, I am careful exceedingly.

The merely calculable phenomena of economy are indeed supposed at present to indicate a glut of them; but our economists do not appear ever to ask themselves of what *quality* the glut is, or, at all events, in what quality it would be wisest to restrict the supply, and in what quality, educated according to the laws of God, the supply *is* at present restricted.

I think the experience of most thoughtful persons will confirm me in saying that extremely good girls, (good children, broadly, but especially girls,) usually die young. The pathos of their deaths is constantly

used in poetry and novels; but the power of the fiction rests, I suppose, on the fact that most persons of affectionate temper have lost their own May Queens or little Nells in their time. For my own part of grief, I have known a little Nell die, and a May Queen die, and a queen of May, and of December also, die;—all of them, in economists' language, 'as good as gold,' and in Christian language, 'only a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour.' And I could count the like among my best-loved friends, with a rosary of tears.

It seems, therefore, that God takes care, under present circumstances, to prevent, or at least to check, the glut of that kind of girls. *Seems*, I say, and say with caution—for perhaps it is not entirely in His good pleasure that these things are so. But, they being so, the question becomes therefore yet more imperative—how far a country paying this enforced tax of its good girls annually to heaven is wise in taking little account of the number it has left? For observe that, just beneath these girls of heaven's own, come another kind, who are just earthly enough to be allowed to stay with us; but who get put out of the way into convents, or made mere sick-nurses of, or take to mending the irremediable. (*Letter* 90.)

## 66. Loss of Life.

I will not enter here into any debate of loss by exile, and national ostracism of our strongest. I keep to the estimate only of our loss by helpless,

reckless, needless death, the enduring torture at the bolted theatre door of the world, and on the staircase it has smoothed to Avernus.

'Loss of life'! By the ship overwhelmed in the river, shattered on the sea; by the mine's blast, the earthquake's burial—you mourn for the multitude slain. You cheer the lifeboat's crew: you hear, with praise and joy, of the rescue of one still breathing body more at the pit's mouth:—and all the while, for one soul that is saved from the momentary passing away (according to your creed, to be with its God), the lost souls, yet locked in their polluted flesh, haunt, with worse than ghosts, the shadows of your churches, and the corners of your streets; and your weary children watch, with no memory of Jerusalem, and no hope of return from *their* captivity, the weltering to the sea of your Waters of Babylon. (*Letter* 91.)

## 67. The Beasts.

Nevertheless something is to be said for the beasts also. What do you think they were made for? All these spotty, scaly, finned, and winged, and clawed things, that grope between you and the dust, that flit between you and the sky. These motes in the air —sparks in the sea—mists and flames of life. The flocks that are your wealth—the moth that frets it away. The herds upon a thousand hills, — the locust,—and the worm, and the wandering plague whose spots are worlds. The creatures that mock you, and torment. The creatures that serve and love you, (or would love if they might,) and obey.

The joys of the callow nests and burrowed homes of Earth. The rocks of it, built out of its own dead. What is the meaning to you of all these,—what their worth to you? . . .

. . . You might spare the poor beasts a little room on earth, for charity, if not for curiosity. *They* have no mansions preparing for them elsewhere.

What! you answer, indignant,—"All that good land given up to beasts!" Have you ever looked how much or little of England *is* in park land. . . .

The parks lie on the face of each county like a few crumbs on a plate; if you could turn them all at once into corn land, it would literally not give you a mouthful extra of dinner. Your dog, or cat, is more costly to you, in proportion to your private means, than all these kingdoms of beasts would be to the nation.

"Cost what they might, it would be too much"—think you? You will not give those acres of good land to keep beasts?

Perhaps not beasts of God's making; but how many acres of good land do you suppose, then, you *do* give up, as it is, to keep beasts He never made,—never meant to be made,—the beasts you make of yourselves?

Do you know how much corn land in the United Kingdom is occupied in supplying you with the means of getting drunk?

Mind, I am no temperance man. You should all have as much beer and alcohol as was good for you if I had my way. But the beer and alcohol which are *not* good for you,—which are the ruin of so many of you, suppose you could keep the wages you

spend in that liquor in the savings bank, and left the land, now tilled to grow it for you, to natural and sober beasts?—Do you think it would be false economy?—Why, you might have a working men's park for nothing, in every county, bigger than the Queen's! and your own homes all the more comfortable. (*Letter* 27.)

## 68. The Ideal Realized.

You have heard it said occasionally that I am not a practical person. It may be satisfactory to you to know, on the contrary, that this whole plan of mine is founded on the very practical notion of making you round persons instead of flat. Round and merry, instead of flat and sulky. And my beau-ideal is not taken from "a mechanical point of view," but is one already realized. I saw last summer, in the flesh, as round and merry a person as I ever desire to see. He was tidily dressed—not in brown rags, but in green velveteen; he wore a jaunty hat, with a feather in it, a little on one side; he was not drunk, but the effervescence of his shrewd good humour filled the room all about him; and he could sing like a robin. You may say "like a nightingale," if you like, but I think robin's singing the best, myself; only I hardly ever hear it now, for the young ladies of England have had nearly all the robins shot, to wear in their hats, and the bird-stuffers are exporting the few remaining to America.

This merry round person was a Tyrolese peasant; and I hold it an entirely practical proceeding, since I find my idea of felicity actually produced in the

Tyrol, to set about the production of it, here, on Tyrolese principles; which, you will find, on inquiry, have not hitherto implied the employment of steam, nor submission to the great Universal Law of Supply and Demand, nor even Demand for the Local Supply of a "Liberal" government. But they do imply labour of all hands on pure earth and in fresh air. They do imply obedience to government which endeavours to be moral. And they result in strength of limbs, clearness of throats, roundness of waists, and pretty jackets, and still prettier corsets to fit them. (*Letter* 11.)

On any given farm in Switzerland or Bavaria, fifty years ago, the master and his servants lived, in abundance, on the produce of their ground, without machinery, and exchanged some of its surplus produce for Lyons velvet and Hartz silver, (produced by the unhappy mechanists and miners of those localities,) whereof the happy peasant made jackets and bodices, and richly adorned the same with precious chain-work. It is not more than ten years since I saw in a farm-shed near Thun, three handsome youths and three comely girls, all in well-fitting, pretty, and snow-white shirt and chemisette, threshing corn with a steady shower of timed blows, as skilful in their—cadence, shall we, literally, say?—as the most exquisitely performed music, and as rapid as its swiftest notes. There was no question for any of them, whether they should have their dinner when they had earned it, nor the slightest chance of any of them going in rags through the winter.

That is entirely healthy, happy, and wise human life. Not a theoretical or Utopian state at all; but

one which over large districts of the world has long existed, and must, thank God, in spite of British commerce and its consequences, for ever, somewhere, exist. (*Letter* 44.)

## 69. The Coming Contest.

"Was the leisure of the Greeks not owing to the hard work of the helots and slaves they had?" asked my old friend, Thomas Dixon.

Yes, truly, good labourer; nor the Greeks' leisure only, but also—if we are to call it leisure—that of the rich and powerful of this world, since this world began. And more and more I perceive, as my old age opens to me the deeper secrets of human life, that the true story and strength of that world are the story and strength of these helots and slaves; and only its fiction and feebleness in the idleness of those who feed on them:—which fiction and feebleness, with all their cruelty and sensuality, filling the cup of the fornication of the kings of the earth now to the lip, must be, in no long time now, poured out upon the earth; and the cause of the poor judged by the King who shall reign in righteousness. For all these petty struggles of the past, of which you write to me, are but the scudding clouds and first wailing winds, of the storm which must be as the sheet lightning — from one part of heaven to the other,—"So also shall the coming of the Son of Man be."

Only the first scudding clouds, I say,—these hitherto seditions; for, as yet, they have only been of the ambitious, or the ignorant; and only against

tyrannous men: so that they ended, if successful, in mere ruinous license; and if they failed, were trampled out in blood: but *now*, the ranks are gathering, on the one side, of men rightly informed, and meaning to seek redress by lawful and honourable means only; and, on the other, of men capable of compassion, and open to reason, but with personal interests at stake so vast, and with all the gear and mechanism of their acts so involved in the web of past iniquity, that the best of them are helpless, and the wisest blind.

No debate, on such terms, and on such scale, has yet divided the nations; nor can any wisdom foresee the sorrow, or the glory, of its decision. One thing only we know, that in this contest, assuredly, the victory cannot be by violence; that every conquest under the Prince of War retards the standards of the Prince of Peace; and that every good servant must abide his Master's coming in the patience, not the refusal, of his daily labour. (*Letter* 83.)

## 70. Political Aphorisms.

1. Any form of government will work, provided the governors are real, and the people obey them; and none will work, if the governors are unreal, or the people disobedient. If you mean to have logs for kings, no quantity of liberty in choice of the wood will be of any profit to you:—nor will the wisest or best governor be able to serve you, if you mean to discuss his orders instead of obeying them.

2. The first duty of government is to see that the people have food, fuel, and clothes. The second,

that they have means of moral and intellectual education.

3. Food, fuel, and clothes can only be got out of the ground, or sea, by muscular labour; and no man has any business to have any, unless he has done, if able, the muscular work necessary to produce his portion, or to render, (as the labour of a surgeon or a physician renders,) equivalent benefit to life. It indeed saves both toil and time that one man should dig, another bake, and another tan; but the digger, baker, and tanner are alike bound to do their equal day's duty; and the business of the government is to see that they have done it, before it gives any one of them their dinner.

4. While the daily teaching of God's truth, doing of His justice, and heroic bearing of His sword, are to be required of every human soul according to its ability, the mercenary professions of preaching, law-giving, and fighting must be entirely abolished.

5. Scholars, painters, and musicians may be advisedly kept, on due pittance, to instruct or amuse the labourer after, or at, his work; provided the duty be severely restricted to those who have high special gifts of voice, touch, and imagination; and that the possessors of these melodious lips, light-fingered hands, and lively brains, do resolutely undergo the normal discipline necessary to ensure their skill; the people whom they are to please, understanding, always, that they cannot employ these tricksy artists without working double-tides themselves, to provide them with beef and ale.

6. The duty of the government, as regards the distribution of its work, is to attend first to the wants of

the most necessitous; therefore, to take particular charge of the back streets of every town; leaving the fine ones, more or less, according to their finery, to take care of themselves. And it is the duty of magistrates, and other persons in authority, but especially of all bishops, to know thoroughly the numbers, means of subsistence, and modes of life of the poorest persons in the community, and to be sure that *they* at least are virtuous and comfortable; for if poor persons be not virtuous, after all the wholesome discipline of poverty, what must be the state of the rich, under their perilous trials and temptations?—but, on the other hand, if the poor are made comfortable and good, the rich have a fair chance of entering the kingdom of heaven also, if they choose to live honourably and decently.

7. Since all are to be made to labour for their living, and it is not possible to labour without materials and tools, these must be provided by the government, for all persons, in the necessary quantities. If bricks are to be made, clay and straw must be provided; if sheep are to be kept, grass; if coats are to be made, cloth; if oakum to be picked, oakum. All these raw materials, with the tools for working them, must be provided by the government, at first, free of cost to the labourer, the value of them being returned to them as the first-fruits of his toil; and no pawnbrokers or usurers may be allowed to live by lending sea to fishermen, air to fowlers, land to farmers, crooks to shepherds, or bellows to smiths.

8. When the lands and seas belonging to any nation are all properly divided, cultivated, and fished, its population cannot be increased, except by importing

food in exchange for useless articles,—that is to say, by living as the toy-manufacturers of some independent nation, which can both feed itself, and afford to buy toys besides. But no nation can long exist in this servile state. It must either emigrate, and form colonies to assist in cultivating the land which feeds it, or become entirely slavish and debased. The moment any nation begins to import food, its political power and moral worth are ended.

9. All the food, clothing, and fuel required by men, can be produced by the labour of their own arms on the earth and sea; all food is appointed to be so produced, and *must* be so produced, at their peril. If instead of taking the quantity of exercise made necessary to their bodies by God, in the work appointed by God, they take it in hunting or shooting, they become ignorant, irreligious, and finally insane, and seek to live by fighting as well as by hunting; whence the type of Nimrod, in the circle of the Hell-towers, which I desired you to study in Dante. If they do not take exercise at all, they become sensual, and insane in worse ways. *And it is physically impossible that true religious knowledge, or pure morality, should exist among any classes of a nation who do not work with their hands for their bread.*

10. The use of machinery in agriculture throws a certain number of persons out of wholesome employment, who must thenceforward either do nothing, or mischief. The use of machinery in art destroys the national intellect; and, finally, renders all luxury impossible. All machinery needful in ordinary life to supplement human or animal labour may be moved by wind or water: while steam, or any modes of *heat-power*, may

only be employed justifiably under extreme or special conditions of need; as for speed on main lines of communication, and for raising water from great depths, or other such work beyond human strength.

11. No true luxury, wealth, or religion is possible to dirty persons; nor is it decent or human to attempt to compass any temporal prosperity whatever by the sacrifice of cleanliness. The speedy abolition of all abolishable filth is the first process of education; the principles of which I state in the second group of aphorisms following.

12. All education must be moral first; intellectual secondarily. Intellectual, before—(much more without)—moral education, is, in completeness, impossible; and in incompleteness, a calamity.

13. Moral education begins in making the creature to be educated, clean, and obedient. This must be done thoroughly, and at any cost, and with any kind of compulsion rendered necessary by the nature of the animal, be it dog, child, or man.

14. Moral education consists next in making the creature practically serviceable to other creatures, according to the nature and extent of its own capacities; taking care that these be healthily developed in such service. It may be a question how long, and to what extent, boys and girls of fine race may be allowed to run in the paddock before they are broken; but assuredly the sooner they are put to such work as they are able for, the better. Moral education is summed when the creature has been made to do its work with delight, and thoroughly; but this cannot be until some degree of intellectual education has been given also.

15. Intellectual education consists in giving the creature the faculties of admiration, hope, and love.

These are to be taught by the study of beautiful Nature; the sight and history of noble persons; and the setting forth of noble objects of action.

16. Since all noble persons hitherto existent in the world have trusted in the government of it by a supreme Spirit, and in that trust, or faith, have performed all their great actions, the history of these persons will finally mean the history of their faith; and the sum of intellectual education will be the separation of what is inhuman, in such faiths, and therefore perishing, from what is human, and, for human creatures, eternally true. (*Letter* 67.)

## 71. Political Parties.

I beg you most solemnly to convince yourselves of the partly comfortable, partly formidable fact, that your prosperity is in your own hands. That only in a remote degree does it depend on external matters, and least of all on forms of government. In all times of trouble the first thing to be done is to make the most of whatever forms of government you have got, by setting honest men to work them; (the trouble, in all probability, having arisen only from the want of such;) and for the rest, you must in no wise concern yourselves about them; more particularly it would be lost time to do so at this moment, when whatever is popularly said about governments cannot but be absurd, for want of definition of terms. Consider, for instance, the ridiculousness of the division of parties into "Liberal" and "Conservative."

There is no opposition whatever between those two kinds of men.

. . . . . .

In many things I am the reverse of Conservative; nay, there are some long-established things which I hope to see changed before I die; but I want still to keep the fields of England green, and her cheeks red; and that girls should be taught to curtsey, and boys to take their hats off, when a Professor or otherwise dignified person passes by; and that Kings should keep their crowns on their heads, and Bishops their crosiers in their hands; and should duly recognise the significance of the crown, and the use of the crook.

As you would find it thus impossible to class me justly in either party, so you would find it impossible to class any person whatever, who had clear and developed political opinions, and who could define them accurately. Men only associate in parties by sacrificing their opinions, or by having none worth sacrificing; and the effect of party government is always to develop hostilities and hypocrisies, and to extinguish ideas. (*Letter* 1.)

## 72. Government.

I quoted to you last year the foolishest thing, yet said, according to extant history, by lips of mankind —namely, that the cause of starvation is quantity of meat. But one can yet see what the course of foolish thought was which achieved that saying: whereas, though it is not absurd to quite the same extent to believe that a nation depends for happiness

and virtue on the form of its government, it is more difficult to understand how so large a number of otherwise rational persons have been beguiled into thinking so. The stuff of which the nation is made is developed by the effort and the fate of ages: according to that material, such and such government becomes possible to it, or impossible. What other form of government you try upon it than the one it is fit for, necessarily comes to nothing; and a nation wholly worthless is capable of none. (*Letter* 13.)

## 73. To Rulers.

Now, if there be any God, and if there be any virtue, and if there be any truth, choose ye this day, rulers of men, whom you will serve. Your hypocrisy is not in pretending to be what you are not; but in *being* in the uttermost nature of you—Nothing—but dead bodies in coffins suspended between Heaven and Earth, God and Mammon.

If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. You would fain be respectful to Baal, keep smooth with Belial, dine with Moloch, sup, with golden spoon of sufficient length, with Beelzebub;—and kiss the Master to bid Him good-night. (*Letter* 84.)

## 74. The Great Ungoverned.

I can always behave as if I had a King, whether I have one or not; but it is otherwise with some unfortunate persons. Nothing has ever impressed me so much with the power of kingship, and the

need of it, as the declamation of the French Republicans against the Emperor before his fall. . . .

But this mass of republicans—vociferous, terrified, and mischievous—is the least part, as it is the vilest, of the great European populace who are lost for want of true kings. It is not these who stand idle, gibbering at a shadow, whom we have to mourn over;—they would have been good for little, even governed;—but those who work and do *not* gibber,—the quiet peasants in the fields of Europe, sad-browed, honest-hearted, full of natural tenderness and courtesy, who have none to help them, and none to teach; who have no kings, except those who rob them while they live, no tutors, except those who teach them—how to die. (*Letter* 10.)

## 75. The True Earthly Kingdom.

All social evils and religious errors arise out of the pillage of the labourer by the idler: the idler leaving him only enough to live on (and even that miserably,) and taking all the rest of the produce of his work to spend in his own luxury, or in the toys with which he beguiles his idleness.

And this is done, and has from time immemorial been done, in all so-called civilized, but in reality corrupted, countries,—first by the landlords; then, under their direction, by the three chief so-called gentlemanly 'professions,' of soldier, lawyer, and priest; and, lastly, by the merchant and usurer. The landlord pillages by direct force, seizing the land, and saying to the labourer, You shall not live on this earth, but shall here die, unless you give me

all the fruit of your labour but your bare living:—the soldier pillages by persuading the peasantry to fight, and then getting himself paid for skill in leading them to death:—the lawyer pillages by prolonging their personal quarrels with marketable ingenuity; and the priest by selling the Gospel, and getting paid for theatrical displays of it. All this has to cease, inevitably and totally: Peace, Justice, and the Word of God must be *given* to the people, not sold. And these *can* only be given by a true Hierarchy and Royalty, beginning at the throne of God, and descending, by sacred stair let down from heaven, to bless and keep all the Holy creatures of God, man and beast, and to condemn and destroy the unholy. And in this Hierarchy and Royalty all the servants of God have part, being made priests and kings to Him, that they may feed His people with food of angels and food of men; teaching the Word of God with power, and breaking and pouring the Sacrament of Bread and Wine from house to house, in remembrance of Christ, and in gladness and singleness of heart; the priest's function at the altar and in the tabernacle, at one end of the village, being only holy in the fulfilment of the deacon's function at the table and in the taberna, at the other.

And so, out of the true earthly kingdom, in fulness of time, shall come the heavenly kingdom, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men; no priest needed more for ministry, because all the earth will be Temple; nor bread nor wine needed more for mortal food, or fading memory, but the water of life given to him that is athirst, and the fruits of the trees of healing. (*Letter* 84.)

# IV

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### PASSAGES 76–107

# IV

# DIDACTIC

## 76. Good Education.

We have, it seems, now set our opening hearts much on this one point, that we will have education for all men and women now, and for all boys and girls that are to be. Nothing, indeed, can be more desirable, if only we determine also what kind of education we are to have. It is taken for granted that any education must be good;—that the more of it we get, the better; that bad education only means little education; and that the worst thing we have to fear is getting none. Alas, that is not at all so. Getting no education is by no means the worst thing that can happen to us. One of the pleasantest friends I ever had in my life was a Savoyard guide, who could only read with difficulty, and write scarcely intelligibly, and by great effort. He knew no language but his own—no science, except as much practical agriculture as served him to till his fields. But he was, without exception, one of the happiest persons, and, on the whole, one of the best, I have ever known: and after lunch, when he had had his half bottle of Savoy wine, he would generally, as we walked up some quiet valley in the afternoon light,

give me a little lecture on philosophy; and after I had fatigued and provoked him with less cheerful views of the world than his own, he would fall back to my servant behind me, and console himself with a shrug of the shoulders, and a whispered "Le pauvre enfant, il ne sait pas vivre!"—("The poor child, he doesn't know how to live.")

No, my friends, believe me, it is not the going without education at all that we have most to dread. The real thing to be feared is getting a bad one. There are all sorts—good, and very good; bad, and very bad. The children of rich people often get the worst education that is to be had for money; the children of the poor often get the best for nothing. And you have really these two things now to decide for yourselves in England before you can take one quite safe practical step in the matter, namely, first, what a good education is; and, secondly, who is likely to give it you.

What it is? "Everybody knows that," I suppose you would most of you answer. "Of course—to be taught to read, and write, and cast accounts; and to learn geography, and geology, and astronomy, and chemistry, and German, and French, and Italian, and Latin, and Greek, and the aboriginal Aryan language."

Well, when you had learned all that, what would you do next? "Next? Why then we should be perfectly happy, and make as much money as ever we liked, and we would turn out our toes before any company." I am not sure myself, and I don't think you can be, of any one of these three things. At least, as to making you very happy, I know something,

myself, of nearly all these matters — not much, but still quite as much as most men, under the ordinary chances of life, with a fair education, are likely to get together—and I assure you the knowledge does not make me happy at all. . . . No, I assure you, knowledge by itself will not make you happy; still less will it make you rich. (*Letter* 4.)

. . . . . .

My friends, the final result of the education I want you to give your children will be, in a few words, this. They will know what it is to see the sky. They will know what it is to breathe it. And they will know, best of all, what it is to behave under it, as in the presence of a Father who is in heaven. (*Letter* 9.)

## 77. Justice and Education.

This true justice consists mainly in the granting to every human being due aid in the development of such faculties as it possesses for action and enjoyment; primarily, for useful action, because all enjoyment worth having (nay, all enjoyment not harmful) must in some way arise out of that, either in happy energy, or rightly complacent and exulting rest.

"Due" aid, you see, I have written. Not "equal" aid. One of the first statements I made to you respecting this domain of ours was "there shall be no equality in it." In education especially, true justice is curiously unequal—if you choose to give it a hard name, iniquitous. The right law of it is that you are to take most pains with the best

material. Many conscientious masters will plead for the exactly contrary iniquity, and say you should take the most pains with the dullest boys. But that is not so (only you must be very careful that you know which *are* the dull boys; for the cleverest look often very like them). Never waste pains on bad ground; let it remain rough, though properly looked after and cared for; it will be of best service so; but spare no labour on the good, or on what has in it the capacity of good. The tendency of modern help and care is quite morbidly and madly in reverse of this great principle. Benevolent persons are always, by preference, busy on the essentially bad; and exhaust themselves in efforts to get maximum intellect from cretins, and maximum virtue from criminals. Meantime, they take no care to ascertain (and for the most part when ascertained, obstinately refuse to remove) the continuous sources of cretinism and crime, and suffer the most splendid material in child-nature to wander neglected about the streets, until it has become rotten to the degree in which they feel prompted to take an interest in it. (*Letter* 9.)

## 78. Schools.

I start with the general principle that every school is to be fitted for the children in its neighbourhood who are likely to grow up and live in its neighbourhood. The idea of a general education which is to fit everybody to be Emperor of Russia, and provoke a boy, whatever he is, to want to be something better, and wherever he was born to think it

a disgrace to die, is the most entirely and directly diabolic of all the countless stupidities into which the British nation has been of late betrayed by its avarice and irreligion. There are indeed certain elements of education which are alike necessary to the inhabitants of every spot of earth. Cleanliness, obedience, the first laws of music, mechanics, and geometry, the primary facts of geography and astronomy, and the outlines of history, should evidently be taught alike to poor and rich, to sailor and shepherd, to labourer and shopboy. But for the rest, the efficiency of any school will be found to increase exactly in the ratio of its direct adaptation to the circumstances of the children it receives; and the quantity of knowledge to be attained in a given time being equal, its value will depend on the possibilities of its instant application. You need not teach botany to the sons of fishermen, architecture to shepherds, or painting to colliers; still less the elegances of grammar to children who throughout the probable course of their total lives will have, or ought to have, little to say, and nothing to write.

Farther, of schools in all places, and for all ages, the healthy working will depend on the total exclusion of the stimulus of competition in any form or disguise. Every child should be measured by its own standard, trained to its own duty, and rewarded by its just praise. It is the *effort* that deserves praise, not the success; nor is it a question for any student whether he is cleverer than others or duller, but whether he has done the best he could with the gifts he has. The madness of the modern cram and examination system arises principally out of the struggle

to get lucrative places; but partly also out of the radical blockheadism of supposing that all men are naturally equal, and can only make their way by elbowing;—the facts being that every child is born with an accurately defined and absolutely limited capacity; that he is naturally (if able at all) able for some things and unable for others; that no effort and no teaching can add one particle to the granted ounces of his available brains; that by competition he may paralyse or pervert his faculties, but cannot stretch them a line; and that the entire grace, happiness, and virtue of his life depend on his contentment in doing what he can, dutifully, and in staying where he is, peaceably. So far as he regards the less or more capacity of others, his superiorities are to be used for *their* help, not for his own pre-eminence; and his inferiorities to be no ground of mortification, but of pleasure in the admiration of nobler powers. It is impossible to express the quantity of delight I used to feel in the power of Turner and Tintoret, when my own skill was nascent only; and all good artists will admit that there is far less personal pleasure in doing a thing beautifully than in seeing it beautifully done. Therefore, over the door of every school, and the gate of every college, I would fain see engraved in their marble the absolute Forbidding

"Let *nothing* be done through strife or vain glory:"

and I would have fixed for each age of children and students a certain standard of pass in examination, so adapted to average capacity and power of exertion, that none need fail who had attended to their lessons

and obeyed their masters; while its variety of trial should yet admit of the natural distinctions attaching to progress in especial subjects and skill in peculiar arts. Beyond such indication or acknowledgment of merit, there should be neither prizes nor honours; these are meant by Heaven to be the proper rewards of a man's consistent and kindly life, not of a youth's temporary and selfish exertion.

Nor, on the other hand, should the natural torpor of wholesome dulness be disturbed by provocations, or plagued by punishments. The wise proverb ought in every schoolmaster's mind to be deeply set—"You cannot make a silk purse of a sow's ear;" expanded with the farther scholium that the flap of it will not be the least disguised by giving it a diamond earring. If, in a woman, beauty without discretion be as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, much more, in man, woman, or child, knowledge without discretion—the knowledge which a fool receives only to puff up his stomach, and sparkle in his cockscomb. In matters moral, most men are not intended to be any better than sheep and robins, so, in matters intellectual, most men are not intended to be any wiser than their cocks and bulls,—duly scientific of their yard and pasture, peacefully nescient of all beyond. To be proud and strong, each in his place and work, is permitted and ordained to the simplest; but ultra,—ne sutor, ne fossor.

And it is in the wholesome indisposition of the average mind for intellectual labour that due provision is made for the quantity of dull work which must be done in stubbing the Thornaby wastes of the world. Modern Utopianism imagines that the

world is to be stubbed by steam, and human arms and legs to be eternally idle; not perceiving that thus it would reduce man to the level of his cattle indeed, who can only graze and gore, but not dig! It is indeed certain that advancing knowledge will guide us to less painful methods of human toil; but in the true Utopia, man will rather harness himself, with his oxen, to his plough, than leave the devil to drive it.

The entire body of teaching throughout the series of 'Fors Clavigera' is one steady assertion of the necessity that educated persons should share their thoughts with the uneducated, and take also a certain part in their labours. But there is not a sentence implying that the education of all should be alike, or that there is to be no distinction of master from servant, or of scholar from clown. That education should be open to all, is as certain as that the sky should be; but, as certainly, it should be enforced on none, and benevolent Nature left to lead her children, whether men or beasts, to take or leave at their pleasure. Bring horse and man to the water, let them drink if, and when, they will;—the child who desires education will be bettered by it, the child who dislikes it, only disgraced.

Of course, I am speaking here of intellectual education, not moral. The laws of virtue and honour are, indeed, to be taught compulsorily to all men; whereas our present forms of education refuse to teach them to any; and allow the teaching, by the persons interested in their promulgation, of the laws of cruelty and lying, until we find these British islands gradually filling with a breed of men who cheat without shame, and kill without remorse.

It is beyond the scope of the most sanguine thought to conceive how much misery and crime would be effaced from the world by persistence, even for a few years, of a system of education thus directed to raise the fittest into positions of influence, to give to every scale of intellect its natural sphere, and to every line of action its unquestioned principle. (*Letter* 95.)

## 79. Competitive Examination.

How many actual deaths are now annually caused by the strain and anxiety of competitive examination, it would startle us all if we could know: but the mischief done to the best faculties of the brain in all cases, and the miserable confusion and absurdity involved in the system itself, which offers every place, not to the man who is indeed fitted for it, but to the one who, on a given day, chances to have bodily strength enough to stand the cruellest strain, are evils infinite in their consequences, and more lamentable than many deaths.

This, then, shall be the first condition of what education it may become possible for us to give, that the strength of the youths shall never be strained; and that their best powers shall be developed in each, without competition, though they shall have to pass crucial, but not severe, examinations, attesting clearly to themselves and to other people, not the utmost they can do, but that at least they can do *some* things accurately and well: their own certainty of this being accompanied with the quite as clear and much happier certainty, that there are many other things which they will never be able to do at all.

"The happier certainty?" Yes. A man's happiness consists infinitely more in admiration of the faculties of others than in confidence in his own. That reverent admiration is the perfect human gift in him; all lower animals are happy and noble in the degree they can share it. A dog reverences you, a fly does not; the capacity of partly understanding a creature above him, is the dog's nobility. Increase such reverence in human beings, and you increase daily their happiness, peace, and dignity; take it away, and you make them wretched as well as vile. (*Letter* 2.)

We must accept contentedly infinite difference in the original nature and capacity, even at their purest; which it is the first condition of right education to make manifest to all persons—most of all to the persons chiefly concerned. That other men should know their measure, is, indeed, desirable; but that they should know it themselves, is wholly necessary.

"By competitive examination of course?" Sternly, no! but under absolute prohibition of all violent and strained effort—most of all envious or anxious effort—in every exercise of body and mind; and by enforcing on every scholar's heart, from the first to the last stage of his instruction, the irrevocable ordinance of the third Fors Clavigera, that his mental rank among men is fixed from the hour he was born,—that by no temporary or violent effort can he train, though he may seriously injure the faculties he has; that by no manner of effort can he increase them; and that his best happiness is to consist in the admiration of powers by him for ever unattainable, and of arts, and deeds, by him ever inimitable. (*Letter* 9.)

## 80. Ideal of Education.

Whatever piece of land we begin to work upon, we shall treat thoroughly at once, putting unlimited manual labour on it, until we have every foot of it under as strict care as a flower-garden: and the labourers shall be paid sufficient, unchanging wages; and their children educated compulsorily in agricultural schools inland, and naval schools by the sea, the indispensable first condition of such education being that the boys learn either to ride or to sail; the girls to spin, weave, and sew, and at a proper age to cook all ordinary food exquisitely; the youth of both sexes to be disciplined daily in the strictest practice of vocal music; and for morality, to be taught gentleness to all brute creatures,—finished courtesy to each other,—to speak truth with rigid care, and to obey orders with the precision of slaves. Then, as they get older, they are to learn the natural history of the place they live in,—to know Latin, boys and girls both,—and the history of five cities: Athens, Rome, Venice, Florence, and London. (*Letter* 8.)

. . . . . .

In the history of the five cities, they shall learn, so far as they can understand, what has been beautifully and bravely done; and they shall know the lives of the heroes and heroines in truth and naturalness; and shall be taught to remember the greatest of them on the days of their birth and death; so that the year shall have its full calendar of reverent Memory. And on every day, part of their morning service shall be a song in honour of the hero whose

birthday it is: and part of their evening service, a song of triumph for the fair death of one whose death-day it is: and in their first learning of notes they shall be taught the great purpose of music, which is to say a thing that you mean deeply, in the strongest and clearest possible way; and they shall never be taught to sing what they don't mean. They shall be able to sing merrily when they are happy, and earnestly when they are sad; but they shall find no mirth in mockery, nor in obscenity; neither shall they waste and profane their hearts with artificial and lascivious sorrow. (*Letter* 9.)

## 81. Infancy.

When do you suppose the education of a child begins? At six months old it can answer smile with smile, and impatience with impatience. It can observe, enjoy, and suffer, acutely, and, in a measure, intelligently. Do you suppose it makes no difference to it that the order of the house is perfect and quiet, the faces of its father and mother full of peace, their soft voices familiar to its ear, and even those of strangers, loving; or that it is tossed from arm to arm, among hard, or reckless, or vain-minded persons, in the gloom of a vicious household, or the confusion of a gay one? The moral disposition is, I doubt not, greatly determined in those first speechless years. I believe especially that quiet, and the withdrawal of objects likely to distract, by amusing, the child, so as to let it fix its attention undisturbed on every visible least thing in its domain, is essential to the formation of some of the best powers of thought. (*Letter* 33.)

## 82. The two Chivalries.

You little know how much is implied in the two conditions of boys' education that I gave you in my last letter,—that they shall all learn either to ride or sail; nor by what constancy of law the power of highest discipline and honour is vested by Nature in the two chivalries—of the Horse and the Wave. Both are significative of the right command of man over his own passions; but they teach, farther, the strange mystery of relation that exists between his soul and the wild natural elements on the one hand, and the wild lower animals on the other. (*Letter* 9.)

## 83. Breeding.

Breeding;—observe the word; I mean it literally; involving first the race—and then the habits *enforced* in youth: entirely excluding intellectual conclusions. The "breeding" of a man is what he gets from the Centaur Chiron; the "beastly" part of him in a good sense;—that which makes him courageous by instinct, true by instinct, loving by instinct, as a Dog is; and therefore felicitously above, or below, (whichever you like to call it,)—all questions of philosophy and divinity. (*Letter* 25.)

## 84. Education and Work.

Education of any noble kind has of late been so constantly given only to the idle classes, or, at least, to those who conceive it a privilege to be idle, that it is difficult for any person, trained in modern habits

of thought, to imagine a true and refined scholarship, of which the essential foundation is to be skill in some useful labour. Time and trial will show which of the two conceptions of education is indeed the ridiculous one—and *have* shown, many and many a day before this, if any one would look at the showing. (*Letter* 9.)

## 85. Woman and Home.

The end of all right education for a woman is to make her love her home better than any other place; that she should as seldom leave it as a queen her queendom; nor ever feel entirely at rest but within its threshold. (*Letter* 33.)

## 86. The two R's.

Broadly and practically, whatever foolish people *read*, does *them* harm, and whatever they *write*, does other people harm; and nothing can ever prevent this, for a fool attracts folly as decayed meat attracts flies, and distils and assimilates it, no matter out of what book;—he can get as much out of the Bible as any other, though of course he or she usually reads only newspaper or novel. . . .

. . . The personal conceit and ambition developed by reading, in minds of selfish activity, lead to the disdain of manual labour, and the desire of all sorts of unattainable things, and fill the streets with discontented and useless persons, seeking some means of living in town society by their wits. I need not enlarge on this head; every reader's experience must avow the extent and increasing plague of this

fermenting imbecility, striving to make for itself what it calls a 'position in life.' (*Letter* 94.)

## 87. Reading.

The sense, to a healthy mind, of being strengthened or enervated by reading, is just as definite and unmistakable as the sense, to a healthy body, of being in fresh or foul air: and no more arrogance is involved in perceiving the stench, and forbidding the reading of an unwholesome book, than in a physician's ordering the windows to be opened in a sick room. There is no question whatever concerning these matters, with any person who honestly desires to be informed about them;—the real arrogance is only in expressing judgments, either of books or anything else, respecting which we have taken no trouble to be informed. (*Letter* 85.)

## 88. Healthy Books.

A small chamber, with a fair world outside:—such are the conditions, as far as I know or can gather, of all greatest and best mental work. At heart, the monastery cell always, changed sometimes, for special need, into the prison cell. But, as I meditate more and more closely what reply I may safely make to the now eagerly pressed questioning of my faithful scholars, what books I would have them read, I find the first broadly-swept definition may be—Books written in the country. None worth spending time on, and few that are quite safe to touch, have been written in towns.

And my next narrowing definition would be, Books that have good music in them,—that are rightly-rhythmic: a definition which includes the delicacy of perfect prose, such as Scott's; and which *ex*cludes at once a great deal of modern poetry, in which a dislocated and convulsed versification has been imposed on the ear in the attempt to express uneven temper, and unprincipled feeling.

By unprincipled feeling, I mean whatever part of passion the writer does not clearly discern for right or wrong, and concerning which he betrays the reader's moral judgment into false sympathy or compassion. No really great writer ever does so: neither Scott, Burns, nor Byron ever waver for an instant, any more than Shakespeare himself, in their estimate of what is fit and honest, or harmful and base. Scott always punishes even error, how much more fault, to the uttermost; nor does Byron, in his most defiant and mocking moods, ever utter a syllable that defames virtue or disguises sin. (*Letter* 92.)

## 89. Shakespeare.

Shakespeare, accessible always at play time in the library in small and large editions to the young and old alike, should never be used as a school book, nor even formally or continuously read aloud. He is to be known by thinking, not mouthing. (*Letter* 95.)

## 90. Use and Pleasure.

You must read, for the nourishment of your mind, precisely under the moral laws which regulate your

eating for the nourishment of the body. That is to say, you must not eat for the pleasure of eating, nor read for the pleasure of reading. But, if you manage yourself rightly, you will intensely enjoy your dinner, and your book. If you have any sense, you can easily follow out this analogy: I have not time at present to do it for you; only be sure it holds, to the minutest particular, with this difference only, that the vices and virtues of reading are more harmful on the one side and higher on the other, as the soul is more precious than the body. Gluttonous reading is a worse vice than gluttonous eating; filthy and foul reading, a much more loathsome habit than filthy eating. Epicurism in books is much more difficult of attainment than epicurism in meat, but plain and virtuous feeding the most entirely pleasurable.

And now, one step of farther thought will enable you to settle a great many questions with one answer.

As you may neither eat, nor read, for the pleasure of eating or reading, so you may do *nothing else* for the pleasure of it, but for the use. The moral difference between a man and a beast is, that the one acts primarily for use, the other for pleasure. And all acting for pleasure before use, or instead of use, is in one word, 'Fornication.' That is the accurate meaning of the words 'harlotry,' or 'fornication,' as used in the Bible, wherever they occur spoken of nations, and especially in all the passages relating to the great or spiritual Babylon.

And the Law of God concerning man is, that if he acts for use—that is to say, as God's servant,—he shall be rewarded with such pleasure as no heart can conceive nor tongue tell; only it is revealed by

the Spirit, as that Holy Ghost of life and health possesses us; but if we act for pleasure instead of use, we shall be punished by such misery as no heart can conceive nor tongue tell; but which can only be revealed by the adverse spirit, whose is the power of death. (*Letter* 61.)

## 91. Imagination in Literature.

The two great loves,—that of husband and wife, representing generally the family affections, and that of mankind, to which, at need, the family affection must be sacrificed,—include, rightly understood, all the noble sentiments of humanity. Modern philosophy supposes these conditions of feeling to have been always absurd, and at present, happily, nearly extinct; and that the only proper, or, in future, possible, motives of human action are the three wholly unsentimental desires,—the lust of the flesh (hunger, thirst, and sexual passion), the lust of the eyes (covetousness), and the pride of life (personal vanity).

. . . . . .

Into one or other, then, of these two forms of sentiment, conjugal and family love, or compassion, all human happiness, properly so called, resolves itself; but the spurious or counter-happiness of lust, covetousness, and vanity being easily obtained, and naturally grasped at, instead, may altogether occupy the lives of men, without ever allowing them to know what happiness means.

But in the use I have just made of the word 'compassion,' I mean something very different from

what is usually understood by it. Compassion is the Latin form of the Greek word 'sympathy'—the English for both is 'fellow-feeling'; and the condition of delight in characters higher than our own is more truly to be understood by the word 'compassion' than the pain of pity for those inferior to our own; but in either case, the imaginative understanding of the natures of others, and the power of putting ourselves in their place, is the faculty on which the virtue depends. So that an unimaginative person can neither be reverent nor kind. The main use of works of fiction, and of the drama, is to supply, as far as possible, the defect of this imagination in common minds.

. . . . . .

Do you know, in the first place, what a play is? or what a poem is? or what a novel is? That is to say, do you know the perpetual and necessary distinctions in literary aim which have brought these distinctive names into use? You had better first, for clearness' sake, call all the three 'poems,' for all the three are so, when they are good, whether written in verse or prose. All truly imaginative account of man is poetic; but there are three essential kinds of poetry,—one dramatic, one lyric, and one epic.

Dramatic poetry is the expression by the poet of other people's feelings, his own not being told.

Lyric poetry is the expression by the poet of his own feelings.

Epic poetry is account given by the poet of other people's external circumstances, and of events happening to them, with only such expression either of

their feelings, or his own, as he thinks may be conveniently added.

The business of Dramatic poetry is therefore with the heart essentially; it despises external circumstance.

Lyric poetry may speak of anything that excites emotion in the speaker; while Epic poetry insists on external circumstances, and no more exhibits the heart-feeling than as it may be gathered from these.

. . . . . .

The gradation of power in all three depends on the degree of imagination with which the writer can enter into the feelings of other people. Whether in expressing theirs or his own, and whether in expressing their feelings only, or also the circumstances surrounding them, his power depends on his being able to feel as they do; in other words, on his being able to conceive character. And the literature which is not poetry at all, which is essentially unsentimental, or anti-poetic, is that which is produced by persons who have no imagination; and whose merit (for of course I am not speaking of bad literature) is in their wit or sense, instead of their imagination.

. . . . . .

The imaginative power always purifies; the want of it therefore as essentially defiles; and as the wit-power is apt to develop itself through absence of imagination, it seems as if wit itself had a defiling tendency. In Pindar, Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Scott, the colossal powers of imagination result in absolute virginal purity of thought. The defect of

imagination and the splendid rational power in Pope and Horace associate themselves—it is difficult to say in what decided measures—with foulness of thought. The Candide of Voltaire, in its gratuitous filth, its acute reasoning, and its entire vacuity of imagination, is a standard of what may perhaps be generally and fitly termed 'fimetic literature,' still capable, by its wit, and partial truth, of a certain service in its way. But lower forms of modern literature and art—Gustave Doré's paintings, for instance,—are the corruption, in national decrepitude, of this pessimist method of thought; and of these, the final condemnation is true—they are neither fit for the land, nor *yet* for the dunghill.

It is one of the most curious problems respecting mental government to determine how far this fimetic taint must necessarily affect intellects in which the reasoning and imaginative powers are equally balanced, and both of them at high level,—as in Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Molière, Cervantes, and Fielding; but it always indicates the side of character which is unsympathetic, and therefore unkind; (thus Shakespeare makes Iago the foulest in thought, as cruelest in design, of all his villains,) but which, in men of noble nature, is their safeguard against weak enthusiasms and ideals. It is impossible, however, that the highest conditions of tenderness in affectionate conception can be reached except by the absolutely virginal intellect. Shakespeare and Chaucer throw off, at noble work, the lower part of their natures as they would a rough dress; and you may also notice this, that the power of conceiving personal, as opposed to general, character, depends on this purity of heart and

sentiment. The men who cannot quit themselves of the impure taint, never invent character, properly so called; they only invent symbols of common humanity. Even Fielding's Allworthy is not a character, but a type of a simple English gentleman; and Squire Western is not a character, but a type of the rude English squire. But Sir Roger de Coverley is a character, as well as a type; there is no one else like him; and the masters of Tullyveolan, Ellangowan, Monkbarns, and Osbaldistone Hall, are all, whether slightly or completely drawn, portraits, not mere symbols. (*Letter* 34.)

## 92. Noble Composition.

As I have a thousand times before asserted, no great composition was ever produced by composing, nor by arranging chapters and dividing volumes; but only with the same heavenly involuntariness in which a bird builds her nest. And among the other virtues of the great classic masters, this of enchanted Design is of all the least visible to the present apothecary mind: for although, when I first gave analysis of the inventive power in 'Modern Painters,' I was best able to illustrate its combining method by showing that "there was something like it in chemistry," it is precisely what *is* like it in chemistry, that the chemist of to-day denies.

But one farther great, and greatest, sign of the Divinity in this enchanted work of the classic masters, I did not then assert,—for, indeed, I had not then myself discerned it,—namely, that this power of noble composition is never given but with accompanying

instinct of moral law; and that so severe, that the apparently too complete and ideal justice which it proclaims has received universally the name of 'poetical' justice—the justice conceived only by the men of consummate imaginative power. So that to say of any man that he has power of design, is at once to say of him that he is using it on God's side; for it can only have been taught him by that Master, and cannot be taught by the use of it against Him. And therefore every great composition in the world, every great piece of painting or literature—without any exception, from the birth of Man to this hour—is an assertion of moral law, as strict, when we examine it, as the Eumenides or the Divina Commedia. . . .

And this so-called poetical justice, asserted by the great designers, consists not only in the gracing of virtue with her own proper rewards of mental peace and spiritual victory; but in the proportioning also of worldly prosperity to visible virtue; and the manifestation, therefore, of the presence of the Father in this world, no less than in that which is to come. So that, if the life-work of any man of unquestioned genius does not assert this visible justice, but, on the contrary, exhibits good and gentle persons in unredeemed distress or destruction,—that work will invariably be found to show no power of design; but to be merely the consecutive collection of interesting circumstances well described, as continually the best work of Balzac, George Sand, and other good novelists of the second order. In some separate pieces, the great masters will indeed exhibit the darkest mystery of human fate, but never without showing, even then, that the catastrophe is owing in the root of it to the violation of

some moral law: "*She hath deceived her father*,—and may thee." The root of the entire tragedy is marked by the mighty master in that one line—the double sin, namely, of daughter and father; of the first in too lawlessly forgetting her own people, and her father's house; and of the second, in allowing his pride and selfishness to conquer his paternal love, and harden him, not only in abandonment of his paternal duty, but in calumnious insult to his child. Nor, even thus, is Shakespeare content without marking, in the name of the victim of Evil Fortune, his purpose in the tragedy, of showing that there *is* such a thing as Destiny, permitted to veil the otherwise clear Providence, and to leave it only to be found by noble Will, and proved by noble Faith. (*Letter* 83.)

## 93. Four Tale-tellers.

Of the four great English tale-tellers whose dynasties have set or risen within my own memory—Miss Edgeworth, Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray—I find myself greatly at pause in conjecturing, however dimly, what essential good has been effected by them, though they all had the best intentions. Of the essential mischief done by them, there is, unhappily, no doubt whatever. Miss Edgeworth made her morality so impertinent that, since her time, it has only been with fear and trembling that any good novelist has ventured to show the slightest bias in favour of the Ten Commandments. Scott made his romance so ridiculous, that, since his day, one can't help fancying helmets were always pasteboard, and horses were always hobby. Dickens made everybody

laugh, or cry, so that they could not go about their business till they had got their faces in wrinkles; and Thackeray settled like a meatfly on whatever one had got for dinner, and made one sick of it.

That, on the other hand, at least Miss Edgeworth and Scott have indeed some inevitable influence for good, I am the more disposed to think, because nobody now will read them. Dickens is said to have made people good-natured. If he did, I wonder what sort of natures they had before! Thackeray is similarly asserted to have chastised and repressed flunkeydom,—which it greatly puzzles me to hear, because, as far as I can see, there isn't a carriage now left in all the Row with anybody sitting inside it: the people who ought to have been in it are, every one, hanging on behind the carriage in front.

What good these writers have done, is therefore, to me, I repeat, extremely doubtful. But what good Scott has in him to do, I find no words full enough to tell. His ideal of honour in men and women is inbred, indisputable; fresh as the air of his mountains; firm as their rocks. His conception of purity in woman is even higher than Dante's; his reverence for the filial relation, as deep as Virgil's; his sympathy universal;—there is no rank or condition of men of which he has not shown the loveliest aspect; his code of moral principle is entirely defined, yet taught with a reserved subtlety like Nature's own, so that none but the most earnest readers perceive the intention: and his opinions on all practical subjects are final; the consummate decisions of accurate and inevitable common sense, tempered by the most graceful kindness.

That he had the one weakness—I will not call it fault—of desiring to possess more and more of the actual soil of the land which was so rich to his imagination, and so dear to his pride; and that, by this postern-gate of idolatry, entered other taints of folly and fault, punished by supreme misery, and atoned for by a generosity and solemn courage more admirable than the unsullied wisdom of his happier days, I have ceased to lament: for all these things make him only the more perfect to us as an example, because he is not exempt from common failings, and has his appointed portion in common pain.

I said we were to learn from him the true relations of Master and Servant; and learning these, there is little left for us to learn; but, on every subject of immediate and vital interest to us, we shall find, as we study his life and words, that both are as authoritative as they are clear. (*Letter* 31.)

## 94. The Strait Gate of Art.

All the arts of mankind, and womankind, are only rightly learned, or practised, when they are so with the definite purpose of pleasing or teaching others. A child dancing for its own delight,—a lamb leaping, —or a fawn at play, are happy and holy creatures; but they are not artists. An artist is—and recollect this definition, (put in capitals for quick reference,)—

A PERSON WHO HAS SUBMITTED TO A LAW WHICH IT WAS PAINFUL TO OBEY, THAT HE MAY BESTOW A DELIGHT WHICH IT IS GRACIOUS TO BESTOW.

"A painful law," I say; yet full of pain, not in the sense of torture, but of stringency, or constraint;

and labour, increasing, it may be, sometimes into aching of limbs, and panting of breasts: but these stronger yet, for every ache, and broader for every pant; and farther and farther strengthened from danger of rheumatic ache, and consumptive pant.

This, so far as the Arts are concerned, is 'entering in at the Strait gate.' The word Strait, applied to the entrance into Life, and the word Narrow, applied to the road of Life, do not mean that the road is so fenced that few can travel it, however much they wish, (like the entrance to the pit of a theatre,) but that, for each person, it is at first so stringent, so difficult, and so dull, being between close hedges, that few *will* enter it, though all *may*. (*Letter* 59.)

## 95. Carpaccio.

I have told you that all Carpaccio's sayings are of knowledge, not of opinion. And I mean by knowledge, *communicable* knowledge. Not merely personal, however certain—like Job's 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' but discovered truth, which can be shown to all men who are willing to receive it. No great truth is allowed by nature to be demonstrable to any person who, foreseeing its consequences, desires to refuse it. He has put himself into the power of the Great Deceiver; and will in every effort be only further deceived, and place more fastened faith in his error.

This, then, is the truth which Carpaccio knows, and would teach:—

That the world is divided into two groups of men; the first, those whose God is their God, and whose

glory is their glory, who mind heavenly things; and the second, men whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. That is just as demonstrable a scientific fact as the separation of land from water. There may be any quantity of intermediate mind, in various conditions of bog;—some, wholesome Scotch peat,—some, Pontine marsh,—some, sulphurous slime, like what people call water in English manufacturing towns; but the elements of Croyance and Mescroyance are always chemically separable out of the putrescent mess: by the faith that is in it, what life or good it can still keep, or do, is possible; by the miscreance in it, what mischief it can do, or annihilation it can suffer, is appointed for its work and fate. All strong character curdles itself out of the scum into its own place and power, or impotence: and they that sow to the Flesh do of the Flesh reap corruption; and they that sow to the Spirit, do of the Spirit reap Life.

I pause, without writing 'everlasting,' as perhaps you expected. Neither Carpaccio nor I know anything about Duration of life, or what the word translated 'everlasting,' means. Nay, the first sign of noble trust in God and man, is to be able to act without any such hope. All the heroic deeds, all the purely unselfish passions of our existence, depend on our being able to live, if need be, through the Shadow of Death: and the daily heroism of simply brave men consists in fronting and accepting Death as such, trusting that what their Maker decrees for them shall be well.

But what Carpaccio knows, and what I know also, are precisely the things which your wiseacre

apothecaries, and their apprentices, and too often your wiseacre rectors and vicars, and *their* apprentices, tell you that you can't know, because "eye hath not seen nor ear heard them," the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them to *us*,—to Carpaccio, and Angelico, and Dante, and Giotto, and Filippo Lippi, and Sandro Botticelli, and me, and to every child that has been taught to know its Father in heaven,—by the Spirit; because we have minded, or do mind, the things of the Spirit in some measure, and in such measure have entered into our rest. (*Letter* 72.)

## 96. Lessons of History.

Nor do I, in the least item, now retract the assertion, so often made in my former works, that human probity and virtue are indeed entirely independent of any hope in futurity; and that it is precisely in accepting death as the end of all, and in laying down, on that sorrowful condition, his life for his friends, that the hero and patriot of all time has become the glory and safety of his country. The highest ideals of manhood given for types of conduct in 'Unto this Last;' and the assertions that the merchant and common labourer must be ready, in the discharge of their duty, to die rather than fail, assume nothing more than this; and all the proper laws of human society may be perfectly developed and obeyed, and must be so wherever such society is constituted with prudence, though none of them be sanctioned by any other Divinity than that of our own souls, nor their violation punished by any other penalty than perfect death.

There is no reason that we should drink foul water in London, because we never hope to drink of the stream of the City of God: nor that we should spend most of our income in making machines for the slaughter of innocent nations, because we never expect to gather the leaves of the tree for their healing.

Without, therefore, ceasing to press the works of prudence even on Infidelity, and expect deeds and thoughts of honour even from Mortality, I yet take henceforward happier, if not nobler, ground of appeal, and write as a Christian to Christians; that is to say, to persons who rejoice in the hope of a literal, personal, perpetual life, with a literal, personal, and eternal God.

To all readers holding such faith, I now appeal, urging them to confess Christ before men; which they will find, on self-examination, they are most of them afraid to do.

For going to church is only a compliance with the fashion of the day; not in the least a confession of Christ, but only the expression of a desire to be thought as respectable as other people. Staying to sacrament is usually not much more; though it *may* become superstitious, and a mere service done to obtain dispensation from other services. Violent combativeness for particular sects, as Evangelical, Roman Catholic, High Church, Broad Church—or the like, is merely a form of party-egotism, and a defiance of Christ, not confession of Him.

But to confess Christ is, first, to behave righteously, truthfully, and continently; and then, to separate ourselves from those who are manifestly or by profession

rogues, liars, and fornicators. Which it is terribly difficult to do; and which the Christian church has at present entirely ceased to attempt doing. . . .

. . . . . .

Wherever the Christian church, or any section of it, has indeed resolved to live a Christian life, and keep God's laws in God's name,—there, instantly, manifest approval of Heaven is given by accession of *worldly prosperity* and victory. This witness has only been unheard, because every sect of Christians refuses to believe that the religion of any other sect can be sincere, or accepted of Heaven: while the truth is that it does not matter a burnt stick's end from the altar, in Heaven's sight, whether you are Catholic or Protestant, Eastern, Western, Byzantine, or Norman, but only whether you are true. So that the moment Venice is true to St. Mark, her flag flies over all the Eastern islands; and the moment Florence is true to the Lady of Lilies, her flag flies over all the Apennines; and the moment Switzerland is true to Notre Dame des Neiges, her pine-club beats down the Austrian lances; and the moment England is true to her Protestant virtue, all the sea-winds ally themselves with her against the Armada: and though after-shame and infidel failure follow upon every nation, yet the glory of their great religious day remains unsullied, and in that, they live for ever.

This is the Temporal lesson of all history, and with that there is another Spiritual lesson,—namely, that in the ages of faith, conditions of prophecy and seer-ship exist, among the faithful nations, in painting and scripture, which are also immortal and divine. (*Letter* 86.)

## 97. Modern Science.

The lecturer said, "the object of his lectures would be entirely accomplished if he could convince his hearers that there was no such thing as a flower." Now, in that sentence you have the most perfect and admirable summary given you of the general temper and purposes of modern science. It gives lectures on Botany, of which the object is to show that there is no such thing as a flower; on Humanity, to show that there is no such thing as a Man; and on Theology, to show there is no such thing as a God. No such thing as a Man, but only a Mechanism; no such thing as a God, but only a series of forces. The two faiths are essentially one: if you feel yourself to be only a machine, constructed to be a Regulator of minor machinery, you will put your statue of such science on your Holborn Viaduct, and necessarily recognize only major machinery as regulating *you*.

I must explain the real meaning to you, however, of that saying of the Botanical lecturer, for it has a wide bearing. Some fifty years ago the poet Goethe discovered that all the parts of plants had a kind of common nature, and would change into each other. Now this was a true discovery, and a notable one; and you will find that, in fact, all plants are composed of essentially two parts—the leaf and root—one loving the light, the other darkness; one liking to be clean, the other to be dirty; one liking to grow for the most part up, the other for the most part down; and each having faculties and purposes of its own. But the pure one which loves the light

has, above all things, the purpose of being married to another leaf, and having child-leaves, and children's children of leaves, to make the earth fair for ever. And when the leaves marry, they put on wedding-robes, and are more glorious than Solomon in all his glory, and they have feasts of honey, and we call them "Flowers."

In a certain sense, therefore, you see the Botanical lecturer was quite right. There are no such things as Flowers—there are only Leaves. Nay, farther than this, there may be a dignity in the less happy, but unwithering leaf, which is, in some sort, better than the brief lily of its bloom;—which the great poets always knew,—well;—Chaucer, before Goethe; and the writer of the first Psalm, before Chaucer. The Botanical lecturer was, in a deeper sense than he knew, right.

But in the deepest sense of all, the Botanical lecturer was, to the extremity of wrongness, wrong; for leaf, and root, and fruit, exist, all of them, only—that there may be flowers. He disregarded the life and passion of the creature, which were its essence. Had he looked for these, he would have recognized that in the thought of Nature herself, there is, in a plant, nothing else but its flowers. Now in exactly the sense that modern Science declares there is no such thing as a Flower, it has declared that there is no such thing as a Man, but only a transitional form of Ascidians and apes. It may, or may not be true—it is not of the smallest consequence whether it be or not. The real fact is, that, seen with human eyes, there is nothing else but man; that all animals and beings beside him are only

made that they may change into him; that the world truly exists only in the presence of Man, acts only in the passion of Man. The essence of light is in his eyes,—the centre of Force in his soul,—the pertinence of action in his deeds.

And all true science—which my Savoyard guide rightly scorned me when he thought I had not,—all true science is "savoir vivre." But all your modern science is the contrary of that. It is "savoir mourir." (*Letter* 5.)

## 98. His own Place.

I was stopped by a verse in St. John's Gospel this morning: "Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own."

His own what?

His own property, his own rights, his own opinions, his own place, I suppose one must answer? Every man in his own place; and every man acting on his own opinions; and every man having his own way. Those are somewhat your own notions of the rightest possible state of things, are they not?

And you do not think it of any consequence to ask what sort of a place your own is?

As for instance, taking the reference farther on, to the one of Christ's followers who that night, most distinctly of all that were scattered, *found* his place, and stayed in it—"This ministry and Apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to *his own place.*" What sort of a place?

It should interest you, surely, to ask of such things, since you all, whether you like them or not, *have*

your own places; and whether you know them or not, your own opinions. It is too true that very often you fancy you think one thing, when, in reality, you think quite another. Most Christian persons, for instance, fancy they would like to be in heaven. But that is not their real opinion of the place at all. See how grave they will look if their doctor hints to them that there is the least probability of their soon going there.

And the ascertaining what you really do think yourself, and do not merely fancy you think, because other people have said so; as also the ascertaining, if every man had indeed to go to his own place, what place he would verily have to go to, are most wholesome mental exercises; and there is no objection whatever to your giving weight to that really 'private opinion,' and that really 'individual right.'

But if you ever come really to know either what you think, or what you deserve, it is ten to one but you find it as much the character of Prudence as of Charity, that she "seeketh not her own." For indeed that same apostle, who so accurately sought his own, and found it, is, in another verse, called the "Son of Loss." "Of them whom Thou gavest me, have I lost none, but the Son of Loss," says Christ (your unlucky translation, again, quenches the whole text by its poor Latinism—"perdition"). Might it not be better to lose your place than to find it, on such terms?

But, lost or found, what do you think *is* your place at this moment? Are you minded to stay in it, if you are in it? Do you mind where it is, if you are out of it? What sort of creatures do you think

yourselves? How do those you call your best friends think of you, when they advise you to claim your just place in the world? (*Letter* 28.)

## 99. "I serve."

You have, I hope, noticed that throughout these letters addressed to you as workmen and labourers,—though I have once or twice ventured to call myself your fellow-workman, I have oftener spoken as belonging to, and sharing main modes of thought with, those who are not labourers, but either live in various ways by their wits—as lawyers, authors, reviewers; clergymen, parliamentary orators, and the like—or absolutely in idleness on the labour of others,—as the representative Squire. And, broadly speaking, I address you as workers, and speak in the name of the rest as idlers, thus not estimating the mere wit-work as work at all: it is always play, when it is good.

Speaking to you, then, as workers, and of myself as an idler, tell me honestly whether you consider me as addressing my betters or my worses? Let us give ourselves no airs on either side. Which of us, do you seriously think, you or I, are leading the more honourable life? Would you like to lead my life rather than your own; or, if you couldn't help finding it pleasanter, would you be ashamed of yourselves for leading it? Is your place, or mine, considered as cure and sinecure, the better? And are either of us legitimately in it? I would fain know your own real opinion on these things.

But note further: there is another relation between us than that of idler and labourer; the much more

direct one of Master and Servant. . . . Happy, or easy, or otherwise, am I in my place, think you; and you, my serfs, in yours?

'You are not serfs,' say you, 'but free-born Britons'? Much good may your birth do you. What does your birth matter to me, since, now that you are grown men, you must do whatever I like, or die by starvation? 'Strike!'—will you? Can you live by striking? And when you are forced to work again, will not your masters choose again, as they have chosen hitherto, what work you are to do? Not serfs!—it is well if you are so much as that. . . . A serf means a 'saved person'—the word comes first from a Greek one, meaning to drag, or drag away into safety, (though captive safety,) out of the slaughter of war. But alas, the trades most of you are set to now-a-days have no element of safety in them, either for body or soul. They take thirty years from your lives here;—what they take from your lives hereafter, ask your clergy. I have no opinion on that matter.

But I used another terrible word just now—'menial.' The modern English vulgar mind has a wonderful dread of doing anything of that sort!

I suppose there is scarcely another word in the language which people more dislike having applied to them, or of which they less understand the application. It comes from a beautiful old Chaucerian word, 'meinie,' or many, signifying the attendant company of any one worth attending to; the disciples of a master, scholars of a teacher, soldiers of a leader, lords of a King. Chaucer says the God of Love came, in the garden of the Rose, with 'his many';—in the court of the King of Persia spoke a Lord, one

'of his many.' Therefore there is nothing in itself dishonourable in being menial: the only question is —*whose* many you belong to, and whether he is a person worth belonging to, or even safe to be belonged to; also, there is somewhat in the cause of your following: if you follow for love, it is good to be menial—if for honour, good also;—if for ten per cent.—as a railroad company follows its Director, it is not good to be menial. Also there is somewhat in the manner of following: if you obey your Taskmaster's eye, it is well;—if only his whip, still, well; but not so well:—but, above all, or below all, if you have to obey the whip as a bad hound, because you have nó nose, like the members of the present House of Commons, it is a very humble form of menial service indeed.

But even as to the quite literal form of it, in house or domestic service, are you sure it is so very disgraceful a state to live in? (*Letter* 28.)

## 100. Rich and Poor.

I will ask you first to consider with yourselves what St. James means by saying in the ninth verse of his general Epistle, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low;" and if you find, as you generally will, if you think seriously over any verse of your Bibles whatsoever, that you never have had, and are never likely to have, the slightest idea what it means, perhaps you will permit me to propose the following explanation to you. That while both rich and poor are to be content to remain in their several states, gaining only by the due and natural

bettering of an honest man's settled life; if, nevertheless, any chance should occur to cause sudden difference in either of their positions, the poor man might wisely desire that it should be some relief from the immediate pressure of poverty, while the rich should esteem it the surest sign of God's favour, if, without fault of his own, he were forced to know the pain of a lower condition.

I have noticed, in 'Sesame and Lilies,' the frantic fear of the ordinary British public, lest they should fall below their proper "station in life." It appears that almost the only real sense of duty remaining now in the British conscience is a passionate belief in the propriety of keeping up an appearance; no matter if on other people's money, so only that there be no signs of their coming down in the world.

I should be very glad therefore if any of my young lady readers, who consider themselves religious persons, would inform me whether they are satisfied with my interpretation of the text; and if so, then how far they would consent, without complaining, to let God humble them, if He wished to? If, for instance, they would, without pouting, allow Him to have His way, even to the point of forcing them to gain their bread by some menial service,—as, suppose, a housemaid's; and whether they would feel aggrieved at being made lower housemaid instead of upper. (*Letter* 30.)

### 101. Covetousness.

Hating covetousness, and fearing God.—You will please to observe that this hate and fear are flat

opposites one to the other; so that if a man fear or reverence God, he must hate covetousness; and if he fear or reverence covetousness, he must hate God; and there is no intermediate way whatsoever. Nor is it possible for any man, wilfully rich, to be a God-fearing person; but only for those who are involuntarily rich, and are making all the haste they prudently and piously can, to be poor; for money is a strange kind of seed; scattered, it is poison; but set, it is bread: so that a man whom God has appointed to be a sower must bear as lightly as he may the burden of gold and of possessions, till he find the proper places to sow them in. But persons desiring to be rich, and accumulating riches, always hate God, and never fear Him; the idol they do fear—(for many of them are sincerely religious) is an imaginary, or mind-sculptured God of their own making, to their own liking; a God who allows usury, delights in strife and contention, and is very particular about everybody's going to his synagogues on Sunday.

. . . . . .

AVARICE means the desire to collect money, not goods. A 'miser' or 'miserable person' desires to collect goods only for the sake of turning them into money.

Avarice is a quite natural passion, and, within due limits, healthy. The addition of coin to coin, and of cipher to cipher, is a quite proper pleasure of human life, under due rule; . . . its disease . . . arises mainly in strong and stupid minds, when by evil fortune they have never been led to think or feel.

FRUGALITY. The disposition to save or spare what we have got, without any desire to gain more. It is constantly, of course, associated with avarice; but quite as frequently with generosity, and is often merely an extreme degree of housewifely habit.

COVETOUSNESS. The desire of possessing more than we have, of any good thing whatsoever of which we have already enough for our uses, (adding house to house, and field to field). It is much connected with pride; but more with restlessness of mind and desire of novelty; much seen in children who tire of their toys and want new ones. The pleasure in having things 'for one's very own' is a very subtle element in it. When I gave away my Loire series of Turner drawings to Oxford, I thought I was rational enough to enjoy them as much in the University gallery as in my own study. But not at all! I find I can't bear to look at them in the gallery, because they are 'mine' no more.

Now, you observe, that your creed of St. George says you believe in the nobleness of human nature —that is to say, that all our natural instincts are honourable. Only it is not always easy to say which of them are natural and which not.

For instance, Adam Smith says that it is 'natural' for every person to covet his neighbour's goods, and want to change his own for them; wherein is the origin of Trade, and Universal Salvation.

But God says, 'Thou shalt *not* covet thy neighbour's goods;' and God, who made you, does in that written law express to you *His* knowledge of your inner heart, and instruct you in the medicine for it. Therefore, on due consideration, you will

find assuredly it is quite *un*natural in you to covet your neighbour's goods.

Consider, first, of the most precious, the wife. It is natural for you to think your own the best and prettiest of women; not at all to want to change her for somebody else's wife. If you like somebody else's better than yours, and this somebody else likes yours better than his, and you both want to change, you are both in a non-natural condition, and entirely out of the sphere of happy human love.

Again. It is natural for you to think your own house and garden the nicest house and garden that ever were. If, as should always be, they were your father's before you, and he and you have both taken proper care of them, they are a treasure to you which no money could buy,—the leaving them is always pain,—the return to them, a new thrill and wakening to life. They are a home and place of root to you, as if you were founded on the ground like its walls, or grew into it like its flowers. You would no more willingly transplant yourself elsewhere than the espalier pear-tree of your own grafting would pull itself out by the roots to climb another trellis. That is the natural mind of a man. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house." You are in an entirely non-natural state if you do, and, properly speaking, never had a house in your life.

"Nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant." It is a 'natural' thing for masters to get proud of those who serve them; and a 'natural' thing for servants to get proud of the masters they serve. . . . Nay, if the service has been true, if the master has indeed

asked for what was good for himself, and the servant has done what was good for his master, they cannot choose but like each other; to have a new servant, or a new master, would be a mere horror to both of them.

. . . . . .

"Nor his ox, nor his ass." If you have petted both of your own, properly, from calf and foal, neither these, nor anything else of yours, will you desire to change for "anything that is his." Do you really think I would change my pen for yours, or my ink-stand, or my arm-chair, or my Gainsborough little girl, or my Turner pass of St. Gothard? I would see you——very uncomfortable—first. And that is the natural state of a human being who has taken anything like proper pains to make *himself* comfortable in God's good world, and get some of the right good, and true wealth of it.

For, you observe farther, the commandment is only that thou shalt not covet *thy neighbour's* goods. It does not say that you are not to covet *any* goods. How *could* you covet your neighbour's, if both your neighbour and you were forbidden to have any? (*Letter* 62.)

## 102. Fees.

All good judging, and all good preaching, must be given gratis. Look back to what I have incidentally said of lawyers and clergy, as professional—that is to say, as living by their judgment, and sermons. You will perhaps now be able to receive my conclusive statement, that all such professional sale of

justice and mercy is a deadly sin. A man may sell the work of his hands, but not his equity, nor his piety. Let him live by his spade; and if his neighbours find him wise enough to decide a dispute between them, or if he is in modesty and simplicity able to give them a piece of pious advice, let him do so, in Heaven's name, but not take a fee for it. (*Letter* 31.)

## 103. Courtship.

When a youth is fully in love with a girl, and feels that he is wise in loving her, he should at once tell her so plainly, and take his chance bravely, with other suitors. No lover should have the insolence to think of being accepted at once, nor should any girl have the cruelty to refuse at once; without severe reasons. If she simply doesn't like him, she may send him away for seven years or so —he vowing to live on cresses, and wear sackcloth meanwhile, or the like penance: if she likes him a little, or thinks she might come to like him in time, she may let him stay near her, putting him always on sharp trial to see what stuff he is made of, and requiring, figuratively, as many lion-skins or giants' heads as she thinks herself worth. The whole meaning and power of true courtship is Probation; and it oughtn't to be shorter than three years at least,—seven is, to my own mind, the orthodox time. And these relations between the young people should be openly and simply known, not to their friends only, but to everybody who has the least interest in them: and a girl worth anything

ought to have always half a dozen or so of suitors under vow for her.

There are no words strong enough to express the general danger and degradation of the manners of mob-courtship, as distinct from these, which have become the fashion,—almost the law,—in modern times: when in a miserable confusion of candlelight, moonlight, and limelight—and anything but daylight, —in indecently attractive and insanely expensive dresses, in snatched moments, in hidden corners, in accidental impulses and dismal ignorances, young people smirk and ogle and whisper and whimper and sneak and stumble and flutter and fumble and blunder into what they call Love;—expect to get whatever they like the moment they fancy it, and are continually in the danger of losing all the honour of life for a folly, and all the joy of it by an accident.

Passing down now from the class of good girls who have the power, if they had the wisdom, to regulate their lives instead of losing them, to the less fortunate classes, equally good—(often, weighing their adversity in true balance, it might be conjectured, better,)—who have little power of ruling, and every provocation to misruling their fates: who have, from their births, much against them, few to help, and, virtually, none to guide,—how are we to count the annual loss of its girl-wealth to the British nation in these? Loss, and probably worse; for if there be fire and genius in these neglected ones, and they chance to have beauty also, they are apt to become to us long-running, heavy burdening, incalculable compound interest of perdition. God save them, and all of us, at last! (*Letter* 90.)

## 104. Plain Girls.

I have received several letters from young correspondents, complaining that I attach too much importance to beauty in women, and asking, "What are plain girls to do?"—one of them putting this farther question, not easy of answer, "Why beauty is so often given to girls who have only the mind to misuse it, and not to others, who would hold it as a power for God's service?" To which question, however, it is to be answered, in the first place, that the mystery is quite as great in the bestowal of riches and wit; in the second place, that the girls who misuse their beauty, only do it because they have not been taught better, and it is much more other people's fault than theirs; in the third place, that the privilege of seeing beauty is quite as rare a one as that of possessing it, and far more fatally misused.

The question, "What are plain girls to do?" requires us first to understand clearly what "plainness" is. No girl who is well bred, kind, and modest, is ever offensively plain; all real deformity means want of manners, or of heart. I may say, in defence of my own constant praise of beauty, that I do not attach half the real importance to it which is assumed in ordinary fiction;—above all, in the pages of the periodical which best represents, as a whole, the public mind of England. As a rule, throughout the whole seventy-volume series of 'Punch,'—first by Leech and then by Du Maurier,—all nice girls are represented as pretty; all nice women, as both pretty and well dressed; and if the reader will compare a sufficient number of examples extending over a series

of years, he will find the moral lesson more and more enforced by this most popular authority, that all real ugliness in either sex means some kind of hardness of heart, or vulgarity of education. The ugliest man, for all in all, in 'Punch' is Sir Gorgius Midas,—the ugliest women, those who are unwilling to be old. Generally speaking, indeed, 'Punch' is cruel to women above a certain age; but this is the expression of a real truth in modern England, that the ordinary habits of life and modes of education produce great plainness of *mind* in middle-aged women. (*Letter* 91.)

## 105. Holiday and Holy Day.

I have been asked to contribute to the purchase of the Alexandra Park; and I will not: and beg you, my working readers, to understand, once for all, that I wish your *homes* to be comfortable, and refined; and that I will resist, to the utmost of my power, all schemes founded on the vile modern notion that you are to be crowded in kennels till you are nearly dead, that other people may make money by your work, and then taken out in squads by tramway and railway, to be revived and refined by science and art. Your first business is to make your homes healthy and delightful: then, keep your wives and children there, and let your return to *them* be your daily "holy day." (*Letter* 22.)

## 106. The Word of God.

I write to the labourers of England; but not of England in 1870–73. A day will come when we

shall have men resolute to do good work, and capable of reading and thinking while they rest; who will not expect to build like Athenians without knowing anything about the first king of Athens, nor like Christians without knowing anything about Christ: and then they will find my letters useful, and read them. And to the few readers whom these letters now find, they will become more useful as they go on, for they are a mosaic-work into which I can put a piece here and there as I find glass of the colour I want; what is as yet done being set, indeed, in patches, but not without design.

One chasm I must try to fill to-day, by telling you why it is so grave a heresy (or wilful source of division) to call any book, or collection of books, the 'Word of God.'

By that Word, or Voice, or Breath, or Spirit, the heavens and earth, and all the host of them, were made; and in it they exist. It is your life; and speaks to you always, so long as you live nobly;—dies out of you as you refuse to obey it; leaves you to hear, and be slain by, the word of an evil spirit, instead of it.

It may come to you in books,—come to you in clouds,—come to you in the voices of men,—come to you in the stillness of deserts. You must be strong in evil, if you have quenched it wholly;—very desolate in this Christian land, if you have never heard it at all. Too certainly, in this Christian land you do hear, and loudly, the contrary of it,—the doctrine or word of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy; forbidding to marry, recommending women to find some more lucrative occupation than

that of nursing the baby; and commanding to abstain from meats, (and drinks,) which God has appointed to be received with thanksgiving. For "everything which God has made is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be sanctified by the Word of God." And by what else?

If you have been accustomed to hear the clergyman's letter from which I have just been quoting, as if it were *itself* the Word of God,—you have been accustomed also to hear our bad translation of it go on saying, "If it be sanctified by the Word of God, and *prayer*." But there is nothing whatever about prayer in the clergyman's letter,—nor does he say, *If* it be sanctified. He says, "For it *is* sanctified by the Word of God, and the chance that brings it." Which means, that when meat comes in your way when you are hungry, or drink when you are thirsty, and you know in your own conscience that it is good for you to have it, the meat and drink are holy to you.

But if the Word of God in your heart is against it, and you know that you would be better without the extra glass of beer you propose to take, and that your wife would be the better for the price of it, then it is unholy to you: and you can only have the sense of entire comfort and satisfaction, either in having it, or going without it, if you are simply obeying the Word of God about it in your mind, and accepting contentedly the chances for or against it; as probably you have heard of Sir Philip Sidney's accepting the chance of another soldier's needing his cup of water more than he, on his last battle-field, and instantly obeying the Word of God coming to him on that

occasion. Not that it is intended that the supply of these good creatures of God should be left wholly to chance; but that if we observe the proper laws of God concerning them, and, for instance, instead of forbidding marriage, duly and deeply reverence it, then, in proper time and place, there will be true Fors, or chancing on, or finding of, the youth and maid by each other, such in character as the Providence of Heaven appoints for each: and, similarly, if we duly recognize the laws of God about meats and drinks, there will for every labourer and traveller be such chancing upon meat and drink and other entertainment as shall be sacredly pleasant to him. And there cannot indeed be at present imagined a more sacred function for young Christian men than that of hosts or hospitallers, supplying, to due needs, and with proper maintenance of their own lives, wholesome food and drink to all men: so that as, at least, always at one end of a village there may be a holy church and vicar, so at the other end of the village there may be a holy tavern and tapster, ministering the good creatures of God, so that they may be sanctified by the Word of God and His Providence.

And as the providence of marriage, and the giving to each man the help meet for his life, is now among us destroyed by the wantonness of harlotry, so the providence of the Father who would fill men's hearts with food and gladness is destroyed among us by prostitution of joyless drink; and the never to be enough damned guilt of men, and governments, gathering pence at the corners of the streets, standing there, pot in hand, crying, 'Turn in hither; come,

eat of my evil bread, and drink of my beer, which I have venomously mingled.' (*Letter* 36.)

## 107. L'Envoy.

Looking back upon my efforts for the last twenty years, I believe that their failure has been in very great part owing to my compromise with the infidelity of this outer world, and my endeavour to base my pleading upon motives of ordinary prudence and kindness, instead of on the primary duty of loving God,—foundation other than which can no man lay. I thought myself speaking to a crowd which could only be influenced by visible utility; nor was I the least aware how many entirely good and holy persons were living in the faith and love of God as vividly and practically now as ever in the early enthusiasm of Christendom, until, chiefly in consequence of the great illnesses which, for some time after 1878, forbade my accustomed literary labour, I was brought into closer personal relations with the friends in America, Scotland, Ireland, and Italy, to whom, if I am spared to write any record of my life, it will be seen that I owe the best hopes and highest thoughts which have supported and guided the force of my matured mind. These have shown me, with lovely initiation, in how many secret places the prayer was made which I had foolishly listened for at the corners of the streets; and on how many hills which I had thought left desolate, the hosts of heaven still moved in chariots of fire.

But surely the time is come when all these faithful armies should lift up the standard of their Lord,—not

by might, nor by power, but by His spirit, bringing forth judgment unto victory. That they should no more be hidden, nor overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. If the enemy cometh in like a flood, how much more may the rivers of Paradise? Are there not fountains of the great deep that open to bless, not destroy?

And the beginning of blessing, if you will think of it, is in that promise, "Great shall be the peace of thy *children*." All the world is but as one orphanage, so long as its children know not God their Father; and all wisdom and knowledge is only more bewildered darkness, so long as you have not taught them the fear of the Lord.

Not to be taken out of the world in monastic sorrow, but to be kept from its evil in shepherded peace;—ought not this to be done for all the children held at the fonts beside which we vow, in their name, to renounce the world? Renounce! nay, ought we not, at last, to redeem?

The story of Rosy Vale is not ended;—surely out of its silence the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and round it the desert rejoice, and blossom as the rose! (*Letter* 96.)

# INDEX

NOTE.—*The numbers immediately following each item are those of the* Letters *of "Fors Clavigera" quoted from; the last, the* page of this volume *on which such passage is to be found.*

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