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POLITICAL ECONOMY

IN CONNEXION WITH

THE MORAL STATE AND PROSPECTS OF SOCIETY

WITH ESSAYS ON COGNATE SUBJECTS.

BY THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. LL.D.

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POLITICAL ECONOMY.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1832.

POLITICAL Economy, though not deemed an essential branch of education for churchmen, touches very closely, notwithstanding, on certain questions, in which both the interest and the duty of ecclesiastics are deeply concerned. The questions of Pauperism and of a Religious Establishment, though no others could be specified, would, of themselves, justify a reference to the lessons and principles of this science, even in a theological course.

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

policy ; and that, while this is neglected, a government, in its anxious and incessant labours for a well-conditioned state of the commonwealth, will only flounder from one delusive shift or expedient to another, under the double misfortune, of being held responsible for the prosperity of the land, and yet finding this to be an element most helplessly and hopelessly beyond its control.

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

Some of the text in this treatise was recently delivered in Lectures to the Students of the Theological Hall in Edinburgh. We gladly transfer them from the chair to the press, were it for no other reason, than to relieve our academic work, in all time coming, even from the semblance of aught that is extra-professional.* We cannot, however, bid adieu to political economy, without an earnest recommendation of its lessons to all those who enter upon the ecclesiastical vocation. They are our churchmen, in fact, who could best carry the most important of these lessons into practical effect. If sufficiently enlightened on the question of pauperism, they might, with the greatest ease, in Scotland, clear away this moral leprosy from their respective parishes. And, standing at the head of Christian education, they are the alone effectual dispensers of all those civil and economical blessings which would follow in its train.

* It may be right to mention, that all which we did deliver upon this subject, was in a separate lectureship of one hour in the week, distinct from the regular lessons of the Theological course, though preparatory to our views on the treatment of pauperism, and other questions in parish economics, which enter largely into the duties and attentions of the pastoral care. It besides formed the natural precursor to another lectureship which we have begun, on the methods and the machinery of Christian education.

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

And if not very hopeful of an instant acquiescence in our principles, far less do we look for the instant adoption of our practical suggestions. The urgencies of the country may perhaps speed onwards the commutation of tithes, and the measure of a universal education. The commutation of taxes into a territorial impost, will be the work of a later age; though we should rejoice even now, did we witness a commencement however humble, an approximation however slow, to this great political and economical reform.

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

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1840.

HAD the main or professed object of the following work been the establishment of a new system of Political Economy, the attention of the reader would have been chiefly, if not exclusively directed to its peculiar doctrines, and to the reasons by which they are supported. But its main object is the application of the science, to a fulfilment no doubt of surpassing practical importance—the moral elevation and consequent economic comfort of society at large; and this, as the great landing-place of the whole demonstration, is that which is most calculated to fill the eye of the reader, and to engross the largest share of his regards, if not altogether to monopolize them. The science stands, as it were, in a place of subserviency or of subordination to the use which is made of it; and appears here rather in the character of an incidental topic—while, with the great majority of those who have written on the subject, it is the elucidation of the science itself viewed as a scheme of doctrine, which forms the great *terminus ad quem* or ultimate design of their authorship.

This peculiarity would have been of less consequence, had the author of these pages taken up the prevalent views of political economy. This would have given him the advantage of readers with whom he could immediately enter into converse on common ground, or set forth on common principles with himself; and thence proceed onwards to the one task of their proposed application. But as the case actually stands, there is a double task imposed on the reader who shall honour this Treatise with a perusal. If hitherto ignorant of the science, he has first a political economy to learn; and we have endeavoured to present him with such views and doctrines, as, however little recognised in any of the reigning schools, have long been familiar to ourselves, and been indeed for many years the articles of our creed.

If again an adept in the science, he has a political economy to unlearn; and this must form a strong initial, in most instances an insuperable obstacle, in the way of our main lesson, with the actual disciples of any of the actual systems of political economy. We expect therefore to meet with more of acceptance, and indeed have actually found it, among those to whom the whole subject was altogether new, than among those preoccupied with notions already acquired—more especially if the notions of Mill and Ricardo, who, though opposed to another section of the utilitarian school, have generated by their writings a race of unyielding and hard utilitarians. We do not even expect much countenance from those unqualified admirers of Smith, who have stood their ground against the novelties of later schools—though we have ever deemed it the best preparation for an acquiescence in our main, and concluding lesson, that one should have become alike intelligent in the doctrines of Smith and Malthus, and so as to be qualified for bringing together and examining in connexion the theory of wealth and the theory of population.

We have attempted in several ways to remedy the disadvantage of which we now complain. There are certain of the economical doctrines on which we have ventured to innovate; and on which, as being of chief scientific importance, we have bestowed a single and separate treatment in the articles of an Appendix, which forms a series of distinct essays on various questions of the science. We have furthermore presented our doctrines in the form of a system, by arranging them, at the conclusion of the Appendix, into a sort of digest or synoptical view of our leading principles. In the present, which is the third edition of our work, we have subjoined brief notanda to each chapter; and this with the view of fastening the attention of the reader on such topics as possessed the greatest interest, either in themselves, or in the conclusions to which they lead. And we shall now bring this Preface to a close, by such a brief outline of our scheme, as might best prepare the reader for entering into the principles and design of the whole publication.

Our great object, then, is to demonstrate, that all agricultural

and all commercial expedients for the enlargement of human maintenance, have a necessary limit—beyond which if the number of human beings overpass, or on which if this number with its powers and tendencies of indefinite augmentation press inconveniently, the inevitable effect must be a general destitution and discomfort throughout the mass of society. It is true that the absolute, and at length impassable limit, in reference even to particular countries, and still more in reference to the whole world, may not be reached for centuries to come. But though this ultimate limit, this final and at length immovable barrier, to any further increase in the means of subsistence, may not be arrived at, nor come to a dead stand for many generations—enough to realize all the practical evils of a stinted and straitened condition, if it be a slowly retiring limit constantly urged upon by a recklessly increasing population. The great problem in these circumstances, and it is a problem which is now engaging more of speculation every day, is how to obtain exemption for the great bulk of the community from the distress and degradation in which they are so frequently involved, that it seems to many as if such were the inevitable lot of humanity. We differ from these in believing, that, within our reach, there are the capabilities of a permanent amelioration in the economic state of the commonwealth, and more especially of a great and stable enlargement in the sufficiency and comfort and whole status of the common people. Short of the question which touches the good of their immortality, we know none more interesting than those which bear on their temporal well-being; and, with all our partialities for a high state and standard of enjoyment among the working classes, we cannot imagine a more deeply important inquiry relative to any interest on this side of death, than how to elevate, by means of well-paid industry, the general platform of humble life—and so as that the ground-floor of the social and political edifice shall be overspread with a well-conditioned population.

Innumerable are the expedients which have been proposed for this blissful result; and the great object of our work is to de-

monstrate the futility of them all save one—or, along with the insufficiency of all merely economical devices, to prove that the distempers of society are mainly resolvable into moral causes, and therefore that the removal of these can only be effected by a moralizing operation. We have long had no faith in the efficacy of any scheme for the mitigation of the evils of our social state, but the Christian education of the people; and it is for the purpose of exposing the inefficacy of all other schemes, that we have found it necessary to attempt such an extensive survey of Political Economy. A reference to, or rather a reckoning with, the various dogmata of that science was unavoidable, in our endeavours to demonstrate the insufficiency of the manifold resources on which philanthropists have calculated, as affording a specific against the lower orders. The scheme of home colonization; and the various proposals of employment for the people; and the capabilities of increasing capital for their maintenance; and the openings of foreign trade; and the relief that might be conceived to ensue from the abolition of taxes; and an indefinite harbourage for our increasing numbers in an extended system of emigration; and, finally, a compulsory provision for the indigent—all these pass in successive review before us; and, if we are so fortunate as to obtain the concurrence of our readers, they will agree with us in the conclusion, that though all should be tried, yet all will be found wanting. Nevertheless we shall not give up in despair the prosperity of that great cause, the object of which is to provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number—believing, as we do, that the sufficiency of the people's means will at length be reached through the medium of the people's intelligence and the people's worth; that there is an inseparable alliance between the two elements of their character and their comfort; and that a thorough education of principle throughout the land, though the only, yet is the sure high road to the economic well-being of the community at large.

ON POLITICAL ECONOMY

IN CONNEXION WITH THE

MORAL STATE AND MORAL PROSPECTS OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE INCREASE AND LIMIT OF FOOD.

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

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

3. Any land that is cultivated for food to human beings, must, at least, yield as much as shall feed the labourers who are employed in working it. But it must do more than this. These

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

4. The imagination is, that the land of greatest fertility was first occupied. Men would naturally settle on those soils which yielded the most plentiful return for their labour, or which enabled them to subsist with the least labour. It is further conceived, that, after all the first-rate land had been cultivated, an increasing population flowed over, as it were, on the second-rate land; which, in virtue of its inferior quality, yielded a scantier return for the same labour. As mankind continued to multiply, a still farther descent behoved to be made, through a gradation of soils, each of less fertility than the one before entered on; and so, either requiring a greater amount of labour to draw from it the same food, or yielding a smaller amount of food to the same labour. This process, it is evident, admits of being extended, till the produce of the soil last entered on shall, by the utmost labour which men will expend on it, be barely sufficient for the subsistence of its agricultural labourers, and of their secondaries.

5. In filling up this sketch, or *histoire raisonnée*, of the conjunct process of culture and population, economists have given in to certain conceptions, which require to be modified. They sometimes describe the process, as if, at each successive descent to an inferior soil, the comfort and circumstances of the human race underwent deterioration; or as if, under the impulse of a hard and hunger-bitten necessity, men were driven, like so many famishing wolves, to those intractable soils, whence they could only force out a more stinted and penurious fare than before—and that, at a greater expense of toil and of endurance. Agree-

ably to this imagination, even economists and calculators have, by a reverse process, found their way to a golden age at the outset of the world—when men reposed in the lap of abundance; and, with no other fatigue than that of a slight and superficial operation on a soil of first-rate quality, richly partook in the bounties of nature. But when all this soil came to be occupied, and the race continued to multiply, land of a second quality behoved to be taken in—and the conception is, that, at every such transition from a better to a worse land, a heavier imposition of toil was laid upon workmen, and a smaller amount of produce was yielded to them in return for their industry. This, certainly, represents to us the species in a course of deterioration, at least in as far as the comfort of the labouring classes is concerned. They are pictured to the eye, as if goaded on by hard and stubborn necessity at every step of this movement, and going forth in starving multitudes, from that better land, which is now too narrow for them. At each new stretch of cultivation, a more ungrateful soil has to be encountered, on which it is thought that men are more strenuously worked, and more scantily subsisted, than before—till, at the extreme limit of this progression, a life of utmost toil, and utmost penury, is looked to as the inevitable doom that awaits the working classes of society.

6. Now, generally speaking, this is not accordant with historical truth. We do read of extensive emigrations, by men who felt themselves straitened in their native land, and went forth in quest of a settlement. But we do not witness, throughout the various countries of the world, the successive degradation of their peasantry. There may be fluctuations in their economic state, from year to year, or from generation to generation. But on the survey and comparison of centuries, we should rather say, that there had been a general march and elevation in the style of their enjoyments. There is a seeming incompatibility in this fact with the process which has just been described—and this has cast a suspicion over its reality. Men have been at a loss to reconcile the descent of labourers among the inferior soils with the undoubted rise which has taken place in their circumstances, or in the average standard of their comfort. This has darkened the whole speculation, and brought on a controversy, which admits, however, we think, of a very obvious and easy adjustment.

7. For, as the fresh soils that had to be successively entered on became more intractable, the same amount of labour, by the

intervention of tools and instruments of husbandry, may have become greatly more effective. The same labour which, by a direct manual operation, could raise a given quantity of subsistence from soil of the first quality, might, with our present implements of agriculture, raise as much from soil of the last quality that has been entered on. If, from one generation to another, a descent had to be made on more stubborn and impracticable soils, and which therefore required a far more operose treatment ere they could be brought to yield as abundantly as did their predecessor soils, in the career of agriculture—it should be remembered that, by this time, the labour of human hands might have been helped and facilitated, to the whole extent of the difference, by the implements of labour. With the scraping and stirring of first-rate land by the branch of a tree, there might be as much of real muscular work required to obtain from it the same quantity of produce, as from second-rate land by means of a wooden spade, or from third-rate land by means of an iron one, or from fourth-rate land by means of a plough, or lastly, from fifth-rate and following lands, by means of those successive improvements in the form of the plough, whereby it is made more effective than before. We will not yet designate the implements of husbandry by the name of capital; but, considering them merely as the products of labour, it is enough at present to affirm, that the whole labour, first of making the plough, and then of working it on the soil of the last and latest quality, might fetch back as liberal a return of food to the cultivators, as an equal quantity of labour, bestowed either directly by the hand, or with the intervention of some rude and clumsy instrument on the land that was earliest entered on. It is thus that there may at once be a progress in agriculture, and yet, through all the gradations of it, the species be upheld in as great ease and sufficiency as at first. Instead of the strong impulse of population driving them helplessly and ungovernably onward to those more inhospitable regions where they are doomed to all the miseries of a more stinted provision than before,—they may, simply and spontaneously, and without the pressure of any felt agony or violence, have entered on the possession of these regions, because now furnished by art with the means of extracting, even from the comparative barrenness of nature, as generous a remuneration for their toils, as they before drew from nature's greatest fertility. We are not, therefore, to imagine of the great family of mankind, that as they grew in numbers, and spread

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

8. It follows not, that in the act of descending to an inferior soil, men have to put forth a greater quantity of labour for the same return,—because it may have been some improvement in the modes or operations of husbandry, which has enabled them to make the descent, and to make the same labour as effective on the ground which they are now reclaiming from the waste, as on that which they had last brought within the domain of cultivation. When, therefore, we see the wilds of nature further broken in upon, we are not always to imagine, that it is from the pressure of a felt necessity, by which men have been forced to submit to a more painful endurance, and to put up with a scantier subsistence in return for it. It may have been the pacific, the prosperous result of some enlargement in the powers of agricultural labour; and in consequence of which, men go spontaneously forth on an inferior soil, because now, for the same work, they earn the same recompense as they did on the soil immediately above it. It is thus a possible thing, that cultivation may be extended, without deterioration to the comfort of

labourers; and that, along its last possible frontier, there might be stationed as high and well-conditioned a peasantry, as ever flourished in any olden or golden period on the lawns of Arcadia.

9. And cultivation may be extended by an improvement in manufacturing, as well as agricultural labour. It may be conceived of the land last entered, that in return for a certain quantity of labour, it yields the subsistence of a hundred families; and that the land next inferior to it cannot be profitably cultivated, because, in return for the same labour, it yields the subsistence of only ninety families. Now, overlooking for the present the element of profit, one might conceive these hundred families to be made up of seventy belonging to the agricultural, and of thirty belonging to the secondary class,—it being the employment of the latter to prepare, for the whole hundred, the second necessaries of life. It matters not whether there be such an improvement in agricultural labour, that sixty can do the work of seventy, or such an improvement in manufacturing labour, that twenty can do the work of thirty. In either way, ninety labourers can do as much as a hundred did before; and whereas, formerly, land behoved to return for their labour the subsistence of a hundred families, ere it could be taken in, it may now be taken in, though of such inferior quality, as to return the subsistence of but ninety families. By the former improvement, the agricultural labourers necessary for a given effect, became fewer than before,—by the latter improvement, though still as numerous, they would require the services of fewer secondaries than before. It is thus that a step of improvement in manufactures alone, can give rise to an onward step of extension in agriculture—and just because a method has been devised for the fabrication of as many yards of cloth, by fewer hands, soils of poorer out-field, than any that had yet been reached, may now be profitably entered upon. An improvement in the form of the stocking machine, may, as well as an improvement in the form of the plough, bring many an else unreclaimed acre within the reach of cultivation.

10. The actual and historical process that has taken place, we believe to be as follows. The labourers of our day work harder than before, but live better than before. They put forth more strength, and receive more sustenance, than they wont to do. There has been an increase on both of these terms; or, such has been the change of habit among workmen, that while greatly

more industrious, they at the same time have become greatly more luxurious. They at once toil more strenuously, and live more plentifully—putting forth more strength, but withal, drawing the remuneration of a larger and more liberal sustenance. This we apprehend to be the actual change of habit and condition which has taken place, with artisans and labourers, in all the countries of civilized Europe,—so that while, on the one hand, we behold a harder-working peasantry, we, on the other hand, behold them more richly upholden, both in the first and second necessaries of life.

11. Now, this may be either a deterioration or an improvement in their circumstances. One can imagine a day of slavish fatigue, followed by an evening of gross sensuality,—as is often exemplified in the life of a London coalheaver, whose enormous wage is absorbed in the enormous consumption, by which he repairs the waste and the weariness of an excessive labour. This, surely, is not a desirable habitude for the commonalty of any land; nor do we read the characteristics of a high or a well-conditioned peasantry in a state of existence, made up, first of drudgery to the uttermost of their strength, and then of grovelling dissipation to the uttermost of their means. They spend one part of their revolving day in the exercise of powers, which are merely animal; and the other part in the indulgence of enjoyments, which also are merely animal—like beasts of burden, who are more hardly worked than before, and, in return for this, are better fed, and lodged, and littered than before. They are now in better keep than their forefathers; and this puts them into heart for the greater work that is extracted out of them. Still it is conceivable of the work, that it may be so very extreme, as, on the whole to degrade and to depress these overdone children of modern industry—and that in spite of the greater abundance wherewith their senses and their spirits are coarsely regaled, during the intervals of their sore bondage.

12. If this be the extreme to which the workmen of our present day are now tending, there is an extreme opposite to this; from which men only began to emerge at the outset of civilisation, and which is still realized among barbarous and demi-barbarous nations. We advert to the sordid condition of those whom nought but the agonies of hunger can impel to shake off an indolence that is else unconquerable; and who, as soon they have satisfied its cravings, lapse again into the rooted and habitual lethargy of their nature. If they have but enough of sleep, and

enough of surfeiting, they care for no higher gratification; nor will they make one effort, above that level to which they subside, by the weight of their own constitutional sluggishness. Food, of some description or other, they must have—but, having it, they are pleased to live in filth and nakedness, and nearly in utter want of all the secondary accommodations. It is obvious of such a people, that so long as they abide in this habit, the inferior soils of the earth never will be reached by them. It is even possible that they may stop short at the very first and most fertile of the land; and never taste of that abundance which is within their reach, just because of their insuperable aversion to the labour of extracting it. It is thus that they might doze away their existence on the surface of an earth whose dormant capabilities they never enter upon; and in vast territories, capable of sustaining millions over and above the few stragglers by whom they are occupied, both cultivation and population may, just because of this moral barrier, have been fixed and limited for many centuries.

13. So that, in reasoning on the causes which have led to the extension of agriculture among sterile and intractable soils, other things must be taken into account, beside the mere energy of the principle of population. We have already shown, how, without bringing this principle into collision with a taste for the enjoyments of life, there may, without any compromise of these enjoyments, and by a mere improvement in the powers of mechanical labour, be a descent among the inferior soils, and so an extension of agriculture, to afford the increasing population as large and liberal a subsistence as before. And it is evident, the very same thing would happen, with every increase that took place in the amount of manual labour, or in the industrious habits of the people. Certain it is, that, in climes and countries the most favourable to production, we may often witness the squalid destitution of whole tribes, restrained by the mere force of indolence, from the enjoyment of that plenty, which, with but a little effort, they could so easily realize. Now this proceeds, not from the principle of population being of smaller strength there than in other parts of the world, but from the counteractive force of indolence being there of greater strength. There is a lethargy, or love of ease, in certain temperaments, which will even carry it over the love of offspring; so that, should it not prevent early marriages, it will, at least, prevent a larger proportion of the fruits of marriage from ripening into maturity. Of the many children who are born, a few only will survive the

sickliness and the spare living to which they are exposed, from that state of voluntary destitution, wherein their parents will rather abide than put forth those efforts of industry which they feel to be intolerable. Just as the taste for secondary enjoyments has not yet aroused them to exertion, so neither might affection for their famishing and misguided little ones arouse them. This accounts for the population being stationary in many countries, where, as yet, the first-rate soils have scarcely been entered upon—and it should convince us that something else than the mere energy of this principle must be adverted to, when we reason on that historical progress which has conjunctly taken place, in the extension of husbandry and in the numbers of mankind.

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

15. This is one important service which commerce has rendered to agriculture. It was the instrument of that great economic change which took place at the termination of the middle ages—when landlords dismissed their retainers, and expended the surplus produce of their estates on the purchase of those articles which trade and manufactures brought to their door. This great transition has been well described both by Adam Smith and Dr. Robertson; but it should not be overlooked, that, beside the reaction on landlords, there was also at that time a strong reaction produced on the habit of labourers. With their grow-

ing taste for the new enjoyments which had been placed within their reach, there was, in order to obtain them, a willingness to forego the lounging and lazzaroni life which they formerly indulged in, and to brook the restraints and the toils of regular industry. A mighty extension must have arisen to agriculture, not merely from the new power that has been given to the implements of labour, but from the new habit that has been given to the labourers themselves. If they now work double of what they did formerly, then, all other circumstances being equal, the land last entered on will, in return for the same labour, only have to feed half of the number of agricultural labourers which it did formerly. It affords room for an immense enlargement, when, in virtue of this moral transition alone, the cultivation which stopped short at the land that, for a given amount of work, returned the subsistence of twenty families, may now be carried downward to a more barren and uncomplying soil, that, in return for the same work, yields but the subsistence of ten families. In this way too, then, have trades and manufactures widened the domain of cultivation; and the products of the former have stimulated and called forth in greater abundance the products of the latter.

16. It is thus that, by a more strenuous industry, and a more effective machinery together, the poorer soils may, to a certain extent, be forced to yield an equal, or, perhaps, a more liberal subsistence to the labourer, than at earlier stages in the process of cultivation. Yet it must be quite evident, that, whether in single countries, or in the whole world, it is a process which cannot go on indefinitely. The time may be indefinitely distant, and indeed may never come, when the absolute and impassable barrier shall at length be arrived at. But to be satisfied that there is such a barrier, one has only to look to the extent and quality of the land in any region of the earth. By labour we might grind even the naked rock into an arable soil,—but a soil thus formed never would return the expense of food bestowed upon the labourers. In every country there is an upland or out-field territory, which will always bid defiance to agriculture. And even though it were not so—though to its last acre it possessed a uniform richness—though the plough might be carried over the whole of the mighty continent, and should find an obstacle nowhere but at the margin of the sea; yet, as sure as that every country has its limit, and every continent its shore, we must acquiesce in it as one of the stern necessities of our condi-

tion, that the earth we tread upon, can only be made to yield a limited produce, and so to sustain a limited population.

17. It seems very generally admitted, that should it ever come to this, the population, brought to a stand in respect of numbers, must either have to encounter great positive distress, or must anticipate this distress by a preventive regimen. In the midst of all the minuter criticisms to which the doctrine has been exposed, the great historical fact remains unshaken—that, let the means of subsistence be increased however largely and suddenly, this is sure to be followed by a corresponding increase of population. Every state and country in the world bears evidence to this truth—whether in the steady augmentations of Europe, or in the gigantic strides that are now making in the population of America. The invariable connexion, as of antecedent and consequent, between a great extent of fertile and unoccupied land, and a great multiplication of families, when once it is entered upon, is too palpable to be obscured by any sophistry, or by the allegation of any mystic principle whatever. Yet the power to support, and the power to create a population, are just as distinct the one from the other, as the constitution of the external world is distinct from the constitution or physiology of human nature. It is not an increase of the former power which gives rise to an increase of the latter—it only gives situation and space for the development of its energies. Should a population, when every let and hindrance of a straitened subsistence is removed, be able to double itself in fifteen years—it would still have the inherent ability of doing so, after that every acre on the face of the globe had been advanced to its state of uttermost cultivation. The power of population would then be kept in perpetual abeyance—with a constant disposition to transgress beyond the limits of the world's food, and as constant a check on the expansion of the capabilities which belong to it.

18. All this is very generally allowed; but then the imagination of many is, that, not until the world be fully cultivated and fully peopled, shall we have any practical interest in the question. They seem to think of the doctrine of Malthus, that the consideration of it may, with all safety, be postponed, till the agriculture of every country and every clime have been carried to its extreme perfection; and that, meanwhile, the population may proceed as rapidly and recklessly as it may. When a household is straitened by its excessive numbers, or a parish is oppressed by its redundant families—they would bar every argument about

the proximate causes of this inconvenience, by the allegation, that there were still thousands of unreclaimed acres at home, or millions in distant places of the earth, though of as little real or substantial consequence to the suffering parties, as if the land were situated in another planet. They appear to conceive, that ere any body can be felt as an obstacle to our progress, it must have come to a dead stand—not aware that to act as a check or impediment, it has only to move more slowly, though in the same direction, than at the rate in which we are advancing ourselves. They proceed on the idea, that no shock or collision can be felt but by the stroke of an impellent on a body at rest—whereas it is enough if the body be but moving at a tardier pace. In the one case, the strength of the collision would be estimated by the whole velocity—yet, in the other, there might still be a very hard collision, though estimated only by a difference of velocities. It is thus that, for the continued pressure of the world's population on its food, it is far from necessary that the food should have reached that stationary maximum beyond which it cannot be carried. It is enough, for this purpose, that the limit of the world's abundance, though it does recede, should recede more slowly than *would* the limit of the world's population. A pressure, and that a very severe one, may be felt for many ages together, from a difference in the mere tendencies of their increase. The man, who so runs as to break his head against a wall, might receive a severe contusion, even to the breaking of his head, if, instead of a wall, it had been a slowly-retiring barrier. And therefore we do not antedate matters, by taking up now the consideration of Malthus' preventive and positive checks to population. There is scarcely a period, even in the bygone history of the world, when the former checks have not been called for, and the latter have not been in actual operation. To postpone either the argument or its application till the agriculture of the world shall be perfected, is a most unpractical, as well as a most unintelligent view of the question—for long ere this distant consummation can be realized, and even now, may the obstacle of a slowly-retiring limit begin to be felt. The tendency of a progressive population to outstrip the progressive culture of the earth, may put mankind into a condition of straitness and difficulty—and that for many generations before the earth shall be wholly cultivated. We are not sure but it may have done so from the commencement of the race, and throughout all its generations. Certain it is, at all events, that the produce of

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

19. The impotency of the one expedient, and efficacy of the other, are nowhere more convincingly exhibited, than along what may be termed the extreme margin of cultivation. It is there where the land pays no rent;* and, laying aside for the present the consideration of profit, it is there where the produce that is reared can do no more than feed the labouring cultivators and their secondaries. But let the population increase to the extent of its own inherent power of increase, and it would force the existing limit of cultivation; or, in other words, flow over upon a soil inferior to that which had last been entered on, or inferior to that which, at the then rate of enjoyment, could do no more than feed the labouring cultivators and their secondaries. The consequence of such a descent is inevitable. The rate of enjoyment must fall. The agricultural workmen must either submit to be worse fed than before; or, parting with so many of their secondaries, they must submit to be worse clothed, or lodged, or furnished than before. The likelihood is, that they would so proportion their sacrifices, as to suffer in both these ways—and so there behoved to be a general degradation of comfort in the working classes of society. There is, to be sure, another way in which they might possibly extract from the more ungrateful soil, on which they had just entered, the same plenty as before. They may submit to harder labour, by putting forth a more strenuous husbandry on the inferior land—but this too is degradation. Whether by an increase of drudgery, or an increase of destitution, there may, in either way, be a sore aggravation to the misery of labourers.

20. If it be not possible, then, to sustain in comfort and suffi-

* We are aware of a certain modification and minuter sort of controversy, to which the affirmation of the land absolutely paying no rent has given rise. We shall not stop to offer any adjustment on this matter, as it is in no way essential to the validity of our argument. See Mr. Prinsep's note to his translation of Say's Political Economy, vol. ii. p. 168,—and Dr. Hamilton on the Progress of Society.

ciency the working classes, by keeping up the produce to the population, when suffered to proceed according to its own spontaneous energies—there seems only to be another alternative for the achievement of this great problem, that of keeping down the population to the produce. We know of no other right, or comfortable, or efficient way of doing this, than by the establishment of a habit and a principle among the labourers themselves. If they will in general enter recklessly into marriage, it is not possible to save a general descent in their circumstances. By the operation of causes already explained, a population may flow onward, in the way of increase, from one age to another without any abridgment on the comforts of our peasantry. When these are trenched upon, it is no longer a flow—but we should call it an overflow. And the only way, we apprehend, of preventing this overflow, with all its consequent wretchedness and crime, is by the formation of a higher taste for comfort and decency among the peasantry themselves. Marriage is not necessarily the effect of a headlong impulse; but may be a voluntary act, in the determination of which, prudence and forethought have had an influential share. It is evident, that the more we elevate man into a reflective being, and inspire him with self-respect, and give him a demand for larger and more refined accommodations, and in one word, raise his standard of enjoyment—the more will the important step of marriage become a matter of deliberation and delay. There is the utmost difference, in this respect, between the man who is content to live on potatoes, and spend his days in a sordid hovel, and the man who aspires, and, indeed, will not be satisfied without that style of food, and furniture, and dress, which we find generally to obtain among a well-conditioned peasantry.* There is a sense of char-

* Mr. T. Perronet Thomson, in his able Tract on the "True Theory of Rent," has stated the effect of this difference with laconic felicity and force. "A labourer in Ireland will live and bring up a family on potatoes; a labourer in England will see the world unpeopled first."—"Englishmen have the physical capability of living on potatoes as much as other men, but fortunately they have not the habit; and though it might be wrong to say that they would starve first in their own proper persons, they will utterly refuse to multiply upon such diet, the effect of which on population is ultimately the same."—"The Englishman will not live and bring up a family on potatoes; because, though he may consent to live on them, when he can positively procure nothing else,—habit, custom, the opinion of those around him, have made it in his eyes contemptible, irrational, absurd, for a man to be living on potatoes, when he has the opportunity of getting anything better. In his hours of prosperity, therefore, he will to a certainty solace himself with bacon, and most probably venture upon beef; and as this absorbs a greater portion of his income in what he views as necessary to his individual existence, it proportionally reduces his disposition to burthen

acter, as well as a taste for comfort, connected with this habit; and when these become general in a land, there is, of consequence, a most sure and salutary postponement in the average date of matrimony. In a newly-settled country, where there is much good land still unoccupied, the moral preventive check might not be called for. In an old country, where it is called for, but not observed, we are sure to behold a wretched and degraded peasantry. There is no other method by which to raise them above this level, or to prevent their falling into it, than by the vigorous operation of this check. Our peasantry, it should be understood by all, have in this way, though in this way only, their comfort and independence in their own hands. They are on high vantage-ground, if they but knew it; and it is the fondest wish of every enlightened philanthropist, that they should avail themselves to the uttermost of the position which they occupy. It is at the bidding of their collective will, what the remuneration of labour shall be; for they have entire and absolute command over the supply of labour. If they will, by their rash and blindfold marriages, over-people the land, all the devices of human benevolence and wisdom cannot ward off from them the miseries of an oppressed and straitened condition. There is no possible help for them, if they will not help themselves. It is to a rise and reformation in the habits of our peasantry that we would look for deliverance, and not to the impotent crudities of a speculative legislation. Many are the schemes of amelioration at all times afloat. We hold, that, without the growth of popular intelligence and virtue, they will, every one of them, be ineffectual. This will at length save the country from the miseries of a redundant population—and this we apprehend to be the great, the only specific for its worst moral and its worst political disorders.

21. It is not, however, by a direct promulgation of the doctrines of Mr. Malthus, that the people will be converted to the side of their own interest. We can imagine nothing more preposterous than the diffusion, for this purpose, of tracts on population among the families of the land. The change will be accomplished surely, though indirectly, and by insensible progress, through the means of general instruction, or by the spread of common, and more especially of sound Christian education

himself with new mouths. If the Irishman had the prospect of all this bacon and beef, he would view it as convertible into potatoes for a family like a patriarch's. The Englishman thinks it but decency to swallow all, and omits the family."

over the country. There is an indissoluble connexion between the moral character and the economic comfort of a peasantry; and the doctrine of Malthus is the *vinculum* by which to explain it. But it is not necessary to point out the *vinculum* to them. To make good the effect, it is not at all necessary that they should understand its dependence upon the cause. It is enough, if, in the state of their own principles and feelings, they present or provide the cause. Let them only be a well-taught and moralized people; and, in that proportion, will they mix prudence and calculation and foresight with every step in the history of their lives. The desirable effect will follow without any theory, or any anticipation of theirs. Let it, on the average, be held disreputable to marry without a fair and adequate prospect or provision; and the result would be a certain average of later marriages, or a country less burdened with an excess of population. It is thus, that half a century ago, in the Lowlands of Scotland, the habit of a large preparation often required, for its accomplishment, the delay of years after the virtuous attachment was formed—this habit was nearly universal among our well-schooled and well-ordered families. And so, though poverty was not unknown, yet pauperism was unknown; and notwithstanding the general barrenness of our soil, did the moral prevail over the physical causes, and uphold within our borders an erect and independent peasantry. They exemplified the doctrine of Malthus, and realized its benefits, long before that doctrine was propounded to the world.

22. In the mechanism of human society, it needs not that, to effectuate a given result, the people, who do in fact bring it about, should be able intelligently to view their own part in it. This is not more necessary in truth than that, to fulfil the beneficent ends of the planetary system, its various parts should be endued with consciousness—that the satellites of Jupiter, for example, should understand and design their own movements. The multitude may be wholly innocent of economical science themselves—yet may they exemplify, and by their agency sustain, its most wholesome processes. They may realize the full benefits of an operation which they do not comprehend—though in very deed they were themselves the operators. We object not to the highest possible education of the peasantry—yet it is not to the lessons of the political, but to those of the moral and religious school, that we look for the best and speediest instruments of their economic well-being. Neither teachers nor taught

may understand this connexion—nor is it necessary they should. The main object and the collateral good of Christianity may be indissolubly conjoined—but there are thousands who have verified this conjunction in experience, though they have never viewed it in theory. In labouring for the good of their eternity, they have reaped, by the way, those blessings which religion so abundantly sheds over the pilgrimage that leads to it.

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

NOTE.—The reader who is conversant in the most esteemed works on Political Economy, will, if he concur in the leading principle of this chapter, know how to modify the conclusion of Dr. Adam Smith, who, in his observations on the advancing and stationary and declining state of a country, seems to reason as if at length a progressive deterioration in the circumstances of the great body of the people, was an almost unavoidable result in the march of human society. There is much in Ricardo to countenance the same melancholy anticipation; and it is only by bringing the Theory of Wealth into contact with the Theory of Population, that the anticipation can be reversed and rectified. By the indefinite control, which the collective mind and habit of society have over the element of Population, the general

standard of enjoyment in a country is capable of being indefinitely raised; and this is of capital importance to be attended to, in studying the connexion between the moral character and the economic comfort of a people.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE INCREASE AND LIMIT OF EMPLOYMENT.

1. THE great and immediate demand is for the application of the external remedies; and, till these have done their uttermost, the feeling is, that the application of the internal is meanwhile uncalled for. So long, it is imagined, as there are still unevoked any possible resources from without, it is yet time to think of a restraint from within. It is readily admitted, that, as cultivation is carried downward through the gradation of soils, the last which has been entered on does no more, in the existing state of our agriculture, than barely remunerate the operations of its husbandry—or, laying capital at present out of the account, than feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries. And it is farther granted that, if the last possible limit is ever to be reached, the tendency of the population to increase must either be corrected by the positive, or kept in by the preventive checks; and that, were the operation of the moral preventive check sufficiently powerful, there might, even in the ultimate state of the world's agriculture, be as high, or a more highly-conditioned peasantry, than at any preceding stage of the world's history. But it is not seen that, long anterior to this consummation, the moral preventive check may be imperiously called for, in order to sustain the comfort and circumstances of the working population. Nevertheless, this moral restraint is desirable *now*, as well as *then*; and that just because the tendency to an increase in the number of labourers far outstrips the tendency to an increase in the productive powers of labour. It is quite true that, by the inventions of machinery, and the improvements which are ever taking place, both in the methods of agriculture, and the implements of agricultural labour, the poorer soils may, for an indefinitely long period, be made to yield as much, in return for the same work, as did their predecessor soils in the series of cultivation. Yet there is nothing in this to supersede the moral restraint—

and precisely because, with every possible enlargement, subsistence *will* not increase so fast as population *would* increase. And therefore it is that, notwithstanding all which may be alleged of the still unexhausted capabilities of the soil, either in this or in any other country of the world, we cannot possibly be saved from the *present* and the perpetual miseries of a redundant population, but by a higher taste for the comforts and the decencies of life among the population themselves. This, by its controlling effect on the date of marriage, and so on the largeness and number of rising families, keeps up the price of labour, by keeping down the supply of it in the labour market. This we hold to be the great specific for insuring a high average style of comfort and enjoyment among our peasantry—nor do we regard it as a less wise and beautiful connexion in the mechanism of society, that the most direct way to establish it is through the medium of popular intelligence and virtue—giving thereby a practical importance to efficient Christian instruction, unknown to the most of economists, and which no mere economists can possibly realize.

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

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

† It has been well remarked by Malthus, in his *Essay on Population*, that the largeness and complication of a society tend to obscure the truth upon this subject:—

“Norway is, I believe, almost the only country in Europe where a traveller will hear any apprehensions expressed of a redundant population, and where the danger to the happiness

insomuch that, when viewed in some one aspect, it holds out a promise of improvement or relief, which, under another or more comprehensive aspect, is seen to be quite illusory. For example, when one witnesses the vast diversity of trades or employments in society, by each of which, or at least in the prosecution of which, so many thriving families are supported, then it is conceived, that the highway for the relief of the unprovided is to find them a trade, to find them employment. Or, when looking to the connexion between capital and labour, and perceiving that the office of the former is to maintain the latter—then, on the idea that capital may, by the operation of parsimony and good management, be extended *ad infinitum*, is it held, by almost every economist of high name, that every accumulation of capi-

of the lower classes of people, from this cause, is in some degree seen and understood. This obviously arises from the smallness of the population altogether, and the consequent narrowness of the subject. If our attention were confined to one parish, and there were no power of emigrating from it, the most careless observer could not fail to remark, that, if all married at twenty, it would be perfectly impossible for the farmers, however carefully they might improve their land, to find employment and food for those that would grow up; but when a great number of these parishes are added together in a populous kingdom, the largeness of the subject, and the power of moving from place to place, obscure and confuse our view. We lose sight of a truth which before appeared completely obvious; and, in a most unaccountable manner, attribute to the aggregate quantity of land, a power of supporting people beyond comparison greater than the sum of all its parts."—"From the small number of people, and the little variety of employment, the subject is brought distinctly within the view of each individual; and he must feel the absolute necessity of repressing his inclinations to marriage till a vacancy offer."—"In countries more fully peopled, this subject is always involved in great obscurity. Each man naturally thinks that he has as good a chance of finding employment as his neighbour, and that if he fail in one place he shall succeed in some other. He marries, therefore, and trusts to fortune; and the effect too frequently is, that the redundant population, occasioned in this manner, is repressed by the positive checks of poverty and disease. In Norway, the subject is not involved in the same obscurity. The number of additional families, which the increasing demand for labour will support, is more distinctly marked. The population is so small, that even in the towns it is difficult to fall into any considerable error on this subject; and in the country, the division and improvement of an estate, and the creation of a greater number of housemen's places, must be a matter of complete notoriety. If a man can obtain one of these places he marries, and is able to support a family; if he cannot obtain one, he remains single. A redundant population is thus prevented from taking place, instead of being destroyed after it has taken place."—"There are no large manufacturing towns, to take off the overflowing population of the country; and as each village naturally furnishes from itself a supply of hands more than equal to the demand, a change of place in search of work seldom promises any success. Unless, therefore, an opportunity of foreign emigration offer, the Norwegian peasant generally remains in the village in which he was born; and as the vacancies in houses and employments must occur very slowly, owing to the small mortality that takes place, he will often see himself compelled to wait a considerable time before he can attain a situation which will enable him to rear a family."

These extracts are all taken from the chapter on the "Checks to Population in Norway."

tal carries an addition along with it to the subsistence of labourers. Or again, when one looks to the multitudes supported by foreign trade, in all its departments, the imagination is that, as agriculture has its capabilities, so commerce has its distinct and additional capabilities; and that, whatever limit there may be to the power of the one for the maintenance of families, this is amply made up by the indefinite extension which might be given to the other. Again, we often hear taxation vaguely, though confidently talked of, as the great incubus on the prosperity of labourers; and that, if this were only lightened or removed, there would thenceforth ensue a mighty enlargement both of industry and comfort to the families of the working classes. And then, in the list of national grievances, we hear of the enormous and overgrown properties which are vested in the few—and a general abundance diffused among the many is figured to be the consequence that would result, if not from the spoliation and forcible division of this wealth, at least from the abolition of entails, and of the law of primogeniture. Or in the absence, perhaps the failure, of all the expedients, emigration is held forth as a sovereign specific for all the distresses of an overcrowded land. And, lastly, after everything but the moral habit of labourers themselves has been thought of, there follows, in this list of artifices for their relief, a scheme which, no longer existing in fancy, has been bodied forth into actual operation, and is the one of all others most directly fitted to undermine the principle and prudence of labourers—even a compulsory tax on the wealthy for the relief of the destitute, so as to disarm poverty of its terrors, and proclaim a universal impunity for dissipation and idleness. Now that this last great expedient has been adverted to, we need scarcely advert to any of those lesser ones which, though but the crudities of mere sentimentalism, have been proposed, each as a grand panacea for all the disorders of the social state—such as the cottage system, and the cow system, and the village economy of Mr. Owen, and the various plans of home-colonization that have been thought to supersede the lessons of Malthus, or, at least, practically to absolve us from all regard to them for centuries to come.

3. Now the remedies we have just specified, may be regarded as belonging to the first class. They are all external remedies; and it will be our distinct aim to demonstrate, in succession, the inefficacy of each of them. There is not one of them that will serve as a measure of permanent relief. In as far as they hold

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

4. It may be thought, however, that, without proceeding further in our argument, we might pronounce at once on the scheme of home-colonization. And we trust it is abundantly obvious, that it is utterly incompetent to the end of providing indefinite sustenance for a population proceeding without restraint in the increase of its own numbers. If there be any sanguine enough to imagine that cultivation may be so speeded forward beyond its natural rate, under the auspices of government, as to absorb all the redundancies of a population, whom the scheme itself may have helped to emancipate from the checks that would otherwise have restrained them—we would appeal to the mighty enlargement which has taken place in our own land within these few years—the millions which have been added to the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland within the lapse of a single generation. The progress of agriculture during this period, from individual enterprise alone, is quite obvious; and it satisfactorily accounts for the commensurate increase that has taken place in the population. And yet, though a larger, is it a more comfortable population than before? Has the increase of food worked out any sensible increase on the average sufficiency of families? Have not the absolute plenty in the land, and the relative poverty of the people who live in it, kept pace the one with the other? And if this be all the result of that progress in our husbandry which has taken place under the enterprise of indi-

viduals, and has afforded room for additional millions of human beings—can we anticipate a more prosperous result from any government enterprise, which at best will but afford room and sustenance for as many additional thousands? The history of the last thirty years may well demonstrate that, with a mighty enlargement in our means of subsistence, the population may retrograde, or at least be stationary, in point of comfort, notwithstanding. It affords the clearest experimental proof of the little which can be done by mere resources for an increasing population, without restraints on the rate of their increase. There was nothing in the vast augmentation which has recently taken place of the one that superseded the use or necessity for the other. And still less ought it to be superseded by any paltry augmentation of the means *ab extra*, which can be looked for from the scheme in question. The philosophy of Malthus, or rather, the practical wisdom of families, ought not to be suspended till home-colonization have made full development of the capabilities which belong to it. A reckless population, made more reckless by the show and promise of such a relief, will shoot ahead of all that can possibly be achieved by it. The additional food that may have been created, will be more than overborne in the tide of an increasing population. The only difference will be a greater instead of a smaller number of wretched families—a heavier amount of distress, with less of unbroken ground in reserve for any future enlargements—a society in every way as straitened as before, yet nearer to the extreme limit of their resources than before—in short, a condition at once of augmented hardship and diminished hope, with all the burden of an expensive and unprofitable scheme to the bargain.

5. We cannot complete our view of the system of home-colonization, without the help of certain ulterior principles, which we shall afterwards apply to the further consideration of this scheme. We shall therefore enter immediately on the proper subject of our present chapter; which is the increase and limit of employment.

6. But before we commence this attempt, it will be necessary to premise a general view of the manner in which the distribution of the labouring classes is regulated by the state of landed property; and to show how a distinct class of labourers, additional to the agricultural and secondary, arises in the progress of cultivation, and increases in number with every descent which

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

7. Now, it is this expenditure on the part of landlords, which gives rise to another class of labourers, beside the two that we have already specified. Should the rent but enable the proprietor to provide himself with the necessaries of life—then that part of it which goes to purchase the first necessaries, would but serve to subsist an idle man instead of a labourer; and that part of it which went to the purchase of second necessaries, would but serve to discharge additional maintenance, and so give additional extent to the secondary population. But such is the unequal distribution of landed property, and so large are the shares which fall in general to the possessors, that, in the vast majority of instances, the rent can do a great deal more than uphold the proprietor in the necessaries of life. It can enable him to subsist better, and to lodge and clothe himself better than an ordinary workman. He can afford to indulge in the luxuries of life: and the preparation of these constitutes the employment of a very large population. It will be found very convenient to distinguish them by a particular name, even though we should not for this purpose fix on the best appellation. We conceive that the fittest term by which to characterize them, is one de-

* See Appendix, Note A.—On the Rent of Land.

scriptive of a circumstance in which their employment differs from that of the two first classes. The two first classes are employed in the preparation of articles which cannot be dispensed with—the preparation of the first and second necessaries of life. The others are employed in the preparation of articles which can be dispensed with. A man can want luxuries—he cannot want necessaries. He might forego luxuries altogether; and so dismiss from his service the whole of this third class, who are employed in preparing them. Or, he might commute one set of luxuries for another; and so, without dismissing them from his service, he might at least shift their employment in that service. It is this liability of being transferred from one employment to another, and this power, on the part of their employers, of dispensing, if they choose to make a surrender of their luxuries, with their services altogether, which has led me to affix to this class the title of the *disposable*. They form the disposable population in contradistinction to the agricultural and the secondary.

8. It is for the sake of defining, and not of stigmatizing, that we speak of luxuries. By this term we would comprehend everything prepared by human labour, and which enters not into the average maintenance of labourers. The landed proprietor must at least have the food of other men—but, in as far as, in style and in quality, it is above that of common labourers, he indulges in luxuries; and so there are cooks and confectionaries, and many others employed in preparing delicacies for the table, who should have their place assigned to them among the disposable population. He must be lodged as well as other men; but then, in as far as his house exceeds in magnitude and elegance that of an ordinary workman, for that excess he must have an additional service of masons, and carpenters, and roofers, and smiths, who, in respect of their contributing to this higher style, belong not to the secondary but to the disposable population. He must be provided also with furniture and clothing up to the degree of comfort and tastefulness which prevail among the common people—but, in as far as additional labourers are required, for upholding a higher tastefulness, or a greater abundance, there is a host of tradesmen, and artificers, tailors, and shoemakers, and upholsters, and cabinet-makers, who must be classified in thousands with the disposable population. We shall not attempt to enumerate the exceeding diversity of employments, which the taste, and the humour, and the artificial wants, and the wayward

appetency of the landed proprietors give rise to. It is mainly they who impress on the industry of the disposable population, any direction which seemeth unto them good; and who, by spending among them their rents, or, in other words, by making over to them the surplus produce of their estates, or, which is the same thing, by transferring to them the power of purchasing that produce,) do, in return for their varied services, effuse maintenance upon their families. This disposable population must, like the agricultural, have a train of secondaries attached to them; and receive as much from their employers as shall provide themselves with the first necessaries, and as shall suffice for the food of those who provide them with the second necessaries of life. It is not enough that the disposable population are *subsisted*—this would only imply their being fed by their employers. They must be *maintained*, which, in addition to their being fed, implies their being clothed, and lodged, and furnished, in all those secondary accommodations that enter into the average comfort of labourers. The price of their services includes in it the power of purchasing food for themselves, and food for all the secondary labourers who, either mediately or immediately, are employed by them.

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

10. Here, however, we cannot refrain from observing the connexion which obtains between the state of the soil and the state of human society. Had no ground yielded more in return for the labour expended on it, than the food of the cultivators and their secondaries, the existence of one and all of the human race would have been spent in mere labour. Every man would have been doomed to a life of unremitting toil for his bodily subsistence; and none could have been supported in a state of leisure, either for idleness, or for other employments, than those of husbandry, and such coarser manufactures as serve to provide society with the secondaries of existence. The species would have risen but a few degrees, whether physical or moral, above the condition of mere savages. It is just because of a fertility in the earth, by which it yields a surplus over and above the food of the direct and secondary labourers, that we can command the services of a disposable population, who, in return for their maintenance, minister to the proprietors of this surplus, all the higher comforts and elegancies of life. It is precisely to this surplus we owe it, that society is provided with more than a coarse and a bare supply for the necessities of animal nature. It is the original fund out of which are paid the expenses of art, and science, and civilisation, and luxury, and law, and defence, and all, in short, that contributes either to strengthen or to adorn the commonwealth. Without this surplus, we should have had but an agrarian population—consisting of husbandmen, and these few homely and rustic artificers, who, scattered in hamlets over the land, would have given their secondary services to the whole population. It marks an interesting connexion between the capabilities of the soil and the condition of social life, that to this surplus we stand indispensably indebted, for our crowded cities, our thousand manufactories for the supply of comforts and refinements to society, our wide and diversified commerce, our armies of protection, our schools and colleges of education, our halls of legislation and justice, even our altars of piety and temple services. It has been remarked by geologists, as the evidence of a presiding design in nature, that the waste of the soil is so nicely balanced by the supply from the disintegration of the upland rocks, which are worn and pulverized at such a rate, as to keep up a good vegetable mould on the surface of the earth. But each science teems with the like evidences of a devising and intelligent God; and when we view aright the many beneficent functions, to which, through the instrumentality of its surplus produce, the actual

degree of the earth's fertility is subservient, we cannot imagine a more wondrous and beautiful adaptation between the state of external nature and the mechanism of human society.

11. By this mechanism of human society, as far as we have explained it, the exceeding diversity of trades and employments may be accounted for. Even were the barrenness of the land such, that it only yielded food for an agricultural and a secondary population—this distribution would of itself give rise to a considerable variety of distinct occupation; and, under the system of a division in labour, we should have shoemakers, and tailors, and weavers, and masons, and carpenters, and artificers in hardware, and dealers, as well as fabricators, in sundry more articles—making out, on the whole, a pretty copious enumeration of separate callings, with the separate interests belonging to them. But when, in addition to the subsistence of an agricultural and a secondary, there is fertility in the land for the subsistence of a disposable population, the multiplication of trades and employments is thereby indefinitely extended—being as numerous as the caprices of human fancy and taste, or the varieties of human indulgence. It is thus that, in proportion as the mechanism of social life becomes more complex, it is also all the more bewildering; and, amid the intricacy of its manifold combinations, we lose sight both of the springs and the limits of human maintenance. One very wide and prevalent delusion, more especially, and which has misguided both the charity of philanthropists and the policy of statesmen, is, that the employment in which men are engaged is the source of their maintenance,—whereas, it is only the channel through which they draw that maintenance from the hands of those who buy the products of their employment. This principle has in it all the simplicity of a truism—and yet it is wonderful with what perversity of apprehension, both the managers of a state and the managers of a parish miss the sight of it. Whether we look to acts of parliament, or to the actings of a parochial vestry—we shall find them proceeding on its being the grand specific for the relief of the poor, to find employment for them. Now, unless that employment be the raising of food, it does nothing to alleviate the disproportion between the numbers of the people and the means of their subsistence,—and if there be a limit, as we have already demonstrated, to the food, we may be very sure that this device of employment will not turn out a panacea for the distresses of an overburdened land.

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

13. And yet it is a delusion which, one might think, should be dissipated by but one step of explanation. A single truism puts it to flight. Nothing appears more obvious, than that *any trade or manufacture originates only its own products*. All that a stocking-maker contributes to society is simply stockings. This, and nothing more, is what comes forth of his establishment. And the same is true of all the other trades or employments which can be specified. They work off nothing, they emit nothing but their own peculiar articles. Were this sure and ample axiom but clearly and steadfastly kept in view, it would put to flight a number of illusions in political science,—illusions which have taken obstinate hold of our legislators, and which to this moment keep firm possession in the systems of many of our economists. They almost all, in a greater or less degree, accredit a manufacture with something more than its own products. The inclination is, to accredit it also with the maintenance of its labourers. In every transaction of buying and selling, there are two distinct elements,—the commodity, and the price of the commodity; of which price, the maintenance of the labourers is generally far the largest ingredient. Now, the thing to be constantly kept in view is, that a manufacture should only be accredited with its own commodity, and not, over and above this, with the price of its commodity. These two stand, as it were, on different sides of an exchange. To the manufacture is to be ascribed all that we behold on the one side. It furnishes the commodity for the market. But it did not also create the wealth that supplies the price of the commodity. It does not furnish society with both itself and its equivalent. The latter comes from a distinct quarter; and we repeat, that by confounding, in imagination, two things which are distinct in fact, a false direction has been given, both to the policy of states, and to the theories of philosophers.

14. This confusion of sentiment appears in a variety of ways. When one sees a thriving and industrious village, and that the

employment of the families secures for them their maintenance, it is most natural to invest the former with a power of command, tantamount to a power of creation over the latter. The two go together; and because when the employment ceases, the maintenance ceases, it is conceived of the former, that in the order of causation it has the precedency. We affirm of a shawl-making village, that all which it yields to society is shawls. We accredit it with this, but with nothing more. But it is accredited with a great deal more, by those who talk in lofty style of our manufacturing interests, and the dependence thereupon of a nation's support and a nation's greatness. We hold, that if, through the exhaustion of the raw material, or any other cause, there were to be an extinction of the employment, the country would only be deprived of its wonted supply of shawls; but the prevalent imagination is, that the country would be deprived of its wonted support for so many hundred families. The whole amount of the mischief, in our estimation, would be the disappearance of shawls; in theirs, it would be the disappearance of that which upheld an integral part of the country's population. It is forgotten, that though shawls may no longer be produced or brought to market, the price that went to be paid for them is still in reserve, and ready to be expended by the purchasers on some other article of accommodation or luxury. The circumstances which have brought the manufacture to ruin, do not affect the ability of those who consumed the products of the manufacture. The employment is put an end to; but the maintenance comes from another quarter, and can be discharged in as great abundance as before, on as large a population. Their employment in making shawls was not the source of their maintenance; it was only the channel by which they drew it to their homes. The destruction or stoppage of the channel does not infer a stoppage at the source; that will find for itself another channel, through which all that enters into the maintenance of our industrious families might be effused upon them as liberally as before. We dispute not the temporary evils of the transition. We allow that a change of employment may bring individual and temporary distress along with it. But we contend, that the expenditure of those who support our disposable population will not be lessened, but only shifted, by this new state of things; and that, after the change is accomplished in the direction of their industry, we should behold as numerous a society as ever, upheld with the same liberality in everything (with the single

exception of shawls, and the substitution of some other luxury in their place) that enters into the comfort and convenience of families.

15. But we are further persuaded, that the confusion of sentiment which we are now attempting to expose, has had a most misleading effect on the views and the policy of statesmen: at one time, inspiring a false hope on the promised extension of trade and manufactures; and, at another time, creating a false alarm on the appearance of their decay. Our legislators do ascribe a higher function to trade and manufactures than that of simply furnishing society with the articles manufactured. They conceive of them as the dispensers of a transcendently greater benefit than the mere use and enjoyment of these articles. There are other and nobler interests associated in their minds with the trade and manufactures of the country, than the mere gratification and convenience which individuals have in the use of their products. This will at once be evident, if we resolve the manufacturing interest into its several parts—as the shawl-making interest, wherewith our senate would not for a moment concern themselves, if they thought that all which hinged upon it was the supply of shawls—nor the stocking-making interest, if in their opinion nothing else depended on it but the supply of stockings—nor the carpet-making interest, if it involved no other or higher consideration than the supply of carpets—nor the buckle-making interest, if they did not suppose that, beside owing to it the supply of buckles, we furthermore owed the maintenance and wealth of buckle-makers. And the remark may be extended from manufactures to commerce.* We should have had no grave deliberations on the China trade, or the Portuguese trade, or the West India trade, if something far loftier had not been associated with these respective processes, than that of serving the families of the land with tea, or wine, or oranges, or sugar, or coffee, or tobacco. These mighty commercial interests are conceived to be productive of something greatly more magnificent and national; and not only the income of all the capitalists, and the maintenance of all the labourers engaged in them, but the strength, and revenue, and political greatness of the state, are somehow associated with their defence and preservation. It is forgotten, of each trade and each manu-

* In extending the observation from home to foreign trade, we pre-suppose, what we shall afterwards attempt to show more particularly, that the *terminus ad quem* of foreign trade, is the benefit, or enjoyment, administered by the commodities which it imports, to the inland consumers.

facture, that it furnishes, and can furnish, nothing but its own proper and peculiar articles; and that, abstracting from the use and enjoyment of these, every other associated benefit is comprehended in the equivalent price which is paid for them. All that the wine trade of Portugal, for example, furnishes to our nation is wine; and, in reference either to the public revenue which arises from it, or to the private revenue wherewith it both enriches the capitalists, and supports the labourers employed in it, these are yielded, not most assuredly by the wine, but by the price given for the wine. The wine trade is but the channel through which these flow, and not the source in which they originate. But, notwithstanding, there is yet a mystic power ascribed to the wine trade, as if part of the nation's glory and the nation's strength were linked with the continuance of it. And hence a legislature tremulously alive to the state of our relations with Portugal, lest the wine trade should be destroyed. Now though, from the interruption of these relations, or from any other cause, the wine trade, on the one side, were destroyed, the counterpart wealth, on the other side, would not be destroyed. It would remain with its owners, to be expended by them on the purchase of some new luxury in place of the wine; by the natural price of which, the same return could be made to capitalists and labourers, and by a tax on which, the same revenue might be secured to government as before.

16. It must be obvious, that employment in agriculture is not an indefinite resource for an indefinite population—seeing that it must stop short at the land which refuses to yield the essential food of its direct and secondary labourers. And it should be equally obvious, that as little is employment in manufactures an indefinite resource—seeing that the definite quantity of food raised can only sustain a certain and definite number of labourers. The latter position seems, on the first announcement, to carry its own evidence along with it; yet there is a certain subtle imagination in its way, which we have attempted to dispose of. Our argument rests on the veriest truism—that a manufacture is creative of nothing beyond its own products. But truism though it is, it has been strangely overlooked, not only in the devices of the charitable, but both in the policy of statesmen, and in the doctrinal schemes of the economists. Yet we think a sufficient explanation can be given, both of the manner in which the perverse misconception at first arose, and of the obstinacy wherewith it still lingers and keeps its ground amongst us.

17. In opposition, then, to the principle, that employment is creative of nothing but its own products, it might be alleged, that the presentation of these products excites a desire for the acquisition of them, and so stimulates other employments in the fabrication of new products, to be given in exchange for the former ones. This was remarkably exemplified throughout the whole of Europe, at the termination of the Middle Ages. Of this we have a masterly sketch by Dr. Adam Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations* ;* when he traces the great economic change which took place, in virtue of a new taste and a new habit on the part of the landholders. Historically, it was the presentation to their notice of those articles of splendour and luxury which manufactures had produced, and which commerce brought to their doors, that prompted the change. This was the moving force, which shifted their old expenditure, and gave another direction to it. They dismissed their idle retainers, and appropriated the surplus produce by which they had been fed, to the purchase of luxuries in dress, or of luxuries in equipage and furniture. They furnished subsistence to as many as before, but in a new capacity, and in return for a different service. The disposable population were differently disposed of. Instead of so many idle marauders, living, save at their seasons of warfare, in sloth and sordidness, on the domain of their feudal lord, they were transmuted into orderly, industrious citizens—as dependent, for the first necessaries of life, on the country as before, but yielding, in return for these, not the homage of their personal attendance, but the tangible produce of their own handiwork. And along with this economic, there was effected a great moral change in the state of society. The contests of violence between adjoining proprietors, were exchanged for the more peaceful contests and rivalships of vanity. The hundreds, who in other days would have followed them to the field, on services of revenge or plunder, were now at peaceful occupation in their workshops—congregated into villages, which grew into cities, and there placed under the protection of law and social order. Liberty, and justice, and civilisation, and right government, all emerged from this altered condition of things; and when we reflect, that commerce was the prime mover in this great transition, by the new desires which it infused, and the change which it effected in the style of living and habit of our landlords—it must be allowed, that, historically, to commerce we owe benefits of a

* And by Dr. Robertson, in the Introduction to his *History of Charles V.*

much higher order than the mere gratification of any of the physical or inferior appetencies of our nature.

18. But there is still another reason (beside the new direction given to the expenditure of landlords) why commerce might be said to have been creative at that period of more than their own immediate products. When the landlords parted with their idle retainers, and they were compelled to be industrious for their livelihood—along with a new habit of indulgence among the proprietors, there sprung up a new habit of industry among the people. At one and the same time, the proprietors became more luxurious than before, and the people became more laborious than before. Even these latter participated to some degree in the taste of their superiors, and were willing also to make their sacrifices, that they might be admitted to their own humble share in those recent gratifications which were beginning to be placed too within reach of the peasantry, and were everywhere raising the standard of enjoyment. They accordingly made sacrifice of their indolence and love of ease, even as the grandees above them made sacrifice of their power and parade of attendance. At the same time, the rights of all were beginning to be more recognised and respected; and, under the administration of more benign and equitable laws, the poor man felt a greater stimulus to labour than before, in the greater security which he now had for the possession and enjoyment of its fruits. And then the severe and regular industry of manufactures was followed by a more severe and regular industry than heretofore in agriculture. The desire of each man to better his condition now began to develop its energies in all the classes of society. Landlords, with a larger and juster sense of their interests, disposed of their farms in the way that yielded the greatest revenue to themselves; and husbandmen, with the benefit of a now more industrious peasantry, so laboured the farms, as to work out the greatest remainder of produce for themselves. In addition to this the business of the country participated, though never to such a degree, with the business of towns, in the benefits that result from the division of labour, and in the greater power given by mechanical invention to the implements of labour. Altogether the limit of cultivation, under the operation of these various causes, has receded an immense way back within these three centuries. Millions of acres, that under the old lazzaroni system had never been entered on, are now yielding subsistence to man; and the increase of food has been surely and speedily

followed up by an increase of population. The land of inferior soils, that formerly yielded nothing, is now productive; and the land that formerly produced, is now, in virtue of deeper and more laborious culture, of tenfold greater fertility than before. Now, in Europe, all this may be in a great measure traced to the reaction of commerce upon agriculture. It was commerce which gave the impulse; and, in addition to its own products, it, through the medium of the new system of society which it introduced, called forth products from the earth, that, but for it, might never have been extracted. In this instance at least commerce seems to have been the creator, not of its own commodities alone, but of the equivalents for these commodities—a fountainhead not merely for the products of its labour, but for the maintenance of its labourers.

19. It is not to be wondered at, then, that he who traced with so graphic and powerful a hand the reflex influence of commerce upon agriculture, should have sometimes forgotten the natural order of precedency betwixt them. He certainly did more than any of his predecessors in the science, in restoring to agriculture the proper honours and ascendancy which belong to her. Yet he does give a power to the enterprise and the accumulation of merchants, which neither experience nor the nature of things will justify. None was more successful than he, in exposing the crude imaginations of those who thought to enrich the country by means of a restricted commerce. But along with this, he greatly overrated the effect of an emancipated commerce, or of commerce set at liberty from its fetters. He very clearly demonstrated the impolicy of those artificial checks, which, in the shape of monopoly or prohibition, had been laid upon trade. But he seems not to have been fully aware of the natural check which stands in the way of its indefinite extension—and by which a gradual retardation, and ultimately an immovable arrest, are laid on the progress of agriculture, and of population, and of capital, and so of commerce. The truth does appear, throughout the work of this great author, in occasional glimpses—but not so explicitly, or with such application and effect, as it would have done had the doctrine of population been understood in his day. This single element alone would have modified a number of his conclusions; and, more particularly, he would not have held out to society the promise of an endless advancement, as if every effort of parsimony, and every accumulation of capital, were infallibly to speed it forward. He seems to reason as if the

simple act of preparing commodities, and placing them, as it were, on one side of an exchange, will, through the operation of stimulus, call forth into existence equivalent commodities on the other side of it. This process, it is true, was conspicuously and memorably exemplified, at that period in history, which may be characterized as the period of transition from the middle to the modern ages of Europe. But that was no sufficient cause why it should have been regarded and reasoned upon as the universal process for all ages.

20. There is, in truth, a wide difference between the state of things at the commencement, and after the full establishment and continuance, of this new era. Then the passion for war had just given place to the passion for wealth and luxury; and this latter passion, when newly awoke, found a soil of boundless and yet unentered capabilities on which to expatiate. The rude and infant husbandry of Europe had a mighty career before it, along which the increasing products of commerce met with their sure return in the increasing products of agriculture. The spirit of mercantile adventure could safely indulge in every variety of caprice and speculation; for the unsated appetite of the landlord found, in the before untouched resources of his land, the means of extended gratification. Commerce appeared to anticipate agriculture, and might almost have ventured in reality to do so, yet not be disappointed; for however it multiplied its wares and its whimsies, it found a ready admission for them in the growing wealth, and the now stimulated fancy and taste of its country customers. It is really not to be wondered at, that men should have been led to imagine, as if commerce had a commencing and a creative virtue in this process; and that it had only to accumulate, and to employ, and to produce, in order to carry forward the prosperity of the nation with uniform, or with accelerated progress. Commerce, in fact, was the prime, the executive agent in Europe, for unlocking the capabilities of the soil; and, at a period when these were rapidly evolved, the articles which it fabricated and brought to market seldom failed to meet with purchasers of sufficient wealth and sufficient number; and so also with a price which enveloped in it the profit of all the capitalists, the comfortable subsistence of all the labourers. It was most natural, in these circumstances, to conceive of commerce as an *efficient cause*, not merely for the commodities of its own workmanship, but for the maintenance of its own workmen; and, if agriculture was not just made of subordinate rank to com-

merce, commerce was regarded as of fully co-ordinate rank with agriculture. Nevertheless it will be found, we think, on further consideration, that however events may have fallen out historically in the order of time, there is an order of nature, and an order of influence, which must be attended to, ere the essential relations of agriculture and commerce be rightly understood. We hold the real dependence of the latter upon the former, to be a truth of capital importance in political economy; and that, if steadfastly kept in view, and carried forward to its legitimate applications, it would put to flight a number of those delusions and errors which, in the course of speculation, have gathered around the science.

21. One plain distinction, and a distinction not to be overlooked by the slight exceptions which can be alleged against it, is, that to agriculture mainly we owe the necessaries of life; whereas, many of its luxuries cannot be had without commerce and manufactures. This is a most momentous distinction, and a vast deal turns upon it. We not only see in it, that manufactures must necessarily, in point of extent, be limited by the produce of the soil; but that the owners of the soil, in virtue of the property which belongs to them, have a natural superiority over all other classes of men, which by no device of politics or law can be taken away from them. The holder of what I cannot want, is the master of my services. He can impress upon them any direction which seemeth unto him good. He can transfer his demand from one luxury to another; and so, as far as his consumption goes, he can extend one manufacture at the expense of a proportional abridgment on another manufacture. Or, he can part with the use of some tangible commodity altogether, and, with the price which went to purchase it, may obtain for himself the use of a menial servant; and, in so doing, he effects an absolute reduction in the manufactures of the country. Or, whether in the spirit of a voluntary patriotism, or in submission to lawful authority, he may render to the state the price of many luxuries; and thus withdraw so many of the disposable population from the business of trade, to the business of our national establishments. It is thus that any given change in the taste or habit of our landlords, would effect a corresponding change in the employment of the great mass of our disposable population. They are virtually the holders of the maintenance of this class of labourers; and it is their collective will which fixes the direction of their labour. Apart from the im-

portation of food, there can be no more labourers in the country than the produce of their estates will subsist. It is the quantity of this produce which fixes the amount of labour; and as far as the labour of the disposable population is concerned, it is the will of the holders of this produce which fixes the direction of it. They are the natural masters of the country; and the ascendancy wherewith their property invests them, hinges on this clear and simple distinction—men can want luxuries; they cannot want necessaries.

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

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

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

24. This distinction between agriculture and manufactures would serve greatly to modify the reasonings of Dr. Smith, when, without reference to any such distinction, he tells of one species of commodities stimulating the production of another species of commodities. It follows not, because commerce had the power, by tempting landlords from an old to a new habit of expenditure, of extorting additional products from a soil whose capabilities had scarcely been entered on; it therefore has this power, when agriculture, with its stationary or slowly-receding limit, has either reached, or is so much nearer the uttermost length to which it can be carried. The stimulus might be as powerful as before. There might be as intense a desire for the

increase of enjoyments, whether they be the enjoyments of pleasure or those of pageantry. But this moving force is in contact now with an obstacle which stood then at a distance so remote, as to have permitted an advancing movement, and that a tolerably free one, for several centuries. We now begin to feel, and may indeed be said to have long felt the utter powerlessness of mere production in manufactures, to enlarge the wealth, or speed forward the economic prosperity of a land. What commerce did in an incipient, it cannot do in an extreme state of agriculture; and in the oldest and richest countries of Europe, the sanguine, the splendid anticipations which the earlier experience awakened, checked and chastised as they have been by the later experience, are now beginning to be abandoned.

25. But not only is there a visionary hope associated with this contemplation,—there is also an alarm which, it is comfortable to think, is alike visionary. They who so count on the reaction of a stimulus, as to imagine, that every addition beyond their present extent to our manufactures, will give a proportional enlargement to our agriculture, might also imagine, that every subtraction beneath their present extent from our manufactures, will proportionally lessen and contract our agriculture also. The two imaginations, in fact, are products of one and the same fallacy. He who thinks that it was the creation of a manufacture which stimulated and called forth an increase of agriculture, may well be apprehensive lest the destruction of the manufacture should as much throw the agriculture back again. Now, it is not so. Though a particular manufacture should be brought to ruin, and the employment in it should cease, the counterpart maintenance will not cease; and our security against this effect is, that there would still remain a sufficiency of objects, on which it were not only possible, but felt by the landlords to be desirable, that they should still spend their incomes. There is not a luxury that can be named, the loss of which would cause our agriculture to go back; even though, historically, it may have been the first presentation of that luxury to their notice, which, by its effect on the appetency of landlords, helped to bring the agriculture forward. Now that the revulsion has taken place from the habit of the middle ages, there is no danger of the surplus produce of their estates lying idle in their hands. They will set their hearts on as large a revenue as before; and notwithstanding the ruin or disappearance of many separate trades, they will still find use for it all. In other words, amid the

numerous failures and fluctuations of employment, they in the meanwhile will not let down the cultivation of a single acre; so that there shall remain as large a maintenance for the same population as before. The expenditure of its holders would be changed, but not lessened. The destruction of one manufacture would be followed up by the creation or the extension of another; or there would be a proportionate addition to the retinue of our landlords. At all events, we should behold as large a disposable class as well supported as ever. It may be Utopianism to expect, that beyond the limits of our present agriculture, there lies before us a career of endless and ever-advancing prosperity; but we might at least give up all our sensitive alarms, lest, by any revolution in the trading world, our prosperity shall ever be sensibly and permanently reduced beneath that limit. So long as we have law and liberty amongst us, our economic resources will be found as stable as the constitution of the seasons or of the soil. Unless we are struck from Heaven with the curse of barrenness, the present means of our subsistence will remain to us. We may have little to hope from a great enlargement of these means, yet have everything to hope from a right distribution of them. There may be, there is, an impassable limit to the physical abundance of our products. There is no limit to the moral cultivation of our people. We may not be able greatly to increase our stores; but with the stores we have, a mighty achievement remains to us. We may indefinitely increase the virtuous and prudential habits of the community; and on these mainly, on these we should say exclusively, it depends, whether there shall or shall not be a high average of sufficiency and comfort among the families of the land.

26. It is now high time that the statesmen and philanthropists of the old world should take this direction. It is to a moral restraint on the numbers of mankind, and not to a physical enlargement of the means for their subsistence, that we shall be henceforth beholden for sufficiency or peace in our commonwealth. It is from the power of Christian education, and not from the devices of the economists, that our deliverance is to come. And yet we abide almost as reckless of this truth, as if in the morning of our history we had still the world to begin, or had still in reserve a land of boundless extent and fertility, on which, as in America, we might expatiate unchecked by any barrier of physical necessity for many generations. To employ

the language of the schoolmen, we are still looking objectively to the enlargement of resources in the outer world of matter, instead of looking subjectively to the establishment of habit and principle in the inner world of mind. Yet thence, and thence alone, will proceed our help and our emancipation from the miseries which beset and straiten us; and nothing will more effectually demonstrate the supremacy of the moral over the physical, in the system of human affairs, than will the ameliorated condition coming in the train of ameliorated character, after the tried impotency of all other expedients.

27. Meanwhile, as the difficulties thicken, and the pressure becomes more severe, the expedients multiply. This is a teeming age for all sorts of crudities; and we have no doubt, that our very nearness to the ultimate and immovable barrier of our resources, has made the necessity to be all the more intensely felt, and so given additional impulse to the speculations of philanthropists. Among others, the favourite device of employment has been acted on to a very great extent; though its inefficacy as a resource, one might think, should be abundantly obvious, on the simple axiom, that employment is creative of nothing but its own products. It was a far more rational and likely expedient centuries ago, in the earlier stage of our agriculture, than it is at present; nor need we wonder, though in these days they should often have experienced a most convenient absorption of poverty and idleness in whole masses, simply by providing and dealing out work. There was room then for such an absorption, when the increasing products of the towns and villages could be met by the increasing products of a land, whose capabilities were yet so far from being fully overtaken. We accordingly meet with this expedient in the innumerable parliamentary acts of other days, for the suppression or the regulation of mendicity; and it was long the favourite scheme, both of parochial counsellors, and of individual philanthropists. The general rule of society is, that each man lives by his business; and the first natural imagination is, that this conjunction between work and maintenance is just, in every instance where poverty and idleness are seen together, to be repeated over again. England is rife with this experiment throughout her teeming parishes; and quarrying, and road-making, and breaking stones, and digging in gravel pits, and the manifold branches of indoor labour in workhouses, have all been devised; that, if possible, by the products of their industry, their surplus people

might earn for themselves their subsistence, or a part of their subsistence. The conception is prevalent all over, and has been endlessly diversified into various ingenuities, alike amiable and abortive. The plating of straw, and picking of hemp, and various sorts of millinery and hand-manufactures, have all been tried and found wanting. The effect is a general depression in the price of the prepared article, whatever it may be; or if the article be altogether new, the purchasers who are allured to it, are withdrawn from the purchase of other articles. On either supposition, a whole body of regular labourers are impoverished by the weight of these additional products upon the general market; and so utterly fruitless indeed has it turned out as a permanent resource, that, in despair, the expedient has been abandoned in many parishes, and the extra population are suffered to lead a kind of lazzaroni life in idleness, and in the mischief and crime which are attendant upon idleness. The truth is, that if home-colonization fail, employment in manufactures is far more likely to fail. By the former, a certain portion at least of sustenance, is drawn from the earth in return for labour—though inadequate to the full maintenance of the labourers. By the other, something is produced too, but it is not sustenance; but a commodity to be offered in return for sustenance; and which cannot earn that sustenance for additional labourers, save at the expense of all previous labourers. The home-colonist, at work among the inferior soils, may perhaps extract from them three-fourths of his maintenance, and leave the remaining fourth a burden upon society. The workman in a charity manufacture, burdens society with the whole of his subsistence. The article he prepares becomes cheaper and more plentiful than before; but he himself becomes the instrument of a general distress, by inducing a dearness and a scarcity on that which is most essential to families.*

NOTE.—The author on his re-perusal of this chapter, would press the following as its most important positions on the attention of the reader. 1. The reduction of various economical questions, as stated in § 3, to their solving principle in the extreme limit of cultivation. 2. The threefold division of the labouring classes in § 7, as affording a point of view from which to have the command over a very wide domain in the science. 3. The connexion between the degree of fertility in the soil, and

* See Appendix, B.—On Machinery.

the gradation of rank and comfort in society, and more especially the natural theology which in § 10 is grounded on this contemplation. 4. The truism that each employment originates but its own products, and the correction which might be drawn from it against the errors of the mercantile policy, § 13. 5. The precedency (§ 20) of agriculture to commerce in the order of influence, notwithstanding the historical successions which took place in the order of time. And lastly, the relative and reciprocal influences of the two as expounded throughout the remainder of the chapter.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE INCREASE AND LIMIT OF CAPITAL.

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

2. Capital behaved to make an early appearance in the history

* Capital, as an instrument of production, is conceived to be bound up by means of agricultural improvement, with every piece of land, on the permanent amelioration of which, certain sums have been expended. And that part of the produce, which would have been yielded independently of this improvement, is ascribed, not to the capital which has been laid out upon the farm, but to the original powers of the soil.

of human society. The rudest implement that was first used in preparing the ground for the reception of seed, possessed all the essential attributes of capital. If, by the direct application of human hands to the soil, the requisite treatment of it could have been as easily effected, as with the intervention of tools and instruments, these latter would never have been employed. But the contrary of this was soon found; and when the branch of a tree was broken off, and rightly fashioned for scratching the surface of the earth, even at this rudimental stage do we behold the application of capital to agriculture. This primitive expedient for facilitating human labour, and making it more effective, exemplified the functions and the benefit of capital as distinctly as do the spade or the plough that have superseded it, or as does all the various and complicated apparatus of modern husbandry.

3. Having, for the first time, introduced the element of profit to the notice of our readers, we think it right to premise this part of our argument, with two distinct notices regarding it.

4. The first is, that though profit enters as a distinct ingredient into the price of every article, yet that article may be supplied in far greater abundance, and, as it regards manufactured commodities, may be afforded far more cheaply to the consumer, than if there had been no capital applied to the production of it, and, consequently, no room for the imposition of such a charge. Even though it should require the constant labour of one man to make and to repair a plough, and the constant labour of another to use it, yet if, with one plough, as great an amount of work can be performed as with the mere handiwork of ten men, then, out of the maintenance of ten men, a liberal profit might well be afforded to the capitalist, and a large surplus produce, over and above, be afforded to the country. It is thus that capital, in the shape of farm-utensils of various sorts, by opening a descent to inferior soils, has inconceivably augmented the produce of the land, and so enabled it to maintain a vastly larger population. And furthermore, capital, by superadding mechanical to manual labour, has so augmented the amount of manufactured articles, that, notwithstanding the charge of profit to which it has given rise, both the luxuries and the second necessaries of life are furnished in much greater profusion, as well as greater cheapness, to society.

5. Our next notice in regard to profit is, that it has the effect of attaching the services of the disposable population to other

masters beside the mere landed proprietors. We believe, that in a country constituted like ours, the latter will engross by far the largest proportion of these services. Yet every man elevated above the condition of the working classes has, more or less, the command of them. Every man whose expenditure reaches higher than the necessaries of life, has a certain amount of enjoyment ministered to him, by one or more of the disposable population. Their office is the preparation of luxuries; and, when one looks to the style, and the splendour, and the establishment of merchants and manufacturers, it is obvious that they are admitted to a considerable share in the services of this class, along with the proprietors of land.

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

* "Every prodigal appears to be a public enemy, and every frugal man a public benefactor."—"Parsimony, and not industry, is the immediate cause of the increase of capital."—"Parsimony, by increasing the fund which is destined for the maintenance of productive hands, tends to increase the number of these hands."—"By what a frugal man annually saves, he not only affords maintenance to an additional number of productive hands for that of the ensuing year, but, like the founder of a public work-house, he establishes, as it were, a perpetual fund for the maintenance of an equal number in all times to come."—*Wealth of Nations*.

These, and similar passages, taken together, certainly give the impression of an indefinite

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

7. And on this subject, too, we might learn a lesson at that place in the science where so many other of its lessons are to be gathered—even at the margin of separation between the cultivated and the uncultivated land. We have already seen, that cultivation cannot be speeded forward beyond this margin, at a rate faster than the improvement in the powers of labour enables the land of next inferior quality to feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries. If, by an undue increase of population, the cultivation is forced a greater way than this, then the land last entered on is not able to repay its cultivation, and distress is felt in the country because there are too many men. But as surely as there might be too many ploughmen, so there might be too many ploughs. If, in virtue of the excessive number of ploughmen, all cannot find employment, without forcing an entrance upon soils that would return inadequate wages for the labour, so, in virtue of the excessive number of ploughs, all cannot find employment, without a like return of inadequate profit for the capital. Nay, profit forms such a fraction in the price of most articles, that a large fluctuation of price might not only diminish profit, but annihilate it, or even, by the conversion, as in algebra, of positive into negative, might transmute the profit into loss. It appears from this instance, that just as agriculture might be overladen by an excess of labour, so might it be overladen by an excess of capital. And at the extreme boundary of cultivation, might there be distinctly seen the operation of that check which opposes the indefinite advancement of both. Diminish the wages of agricultural labour beneath a certain rate, and ploughmen will cease to be multiplied. Diminish the profit of agricultural capital beneath a certain rate, or, still more surely, annihilate profit, and ploughs will cease to be multiplied. Both

power, in indefinite parsimony, to carry the capital of a country, and its power to maintain labourers, beyond any limit which can be assigned. This has, accordingly, been contended for by several of Smith's commentators, in formal and express argument.

the population and the capital are here brought alike to a stand ; and, at the point now specified, both are alike impotent for the purpose of enlarging the wealth of the country. The boasted power of capital for the maintenance of labour is, in this instance at least, found to be an illusion. There is no virtue in the excess of ploughs to maintain the excess of ploughmen. Nothing but an adequate return from the soil can uphold either ; and for want of this, each excess must at length disappear,—it being as true of the capital as of the population, that it is heavier than the land can bear.

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

9. There has recently been proposed a just and felicitous distinction, between the work done by human hands, and that done by tools, or machinery of any sort. The one is called the product of immediate, the other the product of antecedent labour. Under this view or conception of the matter, it will perhaps be

more readily seen, that there may be a redundancy of capital, as well as of population. In respect of there being more of both than there can be obtained any adequate return for, there is a complete identity between them. If there may be too much of immediate, so also may there be too much of antecedent labour, brought to bear both on agriculture and manufactures. Agriculture cannot be extended, unless the additional land that is taken in, be able not only to feed the ploughman, but also the makers of the plough. A manufacture cannot be extended, unless the additional commodity produced, will more than exchange for the maintenance both of the workers of the machine, and the makers of the machine that is employed. In each case a return must be yielded, which shall both maintain the immediate labourers, and also remunerate the outlay that was expended in maintaining the antecedent labourers. There is occasionally an excess of both; and the effect, in the one case, is the distress and diminution of workmen; in the other, the distress of capitalists, and the diminution of capital.

10. The reasoning is just as applicable to moneyed as to material capital. There is nothing in the intervention of this new element to affect our conclusion. Money, when consisting of the precious metals, is itself viewed as a commodity. It may rather be regarded, as that which possesses the property, or the power, of lifting all commodities; or under the very general aspect, of being that which enables its possessor to lift by purchase any commodities which may be presented, or which may be had for sale: the quantity thus lifted depending on the relative value which obtains between the money and the commodity in question. It is of no consequence to any inference of ours, whether gold or paper be the instrument of exchange, or, in other words, what the *substratum* of money is; of as little consequence, truly, as what the material is on which an order for payment shall happen to be written. Enough that it is an effectual order; and, however interesting the other questions may be, which relate to currency and its fluctuations, it is sufficient, for the determination of our particular question, that the existing currency, whether paper or metallic, possesses, for the time being, a certain power of lifting all such articles as are presented in a market; and so has the substantial functions of a circulating medium.

11. Let us now imagine the sum received by any merchant or manufacturer, at his great annual sale, to be eleven thousand

pounds; of which he allocates one thousand to the expenses of his family, and reserves ten thousand for the continuation of his business. This latter sum he may be conceived to lay out in the repairs of his material capital, and in the maintenance of his workmen, who repeat the course of the by-gone year—that is, work up the same commodities for their employer; and which, if he again sell them for eleven thousand pounds, will enable him to start with the same advantage, and to enter on another rotation, in precisely the same circumstances as before.

12. The length of such rotations varies exceedingly in different trades, though they may all be generalized into one summary expression; and the world of trade may be conceived to revolve in what we shall call an economic cycle, which accomplishes one revolution, by business coming round again, through its successive transactions, to the point from which it set out. Its commencement may be dated from the point at which the capitalist has obtained those returns, by which his capital is replaced to him: whence he proceeds anew to engage his workmen; to distribute among them, in wages, their maintenance, or rather, the power of lifting it; to obtain from them, in finished work, the articles in which he specially deals; to bring these articles to market, and there terminate the orbit of one set of movements, by effecting a sale, and receiving, in its proceeds, a return for the whole outlays of the period.

13. There is nothing in the intervention of money, which should disguise the real character of this operation. If landed proprietors be the chief customers for the commodities in question, they do not just give, on the instant, the *ipsa corpora* of their wealth; but they give what is equivalent, a lifting power to a certain extent, or an order to a certain amount, for the produce of their land. This passes from the hand of the capitalist to the hand of his workmen; and they, on presenting it at a shop or a market, just get, in food, that chief article of maintenance, the proper and essential return for their labour. It must be obvious then, that principally with the holders of this maintenance, is lodged the power of replacing the outlays of the capitalist. His power to uphold, and still more to extend production on the one side, is mainly dependent on their power of affording him equivalents for his products upon the other. Economists have looked too exclusively to the accumulations of the merchant, as if these could indefinitely advance the wealth of a land. They have not enough considered the nature or the limits of that

replacing power, which lies in the hands of his customers. They have calculated too much on his ability to produce, without at the same time calculating on their ability to purchase. It is thus that the check to the augmentation of capital, has not been sufficiently kept in view; and the most sanguine and splendid anticipations have been indulged, respecting the progress of society, without sufficient regard to those immovable barriers which nature and necessity have placed in its way.

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

accumulation of theirs, but the returning power of consumers may remain unaltered. There would be more goods brought to market than before, but the whole price given for them may not be greater than before. Anterior to the general saving that we now imagine, capitalists, for the prime cost of ten millions, receive, in the whole price of their commodities, eleven millions. But since that saving, they, for the prime cost of ten millions two hundred thousand pounds, receive the same sum of eleven millions. By the saving in question, they have become at once richer in capital, and poorer in revenue. For the two hundred thousand pounds which they have added to the one, they have sustained a greatly overpassing loss; for they have taken two hundred thousand, and that yearly, from the other. It might be safe and profitable for one capitalist, or a certain fractional number of them, to accumulate. But a general accumulation cannot take place, save at the expense of the general revenue of capitalists. It is true, that, so long as agriculture is in progress, there might be yearly additions to the returning or replacing power, by which as large, or a larger revenue, might be afforded to a still enlarging capital. But when the progress of agriculture becomes slow and difficult, or, most of all, when it touches upon the extreme limit, then the impotency of accumulation on the part of capitalists must be severely felt. Each new investiture, in fact, will then be followed up by an adverse reaction or recoil upon themselves. As they grow in capital, they will decline in revenue. There is no escaping from the consequence, after that the returning power has become stationary. Every addition to capital, causes just a permanent yearly abstraction of the same amount from revenue; and the same return, on a larger prime cost, is all which the capitalists reap for their pains. Society obtains their enjoyments at a cheaper rate, when, by an overdone competition among capitalists, each strains at becoming richer than before. But if there be no increase in the wealth of customers, capitalists cannot persevere in such a walk of speculation, without impoverishment and ruin to many of themselves.

15. We may now see what the check is to an indefinite accumulation on the part of capitalists. If the returning power be represented by eleven millions, it is obvious that the capital vested in business cannot go beyond it. At ten millions, it would command a profit of one million to the capitalists; and, if they chose to accumulate to a capital above this, they may

successively advance it up to ten millions one hundred thousand, ten millions two hundred thousand, ten millions three hundred thousand, or ten millions four hundred thousand pounds: in which case, they would as surely reduce their collective income to nine, or eight, or seven, or six hundred thousand pounds. They might even, by the mere force of their own accumulations, bring up the capital indefinitely near to the eleven millions, but with the sure effect of bringing down this revenue indefinitely near to annihilation. Could they afford to live on nothing, they might push forward the capital to eleven millions, and annihilate profits entirely. Or if, from some other source than their accumulations, capital were still farther extended, and so as to overpass the eleven millions, profit would be converted into loss, and there would take place the absorption of a yearly excess. At the termination of the economic cycle, capital would constantly revert to eleven millions. Whatever the amount of capital may be, which, at the commencement of the economic cycle, merchants and manufacturers are able to advance, its amount, in the end, must of necessity be limited by what customers are able to return.

16. This brings into view a most important element, which hitherto has scarcely been admitted into the consideration of profit. We are abundantly familiar with the idea, that the rate of wages is dependent on the average standard of enjoyment among labourers. But we have not been so accustomed to think of the rate of profit, as depending on the average standard of enjoyment among capitalists. Nevertheless, it is actually so. It is a question with every individual capitalist, whether he shall spend the whole revenue of the current year, or how much of it he shall reserve, for the purpose of vesting it in trade, and so giving additional extension to his business—or, finally, whether he shall expend more than his revenue, and so trench upon his capital? This question turns precisely on the balance between two appetites of his nature—between the appetite for eventual gain, and the appetite for present comfort. Should the latter prevail, *and prevail generally*, capital would be kept down, and profit be sustained. Should the former prevail and also prevail generally, capital would be augmented, and profit be depressed. It does not affect this conclusion, that the highway to fortune, on the part of the individual merchant, is to save as much, and spend as little of his revenue as he can. It is true of every single capitalist, that he is all the richer by saving than spend-

ing; and that, under any given rate of profit, or with any given general habit on the part of capitalists. But it is not true that capitalists collectively, will become richer by saving than by spending; for, on their general habit, the rate of profit immediately and essentially depends. Could they effectuate a combination amongst themselves, they might uphold, at their general and collective pleasure, the rate of profit and interest in the land. But they are not able to achieve so extensive a concert, nor would its members be individually faithful in their observation of it; and this is not the only instance, in which the good of society is secured by the impossibility of combinations. Meanwhile, nothing can be truer, than that just as the wages of labour depend on the collective taste and will of labourers, so the profits of stock depend on the collective taste and will of capitalists. With this view, profits are what capitalists in the aggregate choose to make them. And however little the rate of profit may have been associated in the minds of economists, with the standard of enjoyment in the middle classes of society—yet, ultimately and efficiently, this is precisely the element on which it turns.*

* Mr. Thomas Perronet Thomson has, with his accustomed shrewdness, noticed this connexion, and thus felicitously remarks upon it:—

“ And as opinions and habits determine the final or average proportion, which shall be maintained between the numbers of the labouring population and the funds for their support, or, in other words, determine the average rate of wages; so they also determine the average rate of profits of stock, which are only the wages of another description of labourers, consisting partly of the recompense of present labour exerted in the form of superintendence, and partly of the recompense of past labour exerted in the creation of their capital. Public opinion and custom require, for example, that a shopkeeper shall have a good coat—shall drink at all times malt liquor, and sometimes wine, and give them to his neighbours; that his wife and daughters, if he has any, shall wear clean linen, and moreover not wash it themselves; and that when they travel, it shall be by the stage-coach, and not by the waggon. Though he may do without some or other of these things, in a certain degree, when necessity presses, he cannot and will not do without them in the main. If, therefore, he is a man of foresight, he will at all events defer adding to the population of shopkeepers, till he sees a fair prospect of supporting a family in the way which public opinion pronounces to be respectable. But if he engages in it without foresight, he will keep down the population of shopkeepers in another way—for he will break. Bankruptcy is the check to the indefinite multiplication of traders, as the evils arising from diminished food are the check to the indefinite multiplication of the lower classes of labourers. In the same manner, if the higher order of traders would, or could, do without a certain rate of expenditure, they might remit something of their rate of profits. If a great brewer, for example, would drive his family to the two-shilling gallery in one of his own drays; or a banker be content, as in India, to sit on a mud floor in the shop of his forefathers, and retire to swallow rice with the condiment of ghee—there would be some chance of the thing being brought to pass. But the crowning city has determined, that her merchants shall be princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth; and they neither can, nor will resist the award. The opinion of

17. But it will demonstrate still more forcibly and clearly the limit to accumulation, if we reflect that the power of accumulating is not confined to capitalists; but that it may be, and often is, exemplified by their customers; and more especially by those who are the chief consumers of luxuries, and who have it therefore in their power to economize the use of them. We can imagine that part of our capital, which is connected with the industry of the disposable population, to amount to ten millions, being the prime cost of all the goods wrought up by this class of labourers, which enter into one revolution of the economic cycle. Should these be met by a returning power of eleven millions, the capital is fully replaced, and with a profit that enables the capitalists to live at a certain rate of luxury and comfort. But if, after the commencement of this revolution, the holders of the returning power had been visited with the inclination to save more and spend less,—if a general retrenchment had taken place among them, so that, instead of spending eleven millions, they had laid up five, and had only assigned six millions to the purchase of those articles which had been brought to market at the expense of ten millions,—it is quite evident that, in this instance, the original capitalists of these ten millions would find the market sadly overladen, at least, with their commodities. They had enlisted into the service of their different establishments a disposable population, whose office it is to work up luxuries for those who are enabled by their revenues to purchase them. But

society, therefore, is what, in the long run, determines and keeps up the rate of recompense in this class, as well as in the other; and though there may be individual exceptions, men in general will break, sooner than not live up to what is expected from them. The difficulty is not in finding men to live up to this mark; but in finding men who will live within their means. The profits of stock, like wages, may be momentarily elevated or depressed, by the fluctuations, in the proportion between the business to be done, and the men who are to do it. When business is scarce, the competition may, to a certain degree, induce traders to do it at a cheaper rate; and the contrary. But if the scarcity of business is permanent, traders will begin to go out by the horn-gate of bankruptcy, and so the balance will be preserved."—*True Theory of Rent*, 7th Edit. pp. 16, 17.

Mr. Thomson does not, perhaps, advert distinctly enough to overtrading, as a far more copious source of bankruptcy than overliving. Under a system of universal parsimony, a permanent scarcity of business relatively to the capital would ensue, and the horn-gate might be far more crowded, than under a liberal system of expenditure on the part of merchants. It is true, that the same general recklessness which leads man to overspend, might lead them to overspeculate; but it is far more to the latter, than the former habit, that our bankruptcies are owing. On the other hand, the same caution which restrains a man from spending beyond his revenue, may restrain him from trading beyond his capital—as perhaps in Holland. It is from the latter exercise of caution, greatly more than from the former, that bankruptcies are so rare in that country.

should a taste for luxury give place to a taste for accumulation, in the degree that we have now specified, it is obvious, that the lessening of the effective demand from eleven to six millions, must just have the effect of lessening, in this proportion, the price of their commodities. And so far from its being in their power by parsimony, or in any other way, indefinitely to extend the capital in their hands; we find that this is not only limited by the power of their customers, but that, by a change in the will or taste of these customers, this capital could be wrested to any given extent away from them.

18. To intercept all evasions, it may be right to trace the effect of this change a little farther. The sum of five millions, that we conceive to have been laid up by landed proprietors, is not therefore hoarded. Generally, it would be deposited in hands which lay it out in quest of gain, or on production, for the sake of a profit. We are aware of its being equally spent in either way. But, whereas formerly it went to be spent as revenue, and with an immediate view to consumption; now it is spent as capital, and with an immediate view to production. Let this conversion of revenue into capital be supposed to have taken place at the commencement, or along the progress, of the one economic revolution, which we suppose to have been signaled by the change in question. Then it had been possible, that, prior to the result of a market overstocked with luxuries, and the price of them falling to the level of the reduced demand, this sum of five millions might have been, imprudently or unforeseeingly, vested in the manufacture of luxuries—when, with fifteen millions expended on their preparation, and a returning power of only six millions to replace this outlay, the failure in the speculation behoved to be all the more signal. But, though this conversion of revenue into capital had not taken place till the economic cycle had fully revolved, still there would have been but a return of six millions to a cost of ten millions; and a reduction to this extent behoved to have taken place in the capital of the original manufacturers. Or, allowing them, as before, a million a year for their maintenance, they could only begin their operations anew with a capital of five millions. So that this conversion of revenue into capital by consumers, has not increased the capital of the country. It has only shifted it into other hands. The sum of five millions, that formerly went to be spent, is saved; or, in other words, instead of going to replace capital in its old situation, it has gone to create capital in

a new situation. The whole difference is, that instead of being returned, it has been retained; and, for the original capitalists in the possession of ten millions, we now behold their capital reduced to five, and the remaining five in the possession of so many customers, who, by their savings, have enriched themselves, but only to the extent in which the others have been impoverished.

19. We may pursue this hypothetical case a little further. The manufacturers of luxuries must now reduce their establishments in the proportion of the reduced demand. Should only six millions' worth of the commodities in which they deal continue to be bought, from year to year, they have still capital enough left for this extent of business. But, meanwhile, the sum of five millions, now in the hands of their old customers, waits for a profitable occupation; and, in seeking after it they will have been effectually warned, by the losses of their predecessors, from the manufacture of luxuries. Let us now, then, turn from this department of business, that has just rejected the excess of capital, wherewith it was overladen, and try to imagine a settlement for the new-formed capital in some other branch of the national industry. And there is a great, and withal a distinct department of this sort, where are prepared, not the luxuries of life for the wealthy, but the second necessities of life for the general population. This sum will be superadded to the capital already vested in that species of industry, which we may suppose to have been previously of the amount of ten millions. It will thus be made to attain the magnitude of fifteen millions. By this change, the sum of five millions is withdrawn from the support of industry in the third class of labourers, and transferred to the support of industry in the second class. The labourers, on the whole, will have the same money, but not more, distributed among them as formerly; though a great change will be effected in the distribution of their industry—half the disposable population being taken off from the manufacture of luxuries, and passing into the secondary population, whose employment is the manufacture of second necessities. At all events, the great customers for the second necessities, the labourers, will not be able to make larger offers of money in the market for them than they wont; that is, if, in the purchase of second necessities, they could only afford to pay eleven millions previous to this change, this is all the sum which they can afford still. Formerly they replaced the capital of ten millions, and afforded an additional

million in profit for the livelihood of the capitalists. They would now fall short of replacing the capital of fifteen millions, embarked in the preparation of second necessities, by the sum of four millions. The capitalists who dealt in second necessities, allowing them one million to live upon, would only be able to start, as before, with ten millions, and that notwithstanding the investiture of an additional five millions at the commencement of the last economic cycle in their business. Such a yearly investiture, in fact, all other circumstances remaining the same, would be followed up by a regular yearly extinction of the sum invested. There would of course, so long as it continued, be an unnatural cheapness of the second necessities. Let the wealthy stint themselves to one-half of their usual luxuries, and then vest the produce of their economy in the manufacture of second necessities, and this were tantamount to a gratuitous distribution to that extent, of additional second necessities among the general population. The additional investiture of five millions, calling forth no additional return from the purchasers, is, in effect, equivalent to a gift of five millions' worth shared among them. It is not necessary to strengthen our argument, by supposing the taste for accumulation to extend also among the common people. They would certainly be enabled to indulge this taste, by the cheapness of all the second necessities, and might, if they so chose, spend less than their wonted sum on the purchase, and yet be as well clothed and lodged as formerly. This, as far as it went, would reduce their return for the fifteen millions, to a less sum than the eleven millions, and serve to enhance still more the proof of an utter powerlessness on the part of indefinite parsimony to create or to sustain an indefinitely increasing capital.

20. As capital, then, would not continue to rush into a business where the goods, from the excess and superfluity of their production, sold for less than prime cost, we may now, with all safety, conclude, that the five millions annually saved by the landed proprietors, and which had been rejected from the manufacture of luxuries, would be equally rejected from the manufacture of second necessities. And should the saving continue to be made, there only remains another great department on which to try the investiture of this sum. After having sought in vain for the profitable occupation of itself in the business of the disposable and secondary classes, we may now suppose, for a moment, that it has found a landing-place in agriculture. In this case, half the disposable population, withdrawn from their old employment,

would be turned to the new employment of cultivating the land—spreading tillage over a greater extent than before among soils which had been yet unbroken, and carrying it to a greater depth and perfection than before, in the soils that had previously been entered on. It should be recollected that, previous to this accumulation and its investiture, the agriculture had been already carried forward to that limit which has so often met our notice; and from the contemplation we may again draw an important lesson—even that there is a like limit to the extension of capital. But, before adverting to this limit, we would remark, in the first instance, that, if the agricultural capital, previously to this new investiture, was ten millions, it now becomes fifteen millions. And as there is nothing in this change which can immediately, and at once, furnish the general population with a greater returning power than before, there would only, for one year at least, be a return of ten millions for the now extended investiture of fifteen millions. We believe, that, in this department of business, the loss would be greatly aggravated by the circumstance of the great increase that must at first take place in the food of the country, without an instant corresponding increase of population. This would cheapen the article much beneath the rate at which luxuries or second necessaries would be cheapened, from the same cause of an excess in their production. One can indefinitely extend his use of luxuries, or his use of second necessaries, but he cannot indefinitely extend his use of the first necessaries of life. One can treat himself with double the amount of splendid furniture, or use double the amount of clothes, but he cannot eat double the quantity of bread that he wont. It is thus that an excess of food causes a much greater depression of its price, than a like excess of most other articles; so that the return for the fifteen millions of capital, now embarked in agriculture, would, we are persuaded, be greatly less than the eleven millions, formerly returned for the ten millions that wont to be embarked in it. This will always form a strong initial barrier in the way of vesting more capital in agriculture, than what the state of the country at the time admitted of. No distant anticipations could tempt capitalists very far in this walk of speculation, with such a grievous absorption to meet them at the outset, or could tempt men by their savings to become capitalists.

21. But although there were no fall of price from the extension of agriculture beyond its natural limit, there is a sufficient barrier

to this extension in the unproductiveness of the land which lies beyond it. The agriculture stops where it does, just because the land of last quality is barely sufficient to repay the expenses of its husbandry; and, in the existing state of agricultural labour and machinery, no land beneath this could be attempted without loss to the cultivator. We might conceive of the next land beneath, that its produce fell short, by one-tenth, of the ability to feed its agricultural labourers and their secondaries; or, that it would require a hundred, made up from both these classes, to raise food for ninety labourers. This would obviously increase the whole means of subsistence in the country. By this single instance, there would be food for ninety labourers added to the whole previous amount of the national produce, although it did require the work of a hundred labourers to raise it. Were this instance multiplied into an extensive system of home-colonization, there is no doubt that, in the first instance, there would be a sensible increase of the chief necessaries of life, and a temporary cheapening thereof, to the sensible relief of all the labouring classes in the land. But the increase of population would speedily restore the old price, when we should behold a larger, but not a more comfortable peasantry than before; and the last land, now that the natural limit of cultivation had been forced, only yielding the food of ninety labourers in return for the work of a hundred. It may be asked, whence are the ten labourers maintained? The husbandry of these inferior soils, not being able to repay itself, must be maintained, either by the voluntary benevolence of individuals, or by taxation. In either way there is a sacrifice of luxury on the part of the wealthier classes; or, in other words, so many labourers are withdrawn by this operation from the disposable, and placed in the agricultural or secondary classes. The process by which food has been raised for an additional hundred, has had the effect of at least withdrawing ten from the disposable population. It may be extended to land of the next inferior quality; where, for every additional hundred that can be fed by its produce, twenty must be withdrawn from the disposable population. This may be conceived to go downward, till rent is annihilated, or the last man is withdrawn from a disposable population, now upheld by the landed proprietors. So that home-colonization, the moment it passes beneath the limit of that land which yields a profit to the cultivator, may be regarded as having entered on the first step of a process, that, if consummated, would give us a larger popu-

lation certainly, but a population almost wholly made up of the secondary and agrarian classes; and, therefore, labouring for the supply of a now larger society in the mere necessities of existence. Meanwhile, the disposable population must have waned toward its extinction. The community will have gained in numbers, but not in comfort, even to the general mass of families. And it will have lost the services which are rendered by the disposable class—a forfeiture this, not merely of the elegancies of life to the wealthier classes, but the far heavier forfeiture of all that can civilize the species, or subserve the purest and highest objects of patriotism.*

22. But, without here pursuing this speculation so far, we may clearly see how, even at the outset of such a process, there is a limit to the profitable embarkation of additional capital on agriculture. The land which cannot even feed its direct and secondary labourers, will far less yield a remuneration to the capital which landlords may have saved from their revenue; and which, rejected from two of the great branches of national industry, is vainly endeavouring to find a profitable investment for itself in the greatest and most important of all—the agricultural department. The domain of cultivation is, no doubt, gradually widening with the improvements that are ever taking place in the methods of agricultural labour. But when capital makes a rash attempt beyond this boundary, it is sure to be absorbed. While landed property continues, and the owners have a free control over their own movements, this cannot long be submitted to. The landlord will not continue to employ, on a land that brings no return, agricultural labourers, who might, for the sum he is yearly spending in the shape of unproductive capital, be serving him in the capacity of disposable labourers; and from whose hands he might obtain a substantial return of comfort for the same sum, when expended in the shape of revenue. Neither will the tenant persist in cultivating land which yields him no profit. There is no escaping from the conclusion. Accumulation, or the conversion of revenue into capital, has its limits in this as well as in every other division of the business of society. In other words, capital is hemmed on all sides by a slowly-receding boundary, which it cannot overpass; and beyond which, if it attempt to enlarge itself, it is broken into surges at the barrier by which it is surrounded.†

* See Appendix, C.—On Home-Colonization.

† We may here remark, how extraordinary it is, that the doctrine of the impossibility of

NOTE.—The doctrine of this chapter as being new to Political Economy will run counter to all those habits of thought which have been grounded on an acquaintance with previous writers in the science. The attention of the reader is therefore particularly requested to § 7 and 8, and especially to the proposition—obvious enough, one might think, when it is stated—that if there may be too many labourers, so may there be too many implements of labour. We must therefore confess a great value for the principle, § 16, that the average standard of enjoyment among capitalists has a regulating and controlling influence on the rate of profit—just as the standard of enjoyment among labourers affects wages. We would also refer to § 21, on the effects of home-colonization—both as perniciously influencing the distribution of labourers; and, without adding to the comfort of the working classes, most seriously abridging the general good of society.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE PARALLEL BETWEEN POPULATION AND CAPITAL, BOTH IN RESPECT OF
THEIR LIMITS AND THEIR POWERS OF EXPANSION.

1. WE have now abundantly shown, how impossible it is to sustain or accumulate capital beyond what a country can bear in the existing state of its agriculture; though, when the agriculture itself extends, everything else extends along with it. The larger population, consequent on the increase of agricultural pro-

a general glut—or, which comes to the same thing, the doctrine, that capital might find indefinite room for its own profitable investiture—should have been strenuously advocated by the disciples of a school, which connects the rate of profit with the return that is yielded to the husbandman by the last cultivated land. It is sufficient, to establish our view of the question, that the land which can afford a rent is of finite quantity, and requires but a finite capital for the full occupation of it. Let the capital then exceed this, and flow over on soils of inferior fertility, and you will soon reach an agriculture, the produce of which cannot even feed the direct and secondary labourers. This affords a clear example of a return falling short of the outlay,—the food produced falling short of the food expended. Now, on the principle, and it is a just one, that the profit on all other business is commensurate with that on agriculture, we shall, in such a state of things, from the general exuberance of capital, have profit converted into loss, or what may be termed a negative profit, repressing this exuberance throughout all the departments of enterprise, and so keeping down the capital to what the country can bear.

duce, demands a larger supply of the second necessaries, and the manufacture of these requires additional hands, and the investiture of new capital. The increase of rent, consequent on the descent among inferior soils, gives to landlords a larger command over the luxuries of life than before; and hence, a greater disposable population, with room also for the employment of additional capital in this branch of the nation's industry. Only let the agriculture be such that the population may be comfortably fed; and there is no fear of a right distribution for them,—falling in as they will, among the agricultural, the secondary, or the disposable classes, just according to circumstances. And there is as little fear of the labourers, in all the three, being rightly proportioned between the immediate and the antecedent.* Too many labourers, on the whole, would argue an excess of population; and too large a proportion of antecedent labourers, would just as certainly argue an excess of capital. The one excess is limited by the impossibility of labourers being subsisted beneath a certain rate of wages; and the other excess, as effectually limited by the impossibility of capital being supported beneath a certain rate of profit. Historically, both undergo an increase—but just as the increasing agriculture lets them. Population wont force agriculture beyond a certain limit; but agriculture will ever draw population after it. And the same may be as truly affirmed of capital. It wont force agriculture beyond a certain limit,—and should it, in the moment of its redundancy, seek to do so, it will be sunk or dissipated, and so its excess lopped off. There is a prevalent mistake respecting the order of causation, or the order of antecedency in this matter. It is not an uncommon imagination, that let capital be only accumulated to any extent; and to that extent it will, without let or obstruction, speed on the agriculture. It were far more correct to say that agriculture opens room for the occupancy of capital.

2. We are not blind to the circumstance, that population, through its excess, and the consequent lowering of wages, opens a way into inferior soils, which, under a higher wage, could not have been entered on—nor to the circumstance that capital, through its excess, and the consequent lowering of profits, causes a similar descent, and so an extension of the agriculture. Even such may be the redundancy of the former, that, in a general distress for provisions, land may be attempted, from which but a miserable subsistence can be wrested; and such may be the re-

* See Chap. iii. § 9.

dundancy of the latter, that, in the general difficulty for a profitable investment, land may be attempted, which, instead of sustaining and extending, extinguishes the capital that is put upon it. In this view, both population and capital may be regarded as impellent causes, for hastening forward the progress of agriculture. Yet it is not the object of a wise policy, to stimulate, beyond the natural incitements to their progress, the increase of either. Grant but a state of security and social order—and the spontaneous tendency, whether of population or of capital, is to increase with a rapidity far beyond the movement of that slowly-receding barrier which, ever and anon, is checking the precipitation, and repressing the increase of both. And better, we think, than that either should be urged forward against this barrier, by the inconvenience of a painful excess—better if the secret could be discovered, by which both might be taught to moderate their pace, and to walk in pacific and prosperous advancement, side by side with the natural enlargement of agriculture; that capital, as well as labour, might be saved from those visitations of distress, which are sure to come on both when alike straitened and overborne, each by the weight of its own undue accumulation.

3. There is a parallel between population and capital, which, if more dwelt upon, would rectify the sanguine and extravagant imaginations, that are still afloat respecting the power and indefinite capabilities of the latter; seeing they are the very imaginations which at one time prevailed regarding the former. The days once were, when population was the great demand of patriots and political economists; and accordingly, it was held the wisest policy of a state, to encourage early marriages, and raise foundling hospitals, and artificially foster in every sort of way this one element of national greatness. The days still are when capital is the great demand of politicians and philanthropists; and it is imagined, that by every effort of parsimony, by retrenchment in all directions, whether public or private, by accumulation to the uttermost, we may build up to an indefinite extent, this other element of national greatness. The limits of the first are now understood; and also its own spontaneous tendency to overpass these limits, so as to supersaturate a country, and produce distress among families. The limits of the second are not understood; neither it is seen how, instead of being the object of an anxious or watchful solicitude on the part of statesmen, it may safely be left to the operation of those natural prin-

ciples, in virtue of which it is ever tending to its own redundancy, and working by its very excess the infliction of many a heavy misfortune on the capitalists of the land. In this respect there is no difference between immediate and antecedent labour. The one is liable to as great excess as the other. As too many human hands may be working *now*, and drawing in return an inadequate subsistence; so too many human hands may have been working *last year*, and the existent products of their industry, whether in the shape of goods, or instruments of future production, may be drawing a return of gains that are wholly as inadequate. What the action of low wages is upon population, so the action of low profit is upon capital. They prevent the increase of both beyond a certain amount. Nay, support in the one case may decline into starvation; and population be lessened in consequence,—and profit, in the other case, may be turned into loss, and capital be effectually lessened also.

4. But population and capital not only resemble each other, in respect of the limit which opposes their indefinite augmentation. They are both subject to losses and deficiencies beneath this limit, and they resemble each other in respect of the exceeding force and facility wherewith these deficiencies are repaired. If, by the operation of disease or war, any sudden and large blank have been made in the population, it is now understood how speedily this vacuum is filled again, by the general translation of the families into better circumstances, and the stimulus given from this cause to a number of marriages that would have otherwise been postponed. And, accordingly, an unwonted number of deaths in one year is followed up, as may be seen from the tables of political arithmetic, by a like unwonted number of births, throughout the short period of a few years thereafter. But it is not adverted to, that the deficiencies of capital are repaired by a process still more sudden. Let the whole capital embarked in glass-making, for example, be a million of money, which, if replaced in one revolution of the economic cycle by eleven hundred thousand pounds, would enable the manufacturers to live, and to commence their course anew, in the same circumstances as before. But we may conceive one of these manufacturers, with the capital of a hundred thousand, to have withdrawn it from business, and to have squandered it in a fit of extravagance, so that, in a few months, there is not a vestige of his fortune remaining. The common imagination is, that the capital thus wasted by the dissipation of one capitalist, can only be repaired

by a strenuous parsimony on the part of all the rest. But the truth is, it may be repaired, and that in the course of a single twelvemonth, from another cause. There is nothing, generally speaking, in the extravagance of this said glass-maker, that can affect the wealth or ability of his customers. It may lessen, for one year at least, the quantity prepared, but it lessens not the ability to purchase. If eleven hundred thousand pounds were in readiness last year, for buying up the glass that had been manufactured at the expense of a million, there is nothing, in the wasteful expenditure of one of the capitalists, that can prevent the same sum of eleven hundred thousand pounds from being in readiness next year. The producing power is, for one season, impaired; but the returning power is as great as ever. And the effect is just a rise in the price of the article. When the effective demand is the same as before, the price, averagely speaking, is in the inverse proportion of the quantity brought to market. The price of eleven hundred thousand pounds, given last year in return for the cost of a million, is given this year in return for the cost of nine hundred thousand. The capital is thus restored to its original magnitude; and that without any effort or hard straining on the part of the remaining capitalists. The truth is, that to them it has been a prosperous, a holiday season of high prices and flourishing markets. That extravagance which has ruined their brother capitalists, has enriched them. They, in a single year, have fallen both into his profits and his capital. So far from being more painstaking or penuriously economical than before, they might spend among them the ten thousand pounds which came to him in the shape of revenue, and still inherit the whole of his capital, or the hundred thousand pounds into the bargain. The glass-making capital is fully replaced, not with any sacrifice or self-denial on their part, but at the expense of their customers—and with the temporary mischief to these, of a tenth less of the article of glass than they would otherwise have had, the capital starts again into as great extent and efficiency as before.*

* Or the capital may be repaired not at the expense of the customers, but at the expense of the manufacturing labourers, who, if they all keep by their wonted employment, must be satisfied for one year with a proportional reduction of their wages. In this way the usual quantity of glass may be supplied at the usual price, but with such a profit from the diminished outlay, as to make up the deficiency which had been created in the capital of glass-makers. This subject is treated at greater length in my work on the Christian and Economic Polity of Nations, Chapter XXII.—“On certain prevalent errors and misconceptions, which are fostered by economic theories, and which are fitted to mislead the Legislature in regard to labour and the labouring classes.”

5. It is thus that, in capital, there is a restorative virtue, which, as if by the instant force of elasticity, causes it, speedily and spontaneously, to recover the encroachments that have been made upon it. Grant but a secure administration of justice, and a well-regulated social economy, and as certainly as the population of a country follows hard upon its food, so certainly does the capital follow hard upon all that business which, in the existing state of things, it is profitable or possible to carry on in it. If in excess, then it over-produces; and through the medium of consequent low prices, the excess is lopped off in one revolution of the economic cycle. If in defect, then it under-produces; and through the medium of consequent high prices, the deficiency is repaired in one revolution of the economic cycle. It is thus that, from year to year, the capital may oscillate on each side of the returning power; but the latter is the place to which the former is constantly, though tremulously tending; nor will the vibrations ever go far, or for a great length of time, in either way. The capital, ever adjusting itself to the likely returns, is just the supply ever adjusting itself to the effective demand. And whether that demand be for immediate labour, or for the products of antecedent labour, it will, according to its relative magnitude, act at one time as a check, and at another as an encouragement, on population, or on capital, or on both.

6. The general effect of the reasoning in Dr. Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, (and that notwithstanding his occasional recognitions of the truth,) is to impress the idea, that by accumulation a country makes unceasing advances, and without any let or hindrance *ab extra*, in wealth and economic prosperity. It is not mere hoarding that he recommends, but the accumulation of productive capital, or of capital turned to use, and going forth in repeated outlays on the business of production. But to uphold the capital, these outlays must be replaced, which they can only be by the expenditure of those who consume. Mr. Malthus, on this, institutes a question respecting the balance between production and expenditure; arguing rightly, that if it was to be no expenditure, the motive to production would cease, and if it was to be all expenditure, the materials and instruments of production would be destroyed.* There must, then, be a line some-

* "Adam Smith has stated, that capitals are increased by parsimony, that every frugal man is a public benefactor, and that the increase of wealth depends on the balance of produce above consumption. That these propositions are true to a great extent, is perfectly

where between production and expenditure, which it were best, on the whole, for a country to observe ; but whether it be possible verbally to describe that line or not, practically nature hath, as in the case of population and food, provided both checks and stimulants, in virtue of which the economic machine might, with all safety, be left to its own movements. There is, on the one hand, an appetite for future wealth, and, on the other, an appetite for present indulgence. If either were to take possession of the country, in the shape of a universal mania, it might overturn the balance of society. But just in proportion as either of these forces goes to excess, and so causes a deviation from the line of optimism on one side, in that proportion is the other, or counteractive force, augmented, so as at length to recall the stray movement, and cause an oscillation towards the other side. Should accumulation go to excess, and so the supply in markets overpass the demand, the lowering of profits will check the farther tendency, and the wealthy feel tempted to purchase present enjoyment with the overflowings of their revenue, rather than throw them away on unproductive investments. Should expenditure go to excess, and so the demand in markets overpass the supply, the rise of prices will not only prove a check to farther expenditure, but will tempt the cupidity of capitalists to every possible accumulation, that they may multiply and spread out their investments to the uttermost, and so catch, each for himself, as large a share of the current prosperity as he may. It is thus that there are restraining forces in operation, which prevent the extremes either of accumulation or of expenditure from

unquestionable. No considerable and continued increase of wealth could possibly take place without that degree of frugality which occasions, annually, the conversion of some revenue into capital, and creates a balance of produce above consumption ; but it is quite obvious that they are not true to an indefinite extent, and that the principle of saving, pushed to excess, would destroy the motive to production. If every person were satisfied with the simplest food, the poorest clothing, and the meanest houses, it is certain that no other sort of food, clothing, and lodging, would be in existence ; and as there would be no adequate motive to the proprietors of land to cultivate well, not only the wealth derived from conveniences and luxuries would be quite at an end, but if the same divisions of land continued, the production of food would be prematurely checked, and population would come to a stand, long before the soil had been well cultivated. If consumption exceed production, the capital of the country must be diminished, and its wealth must be gradually destroyed, from its want of power to produce ; if production be in a great excess above consumption, the motive to accumulate and produce must cease, from the want of will to consume. The two extremes are obvious ; and it follows, that there must be some intermediate point, though the resources of political economy may not be able to ascertain it, where the taking into consideration both the power to produce, and the will to consume, the encouragement to the increase of wealth is the greatest."—Malthus' *Political Economy*, pp. 8, 9.

being predominant in the land. The capital never goes to such excess as to annihilate all profit, or that fraction of it—the interest of money. And the expenditure never goes to such excess, as to sweep off capital from any branch of industry where it can be safely or lucratively employed.

7. But instead of one universal mania on the side either of expenditure or accumulation, the former appetite may be in excess with a certain number of individuals in the community, and the latter appetite be in excess with a certain and distinct number of other individuals. This represents the actual state of society, and it may be right to consider for a moment the effect of it. It will be found that expenditure, though in great excess, and that too amongst a great number of people, may not, after all, operate to the extinction, or even to a stay on the proper increase of capital. The truth is, that the love of indulgence in one quarter of society, will ever be sufficiently met by the love of acquisition in another quarter of society, to keep up the capital of the country in an abundantly effective state for producing all which capitalists find it their advantage and their interest to produce. We can imagine each appetite carried so far, as that one set of men shall spend in extravagance more than their income, and another set of men shall lay out in business more than their capital. Let us begin with the first supposition; and it might make the effect more palpable, to make use in illustration of large numbers, nor will it affect the validity of our conclusion, though the numbers should be greater than are ever realized. We shall state the income of all our landed proprietors at one hundred millions, and conceive that, in virtue of an extravagant habit amongst them, their whole expenditure is one hundred and ten millions. It matters not to the argument, whether they are enabled to spend this excess of ten millions, by means of a credit directly afforded to them from the dealers from whom they buy, or of a credit afforded to them from men in whose written engagements the country has faith, and whose notes, therefore, have the power which belongs to money, of lifting the commodities for which it is offered in exchange. In either way, ten millions more have been offered, and ten millions more have been received, for the various articles of enjoyment and expense that have been brought to market throughout the year, than otherwise would have been, but for this wasteful extravagance on the part of the landlords. Had new purchasers to the amount of ten millions started up, this addition to the de-

mand would just have raised the money price of all these articles; but not more than does this extended demand of old purchasers. The effect of extravagance, on the part of old customers, is just to raise prices as much, as if the additional purchases had all been made by new customers. There is no waste of productive capital incurred by this extravagance on the part of landlords. Capitalists may have been carrying on their operations, through one year of this extravagance, in the very same way; and of consequence brought the same quantity of finished goods to market, as if landlords had been spending their incomes only, and no more. And the whole effect of their spending more, is just to raise the price of these goods. If they bring a pecuniary demand to the market, of ten millions more than they ought to have done; this raises prices, and accordingly profits, to the extent of ten millions more than they otherwise would have been. Extravagance does not immediately and of itself increase the quantity of goods brought to market. The individuals who are extravagant, engross a larger quantity of these goods for the year, than would else have come to their share. But they are indulging their love of pleasure at the expense of their own fortune, and also at the expense of the general enjoyment of all other consumers who may keep within their incomes, but have the disadvantage of greater prices, and consequently, a less amount of enjoyment than they would have had, but for the wasteful expenditure of so many of their fellows. This extravagance for a year leaves the supply unaltered, but, by increasing the demand, raises for that year the price of all the articles on which so much of additional expenditure has been lavished. Landlords have been impoverished to the extent of ten millions by this extravagance; but to that very extent, through the augmentation of price or profit, have capitalists been enriched by them. As much as they have mortgaged their estates, and thereby reduced their own wealth, so much have they transferred of a lifting power that enables others to purchase land to the whole value of the mortgage. The extravagance of landlords does not have all the effect which is ascribed to it, in the way of reducing the property of the nation. Mainly, its effect is but to transfer the property of the nation. In as far as it keeps up prices and profit, it retards the progress of cultivation among new soils. And so long also as an estate is in the possession of a dissipated proprietor, this may be a temporary let in the way of its improvement. Yet, bating these exceptions, the extravagance of landlords does not produce

a *reduction* in the property of the nation, but only a *rotation* of it.*

8. And the effect of overspending on the part of consumers, to raise prices, is neutralized by the effect of overtrading on the part of capitalists, to lower prices. These two opposite vices may prevail to a great extent in society, and that too, from their counteraction of each other, without sensibly impairing the capital, or altering the rate of profit. As there may be an extravagant love of pleasure, leading one man to lay out on present indulgence more than his revenue; so there may be an excessive love of gain, leading another man to excessive speculation, or to lay out, on business, more than his capital. He is enabled to do this by the trust reposed in him, either on the part of those from whom he purchases the various materials of his speculation, or on the part of lenders, who accommodate him with money, or with written engagements which have the virtue that belongs to money. At all events, if he purchase more than he ought, to that extent he raises the price of the things purchased, and so the cost of the articles which he manufactures, or of the articles in which he deals. But he furthermore pours a larger supply of these articles into market, and so far reduces their selling price. For every new adventurer, who enters any walk of commercial enterprise, or for every old capitalist, who has already entered it, and become more adventurous than before, the cost of the commodity is proportionally raised, and its price proportionally lowered. This soon meets with its corrective in bankruptcies and losing speculations, by which some are driven from the trade altogether; and only those whose fortunes are reduced but not annihilated, can keep possession of the field.†

* By its effect on prices, this ultra expenditure of landlords lessens the share of the annual supply, which would otherwise have fallen to all other customers.

† The problem suggested by Mr. Malthus, in the passage which we have extracted at Sect 6 of this chapter, meets with its readiest solution, by connecting it with the influence which an increase of production on the one hand, or of consumption on the other, has on cultivation. The more that production prevails over consumption, as in peaceable, and industrious, and well-regulated communities, the more do prices, and therefore profits fall, so as to carry down the cultivation among poorer soils, and by enlarging the agricultural produce, or the maintenance of labour, to make the country richer in all the products of labour. This will meet with its effectual check, when this superiority of production over consumption, with its effect on profit, is carried so far, that the last returns, whether from agriculture or any other business, do not yield what has been called a living profit. On the other hand, in those countries where the consumption or expenditure bears a greater proportion to the production, as in demi-barbarous, and unsettled, and oppressed communities, where profit

9. In the matter of population, and consequently of wages, there may be a balance between the improvidence of many individuals on the one hand, who rush precipitately into marriage, and the licentious celibacy of many on the other hand, who, though entitled by the sufficiency of their circumstances to enter upon this state, prefer a life of dissipation. The one excess may so neutralize the other, as to produce betwixt them no aggregate effect upon the population; but better, certainly, that neither excess obtained, and that the same result were brought about, by the avoidance alike of profligacy, and of premature marriages. So in the matter of capital, and consequently of profits, there may be a balance between the extravagance of many individuals on the one hand, and the reckless temerity of many commercial speculatists on the other. And the one excess may so neutralize the other, as to produce betwixt them no aggregate effect upon profit. But better too, in this instance, that neither the one excess nor the other did obtain; that no man spent beyond his income, and no man speculated beyond the fair and honest likelihoods of the business he was engaged with. It may cause no sensible difference to the two great public and economic interests of profit and wages; but there is involved in it a momentous difference to the worth of individual character, and the comfort of families. We feel no dread anticipation of national loss, either from profuse expenditure or from excessive speculation. But both habits are much to be deprecated, as being alike unfavourable to private virtue and happiness. And both these excesses may in fact be realized by the same individual—in whom the appetite for gain, and the appetite for indulgence, may meet together in hurtful and vicious combination. This we often find exemplified in the present age; when splendid extravagance is followed by splendid bankruptcy, out of the wrecks and ashes of which there suddenly ariseth a phoenix as splendid as before. But we deem that all the liberalities of such an age, form no equivalent for those virtues of more severe and unbending aspect, which flourished in other days; when the good old temperament of hard and honest, sat more conspicuously than they do now on the visage of plodding and painstaking, but withal well-conditioned and well-principled citizens; and when, sturdy and well-built in all the cardinal virtues, the grandfathers of our present race, with

and the interest of money are high, the cultivation is proportionally contracted; and wealth as being mainly dependent on the amount of agricultural produce, is contracted along with it.

their homely fare and their primitive habits, were still uninfected by the vice and vanity of modern times. This we deem to have been better and wholesomer far, than is a commerce of proud and precarious adventure; and we do indeed hold the passions, and the profligacies, and the gaming artifices of her now deeper play, to be wretchedly atoned for by all the gaudy efflorescence of her pageant style, and her mushroom places.

10. We may with all safety conclude, then, that, under the protection of equitable law, capital is sure to maintain itself fully up to the state at which it is most beneficial; and even tends to go beyond this. When reduced by any case beneath this standard, it evinces the same restorative force as that which belongs to the element of population. The increase of the one need be no more the subject of demand or anxiety than that of the other. The expenditure in excess of mere customers, as of landed proprietors, does not lessen capital. It but raises money prices, and so the very extravagance which mortgages the land to the extent of ten millions, transfers the power of purchasing, to that extent, to some other quarter in society, and thus occasions a mere change or division in property, without a diminution of it. The expenditure of capitalists themselves may lessen capital, but the operation of a high profit almost instantly recovers it, just as when disease or war lessens population, the operation of a high wage is to act as a stimulus to marriage; and so bring, in a little time, the number of the people up to the means of their subsistence. There is no artificial fostering requisite for the upholding of either. Each may with all safety be left to itself, and the danger is as small, that we shall not have enough of antecedent, as that we shall not have enough of immediate labour. The less of population to the food, the more is there of plenty among labourers. The less of capital to the business, the more is there of profit among capitalists. But neither will the food remain long in excess, nor the profit in excess. With both there is a rapid tendency to excess the other way: that is, to an excess of population on the one hand, and an excess of capital on the other. It is not by the deficiency of these, but by the redundancy of these, that distress and inconvenience begin to be felt, first, among the labourers, secondly, among their employers. There is no need for exciting, beyond the operation of its own spontaneous forces, an increase of the supply of immediate labour; for, in truth, it is the oversupply of this, that, by the lowering of wages, spreads discomfort among the people. And there is

just as little need for exciting, beyond the operation of its own spontaneous forces, an increase of the supply of antecedent labour; for it is the oversupply of this, which, by the lowering, or the destruction of profits, turns merchandise into a desperate game, and spreads disorder among capitalists.

11. We hear much from the economists of ruinous extravagance. Now, individual landlords, and individual capitalists, will find it ruinous to themselves; but it is only because the extravagance of the former causes a rotation of wealth, by which it is moved away from them, and because the extravagance of the latter causes first a destruction, and then an almost instant replacement of wealth, which springs up in other hands. Meanwhile, and notwithstanding the play of these yearly oscillations, the property and capital of the nation abide in unimpaired magnitude. But the general fancy is, that if there have been a defalcation of capital, through the extravagance of some, it is repaired through the parsimony and painful accumulation of others. Instead of which, it is repaired, and that almost *per saltum*, not by means of parsimony on the part of capitalists, but by means of high prices for a year, which is tantamount, we admit, to a privation for that time on the part of customers. Never are capitalists more exempted from the duties and the cares of frugality, than when this restorative process is going on; for to them it is a season of heyday prosperity, wherein, without any change of habit, or rather, notwithstanding an increase, if they so choose, of expenditure and luxury, the capital, wasted or withdrawn from business by others, comes back, with almost instant reflux, upon themselves. They, without effort, fall into possession of the ground which the others had abandoned, and find it as full of capital, and as productive of revenue, as before. It is all an enlargement to them; and at no time was this more apparent, than when the borrowing system, by government, was in full activity; producing, therefore, a yearly extinction of capital, and yet closely followed up by its yearly regeneration. It was not regenerated, as Dr. Smith imagines, by parsimony, but by a rise of profits. The twenty millions, borrowed one year, and withdrawn from the business of production, just by the inverse action of supply upon prices, were replaced next year, to the great and sudden enrichment of all the moneyed and mercantile interests in the land. And the same loan to government, if repeated for ten years, would just be followed by the same effect; that is, a season of this duration

distinguished by its high prices, and so by its high profits. The reality of this process stands palpably forth to observation in the price of stocks—which fall in war sometimes to half of their value in peace; and indicating, therefore, no less than a double rate of profit. This will suffice to account for the full maintenance of the capital of a nation, notwithstanding the repeated drafts on that capital by borrowing. The lenders withdraw their fortunes from business, and virtually become mortgagees upon the land; having their interest paid by a perpetual tax, that falls upon the country, and we think upon the landlords. The capitals which remain in trade are then suddenly enlarged, by the impulse given to profits. The perfect sufficiency of this capital for the business of the nation, even under all the encroachments to which it is subjected by government loans, is abundantly obvious; and is ascribed, by Dr Smith, to the compensation by the savings in one class of the community for the squanderings of another. But the true explanation is, that it arises from the high prices to which the community at large are subjected; it being, in truth, a season of privation to them, while a season of feverish prosperity to manufacturers and merchants. And, meanwhile, the expenditure does not diminish the property of the nation; it only transfers a part, and so divides it. The land is as good as partitioned between the landed proprietors and the national creditors, who are the mortgagees. Should the debt overtake the wealth of our proprietors—should the mortgage equal the value of land, and still justice be scrupulously adhered to, there would be no disappearance of property in consequence; there would only be the dispossession of existing proprietors. Landlords would have to do generally, in consequence of the extravagance of government, what they have often to do severally, in consequence of their own individual extravagance. They would have to renounce their estates in favour of their creditors; when, as we have already said, the ultimate effect of the expenditure would be found, not in the main to have been a reduction of property, but only a rotation of it.

12. Dr Smith mourns over our national debt, as if, by each successive act of its extension, the country had been thrown permanently back in the career of economic prosperity. It has been computed by some, how much more populous we should have been, had the practice of inoculation been discovered sooner; and, in like manner, he computes how much richer we should have been, had the different sums borrowed by govern-

ment been all retained as capital. But the truth is, that it never could have stood as capital. The effect of the debt, while under its process of formation, was to subject the people to higher prices, and so to a scantier supply of all the comforts of life. Had there been no formation of a debt, and the people been left to their wonted supply of these articles, they would just have made all the larger use of them ; and if not, there would have been an excess of capital beyond what the country could bear, and so an absorption of this excess, in the losses and the bankruptcies of over-trading. The whole effect of the debt at the time of its contraction, is to expose the people to those higher prices, which have both to return the abiding, and to replace the withdrawn capital. And the whole effect of the debt afterwards, is to divide property, just as a mortgage divides it between the creditor and the landed proprietor. We look to the wrong quarter for its effect, when we look for a diminished capital. The truth is, that while this borrowing system lasted, capital was upheld in full extent and sufficiency ; and when the borrowing system terminated, capital, unprovided with its wonted vent or absorbent, went to dissipation, in the overflow of its own exuberance. It was felt to be a paradox at the time ; but we think it admits of lucid explanation, that capitalists flourished in war, and that in peace they suffered the reaction of many adversities and losses.*

13. It is readily enough perceived, how soon the population of a country recovers from the effects of a desolating war ; and how, with its agriculture and its seasons unchanged, it witnesses, in a few years, an equal number of equally thriving families. But there is just as great vigour and indestructibility in the element of capital ; which, though wrecked to the uttermost by victorious armies, will, in the course of a few years, attain to all the magnitude, and all the efficiency, which it ever had. If, by the multiplication of labourers, the country will soon have enough of population ; then, simply by a right distribution of them into the immediate and antecedent, the country will almost as soon have enough of capital. And this distribution may, with all safety, be left to the guidance of individual interest. The first effect of the lessened capital would be a lessened production ; and in repairing this, the chief and foremost efforts would, of course, be directed to those things that were of most urgent necessity. Hence a greater than ordinary proportion of the people

* See Appendix, D.—On the National Debt.

would be set to repair the deficiency of food, who, between their immediate and antecedent labour, would speedily put the fields into their wonted order, and give their wonted completeness to the instruments of husbandry. After this had been achieved, the great and extraordinary effort would then be transferred to the manufacture of second necessaries; for that would now be the quarter of greatest demand, and at the same time deficiency; and where, therefore, under the encouragement of highest price, capital would be most readily allured, or rather, most quickly forced up to its original magnitude. And so this matter would proceed, till, in a very few years, the recovery both of population and of capital would be completed. By one revolution of the economic cycle, what is termed *the circulating capital* would be nearly restored; and by a few revolutions more, what is termed *the fixed capital* would be fully restored; and all this, not by the parsimony of successive generations, but by the privations of a very few successive seasons. It has been a theme of wonder to historians, that, after the most sanguinary and destructive wars, a country should so fast emerge again into its wonted prosperity and strength. Like the mysterious sanative principle in the human body, it has had a mysterious appellation given to it, and been ascribed to an unknown *vis medicatrix* in the body politic. But such a disguise for ignorance is altogether unneeded; for there is no mystery whatever in the process. It is all due to the action of forces perfectly understood, however little applied to the explanation of the phenomena in question. The effect of a high profit on a deficient capital, may be just as lucidly apprehended as the effect of a high wage on a deficient population. They, in a very short time, cease to be deficient. The facts of history upon this subject are notoriously in accordance with the principles of science; nor should we any longer marvel, why Russia, and Prussia, and Austria, and France, after having, to all appearance, exhausted each other, should, in less than half a generation, be able to renew their conflicts in as great force and fulness as before.

14. It is in old and well-governed countries where capital is most exposed to the discomfiture of its attempts for its own enlargement. It is in these where profit has sunk to the lowest state that is consistent with the maintenance of capital; and where, therefore, if capital were farther extended, the profit might be annihilated, or even converted into loss. A country, though well governed, yet if new, may have its profits high,

because of the unbroken tracts which yet lie open for cultivation, as in the United States of America; and on which the exuberance of capital may overflow, and find profitable investments for generations to come. And a country, though old, yet if ill governed, may also have its profits high. The insecurity to which all property is exposed, from injustice and violence, will prevent the wealthy, in such countries, from exposing their capital, without the promise of a considerable return. The high profit is an indemnification for risk; and should be equal to the ordinary profit in ordinary circumstances, with a premium, over and above, for a very hazardous insurance. In balancing the matter between the value of a present indulgence, and that of a future acquisition, the uncertainty attendant on the latter will tempt merchants to give a larger proportion of their gains to expenditure; and this, by keeping down their capital, upholds their profit. It is in perfect accordance with this, that, in countries under oppression, the cultivation should have made so short a descent among the inferior soils. The same consideration which operates in restraining the application of mercantile, will also operate in restraining the application of agricultural capital; the latter of which requires, as much as the former, the inducement of a large return in barbarous or demi-barbarous countries. Hence the prodigious capability of soils that lie without the margin of cultivation, in far the greater number of countries in the world—in Asia Minor, in South America, in Hindostan, along the Northern shores of Africa, and, generally speaking, in all territories under the Mahometan yoke. This holds out the brilliant perspective of a great enlargement in the physical resources of the human family, as being the sure attendant of their growth in morality, and religion, and social order. Even the larger countries of civilized Europe have still this prospect in reserve for them; as is evident from the higher interest of money, in conjunction with the yet imperfect agriculture of such countries as Spain, and Austria, and Russia, and Poland. Perhaps there is no first-rate nation so near, in this respect, to its extreme limit as Britain, that has long been the seat of pure legislation, and of safe and prosperous industry. There, a low interest, a high-wrought agriculture, the distress both of a redundant population among the labourers, and of a redundant capital among the mercantile classes, go hand in hand. Ireland, with its higher interest of money, and its less perfect agriculture, has yet a career of greater advancement to describe than there is now room for

in this country. One of the recipes often given for the medication of that interesting land, is to pour capital into it. But this is mistaking the consequence for the cause. The economic will follow spontaneously in the train of the moral improvement. With the progress of education, and law, and industry, capital will naturally be attracted thither; and, what is still better, a capital of home-growth augmentation will speedily be formed. Their slovenly agriculture, and unreclaimed wastes, are to us the materials of a cheering anticipation; for they tell how large are the still undeveloped capabilities of Ireland. The redundancy of the Irish population, is only, as compared not with the potential, but with the actual amount and distribution of their produce, an amount which might be doubled with a better system of husbandry; and a distribution which will become more thoroughly internal than at present, when landlords begin to feel, that on their own estates, and among their own peasantry, they may taste the charm and tranquillity of home. It is competent for moral causes, and for these alone, to effect every desirable amelioration; and, if man would but do his part, nature has in store for Ireland a liberal subsistence for millions more of human beings than are now famishing upon its territory.

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

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

NOTE.—The analogies between population and capital, as stated in § 3 of this chapter, confirm the doctrine of the previous chapter, on the necessary limit to the extension of capital. This is made still more obvious, when capital is viewed as the produce of antecedent in contradistinction to immediate labour. We feel the great importance of that restorative power, § 4, which brings up capital almost *per saltum* to what it originally was, after having undergone losses or diminutions from whatever cause. And the effect of extravagance on prices, with the corollary deduced therefrom in § 7, is particularly urged on the consideration of the reader,—as it may lead him to modify the conclusions of Dr. Smith in the way we have attempted to do in § 11. It will be seen how it is that the borrowing system has not trenched either on the capital or business of the nation—and that capital is upholden under it, not by the extraordinary savings, but the extraordinary profits to which it gives rise. The precise economic effect of the National Debt is stated in § 12, and shown to be anything rather than a diminished capital. We can think of no explanation for the historical phenomena mentioned in § 13, but on the principles expounded in this chapter—though to us the most interesting aspect of the whole, is the influence, § 14, which the moral state of a country, and more especially its progress in civilisation and law, has on the extension of its capital and wealth.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF OVER-PRODUCTION, OR OF A GENERAL GLUT.

1. By our division of labourers into three classes, we are enabled to refute the modern paradox, of the impossibility of over-production, or the impossibility of a general glut. They who maintain this doctrine, represent what they term unproductive

consumption, or unproductive expenditure, as an injury to the nation. They know, that though all wealth were turned into capital, there would just be as much expenditure as before; but it would be expenditure on the tools and materials, or on the maintenance of industry. Instead of spending my income of a thousand guineas in the year, it is certainly possible to stint myself to fifty pounds; and either directly, or through the medium of a loan, I may spend a thousand pounds annually in the employment of labourers, who shall work up a return for the maintenance bestowed on them. It is in virtue of this return, that the latter mode of spending a thousand pounds, has, in opposition to the former, been termed productive expenditure, when viewed as coming from the hands of the employer; or productive consumption, if viewed as going to the maintenance of so many workmen and their families. And their workmanship is the product—a product that we should not have had, if the owner of the sum, instead of giving it the supposed destination, had spent it on his own personal or family indulgences.

2. The thing wanted, therefore, by these new economists, is, that each man, laying out as much as possible of his income on productive expenditure, should lay out as little as possible on his own individual enjoyments. And this can certainly be done, till the man reduce himself to the necessaries of life. This is the extreme limit of the possibility in regard to him; and the extreme limit in regard to the country at large, might be reached by all men of wealth, higher than that of a labourer, doing the same thing; that is, confining themselves to the use of necessaries, and spending the surplus, not in the purchase of existent products for their own and their families' further enjoyment, but in the maintenance of workmen whom they put to the formation of new products. At this rate it is obvious, that all luxuries would be proscribed. These products would fall out of demand, and cease to be fabricated. The men now employed in their fabrication would still continue to be supported, and by the same people too—only, instead of being supported by them in the act of spending their revenue on the old and customary products, they would be supported by them in the act of laying out that revenue, now turned into capital, on the manufacture of new products. And these products, in virtue of this universal change that had taken place in expenditure, behaved to be either the first or second necessaries; seeing that, when society was brought to this state of alleged optimism, all men behaved to confine them-

selves to the use of necessaries, and devote the surplus of their incomes to that production, which it is impossible by this new doctrine to carry to excess. That this new production should be a production of luxuries, after the use of luxuries has been thus proscribed and banished from the land, is surely out of the question. If production at all, it must be that of the first and second necessaries. In other words, by this change, the disposable population would be, not destroyed, but transferred. The class would be destroyed,—but the men who compose it would be supported, and as well supported as before, in other employments; or merged into the other two classes of agricultural and secondary labourers.

3. By tracing the effect of such a change in the habit of expenditure, (were it possible, which it is not, that such a change could be realized,) we shall find that it would be productive of no real benefit or blessing to society. We might perhaps satisfy ourselves with the certainty, that it is a thing not to be done,—but we hold it of importance furthermore to know, that it is a thing not to be desiderated. At all events it will be found, in the course of the investigation, that this new doctrine, of the impossibility of a general glut, is altogether a chimera. And, like many other important lessons in political economy, we think that this one too can best be learned at the extremity of cultivation,—at the limit of a country's food, beyond which it is utterly impossible to carry any one economic interest, that is dependent either on the number of human beings, or on the industry of human hands.

4. First, then, let us imagine that the farmer, in any given state of the husbandry, lays out, and persists in laying out, the uttermost he possibly can, on the business of that production wherewith he has to do. There can be no doubt, that the less he spends upon himself, and the more he spends upon his business, the faster will he carry out upon his land the limit of cultivation. Even when he has reached that soil, which can yield no more than his profit, over and above the food of its direct and secondary labourers, he may still persevere in making a surrender of that profit; and instead of consuming it on his own enjoyments, may continue to put it out on the expenses of a further cultivation. With this determined sacrifice, year after year, of all the profits of his husbandry, he will not only carry out the cultivation at a faster rate, but he will carry it further than he could otherwise have done. He may be obliged to stop at last, when he comes to a soil which yields him no profit, and which

can barely feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries ; but yet he stops at a line ulterior to that which would have bounded his progress, had he been in the habit of spending the profits upon his family, instead of sinking them upon his farm. The land last entered on, would be further down in the gradation of qualities of soil, because it would have less to do ; having only to yield the food of its direct and indirect labourers, instead of having both to yield that much, and a profit to the cultivator besides. This attempt, then, at production, on the part of the farmer, to the uttermost of his power—this surrender of his own profits to the cause, must give a certain stretch to cultivation, and be the means of reclaiming a belt that would have otherwise remained on the exterior of the domain of cultivation. There would have been room thus afforded for a larger, but not certainly on that account for a happier or a richer population. Their comfort, in fact, depending as it does, not on the absolute quantity of food, but on the relation which the quantity bears to their own number ; and this, again, depending on their own standard of taste and of enjoyment,—all that the extreme parsimony of the farmer can work out for us, is a bulkier, but not a better-conditioned society than before ; a greater number of families, but these not at all more thriving families than they were formerly. Let us state truly the effect of this straining after production, with all his might and all his means, on the part of the cultivator. He annihilates his own profit by it. He adds something to the magnitude of the commonwealth. He adds nothing to the prosperity or comfort of the individuals who compose it.

5. It seems needless to make a distinct argument, for it is essentially the same, on the case of another species of capitalist ; even him who heads, and who by his funds sustains, the manufacture of second necessities. He, too, like his brother agriculturist, may, in his zeal for production, choose to live as a labourer, and to embark all profit on the enlargement of his concern. The consequence would be a larger supply of second necessities, and such a consequent cheapening of them, that profit should be annihilated. We have already demonstrated how this, too, would give a stretch to cultivation. It would, *pro tanto*, have the same effect, in this way, that we ascribed to the cheapening of second necessities, by an improvement in the machinery employed to prepare them. It would not of itself lessen the number of secondary labourers requisite for this preparation. The last land would still have to feed the same num-

ber of these. But it would have no longer to feed the disposable population, that went to be employed in the preparation of luxuries for the manufacturing capitalist. He, by the supposition, has given up this idle expenditure, and embarked all the proceeds of his retrenchment on the extension of his business. The effect of thus freeing the last land from the burden of subsisting so many as would have been otherwise required of it, is just to enable the cultivator to make a step down to worse land. By this change in the habit of the capitalist, a few of the disposable class would be transferred, as in the former case, to the business of a now more extended agriculture; and with the consequent increase of population, to the business of a then proportionally extended manufacture of second necessaries. In both cases, there might be a temporary enlargement of comfort to labourers. But this, so long as the standard of enjoyment remained the same, would soon be followed up, and therefore compensated, by an increase of population. And so the result of this second effort, at an indefinite production, would come, like the first, to a very definite and limited result. It would annihilate profit. It would add something to the magnitude of the commonwealth. It would ultimately, or permanently, add nothing to the prosperity and comfort of its individual families.

6. But the extension of agriculture that would ensue from capitalists, whether agricultural or manufacturing, giving up their profits, is as nothing to the extension that would ensue from landed proprietors giving up their rents in the cause. We need not make a separate case of the capitalists employed in the manufacture of luxuries,—for the most which they could surrender to the object of increasing production, is the profits of their business. But were their great customers, the landlords, to be enlisted in this warfare against all unproductive expenditure, they could, by giving up the use of whatever is superfluous, turn, not merely the profit made on luxuries, but the whole price of luxuries, to the purposes of capital. The most that capitalists could do, by a yearly sinking of their profits, would be to carry down the cultivation to the soil that barely feeds the labourers, directly and secondarily employed on it. But landlords, by a yearly sinking of their rents, could do a great deal more; could make, in fact, the cultivation pass a very far way beyond this line among the deficient soils.* With

* We name those the deficient soils whose produce is insufficient for the subsistence of their direct and secondary labourers.

the exception of their own essential maintenance, which they might reduce to that of labourers, they could turn the whole of their immense revenues into capital, for the object of production; though, from the universal change which we now suppose in the state of the demand, it behoved to be the production of first and second necessaries. Of course, the present employments of the disposable population would be completely broken up, and we should behold them spread in immense numbers over the deficient soils of the territory,—where they would be supported, partly by the scanty and inadequate returns of their penurious husbandry; but this made up by the successive outlays of that revenue which landlords drew from their superior soils. In effect, this scheme of production to the uttermost, would give rise to the very same distribution, and be attended by the same consequences, with a scheme of home-colonization carried to the uttermost. The landlords would only be denuded of their revenues in a somewhat different capacity; not in that of philanthropists or leypayers, but in the capacity of over-traders. The ultimate effect of that system which the enemies of unproductive expenditure so strenuously recommend, supposing it carried to the uttermost, would be a regular yearly investiture of all the superfluous revenue of landlords; and that followed up by as regular a yearly loss to them of the whole sums invested. There would not be the extinction of rent from the superior soils; but there would be the absorption of it on the deficient soils. There would be the extinction of a disposable population. There would be a considerable increase of the general population; but with this addition to the number, there would most assuredly be no addition to the comfort of families. With the surrender of luxuries on the part of the landlords, agriculture could be carried a great way beyond its natural limit; yet it is not illimitable. When the last luxury had been given up, and the last man been withdrawn from the disposable population, then would agriculture reach the farthest possible barrier which nature and necessity had laid in the way of its extension—as the beach, or the sandy desert, or the impracticable rock, or the climate of eternal frost, within which no esculent can be reared.

7. Our first remark on this process of indefinite parsimony, and of laying forth to the uttermost on production, is, that it never can be realized. We have endeavoured to trace its effects; but we are quite sure, all the while, that they never can be exemplified. Capitalists will not persist in stinting themselves to the

bare necessaries of life, and laying out the whole surplus of their profits on the extension of their business, when they come to find, that, after all, these profits are at length annihilated. Landlords will not persist in foregoing such indulgences as might be spared, if they come to find, that any returns which might be made only go to make out the support of an increasing population, instead of coming back in the shape of additional wealth, and additional command over the enjoyments of life to themselves. No man would continue to superintend the operations of a capital, no man would continue to administer and manage the affairs of a landed property, if such were to be the result of it. The moving forces which actuate, and which lead either to the operations of merchandise, or to the arrangements of agriculture, would cease, on this system of production to the uttermost, and of no consumption save for the object of production. If such a system were once entered on, it would speedily be checked by its profitless, and, in many instances, by its positively losing and ruinous results. So that it is not in opposition to any apprehended practical evil, but in opposition to a theory, that we have been induced to frame, or at all to insist on our present argument.

8. But even though practicable, we should hold it to be a process not at all desirable. That it would hasten the progress of agriculture, and so the growth of society in respect of population, is very certain. With a less amount of frugality in times past, we should have had, at this moment, a narrower domain of cultivation; and a domain so much the larger and more productive, had there been greater frugality, even though many owners and occupiers of land had starved or ruined themselves in the cause. There can be no doubt that cultivation has often received a permanent stretch at the expense of an irrecoverable loss to the individual cultivator; and that, better than this, instances can be named, where, but for a large outlay on the part of owners, there are many extended improvements, at length yielding an ample though distant return, which might have been postponed or never undertaken. Yet, with all these admissions, while we should deprecate the encroachments, by waste and extravagance, on agricultural capital, we should also deprecate the encroachments by parsimony, on the general habit of capitalists living in the enjoyment of their profits, and landowners in the enjoyment of their rents. For ourselves, we have no fear whatever of the former encroachment, and would again

advert to that beautiful compensation, by which the excessive love of present enjoyment on the part of spendthrifts, when carried to the length of abridging their capital, does, by its effect on supply and price, call forth a counteractive force in the opposite direction—by inviting others in whom the love of gain predominates, the more to extend their operations, whether in trade or in husbandry. We have no alarm for the effect of economic theories on the habit of individuals; but even though they had the influence, which they have not, we should hold it a thing to be regretted, if they led our capitalists either to spend more, or to spare more, than they would spontaneously. We should rather confide the progress of agriculture to the improvement of its own machinery, and its own methods, than hasten that progress unnaturally by an extreme parsimony, whether among the owners or the occupiers of land. We have no demand for a forced increase either of food or population; neither do we look on that system as being at all friendly to our species, which, by an abridgment on the free control of every man over own revenue, would either speed the advances of cultivation beyond the rate at which it might otherwise proceed, or carry it beyond the boundary at which it would otherwise stop. The final result of such a system, when consummated and brought to its perfection, were an agriculture carried not merely to the limit beyond which it could not produce so much as pay its own expenses, but to the limit beyond which it could not produce at all. Our preference is for an agriculture that stopped at the upper extremity of the deficient soils, rather than an agriculture that did not stop till it reached their lower extremity. In very proportion to the progress made among the deficient soils, are profits and rent encroached upon, and the disposable class dwindles away by successive abridgments, till the last man is transferred to the agricultural or the secondary. We repeat that we have no value for such a consummation; and, infinitely rather than this ultra agrarianism, would we have a more limited, because, along with this, we should also have the composition and the materials of a more secure and far happier society. We see not the good of an addition to the mere numbers of the commonwealth, if it can only be effected at the expense of the whole, and to the utter ruin of certain great interests which cannot otherwise be provided for than with a disposable population; implying, no doubt, the means of leisure and luxury to an opulent class, but implying also, beside a thousand bland and beneficent influences on the

comfort and moral state of all classes, an ability on the part of the ruling power, to appropriate of these means for all the best and highest objects of an enlightened patriotism.

9. This is a great question, and something of far mightier import than the maintenance of a rank and a property for the upper classes is involved in the determination of it. We hold that, on the moment when agriculture overpasses its natural limit, and enters on the deficient soils, the condition of the general peasantry is put into a state of fearful precariousness. And it matters not whether this shall happen by a scheme of home-colonization for the purposes of charity, or by the schemes and speculations of over-trading, either for the sake of a profit that wont be realized, or on the false system that all unproductive expenditure is ruinous. If the first, or an undertaking of charity for the good of others, we can prove that though it may land us in a greater, it will land us also in a more wretched population.* If the second, or an undertaking of business for the good of ourselves, it cannot long be persisted in under a continued experience of the losses which are incurred by it; and it is always to the distress of multitudes, when any enterprise of industry, because of its unproductiveness, behoves to be abandoned. We therefore deem it an alternative altogether big with efficacy on the ultimate condition of our species, whether they shall keep within the natural limit, or, breaking through among the deficient soils, push onward to the extreme limit of the agriculture. Our preference is wholly, and that for the sake of the prosperity of all classes, to the former term of this alternative. We should rather the liberal consumption of their rents, than the yearly absorption of them in losing schemes of husbandry, on the part of the landed proprietors. We should rather a high rate of profit, upheld by a large expenditure on the part of capitalists, than the utter degradation of this class by a parsimony that would annihilate profit, and sink their condition to that of the general population; even although this larger expenditure and larger profit did somewhat retard the progress of agriculture. And we should infinitely rather, on the part of labourers, behold them keeping within the superior soils, in more limited number, but in larger sufficiency, than flowing over on the deficient soils, and there bringing down, by the very weight of their redundancy, the state and circumstances of the whole order to which they belong. We are sensible that at this

* Again see the Appendix C.

rate we should have a more contracted agriculture, and therefore a less populous world ; but our preference is for a higher wage and higher profit too, with a narrower rather than a lower wage and profit with a wider cultivation. . It is at the natural limit of cultivation, that we should feel disposed to take our most resolute stand—assured as we are, that if the attempt to pass beyond it be, from whatever cause, largely and systematically prosecuted, a general want and wretchedness among labourers or capitalists, or both, would follow in its train.

10. But it is now time for addressing ourselves to the argument of our more recent economists, for the impossibility of a general glut, in the terms which they themselves have employed when propounding it. Their reason for there being no such thing as over-production, or for a general glut being impossible, is, that any partial over-stockings of the market which may accrue, arise, not from an excess of commodities upon the whole, but from the excess of certain commodities, and so a wrong or mistaken distribution of them. They ground their proposition on the indefiniteness of human wants, or rather, of human desires, in virtue of which, they affirm, there can be no excess in the supply, if known only what the desires specially are. The mal-adjustment in the market, according to them, has arisen, not from the desires of men being over-satiated with too many objects, but from these desires not being met by the right objects. If, for example, there be an excessive quantity of cotton goods in the market, they become immoderately cheap, and purchase less than they otherwise would, of all other commodities, which of course are, in reference to this one commodity, immoderately dear. This must proceed, it is argued, from an excess of labour employed in the preparation of cotton goods, and a corresponding deficiency of labour in the preparation of the other articles which come into exchange with them. Had a certain portion of labour, then, been transferred from that quarter where it has been in excess, to those quarters in which it has been deficient, the equilibrium would have been restored, and the cotton goods been exchanged, with all others, at a fair relative value. At this rate, there would have been no glut of any one commodity ; and yet the quantity of commodities on the whole would have been as large as ever. On these grounds it is contended, that there can be no glut arising from over-production in the general, but only from a miscalculation as to the real state of the demand ; and so a disproportionately large supply of certain articles

of merchandise, with a corresponding defect and diminution in the supply of others.

11. Now, in the first place, it must be obvious, that so long as the food of a country is ahead of its population, there is no danger of such a general glut extending to all commodities, as shall produce general distress among labourers; and less danger than otherwise, of such a partial glut in some of them, as shall bring distress to certain classes of labourers. The holders of this food, are the holders of that which is the chief ingredient in the maintenance of families; and, holding it in excess, there can be no doubt, on the average, of an ample remuneration for the products of manufacturing industry. Even should the first holders, the landed proprietors, confine themselves exclusively to the use of certain favourite commodities, and neglect the others; by their more intense demand for the former, they raise their price, and transfer to the venders of certain articles the whole of that surplus food, which might have otherwise been distributed among the venders of all articles. But after this food, or, which is the same thing, the power of lifting it, has been placed in the hands of the second holders, the fortunate calculators on the taste of the original ones, there will still be a surplus to them, the whole food being in excess to the population, which, rather than left to moulder in their own idle possession, will find its way either to such articles as can be found, or to the purchase of labour for the preparation of other articles. It is thus that, in the state now supposed, the products of industry will seldom miss being exchanged with a liberal maintenance to workmen; or, at all events, workmen will seldom miss of a liberal maintenance. Capitalists may suffer a diminution in their gains, or even a positive loss, by miscalculation. But, in a general excess of food, this will not affect the general comfort of labourers; as exemplified now in America, and as perhaps exemplified in various stages in the enlargement of European agriculture, since the termination of the Middle Ages.

12. But periods of general comfort are periods of frequent and early marriages; and so of more frequent, as well as larger families. An increasing population follows in the train of increasing food, and at length overtakes and presses on it. That the pressure be felt, even long before the agriculture has come to its uttermost perfection, it is enough if the rate of increase in the population exceed the rate of increase in the means of subsistence. The nearer the agriculture is to its extreme limit, the

pressure will be the more felt; and it will be greatest of all, when, instead of a slowly receding barrier, the food of the country has reached its maximum, and the barrier has become stationary. Hence the straitness that is felt in the old countries of Europe, as marked by the tide of emigration, compared with America; where vast tracts of yet unbroken land await the enterprise of adventurers, and afford additional harbourage for additional millions of families. It is in the former countries, where those gluts, which create a reaction of poverty and distress amongst the working classes, are of most frequent occurrence. It is there that miscalculation occurs most readily, and it is also followed up by the severest consequences. It is in countries of saturated population, where the workmen who had been engaged in the preparation of a neglected commodity, experience the most fearful distress, when dismissed in thousands by their employers, because unable, from the want of returns, to uphold their establishments. Had this taken place in a country where there was a sufficiency of food for all, the discarded labourers might still have met with their subsistence in return for some new service to those who were the holders of it. But there is no such resource, when the food is already engrossed by those more fortunate of their class, who have been engaged in the preparation of the more favoured commodities. It is thus that, in every country so situated, when there is any disproportion among the manufactured articles which are brought to market, there must fall a weight of suffering on certain classes of the industrious; even the makers of the articles which are in excess. But it is a mistake to imagine, that, by simply rectifying this disproportion, the suffering will be done away. It would only be more divided than before. There might be no increase of severe distress in any one quarter; but in exchange for this, there would be a straitness and certain feeling of penury amongst all the operatives in the land. Still there would be a glut; though not proceeding from excess in certain *manufactured* articles, with a corresponding deficiency in others. After the adjustment of the best relative proportion had been established between them, there would remain a glut of these commodities upon the whole; and that proceeding from an anterior glut, not to be rectified by any skill in the transference or new distribution of capital; even a glut of human beings, which nothing can prevent, but the reign of prudence and principle amongst families; and nothing can correct, but the famine, and disease, and war,

which are so many chastisements inflicted by the hand of nature, on human guilt and human improvidence.

13. It is vain to say, that, in these circumstances, a transference of labour should be made from manufactures to agriculture. We have already seen, that there is not room for an indefinite employment of labourers in the one department more than in the other. The population who are now working on the land last entered, or on the land that is placed along the extreme margin of cultivation, only obtain from it a produce which feeds the agricultural labourers and their secondaries, and which remunerates the capitalists. An additional population, if it anticipate and exceed the natural progress of agriculture, as already explained, behoved to enter upon land of inferior quality to this; which land could only continue to be cultivated with loss to the capitalists, or by means of an under-fed or inferiorly-maintained population. It is thus, that there can be demonstrated to exist a limit all round to the employment of labourers. And for the right direction of philanthropy, for the purpose of giving effect to her devices and her doings, to save the wasteful or the pernicious expenditure of her powers, it is well that all the false lights should be extinguished, which may have heretofore bewildered her, and that she should be no longer misled by a delusive confidence in impotent or fruitless expedients.

14. There is nothing more fitted to inspire this delusive confidence, than the doctrine which we now endeavour to expose. It suggests the idea of an indefinite harbourage for the people, let them multiply and increase to whatever extent they may. It gives a virtue unlimited to credit and commerce, and the enterprise of merchants; and removes from contemplation that barrier to the extension of agriculture, which must ever prove a barrier, alike firm and impracticable, to the extension of trade. It overlooks the obvious truth, that there may be too much production, just because there may be too many producers. It is this which may give rise to a general glut, at least of all but the first necessities of life. It is but a poor evasion, that because there is a deficiency in these, the glut is not universal; so that if all sorts of products were included, the doctrine has still a foundation to rest upon. It needs but one qualification to meet this. *Generally*, and with one single exception, even that of food, there may be an excess of products; and *universally*, or inclusive of food and of all things else, there may be an excess of productive effort. We shall at length come to a limit, beyond

which the expense incurred in the fabrication must exceed the expense of the thing fabricated. At, or rather beyond, the natural margin of cultivation, we see this truth in all its nakedness; stripped of those accompaniments which, in the shape of marketing, and money, and exchanging processes, but obscure the character of the proceeding, without essentially changing it. Then it becomes quite palpable; for then the food which has been consumed by workmen, during the process of their labour, exceeds in quantity the food which they raise. There is no mere distribution which can avert this calamity; a calamity that, wherever it occurs, is felt throughout the whole community of labourers. And a scanty return for the labour bestowed on the production of the one commodity of food, is very generally associated with a glut of all other commodities. Commensurate to a smallness of produce in the department of agriculture, is there a smallness of price in the department of commerce and manufactures. When immediately, and without exchange, there is a scanty return for the last agricultural labour expended on our overwrought fields, then mediately, and with exchange, is there a like scanty return for all manufacturing labour, and that because of our overstocked markets. It is thus that starvation, or more severe distress, may be realized, from the want of first necessaries, in the midst of general abundance, both as to the second necessaries and luxuries of life. This, if there be not a virtuous and well-educated commonalty, is the ultimate state of every industrious nation; a state from which it can only be saved, not by the multiplication of its products, but by a wholesome, and moral restraint on the multiplication of its people.

15. This, then, is the substantial refutation of the new doctrine—that there can be no glut, if capitalists, in their speculations, would but speculate soundly—or, that they cannot overload the market, if they would but select and offer the right commodities for sale. The reasoning in behalf of this doctrine we hold to be wrong, even though we should admit the supposition whereon it rests—which is, that the object proposed, in every presentation of commodities for sale, is to obtain other commodities in exchange for them. Although this were true, still there is one sense in which, notwithstanding the nicest possible adjustment, in the way of proportioning the respective articles to the respective demand for them, there yet would be a glut. There may be an over-population of the country, and so a glut of men—who, with the best possible accommodation of their industry

to the taste and the wants of those who hold the materials of human sustenance in their hands, may still find the products of their industry to be too abundant, and therefore too cheap for their obtaining an adequate maintenance in return for them. The escape from this conclusion is, that still the glut is resolvable into a mistake in point of proportion, food being in defect, and all other commodities in excess; and that so a rectification would be brought about, were a portion of the capital transferred from the preparation of the latter to that of the former—or, speaking generally, from manufactures to agriculture. But this goes on the presumption that food can be raised by turning capital to this object, just as indefinitely as houses, or ships, or steam engines, can be multiplied in the same way. The state of matters at the extreme margin of cultivation is not adverted to. It is forgotten why, in the present circumstances of the country, that is the margin; and why it cannot, without loss, be carried further onward or downward than it actually has been. The ulterior land would not, in the present state of agricultural science, feed both the primary and secondary population who should be employed on it. At least, it would not do this, and also remunerate the capitalist for his outlay. Nay, there is the utmost hazard, or rather certainty, in such a state, of lighting upon soils so ungrateful, as to convert profit into loss, and so diminish the capital. It were well if this check to indefinite enlargement could be fully kept in view; for a recklessness to limits, and necessary laws on the part of the *savans* in political economy, might induce a corresponding recklessness on the policy of statesmen, and even on the general habits of society. There are certain recent doctrines in the science, which, beside being unfounded in themselves, have precisely this effect. In particular, the position that there is no limit whatever to the means of productive and profitable employment, is really tantamount to the position, that there is no necessary limit on the numbers of the species. If work can thus be augmented indefinitely, then might workmen be augmented indefinitely. It is under the influence of some such maxim as this, that a delusive confidence is encouraged, and relief for a straitened and overburdened community is always sought for in the wrong quarter—in the enlargement of work, rather than the limitation of workmen—in the increase of produce, when nothing will effectually or permanently keep the country at ease, but a check on the increase of population.

16. We feel unwilling to protract an argument already too much lengthened out; else, instead of viewing the outlay of capital for the sake of production in the form of material, we might proceed to view it in the form of a monied investiture. Under this distinct aspect, the reasoning might be so managed as not only to demonstrate a fallacy in the conclusion of our adversaries, but to detect a fallacy in the assumption on which their argument rests. And a further advantage would be, that without adverting to the limit of agriculture at all, the possibility of a universal glut might be established, in whatever state or at whatever stage society might be,—whether bordering on the extremity of its resources, as in some countries of Europe; or in the rapid progression of infancy and youth, as in America. Let any country be imagined, whose monied capital for the year amounts to a hundred millions, which by one revolution is replaced with a profit of ten millions, to be expended by the capitalists in the shape of revenue. Matters might be conceived to go on easily and prosperously at this rate, with a fair wage to the workmen, and a fair profit to their employers. And yet even here, without supposing any glut of men, there might be produced a glut of commodities; and that simply, from an increased desire, beyond a certain limit, on the part of the wealthy to become wealthier still. Under the influence of this desire, consumers might, at one and the same time, be led to save, and capitalists to speculate. Landed proprietors, for example, might by dint of economy abridge their expenditure by twenty millions in the year; and, instead of laying it out on those ulterior soils that would not repay, might lay it up in banks, and with the prospect of an interest for the sum deposited. This sum, on the other hand, lent out to capitalists, will increase their facilities of speculation, and extend the monied capital embarked in production, from one hundred to a hundred and twenty millions.* In this ratio then, will the monied cost of the country's products be increased; but what is the result when they are brought to market? Instead of being met by a proportional monied price, they will be met by a returning power, just as much reduced as the

* Here it may be said, that the capitalists will still have to start anew with only a hundred millions, because the twenty millions which they have borrowed, only come in place of the twenty millions that were withdrawn from expenditure the year before, and by which sum their capital fell short of being replaced in the last revolution of the economic cycle. This is only saying, that the glut takes place a year earlier than we think necessary to insist upon for the purposes of our argument.

producing power has been increased. The twenty millions that have passed from one side to the other, will overturn, for one year at least, the balance between production and consumption; and that year there is an over-production or glut, to the annihilation of all profit, and the positive loss of thirty millions over and above—or even of forty millions, if the capitalists spend as much in the shape of revenue as before. At all events, the capital of a hundred and twenty millions, laid out on commodities, would be met by ninety millions only on the part of purchasers.

17. It cannot surely be said, in this instance, that still the producers had erred in working up more of certain commodities than were wanted. Their error simply lay in over-production; and this was an error, from the consequences of which no imaginable shifting of the production to other commodities could have saved them. What new accommodation to the taste of their customers, who had only ninety millions to spend, could have enabled them to dispose with a profit, the hundred and twenty millions' worth of goods which they had brought to market? The consumers did not want other commodities in lieu of those which were presented. They simply wanted to be richer than before; and that, not by possessing themselves in greater abundance than before of certain special commodities, but by possessing themselves of a greater general power than before to purchase all commodities. It is the oversight of this distinction, we think, which has led to this new doctrine on the subject of gluts. When a consumer refuses certain commodities, it is not always, as has been assumed, because he wants to purchase others in preference—but he wants to reserve entire the general power of purchasing. And when a merchant brings commodities to market, it is not generally in quest of other commodities to be given in return for them; so that were these other commodities in defect, then had a portion of the capital expended on the first been transferred to the second, the balance would have been restored; and neither set of commodities being either too cheap or too dear, there would have been a glut of neither. This is not the way of it. The proper object of the merchant is not to obtain, in return for the articles wherein he deals, any one species of commodities more than another; but it is to extend his general power of purchasing all commodities. It makes no valid evasion, that money is a commodity. This may complicate the question, but does not affect its essential character.

The truth is, that the real metallic money for which a merchant has any use, does not amount to more than a small fraction of his capital, even of his monied capital ; all of which, though estimated in money, can be made, on the strength of written contracts, to describe its orbit, and be effective for all its purposes, with the aid no doubt of coin, but of coin amounting to an insignificant proportion of the whole. The great object of the monied capitalist, in fact, is to add to the *nominal* amount of his fortune. It is that, if expressed pecuniarily this year by twenty thousand pounds for example, it should be expressed pecuniarily next year by twenty-four thousand pounds. To advance his capital, *as estimated in money*, is the only way in which he can advance his interest as a merchant. The importance of this object to him is not affected by fluctuations in the currency, or by a change in the real value of money. It is possible that he may succeed in advancing his fortune, by the business of one year, from twenty to twenty-four thousand pounds ; and yet, from a decline in the value of money, he may not have increased thereby his command over the comforts and conveniences of life. Still it was as much his interest to have engaged in the business, as if money had not so fallen ; for else, his monied fortune would have remained stationary, and his real wealth would have delined in the proportion of 24 to 20. Better than lose this ground, is it for him to have laboured as he did, even though he should only succeed in keeping himself even with what he was at the outset. So that the great aim of every trading capitalist is, to increase his fortune as estimated in money. Commodities are not his terminating object, save in the spending of his revenue, and when he purchases for the sake of consumption. In the outlay of his capital, and when he purchases for the sake of production, money is his terminating object. If he start at present with a certain sum expressed in pounds, shillings, and pence, the great end of his exertion or enterprise is, that after the current speculation is completed, he might start anew on another speculation, with a larger sum, expressed as before in pounds, shillings, and pence ; whether these have meanwhile increased or decreased in their value. Had this consideration been kept in view, we feel persuaded, that the doctrine of the impossibility of a universal glut would never have been framed.

18. There is nothing in the operations of credit to affect, but rather to confirm this reasoning. Generally speaking, when men trade upon credit, the only difference which it makes is, that

they trade not with their own capital, but with that of other people; and there is nought surely in this, which should lead us to modify any of our conclusions on the subject of capital. Very often too, when trading upon credit, it is not strictly with the capital of others; and yet it may be a credit which has a substantial basis to rest upon. A landed proprietor may bind himself to a future payment, in a written deed or instrument which he makes over to a trader; and in this way, a species of wealth, that is not fitted in itself to perform the functions of moneyed capital, is made available for this end. The truth is, that his written engagements, just like the notes issued by a bank whose credit is unexceptionable, because grounded on the immense landed wealth of its proprietors, have in them all the virtue of money. It is curious to trace the effect of such an operation. We can imagine an additional ten millions created in this way; and that at a time when the trade of the country was moving evenly and surely, with the annual outlay of capital to the extent of a hundred millions, and the return of a hundred and ten. If the additional ten millions that we now suppose, are created for the purposes of speculation, this has just the effect of advancing the cost of all the means and materials of manufacture; and so, causing an outlay of a hundred and ten with the old return of a hundred and ten, profit would be annihilated. If the additional ten millions be created for the purposes of extravagance, this has just the effect of advancing the price of all the finished articles in trade and manufactures; and so, causing a return of a hundred and twenty to the old outlay of a hundred, profit would be advanced from ten to twenty millions. In either way there would be effected, not the reduction of wealth, but the rotation of it. Should landed proprietors overspeculate to the extent of ten millions, to that extent do they mortgage their estates; and their creditors may be traced to the holders of the means and materials in manufacture, who, by a commensurate rise in the price of these, have become as much richer as the speculatists have become poorer. Or, should landed proprietors overspend to the extent of ten millions, to that extent also do they mortgage their estates; and their creditors may be traced to the holders of all sorts of finished articles for sale, who, by a commensurate rise in the price of these have become as much richer as the spendthrifts have become poorer. In the latter case, the error lies in turning to revenue that which should have been suffered to remain unalienated and undisturbed in the bosom of their pro-

perty. In the former case, the error (and in spite of all the demand which there is by economists for capital to the uttermost, and production to the uttermost, the one is just as great an error as the other) lies in turning to capital that which should have been suffered to remain alike undisturbed and unalienated.

19. However interesting to pursue credit into all its issues and final consequences, we must not detain ourselves among the varieties and numerous modifications of which it is susceptible. We shall only instance the case when credit is entirely fictitious, but in virtue of a delusive confidence obtains currency to its notes or instruments for a time—as to the bills which are drawn and accepted by men of no capital, and the issue of engagements by a bank beyond its power of liquidation, should they have been turned to the prosecution of rash and ruinous undertakings. These, while their credit lasts, have the same power of effecting exchanges as money itself has; and one can imagine, that in this way there may be sent afloat into the world of enterprise an additional sum of ten millions, while the whole pecuniary returns for the outlay of moneyed capital were the same as before. There behoved, in consequence, to be a diminution of profit to the extent of ten millions. Amid the general losses which ensue by this overtrading, the adventurers, it is possible, may come in for a fractional share of the returns along with the previous traders amongst whom they have thrust themselves. But in as far as fictitious credit in the hands of some has thus made good its encroachments, it will be found to have been by the shifting of a solid capital that was before in the hand of others, now elbowed out by the more fortunate gamblers who have succeeded them. One melancholy effect often is, that labourers, thrown adrift and defrauded of their wages, have to live many days in penury. But for this excessive and unwarrantable speculation, they may have continued in their wonted fulness; so that, in this instance too, capital may be said to have been forced, though by anticipation, out of that which should have been left to its proper destination; and which, instead of being speculated with by merchants in the shape of capital, ought to have been spent by workmen in the shape of revenue.

20. At all events, the phenomena of credit, though we can afford to dwell upon them no longer, lend the most ample and satisfactory confirmation to our views on the subject of capital. In a season of great commercial distress, occasioned by many failures, we often hear the calamity ascribed to so many people

trading upon credit, instead of trading with capitals of their own. But this very circumstance proves, that capital cannot be carried beyond a certain limit in any country. Grant that the sum embarked this year on mercantile transactions, was raised by credit from a hundred to a hundred and ten millions, there need have been no failure, had the return for this sum, in the price of the goods prepared and brought by it to market, been a hundred and ten millions, with a sufficient profit beside to all who were engaged. But if, instead of this, the return is but a hundred and ten millions without any profit, then, on the supposition that capitalists have lived as usual, there must be failures to the amount of ten millions. It is not, however, the mere circumstance of these commodities being manufactured partly by capital and partly by credit, that has produced this result. It is simply the excess of commodities over the effective demand for them; an excess that would have been the same although wrought up altogether on capital, instead of partly on capital and partly on credit. If, after that a hundred millions were embarked on the yearly business of the country, there was no room for adventurers trading in addition on a credit of ten millions, there would have been just as little room for them trading to this amount with capitals of their own. The same loss would have ensued, with this only difference, that capitalists to the amount of ten millions would have lost their own, instead of adventurers losing the same sum to other people. In the one case, the rash adventurers and they who trusted them, would have received their chastisement. In the other case, the excess of capital would have been lopped off. Whether it be an excess of production from rash adventure or redundant capital, the result is altogether similar. And thus it is, that just as population, when pressing on the food of a country, limited in its power of subsisting labourers, receives a check by poverty and disease; so capital, when pressing on the business of a country limited in its power of returning the outlays with a profit, receives as effectual a check by the losses of real, and the bankruptcies of fictitious capitalists.

21. In conclusion, we would only observe, though at the hazard of some reiteration, that the number of human beings in a country is very nearly on a level with the amount of human subsistence, and tends to go beyond it. Labour is the return given by the general population, to those who uphold them in the necessaries of life; and the products of this labour may be either turned by their owners into self-consumption, or laid up by

them for the purpose of future production. But just as labourers cannot be multiplied beyond the possibility of a wage to sustain them, so neither will the products of antecedent labour be multiplied and employed as capital, beyond the limit at which profits are diminished, so as to be on a level with the least possible maintenance of the capitalists. When a country is improved to the uttermost, and is, therefore, pressing on its ultimate resources, the necessaries of life have become stationary in their amount; and then nothing can raise wages but a diminished population, and nothing can raise profit but a diminished capital. An increase in the necessaries of life would afford room for the enlargement of both. So long as there is fresh land to be entered upon, there is a scope for the investiture of more agricultural capital; and in the larger demand of an increasing population for second necessaries, as well as the larger demand of the new, and now wealthier proprietors for luxuries, there is scope for the investiture of more manufacturing capital also. While this is in progress, profit is upheld from sinking so rapidly as it would; and so the interest of money, which is proportional to profit, is higher in America, than in the old, and, at the same time, well-governed countries of Europe. But though, for a long period, agriculture may thus draw capital after it, it follows not that capital can, beyond a certain limit, force agriculture. In proportion as that limit is approached, profit falls; and capital, ever tending to an overflow, feels itself beset within the confines of a field too narrow for the advantageous occupation of it. The days have been, when the great prescription of political empiricism, for the distresses of a weak or wretched country, was an increase of population; but this has now gone by. The next remedy, at one time embodied in the acts of government, and still proceeded on in the schemes of provincial or parish philanthropy, was the increase of employment; but this too, in ways innumerable, has proved itself to be a resource that is not indefinite. There is still an unbroken faith in the increase of capital, as a specific for the distempers of a land that labours, and is oppressed under the multitude of its suffering families. But this device too, is impotent like the rest; and we must look to some other quarter still, ere we can find the secret principle of a nation's secure and permanent wellbeing.*

* In the following extracts from Say's Political Economy, the reader will observe his assertion of the doctrine which we have attempted throughout this chapter to expose as erroneous:—

NOTE.—We might not have not entered on the refutation of the paradox against which this chapter is directed, had it not been the paradox of an Economical System which has obtained an undue credit in recent times. Like many other questions, it can best be decided, as we stated in § 3, at the extreme margin of cultivation. The mischievous influence of this paradox we have en-

“Neither individuals nor communities can extend or fertilize their territory, beyond what the nature of things permits; but they have unlimited power of enlarging their capital, and consequently, of setting at work a larger body of industry, and thus of multiplying their products: in other words, their wealth.”—Book I. Chap. v.

“Moreover, it may be remarked, that the powers of man, resulting from the faculty of amassing capital, are absolutely indefinable; because, there is no assignable limit to the capital he may accumulate, with the aid of time, industry, and frugality.”—Book I. Chap. xi.

In the following extract, he seems to overlook what the real distinction is, between an old and a new country, in respect of the slow accumulation of capital in the former, and its rapid accumulation in the latter; and, in overlooking this distinction, he of course must miss altogether the perception of any absolute limit, beyond which capital cannot be extended:—

“In point of fact, capital is of much more rapid accumulation in new countries, than in countries long civilized. It would seem as if the colonists, in abandoning their native country, leave behind them part of their vicious propensities; they certainly carry with them little of that fondness for show, that costs so dear in Europe, and brings so poor a return. No qualities but those of utility, are in estimation in the country they are going to; and consumption is limited to objects of rational desire, which is sooner satisfied than artificial wants. The towns are few and small; the life of agriculturists, which they must necessarily adopt, is, of all others, the most economical; finally, their industry is proportionally more productive, and requires a smaller capital to work upon.

“The character of the colonial government usually accords with that of individuals; it is active in the execution of its duties, sparing of expense, and careful to avoid quarrels: thus there are few taxes, sometimes none at all; and, since the government takes little or nothing from the revenues of the subject, his ability to multiply his savings, and, consequently, to enlarge his productive capital, is very great. With very little capital to begin upon, the annual produce of the colony very soon exceeds its consumption. Hence the astonishingly rapid progress in its wealth and population; for human labour becomes dear in proportion to the accumulation of capital; and it is a well-known maxim, that population always increases according to the demand.”—Book I. Chap. xix.

It is pretty evident from this passage, that, in order to keep up as fast a rate of accumulation in an old as in a new country, all which Mr. Say holds to be necessary, is, that the individuals, and government of the former, should equal those of the latter, in frugality and good conduct.

We conclude this list of extracts, with a passage which depones to the fact, of the speedy restoration of a spent, or diminished capital, to its original magnitude; but indicates the prevalent misconception which obtains, as to the principle or reason of the fact:—

“It would seem that there exists in the politic, to a stronger degree than even in the natural body, a principle of vitality and elasticity, which cannot be extinguished without the most violent pressure. One cannot look into the pages of history, without being struck with the rapidity with which this principle has operated. It has nowhere been more strikingly exemplified, than in the frequent vicissitudes that our own France has experienced since the commencement of the Revolution.”—Book III. Chap. vi.—See Appendix E, on Profit.

deavoured to expose and correct in § 14 and 15. We conclude this note by a reference to § 18 and what follows—as an example of the manner in which a general principle might be carried through a number of subordinate phenomena and cases and, if true, be found to harmonize with them.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE LIMITS OF A COUNTRY'S FOREIGN TRADE, AND ITS SUPPOSED POWER TO FURNISH A PEOPLE WITH EMPLOYMENT AND MAINTENANCE.

I. *The case of a country whose population is limited by its agricultural produce.*

1. The next resource which dazzles the imagination of philanthropists and statesmen, is foreign trade. This is held to be a fountain-head of wealth and of employment; which, in the eyes of many, are altogether indefinite. Such is the virtue, indeed, associated with the very names of capital and commerce, that many wonder how, in a country where these have attained an unexampled magnitude, there should be any distress, and far more, ought like general distress among its families. One might understand how a people, confined within the limits of their own home trade, should be in a straitened condition. But open the world to them, and the conception is, that all straitness and limitation are necessarily put an end to. With access to all the markets of the globe, it is felt, as if every clime, and every nation, were made to contribute to our abundance; and that a horn filled with treasure from the various regions of the earth, were thereby poured over the towns and villages of our land. The imagination is greatly confirmed, when we see the largest towns of the empire, in special connexion with foreign countries, and, to all appearance, upheld by the demands and the payments of customers there. The very existence of these large and flourishing establishments, and the maintenance of their thousands, and tens of thousands, of industrious families, are ascribed to a foreign trade; the annihilation of which, would involve the annihilation, not merely of their work, but of their livelihood; and the extension of which, it is thought, would carry along with it a proportional extension of support for an unprovided or a yet unborn population.

2. And this popular imagination receives great countenance from the representations and the views of our most distinguished economists. Home trade consists in the exchange of one set of home products for another. But over and above these, there might be commodities produced at home, for which there is no demand within the country; and for which, therefore, no equivalents can be obtained among ourselves. These Dr. Smith terms the surplus produce of the nation, the exchange of which, for equivalents from abroad, gives rise to foreign trade. Now, he so represents it as to give the impression, that without these equivalents there would have been no surplus produce—that the former, in fact, have stimulated the production of the latter—and that, therefore, without a foreign trade, we should have wanted not merely the exportation of a surplus, but the very existence of one. He clearly accredits foreign trade with a gain to the nation, equal to the value of this surplus, which, but for the excitement of what is given in return for it, would not, he intimates, have been called into being. Had there been nothing to import, there would, according to him, have been nothing to export; and this gives currency to the notion, that neither would our present exports, nor *ought else in place of them*, have been produced. At this rate the foreign trade is a superinducement on the home, which tells in the way of a distinct addition to the wealth and resources of the country. If a million of our people be employed in the manufacture of export commodities, there is a very general imagination, and certainly an imagination which the views of our distinguished economist do not serve to correct, but to confirm, that they are employed in a business which foreign trade has called into existence; and, as their employment is the vehicle of their support, that to this foreign trade we are indebted for the support of a large proportion of our families.

3. Let us now attend, for a moment, to the real character and effect of these interchanges in foreign trade. Let us put, for an example, the two countries of Britain and Portugal: the hardware of the one country being exported, and the wine of the other being imported; a million-worth of hardware, and a million-worth of wine. The manufacturers of hardware in Britain become the creditors of Portugal to the extent of a million—and to the same extent do the wine-growers of Portugal become the creditors of Britain. And there is a set of debtors, as well as a set of creditors in each of the countries; the Portu-

guese debtors being the receivers of the hardware, and the British debtors being the receivers of the wine. The exporters in each country look to the consumers of the other as their customers; yet, in fact, neither receive payment, by a direct pecuniary remittance, from those to whom they have sold their respective commodities. The matter is adjusted in this way; and the description applies generally to the interchanges of foreign trade. The importers of hardware into Portugal pay their debt, not to the exporters of the hardware in this country, but they pay it to the exporters of wine in Portugal, and receive in return for their payment an order on the importers of wine in Britain. This order they remit to the exporters of hardware in Britain, who, on presenting it to the importers of wine, there receive payment. Generally speaking, then, the adjustment takes place by bills of exchange, which have the effect of making over the debtors in Portugal not to their creditors in Britain, but to their creditors in Portugal; and the debtors in Britain, not to the creditors in Portugal, but to their creditors in Britain. The parties thus brought into relation, may be alike unknowing and unknown to each other; transacting, as they do, through the medium of the bill-broker, who alone comes into contact with both. Still, virtually and in effect, the export manufacturers of our hardware receive their payment from the importers of our wine. They hold themselves to be labouring in the service, and to be maintained by the wealth, of customers abroad; but, in point of fact, they are labouring in the service and are maintained by the wealth of customers at home.

4. It is practically felt by commercial men, and clearly demonstrated by economical writers, that the power of exporting with advantage, is limited or measured by the power of importing with advantage; and that when the one stops, the other must stop also. The export trade ceases to be beneficial, on the moment that the returns which come back in the exchange between ourselves and all other countries cease to be disposable. The deficiency of imports from one foreign country may be made up by an excess of imports from another; and a circuitous adjustment is then made by round-about bills of exchange. But a general deficiency of imports will lay an arrest on a farther increase of exports. In other words, we are enabled to send British commodities abroad, just because there is a demand for foreign commodities at home. The manufacturer of export articles is just as much indebted for his maintenance to our

inland consumers, as the manufacturer of articles for home consumption. The only difference is, that whereas the latter works up a commodity which is immediately purchased by home consumers, the former works up a commodity which goes to the purchase of that which is immediately purchased by them. In as far as the home consumer prefers hardware to wine, he gives a price for it to the manufacturer, who in this instance works for the supply of the home market. In as far as he prefers the wine to the hardware, he gives a price for it to the wine importer, who is enabled thereby to meet the bills of the export manufacturer, who has been working for the supply of the foreign market. It is thus that the export manufacturer works, though not directly and ostensibly, yet virtually and really, in the service of the inland consumer. If not employed in the fabrication of that for which the inland consumer has demand, he is at least employed in the fabrication of that which goes in exchange for such things as the inland consumer has a value and demand for. He works up not that which the consumers at home want, but that which will purchase what the consumers at home want. He is the instrument of obtaining for them their gratification, although that gratification comes to their door in the shape of a foreign luxury. In effect, he labours for their enjoyment, and, in effect, by them he is paid.

5. We are now able to appreciate the doctrine, that foreign trade not only provides a vent for our surplus produce, but that foreign trade called it into being. The million-worth of hardware exported to Portugal, may be denominated surplus produce; seeing that there is no effective demand for it at home. But neither would there have been effective demand for it in Portugal, had Portugal not had the power to purchase it; and what gives this power to her million-worth of wine, is just that for that quantity of wine there is an effective demand, and, of course, a power to purchase it in this country. But for the million-worth of maintenance in the hands of our inland consumers, and discharged by them through the medium of the wine-merchant on the export manufacturers of hardware, to that extent would our imports have been lessened, and to that extent would our exports have been lessened also. Virtually, it is an antecedent ability on the part of inland consumers, which called this surplus produce into being. In the order of dependence, or in the order of cause and effect, the primary rank is due to the inland consumers, and the secondary or derivative to the export manu-

facturers. And the plain reason is, that the manufacturers cannot do without the maintenance, but the consumers can do without the wine. Should their maintenance be destroyed by a permanent blight that would reduce the fertility of our fields, their manufacture would cease; but should their manufacture be destroyed by some barrier of interception that stopped both the exportation of hardware and the importation of wine, their maintenance would not on that account cease to be produced as liberally as before. The effect of the first catastrophe would be a permanent loss to the country, both of a certain population and of the fruits of their industry. The whole effect of the second would be a change of one enjoyment for another to our inland consumers; and not a loss of people, but merely a change in the direction of their industry. We deny not the temporary inconvenience of this transition from one employment to another; but, after the transition has been effected, we should behold the same spectacle of as great and industrious a population as well employed and as well maintained as before.

6. On this subject, the history of wealth has given rise to an erroneous philosophy of wealth. We are aware that they are facts which form the materials of sound philosophy; yet a false philosophy may be constructed of facts misinterpreted and misapplied. And this we hold to have been strikingly exemplified in the case before us. It is quite true, that at the termination of the middle ages, it was mainly the presentation of luxuries from abroad, which impressed a new habit upon our landlords, and gave a new direction to their expenditure. It is quite true that their insatiable appetite for personal enjoyment, when once excited, proved a far more powerful spur to the cultivation of their farms, than a mere desire to support or to extend the coarse and feudal hospitality of the olden times. The love of finery and of sensual indulgence, greatly more inclined them to make the most of their estates, and to draw forth of them the uttermost of their produce, than did the love of a crowded attendance upon their persons, or of a crowded assembly in their halls. It is thus that commerce was a moving force, which speeded their transition from one habit of expenditure to another; and that it was a transition which led to a far more strenuous agriculture than heretofore. There can be no doubt that the carpets, and the looking-glasses, and the wines of other lands, gave an impulse to husbandry all over Europe; and that historically, at that time of day, the produce of foreign parts

had in it a force of allurements, which not only attracted to itself a pre-existent, but gave birth to a new produce in the various countries of Christendom. But now that the transition has been made, and the modern habit of our landed proprietors has been fully established, are we to imagine that the withdrawal of any one, or even of all foreign luxuries put together, would cause the agriculture to narrow itself within its ancient limits, or put so much as one field or furrow of land out of cultivation? Whatever the wine of Portugal may have done *then* in adding to cultivation, has it so much as a particle of influence *now* in keeping up that cultivation? Although port should in all time coming disappear from our markets, is there a landlord in Britain who on that account would let down the cultivation of a single acre of his property? Would he forego the hundred a year that he went to expend on this luxury, because the luxury was no longer to be had? Would he bid his tenants remit of their wonted activity, because he had now remitted so much of their wonted rental—having no use for it, in consequence of this stoppage which had taken place in one of the outgoings of his previous expenditure? Though debarred from one of its accustomed channels, would he not find, and that most readily, new channels of expenditure, through which to impress on industry some other direction, and to discharge the same maintenance on an equal number of people in some other employment? Would he refuse an income so large as before, because, in the absence of some luxury furnished by a single branch of foreign trade, or because in the absence of all the luxuries which foreign trade had placed within his reach, he was now at a loss for objects on which to lavish as great an expenditure as before? And besides, is there not a charm in the enlargement of income, apart from all thought of the enlargement of expenditure? Wealth, no doubt, is an abstraction, when separated from the comforts and enjoyments which it purchases. But abstraction as it is, does it not tell on human conduct with all the power of a living and substantial reality? When the offer is made of an advanced rent for land, must the proprietor calculate on the additional wine, and dress, and equipage it will afford, ere he becomes alive to the happiness of the offer, and is led to close with it? But do we stand in any need of this argument, in the exhaustless variety of nature's gratifications, and the infinitude of resources or openings for expenditure? Amid all the failures and fluctuations which take place, whether in home or foreign trade, will not the desire

of a larger revenue, and with it of a larger command over the services of others, remain an indestructible principle in his bosom? Is any conceivable obstruction in the intercourse with other countries, so to change the nature of humanity in this country, that we should no longer behold the men of it in the same attitude as before, as keen in the feeling of their interests, as insatiable in their longings and aspirations, and each on the full stretch of endeavour for bettering his own condition and his own circumstances? Landlords would just be as eager to receive a rent, and tenants as busy in their callings to pay the rent, and appropriate the largest possible surplus to themselves. In other words, many a particular trade may be destroyed; but the great and primary aliment of all trade would not be destroyed. There might be a shifting of human labour; but there would be no lessening in the amount of it. And, in the act of shifting, there might be partial and temporary distress; yet, conceding this, we should surely and speedily behold as much well-paid industry as before—and that yielded by the hands of as large a population.

7. We may thus perceive what the whole effect would be, were our trade with Portugal suspended, or even brought to permanent extinction. Our inland proprietors would lose their wine, and our export manufacturers would lose one of their markets. But though, on the one hand, the wine should be lost, the ability to purchase it is not therefore lost. It remains entire in the hand of its old possessors, and is ready to be discharged on the purchase of some other gratification. And on the other hand, though the market should be lost, the maintenance of those who went to prepare commodities for the market is not therefore lost. There is on the one side the spare maintenance, and on the other the unemployed population. We may be very sure that things will not continue in this state,—that, in the first place, the maintenance will not be suffered to lie waste; and, in the second place, that the population will not be suffered to lie unemployed. There will, to the proprietor, be the substitution of one enjoyment for another. There will, to the labourers, be the substitution of one employment for another. In as far as the revenue that went to be expended on the wines of Portugal goes to the purchase of foreign articles, there is just the loss of one branch of foreign trade replaced by the extension of other branches. In as far as this revenue goes to the purchase of home articles, there is just a diminution of the foreign

trade, compensated by a proportional enlargement of the home-trade. Ultimately, there is no one interest affected by the change, but the interest of the consumers, who are now obliged to put up with an article which they like not so well as the one they have been forced to abandon. The very fact of their preference for Portugese wine when they could get it, is a proof that there has been a sacrifice of taste in passing from the old luxury to the new; and so, a descent of enjoyment. This difference of enjoyment to them, is really the whole amount of the calamity which such a change can inflict upon the nation. Every other interest is comprehended in the price paid by the consumer, and which goes full fraught with all its powers and its blessings into the new direction that has now been opened up for it. It comprises as large a maintenance to the workmen. It comprises as large a profit to capitalists. And if the former luxury was taxed, and so made the vehicle of a revenue to government; this, too, enters as a constituent into the price, and the same price may still be made to comprise as large a public revenue as before.

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

another, but with as ample means and maintenance as before. The East and the West Indies are regarded as the two hands of the empire; and the imagination is, that were our connexion with these destroyed, Britain would suffer as much as from the lopping off of two hands, or, in other words, would be shorn of its strength and its capacity for action, in virtue of this sore mutilation. It would positively be shorn of nothing but its sugar and tea.* Were our intercourse with the East and the West conclusively broken up we should lose the services; first of our tea-grower, and then of our tea-sweetener—for so might these regions be denominated. It is thus that we would reduce the

* I argue on the supposition of these being their only, as they form their main commodities. When, to vindicate the importance of foreign trade, the superior worth and usefulness of its import articles are insisted on, as of timber from Norway, or nitre from the East Indies, which are important in a national view, the reasoning proceeds on a principle to which we render all homage—its subserviency to the benefit of consumers at home, being the only principle, in fact, on which we concede any value whatever to foreign trade. But this is not the only, not even the chief principle, on which our mercantile economists would rate the importance of foreign trade. They look to the interest of the sellers, and not of the buyers; although, in the price paid by the buyers, every interest of the sellers is comprehended.

And when once the real worth of foreign trade is placed on its essential and only proper foundation, there is much that can truly, and without exaggeration, be alleged in its behalf. Even its very luxuries may fulfil, to a certain extent, the part of necessaries in disguise. The tea, and sugar, and wine, which come to us from abroad, supersede a very great consumption in the shape of milk, or malt liquor, or spirits, which, though not absolutely essential to subsistence, would still have been indulged in, and so have trenchon on the amount of that home produce which now goes purely and nakedly to the purposes of food. Even the food itself is often imported from abroad in large quantities: but this forms a distinct case, and in our next chapter it will form the subject of a distinct consideration.

Nay, it may so happen, that, in virtue of its foreign trade, the agriculture of our land may descend farther into the inferior soils than had otherwise been possible. If any of the second necessaries of life can be obtained, through its imports, with less labour; or if any of our farm implements can, by the same means, be either had cheaper, or made more effective; these would obviously tell at the extreme limit of our agriculture, and have the effect of somewhat pushing it onward to land of greater sterility.

And in those cases where we could have had a home substitute for some foreign luxury, without trenchon on the food of our population; yet, if the actual preference is for the foreign luxury, it is because we have the enjoyment we like best at a less price, or, which is tantamount to this, a greater amount of that enjoyment for the same price. But this, too, is altogether an interest wherewith the consumers, and not the producers, have to do. The producers will be equally well maintained by the consumers, in any way that the latter may choose to employ them. But it is the wisdom, and for the benefit of consumers, that they should encourage, by their demand, the foreign, rather than the home trade; when, as the result of their so doing, they obtain either a better quality, or a greater quantity of enjoyment.

Still, with all these qualifications, had our estimate of foreign trade been reduced and rectified, and set on its proper basis, governments would have as little thought of going to war for the purpose of giving laws to commerce, as of going to war for the purpose of giving laws to taste. They would have felt the matters of trade to be as much beyond their province,

importance of foreign trade to its humbler but juster dimensions; and then assert the independence of Britain thereupon. The noble flotillas which periodically leave our shores, and return laden with the spoils of every climate, form altogether an imposing spectacle; and by which commerce has had a most bewildering glare thrown over it. But this commerce is really not a superinducement from abroad; it is the efflorescence of an inherent vigour and vitality at home. Foreign trade is not the creator of any economic interest; it is but the officiating minister of our enjoyments. Should we consent to forego these enjoyments, then at the bidding of our will, the whole strength at present embarked in the service of procuring them, would be transferred to other services,—to the extension of home trade—to the enlargement of our national establishments—to the service of defence, or conquest, or scientific research, or Christian philanthropy. The only change would be a change of object and of end to consumers; and a change of employment, but not a lessening of their maintenance, to those who are now labouring in the various departments and stages of foreign trade for our gratification. It would greatly subserve the cause of peace and of enlightened policy, were this juster estimate on the subject of all trade, and more especially of foreign trade, adopted by statesmen. The great majority of wars are mercantile wars, which never might have been, but for the illusion of those great names and imaginary interests that are associated with commerce. We feel persuaded, that the fearful conflicts of other days would not now be repeated, could the nation but clearly see that the only interest for which it was called upon to fight, was a somewhat more luxurious breakfast, or a richer dye to the vestments

as the matters of fashion; and as little legislated in order to secure for us a market in other lands, as in order to arrange the dishes and wines of our entertainments, or the dresses of our ballrooms.

The following extract from Say is pertinent to the subject of this note:—

“Although all products are necessary to the social existence of man, the necessity of food being, of all others, most urgent and unceasing, and of most frequent recurrence, objects of aliment are justly placed first in the catalogue of the means of human existence. They are not all, however, the produce of the national territorial surface; but are procurable by commerce, as well as by internal agriculture; and many countries contain a greater number of inhabitants than could subsist upon the produce of their land. Nay, the importation of another commodity may be equivalent to an importation of an article of food. The export of wines and brandies to the North of Europe, is almost equivalent to an export of bread; for wine and brandy, in great measure, supply the place of beer and spirits distilled from grain, and thus allow the grain, which would otherwise be employed in the preparation of beer or spirits, to be reserved for that of bread.”

which covered them, or an easier access to certain wines, or a more liberal importation of shawls and silks, and figs and oranges. It was never the menaced loss of one or all of these which formed the jealousy or the provocative that led to war. It was the apprehension of a far more serious disaster,—the loss of revenue to some large class of our merchants, of support to some large class of our industrious population. Had foreign trade been seen in its true character and effect, we cannot imagine that, for the preservation of a monopoly or a sugar island, so many a struggle would have been entered on. A sense of national honour may still have excited the spirit of discord among the kingdoms of the earth—but not a sense of national interest.

9. But it would appear as if no experience could unschool our politicians and patriots out of their obstinate imaginations upon this subject. In the loss of our American colonies did many a statesman anticipate the downfall of the British nation. And in spite of the utter vanity of this anticipation, do they cling with as fond tenacity to our remaining colonies as before, and would still brave in their defence the expenditure of countless millions. It is not seen how, with the unabated fertility of our own fields, and those resources, far beyond the reach of any distant influence, which lie within the circle of our own shores, we would be in possession of as ample means as before for calling forth and rewarding the services of all our population. Could this only be apprehended, statesmen would not be so tremblingly alive to the interests of any particular trade, nor would they think the prosperity of our island grounded on aught so precarious as the brittle foundation of commerce and of the seas. They would leave commerce to its own spontaneous courses; and instead of undertaking, with anxious heart and uncertain hand, as their predecessors did before them, the guidance or guardianship of its concerns, they would sleep secure in the midst of all its fluctuations. But this never has been, nor is it yet, the policy of statesmen. The doctrine of its natural insignificance is not understood by them; and both in the sigh of Napoleon's heart for ships, and colonies, and commerce, and the splendid vision of Canning, who thought he had conjured up the resources of a new world, by which, through the conveyances of trade, to multiply without limit and without end the riches of our nation, do we recognise that subtle delusion which has misled the legislators of all ages.

10. The agriculture of China is represented as now pressing

on its extreme limit, yet, over and above this, Dr. Smith tells us how much richer that country would have been by the accession of foreign trade. The only effect, we imagine, of foreign trade to a country circumstanced as China is said to be, were the withdrawal of a population from the direct service of ministering to the enjoyment of their maintainers by the preparation of home articles, to the indirect service of working up export articles for the purchase of commodities in foreign lands. There would be an accession to the enjoyment of the inland consumers, seeing they preferred the product of the foreign, to that of the home manufacture. But to the people, there would only be the transference of so many hands from one employment to another, without any accession either to their numbers or to their maintenance. To whatever extent a foreign trade was superinduced, to that extent the home trade would be diminished. And, in like manner, when a new market is opened up, the imagination is, that all the business created by it is a clear accession to the country. And hence the gratulations that we hear, both in and out of parliament, when the market of South America, or the free market of the East Indies, or any other ample and accessible field, is presented to us for the egress of British commodities. But the truth is, that an egress can only be sustained by means of an ingress; nor will exports continue to be carried out with advantage any longer than the imports which come back in return for them can be purchased at home. The only advantage of a new market is, that the wares which it offers may chance to be more agreeable to the taste and the fancy of certain of our inland consumers, than those of any other markets which previously lay open to them. In which case, there will be a transference of expenditure from old to new articles of demand—the formation of a new foreign trade, we admit, but at the expense either of the home trade, or of another foreign trade that had been formerly in existence. The extent of our foreign trade is, in fact, limited by the means or by the extent of human maintenance in the hands of our inland consumers. The opening of a new market can do no more for the general wealth of our country, than the setting up of a new stall can add to the wealth of customers at a fair. It may present new commodities more agreeable to the taste of purchasers, or even old commodities at a cheaper rate than before. Either of these is an undoubted advantage to customers. But it cannot add to the amount of the purchase-money; so that if the new

stall be at all resorted to, it must be by a partial forsaking of the old ones. The same is true of the world at large, where each new country that is opened for commercial enterprise may add to the number and variety of our nation's markets, yet not add to the general amount of its marketing. There is thus a natural, and, for the time, an insuperable barrier in the way of the extension of foreign trade. It is necessarily limited by the wealth of the consumers at home. And hence the mockery of those splendid anticipations which dazzle the fond eye of speculators, when, either by political changes, or by the abolition of monopoly, a new country is laid open to their enterprises. The dream is speedily broken up; and in the spectacle of glutted markets, both at home and abroad, may we learn that there is a limit to the extension of foreign trade, which no country can overpass.*

11. The truth of the principles which we have laboured to expound was put historically to the test, when, on the one hand, Bonaparte, in utter ignorance of them, thought he was levelling a deathblow at Britain, by the exclusion of our commodities from all the markets of the Continent; and, on the other hand, our alarmists at home, in equal ignorance of them, trembled for the result. Neither of the parties understood wherein lay the secret of our country's strength and resources—that is, in the ability of our inland consumers to turn the manufacturers of our prohibited exports into any other direction, and in that direction to support them equally well as before. The truth is, that the extinction of foreign trade in one quarter, was almost immediately followed up either by the extension of it in another quarter, or by the extension of the home trade. The stoppage of all intercourse with France, if it should hinder the exportation of our British cloths, would equally hinder the importation of their French wines; and the price of these, paid by the inland consumers, as it supported the manufacturers engaged in the old line of commerce, would equally support them in some new line, most certain to be struck out, on the former being abandoned. Even had every outlet abroad been obstructed, then, instead of a transference from one foreign market to another, there would just be a universal reflux towards a home market, that would be extended in precise proportion with every successive abridgment which took place in our external commerce. We never deny the consequent change that would thus take place on the enjoyment of consumers; but along with that,

* See Appendix F.—On Free Trade.

we again repeat, that after this revolution in our affairs, there would survive as large a maintenance to our labourers; as large a profit to our capitalists; and the means, with perhaps some new modification of taxes, of as large a revenue to government as before. The great apprehension, indeed, connected with the non-intercourse acts of other countries was, lest the public revenue should irreparably suffer from them; and an astonishment was felt, when, on comparing successive years and quarters of the national income, it was found that there had been no diminution. It is in beautiful accordance with these views, that a lessening in the produce of the customs was generally followed up by an enlargement in the produce of the excise, marking the reaction of the foreign on the home expenditure; and verifying, what we might with all confidence have expected beforehand, the certainty of a full compensation, if not in respect of luxury or physical enjoyment, at least in respect of every substantial economic interest; or of all, in short, which either patriot or philanthropist needs to care for.

12. It is not our province minutely to explain the variations of what has been called the rate of exchange between two countries, or the causes on which they are dependent. But it is a truth, theoretically understood by economists and experimentally felt by practical men, that the mutual imports and exports which pass and repass, cannot exceed a certain disproportion; that they must so reciprocate as to be nearly of equal value the one to the other, or at least that there is a certain difference or excess of the one over the other, which neither of them can pass. The possible amount of exports is limited by the possible amount of imports, and conversely; and this is distinctly and numerically indicated by the state of the exchange. If there be a certain point at which the import trade ceases to be profitable, that determines the point at which the export trade ceases to be profitable. When there is a deficiency of imports, this produces a state of the exchange unfavourable to the export merchant, and which goes in deduction from his profit; so that, should he enlarge his exports any further, the profit might cease to be a remunerating one. In other words, his power to export is limited by the power to import; and this latter power is evidently limited by the ability to purchase on the part of our inland consumers. It is therefore in vain to talk of the indefinite demand for our commodities on the part of other nations. This will avail us nothing for the extension of our trade, unless it be

followed by an indefinite power on the part of our inland consumers, to purchase the commodities which come back to us in return. It is conceivable that there might be a demand in a foreign country, and, but for the obstacle we now insist upon, effective demand too for British exports; the preparation of which would require the industry of a million of people, over and above the numbers already subsisted by the agricultural produce of the island. And, could the agriculture be so enlarged as to afford this additional subsistence, there would be no difficulty in meeting this demand from abroad. For the larger imports necessary to meet the now larger exports could then all be absorbed. Let the maintenance be stretched out to the support of an additional million of human beings, and the wealth of the holders of this maintenance is thereby stretched out to a capacity for purchasing either the immediate products of their industry, or the equivalents given in exchange for these products. The additional maintenance given in return for the new imports, goes to the support of the people who labour in preparing the new or additional exports. It is thus that, with every stretch in the agriculture of a country, there is room for a corresponding stretch in its foreign trade. But should the population of that country have access to no other agricultural produce than that which is raised within its own territory, then, with the difficulty or the impossibility of extending the agriculture, will there be found a like difficulty or impossibility of extending its foreign trade. It is by an exchange adverse to him that the export merchant is brought to the test and the feeling of this difficulty. It is when imports cannot find a sale, because there is not wealth in the country to purchase them, that foreign trade meets with obstructions to its increase. It is then that the tendency to an excess is counteracted by the heavy diminution which profit suffers from an unfavourable exchange. The limit, in fact, of our agriculture, is also the limit of our commerce; and so again do we find the margin of cultivation to be a place in the science of political economy, whence another of its important lessons may be drawn.

13. This subject admits of some weighty and important applications. First, there is a fortunate coincidence between the tendency to excess of Britain's export manufacturers, and the tendency of British gentlemen to reside and travel in foreign parts. It will be seen, on consideration, how the expenses of our landed gentlemen abroad give an impulse, because they give

a real advantage to the business of our export manufacturers at home. They tell favourably for that business on the rate of exchange. Had the non-residents of Britain spent their incomes at home, it must have been chiefly in the purchase of home, and but fractionally in the purchase of foreign commodities. Only a small proportion of their revenue would have been appropriated to the purchase of returns from abroad, and, with this limitation on the imports, there behoved to be a corresponding limitation on the exports also. But when, instead of this, they take up their residence, or are much personally in foreign countries, their whole, or at least the far greater part of their expenditure, must be given to foreign produce; and this, in as far as the effect on exchange is concerned, is precisely tantamount to a larger importation of produce into Britain. The export merchants of this country have the same benefit from the residence of British landlords abroad, that they would have had from the importation of all which they consume abroad. The growth of a taste for foreign travelling, or foreign sojourning, has the same favourable effect on their interest, as the growth of a taste for foreign articles of expense among the gentry who never go from home. It matters not whether the *British consumption* of foreign produce takes place within our country or out of it. In either case, the price is paid by Britons, and is equally set over and against the price paid by foreigners for our export articles. The sum paid by Britons for articles raised abroad, is, in truth, the great fund out of which those merchants and manufacturers are paid, who carry abroad the articles which are raised at home. If this sum be anyhow enlarged, then, proportionally to it, will the amount or the profit of our export trade be enlarged. The only difference is, that our export manufacturers, instead of working in the service of British consumers at home, work in the service of British consumers, who have chosen to transport their persons and their expenditures abroad. In the one case they are paid by bills on our merchant importers. In the other case, they are paid by bills on the agents of our absentee proprietors; and an abundance of bills on either of these classes is alike favourable to the business of exportation. If British landlords, to the extent of a million of rental, have chosen to take up their residence in France, and a million-worth of British goods be annually exported there, the adjustment can take place as effectually by bills, as if our landlords had stayed at home, and there had been the importation of a million-worth of French goods into Britain.

The British exporters are paid by bills on the rent collectors of the British absentees. Or, the British landlords have their rents remitted to them by bills on the receivers of British exports in France. There may have been no agricultural produce exported from Britain for the payment of this rent. The full value of it may have been exported in British manufactures; in which case, both the capitalists and the workmen of this country are as effectually maintained by the ability of our non-resident landlords, as if these had been living on their own estates, and spending their revenues within the country. This non-residence may not have lessened the amount of British industry. It might only affect the direction of that industry. Instead of working in the service of landlords at home, by preparing articles which partly would have been bought by them, and partly been exchanged for imports to be bought by them; there are so many of our population employed in the service of these same landlords abroad, by preparing articles to the full value of their rent, and making an entire exportation of them. The receivers of these articles in France pay the price of them to the British residents there, and thus these obtain their rents. The preparers of these articles can, by means of orders from the British absentees on their agents, or tenantry, draw from the rent which they owe; and thus these obtain their remuneration. In the whole of this process, there need not be the transportation of any food from Britain to France, even though they are the proprietors of Britain's food who are there spending their incomes. The whole of that food may go to the support of British industry notwithstanding; and, in spite of denounced and deprecated absenteeism, may there be a population in the midst of us, fully commensurate to the maintenance that we raise, and maintained too in as great fulness as if the great and wealthy of our land never strayed beyond its borders.

14. There is much that we cannot demonstrate at full length, which, nevertheless, we might venture, with all safety and confidence, to affirm. The superiority of our exports to our imports is connected with peculiar facilities, and tends also to cheapen both the travels and the residence of our countrymen in foreign parts. A gentleman of England, in any foreign country, will find it possible to negotiate his orders on home, both with greater ease and economy, than one having the same territorial wealth in Poland. Wherever he goes, he meets with the debtors of his own nation, who would prefer a bill from him, for the settlement

of their accounts, to the expense and hazard of a pecuniary remittance. It is thus that he may get a premium for his bill, when the traveller of another kingdom would need to offer such a premium ere he could obtain the conversion of his order into money. The exports of England may be regarded as the instruments by which she can obtain accommodation and service for her sons in any quarter of the world whither she might send them. The deficiency of return imports to England, is made up by the demand and the wants of Englishmen on the spot. What they purchase there, comes in lieu of imports. And so long as their expenditure abroad does not exceed in value the superiority of our *manufactured exports* over our imports, we hold that the non-residence of proprietors may be carried to any extent, without the infliction of any *economic* evil upon the nation.

15. But when a country, instead of exporting manufactures, exports agricultural produce, the economical effect of absenteeism ought to be stated differently. The non-resident landlords of England have their rents sent after them; not in the produce of their estates, but in the workmanship of a people who remain at home, and are fed by that produce. But the absentees of Ireland are paid, not in the work of Irish labourers, but in the food of labourers. The effect of their non-residence is to carry off, not the ultimate products of industry, but its maintenance—not the food transmuted into the handiwork of those who are sustained by it, but the food itself,—to the positive lessening therefore of the means by which a population are supported. Should the absentees of England be recalled, it might add nothing to the maintenance, but only affect the direction of labour. But should the absentees of Ireland be recalled, the maintenance of thousands, now sent off in annual shipments, would be retained within its territory. This is another resource in prospect and reserve for that interesting country, when, in the further development of moral causes, it shall have become the congenial home of its own proprietors. This single change in their habit, would as effectually augment the produce applicable to the subsistence of Irishmen, as a better cultivation would: another proof, that however overpeopled in reference to its present condition, the physical and economic capabilities of the land are adequate to the liberal subsistence of a much larger population.

16. But there is another application still more interesting.

Connected with the facilities which belong to England, for the manufacture of valuable exports, she has not only the power, beyond other countries, of commanding personal services abroad to Englishmen individually, but she has also the same superiority of power, for commanding public and political services to the state nationally. Food, speaking generally, is far more bulky and uncarriageable than workmanship; and, when we come to certain of the finer and lighter fabrics, we shall find, that within the limits of one vessel, a hundredfold greater value may be comprised in the products of human industry, than in the articles which serve for the maintenance of human industry. It would require, for example, an enormously greater expense to transport into the heart of France, a given value of agricultural produce from Poland, than to find way into Austria for the same value of muslins, or of precious hardware from Britain. It is thus that we are enabled, by the mere conveyance of our manufactures, to obtain a claim or right of command, over the property and services of a country in some distant part of the world. Instead of taking back in imports the value that we have exported, we may transfer it by loan to the government of the country; we may agree to subsidize its sovereign, and make good our contract by granting him bills on the receivers of our exports there, who are his own subjects; we may, by the same expedient, command the maintenance of our own armies in foreign parts, or we may pay for the services of mercenary troops. It is thus that, in fact, we have intermeddled with all sorts of distant politics, and have the means of doing so influentially. Even though Russia had equal wealth with Britain, so that the whole products of the one nation, if brought to the same market, would fully exchange with the whole products of the other, yet the wealth of the former is not so transportable as that of the latter. Russia and Britain have both great ascendancy in Europe, but the forces by which they can assert it, are put forth in a different way. The former country, though not so densely peopled, yet, in virtue of its prodigious extent, may be said to abound in men, and in the sustenance of men. She can collect an overwhelming host from her provinces; and either send along with her armies the materials of their maintenance, or find, by plunder, these materials in the countries through which they pass. It is thus that her ascendancy is made good by a ponderous locomotion; whereas that of Britain may be upheld in the midst of peaceful and civic pursuits, and without the departure of a single soldier

from her shores. Instead of sending soldiers abroad, she can hire and employ them in foreign parts, by the labour of her artisans at home. With the products of that labour, she can purchase the aid of foreign troops, or the co-operation of foreign governments in her schemes. It is this which has given her a mastery in the negotiations of European policy; and she has made ample use of the powerful and peculiar weapons that her carriageable exports have put into her hands; carriageable, both from her position in the waters of the sea, and from the nature of the exports themselves. It is interesting thus to connect the politics with the economics of Britain, and trace her influence in other lands, to the simple circumstance of her being able, by manufactures, to comprise much value in little room, of her dealing in such light and transportable wares. Dr. Smith, and others, had long remarked the impulse which a foreign war gave to our exports. It is because our expenses abroad just serve the very purpose of importation from abroad. Government pays our export merchants, by purchasing their bills on their foreign correspondents; and, in making over these bills to commissioners, or subsidized governments abroad, they put their schemes of warfare into action. The demand for these bills gives a mighty benefit and enlargement to the business of exportation; so that, connected with our great public expenditure on foreign objects, there is a glowing industry in our manufacturing districts and great commercial out-ports.

17. And here we feel tempted to remark on the egregious delusion of that most mercantile of all our politicians, who founded every calculation of Britain's strength and Britain's glory on the prosperity of her trade; and verified the maxim of ignorance being the mother of devotion, in the idolatry which he rendered to commerce, whilst all unintelligent and unknowing of its internal mechanism—we mean the late Mr. Pitt. Year after year did he lull the British parliament into mischievous security, by the oft-repeated tale of the superiority of British exports. It never once occurred, that a foreign subsidy, or loan, would of itself create that superiority. If we contract for twenty millions to Austria, it is only by the difference between our exports and imports that the contract can be made good. Had there been no loan, there would have been no such excess to boast of; as the whole payment for what had been sent abroad, would then have been made to us in the return of commodities sent back again. But there were no such returns, just because the whole

of this vaunted superiority in our exports had been absorbed in our foreign expenses. The phenomenon of a perpetual superiority in our exports, is explained by the perpetual yearly expense of our foreign establishments, as at Gibraltar, and the Greek Islands, and South Africa, and New Holland, and the other colonial dependencies of Britain in various parts of the world. And the phenomenon of that prodigious superiority in our exports, which ministered such complacency and triumph to the mind of Mr. Pitt, was just the enormous addition which he made to this expense by his foreign subsidies and wars. We cannot imagine a more complete specimen of inverted mental vision, than was given on these occasions—when the country was bidden to rejoice during the heavy additions that were making to the mortgage of the state; and to read, in the necessary effects of this expenditure on the balance of trade, the symptoms of our national prosperity and greatness.

18. And whatever it is that we want done in any foreign region, the exportation of British goods to that region, or to its vicinity, facilitates or furnishes a mean for the doing of it. This holds true, let the business be what it may that we wish to have executed—whether the business of war, or the business of Christian philanthropy. The very circumstances which have invested Britain with such effectiveness in the political contests of far distant territories, mark her out as pre-eminently qualified, among the nations, for the glorious contest with human infidelity and vice all the world over. We have only to look intelligently at the process, and it will disarm the vulgar complaint, that by supporting missionaries abroad we send money out of the country, and so impoverish our own people. If I indulge in the use of foreign luxuries, when they are brought to the country they behove to be paid for; and they are paid by our exports. Suppose me to abandon this gratification altogether, and that I transfer the expense of it to the support of a missionary enterprise. To myself there is a change—the substitution of an exalted moral, in place of a physical enjoyment. To the country there is no change, at least no such economic change as ought to be deprecated. The people who prepared the exports, that went to pay the foreign luxuries which I used at home, may still prepare the same amount of exports to pay the expenses of the missionary whom I support abroad. It is thus that the agents of our apostolical benevolence and zeal may depart in thousands from our shores, and be upheld by us in the

whole cost of their expedition and their doings, and yet may we retain a population as great as the agriculture of the island can subsist, and keep them in the same comfort and well-paid industry as before. The peculiar advantages of Britain enable her to do this without the transportation of any food; and simply by the transportation of her manufactures, through the medium of which, she can, without sustaining any economic injury whatever, send remittances, to an inconceivable amount, for the support and equipment of her missionaries. Instead of impairing, it would, in certain directions, give an impulse and extension to our trade; while to ourselves, the contributors, there would be but the exchange of a sensible for a spiritual gratification—the giving up, it may be, of foreign luxuries, for the higher luxury of foreign benevolence. We as effectually support our export manufacturers in the one way as in the other; and though still the expense of her missionaries forms too insignificant a proportion of British wealth to be admitted into the reasonings of economic science, yet the time may come, when our nation shall exchange her glory in politics and war, for a nobler and more enduring glory, and be the prime instrument of that splendid prediction, that many shall run to and fro upon the earth, and knowledge shall be increased.

19. On the whole, then, it is obvious that foreign trade will always, or very nearly, maintain itself up to that point which is desirable in the given circumstances of a country; and this without the anxious or artificial fostering of any national policy. Foreign, like home trade, is only to be accredited with the service of furnishing to consumers its own articles of enjoyment; and not with the maintenance of those who are engaged in it. When two countries enter into mutual trade, the common idea is, that each stands indebted to its customers in the other, for the maintenance of its foreign-trade population, just as a shop-keeper is maintained by his customers; and the enjoyment which each has in the use of the other's commodities, is regarded but as a subordinate advantage, as being a thing more of individual gratification than of national importance. Now the real state of the matter is, that each stands indebted to the other, only for the enjoyment which it has in the use of the other's commodities; but that, save where there is a transportation of agricultural produce, each maintains its own foreign trade, as effectually as it does its own home-trade population. This view would reduce the natural importance of foreign trade, and so reduce the alarm

that is felt in the prospect of its fluctuations or its failures. The simple consideration, that they are the consumers at home who maintain the manufacturers of the articles sent abroad, should keep us easy under all the casualties to which foreign trade is liable. The threatened loss of their subsistence to hundreds of thousands of families might well make us fearful; but the threatened loss of oranges, or dye stuffs, or tobacco, or even of sugar, wine, rum, tea, tamarinds, nutmegs, mahogany, and coffee, ought not to make us fearful. We might feel annoyed by the loss, or rather the change, of our personal enjoyments. But there are many things which annoy that should not alarm; and when such magnificent objects as political greatness and national security, and the sustenance of many thousands of industrious workmen in the cities and manufacturing districts of our land, and the revenues of the state, and the consequent support of our establishments, whether civil or military—we may rest assured of a delusive imagination, when these come to be associated with that trade, which but supplies us with foreign luxuries, and does no more. The destruction of our intercourse with any foreign land, between which and ourselves a prosperous and satisfactory trade may now be going on, will but stop an outlet for our commodities, and 'an inlet for theirs; but will not destroy the maintenance which, through a process already explained, now passes from the consumers of our imports to the manufacturers of our exports. It will influence the direction of our industry, but not the amount of it; and leave to the industrious as good a wage and as liberal a maintenance as before.

20. But like every other economic interest, by which it is vainly attempted to provide indefinitely for an indefinitely augmenting population, foreign trade too has its impassable limit, beyond which it cannot be carried. In most countries, it may be said to repose wholly on an agricultural basis; and in no country of any great extent, can it be made far to overlap the limits of the maintenance raised at home. The imports and the exports mutually limit and determine each other; and, generally speaking, whatever foreign trade a country can support, it is not in virtue of an originating force from without, but in virtue of an inherent ability that resides and has its origin within the territory. If export manufacturers do prosper in any country, it, in the vast majority of cases, is owing to the power of maintaining them in the hands of inland consumers. Wanting this, to uphold a foreign trade, there would behove to be a

process of exportation without a counterpart importation—a process which economists can demonstrate by reasoning, and which merchants feel in experience to be impracticable. And the simple reason why foreign trade generally stops at the point, when, if extended further, there would need a larger manufacturing population than the agricultural produce of the country can subsist, is that agricultural produce is of such expensive transportation. But the further development of this peculiarity we postpone to our next chapter.

NOTE.—The views of this chapter were advocated by us so far back as 1808, in a work entitled, “The Extent and Stability of National Resources;” and, in our apprehension, they have been greatly strengthened by the innumerable historical confirmations of the last forty years. We have stated in § 2, that, on the subject of Foreign Trade, the popular imagination is at one with the theory of our most distinguished economists; but we are not without hope that the attentive reader will acquiesce in the rationale, as expounded in § 3 and 4, of our opinion which is altogether opposed to theirs. We are inclined to lay great stress on the explanations offered in § 6, first, of the sudden expansion which commerce gave to agriculture at the termination of the Middle Ages; and second, of the impossibility notwithstanding that any abridgments or fluctuations of commerce now will ever, by a reverse process, contract the agriculture within the narrower limits of bygone generations. The loss of any branch of foreign trade is but the loss, as we demonstrate in § 7, of the enjoyment which the article of that trade ministers to its consumers at home—and not of any other of those great national interests which are conceived to be bound up in our external commerce. In § 8 and 9, it will be seen, how much the Political Economy of statesmen influences their politics; and of what importance it were to the peace of the world, if the delusive system which has prevailed hitherto in regard to trade were superseded by sounder and juster notions on the subject. The vanity of counting on the extension of wealth by the opening up of new markets will be seen in § 10; and in § 11, the equal vanity of attempting to abridge or seriously to injure the resources of any country, which subsists on its own agricultural produce, by the destruction or even annihilation of its foreign trade. The reader must not forget that the main reasoning of this chapter, as in § 12, is grounded on

the supposition of the food raised in the country being equal to the consumption of its people. On the other hand, he will perceive from § 13, that the non-residence of landed proprietors may not have the effect of lessening the home resources for the maintenance of the general population—while at the same time it is wrong to apply this principle to the absenteeism of Ireland; and from this single circumstance, that the rents of its land-owners are remitted not in manufactures alone, but also in provisions.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE LIMITS OF A COUNTRY'S FOREIGN TRADE, AND ITS SUPPOSED POWER TO FURNISH A PEOPLE WITH EMPLOYMENT AND MAINTENANCE.

II. *The case of a country which imports agricultural produce.*

1. It must be at once obvious, how much more carriageable the products of manufacturing industry generally are, than the agricultural produce is which forms the chief maintenance of that industry. This of itself causes a great saving; when instead of sending forth the food which maintains the workmen, or the raw materials which form the substratum of any manufacture, we can, in return for our imports, send the finished and wrought commodity itself. There can sometimes a hundred-fold greater value be compressed within the same space, in a finer article of manufacture, than would be occupied by the food which went to the subsistence of the labourers employed in it. Unless the food, then, be relatively in greater abundance, or the country labours under some peculiar disadvantage for manufactures, it is for its profit to send forth the workmanship of human hands, rather than the subsistence of workmen; seeing that one cargo of the former is often of greater value than twenty of the latter. It is thus that the same value can be transported at less expense, or, which is tantamount to this, a greater value of commodities at the same expense can be landed in a foreign market, in the former shape, than in the latter; and can there command a greater return of commodities to be sent back as imports. The export merchant finds that he can bring goods cheaper to a foreign market in the one way than in

the other ; or, with the same cost to himself, can there dispose of articles which bring him larger equivalents ; and the country also finds that, in this way, it obtains a larger return in foreign articles of use or luxury, and so at the same expense can command a larger amount of enjoyments.

2. But more than this, there may be such facilities for manufacture, as to put a country in the condition of having to import its agricultural produce. It may so abound in the best materials ; or it may possess such a quantity of coal, that great impellent of machinery ; or it may be the seat of so many mechanical inventions, each, so long as it is undivulged, conferring a monopoly on the possessor of the secret ; or it may be so distinguished by the industrious habits of its people ; or, lastly, it may have such superiority over other nations in respect of geographical position, and also in respect to the extent of its sea-coast, and so its easy and convenient access to distant places ; that, with the benefit of these various facilities, it may be enabled to work up many a goodly fabrication, and many a desirable commodity, far cheaper than can be done in any other region on the face of the earth. It is thus that the products of its industry may become the objects of a very general demand throughout the world. In these circumstances the export manufactures which are carried abroad, may soon be equal in value to the imports which are used at home. They will even tend to exceed this value ; in which case, should there be any barrier, whether natural or artificial, against the importation of agricultural produce, the superiority of exports over imports will tell unfavourably on the state of exchanges for any further exportation, which will thus be limited by the difficulty of finding disposable returns.

3. Now this is the very state in which, on the non-existence, or the removal of such a barrier, agricultural produce will flow into a country from abroad ; seeing that its importation, notwithstanding the heavy expense attending it, may, to a certain extent, be profitable, and therefore practicable. If, by its advantages for manufacturing, a country can work off commodities cheaper than its neighbours, it may be so much cheaper as to countervail the expense attendant on the importation of food. To meet the general demand for our better and cheaper manufactures, may require the services of a population over and above what our own agricultural produce can maintain. For the maintenance of this extra population an extra produce must be

fetched from abroad, subject of course to the charges of its conveyance. But as there cannot be two prices for an article of the same quality, the home and the foreign grain, if equally good, will be disposed of in the market upon equal terms. The same necessity which caused the importation, must have raised the nominal value of our own agricultural produce. The necessaries of life will have become dearer than they would have been in other circumstances; but connected, as this is, with an additional demand for workmen, labourers will not on that account let down their standard of enjoyment; and so manufacturers will have to lift up the money-price of labour. It is thus that the peculiar advantages of a country for export manufactures, are met by a counteractive disadvantage, which will at length limit the amount of exportation. But so long as the cheapness of our manufactured goods, arising from the greater productiveness of British labour, compensates, or more than compensates for their dearness, arising from the more expensive maintenance of British labourers; the extra demand for our commodities will be upheld or extended; and along with it the importation of food from distant lands. A population will be formed in our territory over and above what the territory itself can maintain. For the sake of distinction, we shall estimate the *natural population* of our island by the number of human beings within it, actually subsisted on the produce of its soil; and whatever the excess of our whole population beyond this may be, we should term the *excrecent*, or the superinduced population.

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

5. This excrecent population will not accumulate in a country beyond a certain limit. In the first place, along with every extension of it there must be an increased importation of food, which will therefore have to be fetched from greater, or more impracticable distances than before. The sea-coasts, or riversides of an exporting country, will only supply a given demand

* Foreign manufactures are not always foreign luxuries.—See Note, chap. vi. sect. 8.

for corn;* and should the demand exceed this, the additional supplies must be drawn from the interior, and the heavy expense of land-carriage added to the expenses of navigation. It is thus that, with every accession to our excrescent population, there must be an accession to the price of grain, and so to the money-price of labour—a process which must stop, whenever the disadvantage to which a manufacturer is liable in the high wages of his workmen, exceeds the advantage which he has in the facilities of his British situation; for at that point will he begin to be undersold, and so shut out from any further enlargement of his business by the competition of foreigners. But secondly, with every addition to the excrescent population, there must be an enlarged exportation of British goods, which will become cheaper in foreign markets in proportion to their supply. These two causes act together in powerful co-operation; so that between the increasing dearness of their maintenance at home, and the increasing cheapness of their manufactures abroad, an arrest must at length be laid on the increase of an excrescent population. Add to this the constant approaches to equalization, between different countries in industry and the arts of life. Britain cannot for ever perpetuate the monopoly which is grounded on the secrets of her superior skill, or on the superior habits of her population. Other countries must at length come nearer to us, both in respect of their machinery and of their men, so as to supply themselves, and likewise their neighbours, with many of our commodities cheaper than we can. It is because the workmanship of human hands is so much more transportable than the sustenance of human bodies, that the interchanges of commerce lie far more in manufactured goods than in agricultural produce. The bulkiness of food forms one of those forces in the economic machine, which tends to equalize the population of every land with the products of its own agriculture. It does not restrain disproportion and excess in all cases; but in every large state it will be found, that wherever an excess obtains, it forms but a very small fraction of the whole population.

6. It is all-important, then, in our reasonings upon this subject, that we advert to the distinction between the two sorts of

* See Jacob's Report to the House of Lords on the Corn Trade. A land-carriage of twenty-four miles adds the expense of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to the original price of the grain; from which it may be seen how soon, by having to fetch it from greater distances, the process of deriving supplies from abroad behoved to be terminated.

foreign trade—that for which the returns are made in the manufactures or luxuries of foreign nations, and that for which the returns are made in agricultural produce. Each trade must have an agricultural basis to rest upon; for in every process of industry, the first and greatest necessity is that the workmen shall be fed. But it makes the utmost practical difference between these two, that the former rests on the basis of a home, and the latter on the basis of a foreign agriculture. In most cases, and more particularly where it is a nation of extensive territory, the whole of their foreign trade is of the first description—the home population engaged in it subsisting exclusively on home produce. When, over and above this, there is an excess of population that requires foreign produce for its subsistence, it will be found, in larger states more especially, that it forms but a small fractional part of the whole. In other words, generally speaking, the excrescent bears a very minute proportion to the natural population of a country; and almost nowhere does the commerce of a nation overlap, but by a very little way, the basis of its own agriculture.

7. By keeping this distinction in view, we shall better estimate the precise character and effect of that calamity, which either the suspension or the loss of foreign trade inflicts upon a nation. In as far as foreign trade rests on the basis of a home agriculture, the trade may be destroyed—yet, on that basis all the people employed in it will continue to be upholden. The export manufacturers will be discarded, no doubt, from their present occupations; yet, supported as they were formerly by a maintenance in the hands of our inland consumers, by that maintenance they will be supported still, only in return for a new service. As we have often said already, there will ultimately be no loss to them, and but the loss of some enjoyment to their virtual maintainers; or rather, the loss of any difference, if there be a difference of superiority, which the old enjoyment had over the new one. It would greatly mitigate our fears of a calamity, and at least take away all sense of its national importance, could we but perceive of foreign trade, that its destruction involved in it no other suffering than this—that is, a certain disappointment to the taste or fancy of consumers; but leaving withal, the same amount of well-paid industry in the land, as sufficient a maintenance as before for as large a population. It is different when the foreign trade rests, either in whole or in part, on the basis of a foreign agriculture. There is no disruption between the people

and their maintenance, by the extinction of the one trade—there is, by the extinction of the other. Let an end be put to the first, and our export workmen will still find footing, in some new capacity, on the soil that sustains them—where, in the midst of home resources, they will be sure of a harbour and a landing-place. If an end be put to the second, it will be tantamount to a sentence of decimation on the families of the land—a sentence which exile or famine will carry into effect. The destruction of foreign trade, in a country which subsists itself, may abridge the enjoyments of the community; but it will neither abridge the population, nor the industry of the population, though it changes the direction and the products of that industry. The destruction of foreign trade in a country which has to import agricultural produce, would cancel from the land an integral part of its population and its industry. To depend in part on other countries for enjoyment, is but a slight matter, when compared with depending on other countries for our existence. The effect of a disruption, in the one case, is not to be compared, in point of vast and fearful importance, with the effect of a disruption in the other. Yet from want of a right discrimination, the two are blended and confounded into one. Politicians look with misplaced and exaggerated alarm to the loss of foreign trade in the general—to the loss of all or any foreign trade. The bugbear and the reality are both viewed with one common feeling; and an event which involves but the disappointment of families in respect of luxurious indulgence, is regarded with the same apprehension, as if it endangered the stability or very being of the nation.

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

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

9. Now they are such histories as these which have inspired many of our compatriots with the same feeling of insecurity for Britain. We have a splendid commerce, which somewhat overlaps the basis of our agriculture, and, of consequence, a certain amount of excrescent population; and that probably would be enlarged, in some degree, were the present restrictions on the corn trade wholly done away. Yet it is consolatory to understand that, in our years of greatest scarcity, when all our ports were thrown open, and the utmost encouragement was given to the trade, the importation scarcely exceeded one-tenth of the annual importation of the island; and that the average importation of ordinary years would not serve our population for eleven days.* We should

* Colonel Torrens, in his able Essay on the External Corn Trade, urges this argument with great effect against the alarmists. He quotes the authority of Mr. Jacob for the importation during the years of greatest scarcity being considerably less than it is stated in the text, namely, that—if the one be correct in his calculation, and the other in his quotation—the importations of 1800 and 1801, taken together, did not amount to five weeks' consumption, or to little more than two weeks' consumption for each year.

not imagine our present excrecent population to be so much as a thirtieth part of the whole; nor do we believe that, on the removal of all fetters from our trade, we should permanently superinduce upon the country an addition of one-tenth to that population who are subsisted by the produce of our own agriculture. The circumstance of having any excrecent population at all, exposes us certainly to an inconvenience on the interruption of our commerce, which should not otherwise be felt. Yet, whatever that inconvenience might be, it is our confident persuasion that Britain would weather it. That a deficiency, by one-tenth of the usual supply in the first necessaries of life, would be seriously felt, is very certain; and the price would be enhanced much beyond the proportion of this deficiency. Yet we believe that the country would experience a speedy, an almost elastic recovery from the evils of such a visitation. The very dearness of an article impels to a thousand shifts and expedients for economizing it. The people would for a season put up with fewer of the second necessaries; and this of itself would have the effect of at once extending the husbandry to poorer soils, and transferring so many of the secondary into the agricultural population. There behoved to be an increase of food from the additional stretch thus given to the cultivation; and there might be a greater increase still from the lessened consumption both of animal food and spirits, and from the stoppage of distilleries by an act of the legislature. With these compensations in our power we have little to fear, even though the violent improbability, "*Britannos toto cælo divisos*," were to be realized. We should remain as independent, as stable, and as great a nation notwithstanding. Let commercial failures and commercial fluctuations be what they may, they can never liken our history to that of the Venetian States or the Hanseatic cities. The maxim, "*Carthago est delenda*," is not applicable to us; and, though lifted in menace by a whole continent, would fall powerless upon our shores. Our commerce, after all, is mainly but the efflorescence of our agriculture; and, though lopped off by the hand of violence, it would leave untouched the strength and stamina of the nation. Could we only brook the loss of our foreign luxuries, we might have a means and a maintenance at home for all our population, whom we could employ in the preparation of other luxuries; or with whom, enlisted in the service of patriotism, we might raise a wall of fire around our island, and brave the hostility of the world.

10. This distinction between the natural and the excrescent trade of Britain, when it comes to be understood, will hush the inquietude of our present alarmists. The one is based on a maintenance produced at home, the other on a maintenance imported from abroad. The export manufacturers belonging to the former are a disposable population, labouring in the service, and subsisted by the wealth, of inland consumers. The export manufacturers belonging to the latter, both labour in the service and are subsisted by the wealth of foreign customers. They are a disposable population, too, but at the disposal of landlords at a distance, instead of landlords at home—of men who, in changing the direction of their expenditure, would desert them altogether, instead of men whose change of expenditure would but transfer them to a new service. That is altogether a false analogy, by which Britain is likened to those states of ephemeral glory, whose greatness and power but lasted with their commerce. Our excrescent population and trade bear no such proportion to our natural as theirs did. Should a disruption take place between ourselves and foreign countries, the excrescent with us would speedily be absorbed in the natural. When Venice was separated from her customers, the foundation on which she mainly rested gave way under her. Our foundation is our own territory. Though separated from our customers, we are not therefore separated from the maintenance of our population. There would be a change undoubtedly—a change of pursuits to the working, and of enjoyments to the wealthier classes of our community. But, with this exception, it would be as great and flourishing a community as before—as competent to all the purposes of defence and national independence; and, though shorn of her commerce and colonies, though bereft of these showy appendages, as available, and we think more so, for all the dearest objects of patriotism.

11. This view, we think, should serve to moderate our commercial ambition, and to quiet one of our great commercial jealousies. So long as Britain can pay cheaper for her imports, by the exportation of manufactured commodities, which are in effective demand abroad, she will never need to export agricultural produce; and so to alienate from her shores the materials of human subsistence, wherewith to purchase foreign articles of any kind for her consumers at home. Her peculiar facilities for manufacture will always secure for her this independence; and her only danger is, lest her overpassing facilities shall make her

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

12. But more than this, we are not to imagine of the excrescent, that it either indicates or creates the same addition to the resources of the country as an equal number of the natural population. Suppose that the excrescent should amount to a thirtieth part of the whole, we would estimate the matter wrong, by conceiving that a thirtieth part had been added thereby to the whole previous wealth and ability of the nation. Let us

compare ten thousand of the disposable class taken from the natural population, with ten thousand of an excrescent population. The former give the products of their industry, or, if engaged in export manufactures, exchange them for other products, by which they obtain their equivalent maintenance from proprietors at home. The latter give the products of their industry in exchange for a maintenance which they draw from proprietors abroad. For each ten thousand of the natural population, we can put to the account of the country's wealth the work of ten thousand and the maintenance of ten thousand. For each ten thousand of the excrescent population, we can only put to that account the work of ten thousand, for their maintenance cometh from abroad, and becomes only ours by parting with the commodities which are given in exchange for it. In estimating the wealth that is indicated by the existence of the former, we must take into account both the produce of the land which maintains them, and of the labour which they give in return for their maintenance. In estimating the wealth that is indicated by the existence of the latter, we can only take the produce of the labour into account, without the produce of land. In the one case, we can reckon as the property of the nation, both the work and the ultimate equivalents of the work. In the other case, we can reckon but the work—for the ultimate equivalents are produced elsewhere, and form an integral part of the wealth of some other land. Dr. Smith defines the wealth of a country to consist in the annual produce of its land and labour. An industrious member of the natural population, adds the produce of his labour to his country, and by means of it he fetches a counterpart produce from the land, which is also to be added to the country's wealth. An equally industrious member of the excrescent population, also adds the produce of his labour to his country's wealth—but the counterpart produce of land which he purchases therewith, must be reckoned to the wealth of another country. If the former do not create, he at least represents a double wealth in the country, beyond what the other does. So that a given excrescent population betokens only half the wealth which an equal natural population does. If the excrescent population amount to a thirtieth of the whole, the wealth associated with their presence will amount to a sixtieth of the whole. The commerce that is pushed beyond the agricultural basis, to the extent of employing an excrescent ten thousand men, does not effectuate the same addition to a country's resources, as if the

agricultural basis were itself extended by means of reclaimed land, or of an improved husbandry, so as to afford the additional subsistence of ten thousand men. In the one case, we have the additional work of ten thousand; but we must accredit the wealth of another country, and not our own, with their maintenance. In the other case, we have the additional maintenance of ten thousand; and, followed up as this must be, with an increase of population, we should soon have the additional work of ten thousand to the bargain.

13. But it will still more strikingly exhibit the insignificance, in a national point of view, of the excrescent when compared with the natural population, if we attend to the relation in which they each stand to the revenue or service of the state. The excrescent population is made up exclusively of labourers and capitalists; and every tax, whether on their income or on the commodities they use, lessens their remuneration, so as to make a higher price necessary for the commodities prepared by them, in order to keep up that rate of wages and rate of profit, without which their manufacture or business could not possibly go on. But in this way the price may rise so high as to cut them out of foreign markets altogether; the advantage of their British situation, in virtue of which they might have been enabled to undersell the traders of other countries, being so much counter-acted by British taxation, as that they at length come to be undersold. It is thus that every such tax lessens the amount of our excrescent population; and, if carried to a certain extent, would cause it wholly to disappear from our borders. At the most, then, the excrescent population can only be made to yield a small fraction, and that a very precarious one, of their wealth to the exigencies of the public service. But let us compare with ten thousand of their number, any ten thousand of the natural disposable population. In the first place, as to those of them who are engaged in home manufactures, however high their wages may be raised by taxation, the inland proprietors, for whose enjoyment they labour, cannot escape from the consequent high prices of those commodities, in the preparation of which they are employed. In the second place, as to those of them who are engaged in export manufactures, their wages admit of being raised by taxation, till the inland consumers shall find that they can obtain the return articles from abroad, at a cheaper rate, by the exportation of agricultural produce. In either way, it will be found, that, compatibly with their exist-

ence and full extent, the natural population could bear to be much more highly taxed than the excrescent population could. But what is more, the landlords at home, who maintain ten thousand of the natural population, can be reached by a direct tax; so as not merely to transfer a certain fraction, but any fraction whatever, nay, even the whole of this natural population, to the service of government. If a landlord abroad still continue to purchase the manufactures of our excrescent population, though they come to him at a price enhanced by a taxation a tenth part more than they would otherwise have cost him; then, for every ten of our people whom he maintains in his own service, he may be regarded as maintaining also one in the service of the state. It is thus that for each ten thousand of our excrescent population, government may raise as much by taxation, as might enable it to command the services of a thousand men. But it could, by means of that higher taxation, which would abridge or annihilate the excrescent population altogether, command a much larger proportion of the services of our natural population; and, by means of a direct tax upon landlords, could obtain a command over the services of the whole ten thousand. An excrescent population indicates but half the wealth of an equal portion of the natural population, whatever direction that wealth may be left to take. But the proportion is far more insignificant, when we compute the respective amounts of wealth from each, that might be made available to the public revenue, or to the general good and service of the nation.

14. Yet insignificant in point of national advantage, nay, hazardous in point of national security as we hold this excrescent population to be, we would not recommend a corn law to prevent the formation of it.* But still less would we recommend any of the expedients of a mercantile policy to foster it into being, or force it into greater magnitude than that at which it would naturally settle. More especially, in the circumstance of being undersold by our neighbours in any of the branches of commerce, we can read no symptom whatever of disaster to the country, but would rather hail it with satisfaction, as that which tends somewhat to limit or to abridge the excrescent population. This points to a policy more generous far than the narrow and heart-burning system of prohibitions, alike dissatisfying to the people abroad and the people at home. We would not, on the one hand, restrain the freest importation of food; but neither,

* See Appendix, G.—On Corn Laws.

on the other, would we restrain the freest exportation of British skill, whether in the shape of British artificers or British machines. All that we gain by the opposite proceeding, is the very questionable good of an excrescent population, who expose us to danger, and yield us no countervailing benefit in return for the room they stand upon. We have enough of natural superiority in our situation and products to secure us at all times, against any large or permanent exportation of food; or, in other words, to secure for us a population commensurate to our agriculture. The advantage of having a population beyond this, is far too problematical to be worthy of the contention and the keenness by which the rivalry of merchants is characterized. We can afford to participate freely with our neighbours, in all the advantages which belong to us as a manufacturing people; and, so far from regarding with any sentiment of jealousy the exportation of British capital or intelligence to other shores, we should conceive, that in this instance too, the magnanimous policy would be found the best for the true interest and safety of the nation.

15. On the whole, however, we believe, that in a perfectly free state of things, there might be a considerably larger importation than now of foreign grain into Britain, and of course a larger excrescent population. The causes, however, already specified, the increasing dearness of imported corn, the increasing cheapness, in foreign markets, of British commodities, and, lastly, the constant tendency to equalization, in point of skill and other advantages between our own and other nations, would all conspire to limit the amount of this importation; and our hope is, that both the foreign and the excrescent might ultimately settle down into a very small and manageable fraction, first of the natural produce, and second of the natural population of our island. Still to this quarter we may look for a certain stretch or enlargement of external resources, whereby room and sustenance would be afforded for a greater number of families than we can now accommodate. Yet, after all, like every other augmentation in the outward means of support, it would but afford a temporary relief to the pressure under which we are at present labouring. As is usual with every increase, from whatever quarter, of the means of subsistence, it would be speedily followed up by a multiplication of our numbers, and so land us in a larger, but not on that account, a better-conditioned community than before. They who are sanguine of this and other

resources, as if a permanent sufficiency for all our families were to be the result of them, would do well to consider the vast enlargement that must have taken place within the last half century, in the produce of our home agriculture; and yet the actual straitness that is felt in spite of it. The phenomenon admits of an easy explanation, palpable as plainest arithmetic to the understandings of any who will but compare the censuses of different periods, and reflect on the rapid increase of our British population. And on what principle can we expect, that an enlargement of resources from any other quarter, will not be followed up by as full a proportional increase of population as heretofore; and, of consequence, that we shall still find ourselves overhung by the same pressure, and in the midst of the very same difficulties as those which now encompass us? That the pressure may be somewhat lightened, for a moment, by the abolition of corn laws, and by several other abolitions and changes also, we cannot deny. But the same important remark is applicable to all of them. It is not by means of economic enlargements, but of moral principles and restraints, that the problem of our difficulties is at length to be fully and satisfactorily resolved. No possible enlargement from without will ever suffice for the increasing wants of a recklessly increasing population. We look for our coming deliverance in a moral change, and not in any, or in all, of those economic changes put together, which form the great panacea of so many of our statesmen. Without the prudence, and the virtue, and the intelligence of our common people, we shall only have a bulkier, but withal as wretched and distempered a community as ever; and we repeat, that a thorough education, in both the common and Christian sense of the term, forms the only solid basis, on which either the political or economic wellbeing of the nation can be laid.

NOTE.—Could we find acceptance for the principles of this chapter, it would dissipate the jealousies, and give an altogether new direction to the policy of statesmen—more especially in Britain, whose natural advantages for trade will ever secure for her, and without an effort, a commerce co-extensive with her agriculture. If we have succeeded in making intelligible the important distinction between a natural and an excrescent population, with the necessary limits which check the increase of the latter, it will appear how small and how questionable the benefit of such a superinducement is; or, in other words, how little de-

sirable it is, after all, that ours should become a grain-importing country. But in § 8, it will be seen what it is that makes the distinction in this respect between the smaller and larger states and in § 9, what the resources are for the security and independence of such a country as our own. In § 11, we have attempted to expose the misdirection which has taken place in the aims and objects of our mercantile politicians—which however will be more fully understood by attending, § 12 and § 13, to the insignificance of the excrescent, both as it regards individual wealth and the interests of the public revenue, when compared with an equal amount of the natural population. We shall be glad if we have made it palpable, § 14, 15—that on both sides men have been contending for an imaginary interest; and that therefore the system of free trade, while it will be found utterly fallacious in its promises of comfort and enlargement to our nation, is the best for removing a great and constant occasion of discordancy—whether between various classes in the state, or between its government and the general population.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE SUPPOSED EFFECT OF TAXES IN AGGRAVATING THE CONDITION OF THE LABOURING CLASSES, WITH THE CONVERSE EFFECT WHICH THE REMISSION OF TAXES IS CONCEIVED TO HAVE ON THEIR RELIEF, AND THE ENLARGEMENT OF THEIR COMFORTS.

I. *Effect of a tax on the net rent of land.*

1. There is not a more popular topic of declamation than the oppressiveness of taxes, and, more especially, their injurious effect on the condition of the working classes in society. The imagination is, that, when laid on the necessaries of life, they trench directly on the comfort and sufficiency of the labourer; and that, when laid on profit, or laid on commodities in general, they trench upon capital, and so upon that power which exists in the country for the remuneration of labour. It is thus that the distresses of the poor, and the straitened condition of the lower orders generally, stand associated in many a mind with the exactions of government. The effect of this opinion is, not only a rancorous politics on the part of the turbulent, but, even among calm philanthropic men, there is the pretty frequent per-

suasion, that each retrenchment in the expenditure of the state is so much clear gain to the common people; and that, by pressing an indefinite economy upon our rulers, they are on the right way for an indefinite augmentation of personal comfort, not to particular classes only, but to society at large. It is therefore of importance to investigate the matter; for, if this abridgment of taxes be really not the specific which is to charm away all want and wretchedness from our land, the attention of the patriot may, in the meanwhile, be diverted from the best expedient for the relief and amelioration of its families.

2. Now, there is one species of tax which, by the consent of all economists, stands exempted from the charge of infringing on the comfort of the working classes. We mean a tax on the net rent of land. The incidence of such a tax is altogether upon the landlord. He is made poorer by it; but no other individual or order of the community needs to be at all affected. A portion of the power which he had to purchase commodities, or to maintain labour, is doubtless taken out of his hands. But it is not annihilated. It is only transferred. After the imposition of the tax, the united expenditure of government and the landlords equals precisely the whole expenditure of the landlords previous to the tax. In the new state of things there might be just as large a profit to capitalists as before, and just as large a maintenance to workmen as before. By every such tax, the power of government to uphold or reward industry is just as much enlarged as the power of the landlords is lessened. A certain part of the disposable population, employed in preparing luxuries for the proprietors of land, are placed by the operation of the tax at the disposal of government. To them it needs be no other change than a change of masters—a change of employment. From the hands of their new employers, they may obtain as large and liberal a support as they did from their old ones. They may have the same support as before, but for a different service. They exchange the service of working up luxuries to private consumers, for the service of the state. They are withdrawn from the business, either of home or export manufactures, by which they minister to the enjoyment of landed proprietors, to the business of manufacturing government stores; or of fabricating the whole material of government service, such as ships, and fortifications, and barracks, and churches, and colleges, and prison-houses; or finally, to the direct business of war, or justice, or public instruction. Artisans may, in thousands, be

transferred thereby into soldiers, or into artisans of another species. Master manufacturers may, in tens, or hundreds, be transferred thereby into officers, or judges, or clergymen. And the latter may be upheld in as great splendour, and the former in as great sufficiency as before. The wealth thus transferred into the coffers of government, can be discharged with as great liberality and effect on the various servants of government, as it formerly could when discharged by the lauded proprietors themselves, through the countless channels of trade and manufacturing industry in the land. After this change, we may still behold the spectacle of as large a population, in every way as liberally upholden, with the only difference of being differently employed. There is no effect produced on the reward of industry, but solely on the distribution of it. They who are paid by the tax may live as well as before. They who pay the tax are the only sufferers. They lose so many of their luxuries—or rather they exchange them for the objects of the public expenditure; perhaps through the medium of fleets and armies, for national independence; perhaps through the medium of schools, and churches, and colleges of justice, for the protection of society from crime and violence, and for the increase of national virtue. Even to them, the tax-payers, it may not be a dead loss, but the substitution of one benefit for another—possibly the substitution of a greater for a lesser benefit.

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

ministration of the property. It is thus that the taxations of a government, which wanted steadfastness of principle and good faith, would relax and retard the agriculture of a country, even though these taxations were restricted to the share which accrued to the landlord in the produce of the soil. But the case is very different when it is a taxation of principle; justified by the urgencies of the occasion; levied alike upon all in like circumstances; not liable to fluctuate, as in Turkey, with the cupidity of the rulers, though liable to be extended with the necessities of the state, of which necessities the landlords themselves, through the organ of a free and representative government, are the effectual arbiters. In these circumstances, there is scarcely any centage of taxation, however great, that would discourage cultivation. Nay, we believe that, in many instances, it has led to the extension of husbandry; and that to the income tax of England, while it lasted, we have to ascribe the breaking up of many a lawn, and pushing forward agriculture to many outfields which had not been entered. The tax, in these cases, stimulated the cultivation. The landlords sought, by a more strenuous agriculture, to compensate for the deprivations which the tax laid on them. They drew upon the land for an additional produce, wherewith to meet the impositions to which they were subjected; and though this cannot be done indefinitely, yet done it was in many instances, when from negligence or pleasure, an estate had not even the average cultivation bestowed upon it. We are aware that under an oppressive and arbitrary system, the tax would not operate in this way. In a country where the government could seize on individual property, no man would try to indemnify himself for one imposition, by means of an additional produce that might just bring on another imposition. The case is altogether different, when the tax, though severe, is equitable, that is, laid in like proportion over the whole country. Each proprietor, feeling that he is safe from any wanton or unlooked-for exaction in future, seeks from the capabilities of his soil, after all the reimbursement which it can afford, for the exactions that already lie upon him. In these circumstances, we really cannot specify to what extent the taxation on net rent may not be carried, because of the discouragement it would give to cultivation. For this purpose, the taxation would need to be not only excessive, but discretionary, partial, at the mercy of a wayward and unprincipled government, and altogether such as left no reasonable security for the

enjoyment of any remainder by the landlord. The effect is totally dissimilar, when the landlords are not only the payers, but, through the predominance of their will in parliament, the establishers of the tax. And then, when the question is put, how far might this taxation on themselves be carried, without injury to the economic interests of the nation—it is obvious that it might be carried indefinitely near to that point, at which, having surrendered all their luxuries, they satisfied themselves for a season with the necessaries of life. This may be regarded as the extreme limit of the taxation on net rent; and by the actual distance of our landlords from this limit, by the degree in which they still can command and enjoy the luxuries of life, do we estimate the power which remains with them of adding to the revenue of the state. They could, on some high call of patriotism, transfer to the service of government, all the disposable population whom they employ. They could transform a million of manufacturers into soldiers. They could, if the emergency called for it, assemble round the standard of the nation's independence—a host many times greater than has yet been exemplified in British warfare; and, so far from touching on the *ne plus ultra* of our public resources, we, on the test of that command which still remains with our landlords over the luxuries of life, do confidently aver, that never was our nation in greater sufficiency for such sacrifices as might conduce to some high object of patriotism or the public weal.

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

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

5. Anterior then to all consideration of what might be yielded, if indeed anything is yielded by profit and wages to the service of the state, there is at least one source of public revenue that might well stand exempted from the obloquy of indignant pa-

* “ Both ground rents, and the ordinary rent of land, are a species of revenue which the owner, in many cases, enjoys, without any care or attention of his own. Though a part of this revenue should be taken from him in order to defray the expenses of the State, no discouragement will thereby be given to any sort of industry. The annual produce of the land and labour of the society, the real wealth and revenue of the great body of the people, might be the same after such a tax as before. Ground rents, and the ordinary rent of land, are, therefore, perhaps the species of revenue which can best bear to have a peculiar tax imposed upon them.”—SMITH'S *Wealth of Nations*, Book V. chap. ii.

triotism. A tax on the net rent of land needs not trench on the income of capitalists, for the united expenditure of government and the landlords can afford them as large an income after the tax as did the unbroken expenditure of the landlords before it.* It trenches not on the comfort of labourers, for all the power of maintenance that has been withdrawn from individual proprietors may still be discharged as liberally as ever from the coffers of the treasury. It changes only the direction of industry, and not the remuneration of it. As many of the disposable population as the produce of the tax can maintain were employed in the manufacture of luxuries; or, while this produce was suffered to remain in the hands of the landlords, they laboured in the service of the landlords. When this produce was taken out of their hands, the maintenance of that population was transferred into the hands of government, and themselves were transferred to the service of government. There might be an abridgment of trade and manufactures by this process, for, instead of preparing tangible luxuries, the greater part of those whose employments shall have thus been shifted, might be engaged in what many economists call the unproductive service of naval or military defenders. This new distribution of our people would have the effect of lessening the trade of the nation; and to those who idolize trade, as if it possessed some mystic virtue in itself, over and above the power of ministering through the medium of its own articles to the enjoyment of customers, this might appear a great national evil; but, in truth, the gratification which consumers have in the use of its commodities, is the great, the only service which trade renders to the commonwealth. This, we admit, is destroyed by the tax. This is given away in exchange for whatever benefit the tax may be laid out in purchasing. Landlords have lost their luxuries; but there is no other loss. Every other benefit which has helped to associate in the minds of men the idea of prosperity with the idea of trade, is fully and perfectly retained. Whatever power lay in the produce of the tax, when in the hands of its original owner, abides with it still when in the hands of government; and, with the single exception of landlords being shorn somewhat of their household, or stinted somewhat in their personal enjoy-

* We employ the term *income* rather than *profit*, because the expenditure from the hands of Government being more directed to the support of what economists term unproductive labour, may be more in the shape of annual payments, and less in the shape of prices for commodities, than when that expenditure came from the hands of the landlords.

ments, do we behold the spectacle of as large a population in circumstances of as great comfort and sufficiency as before.

6. Having this view, we cannot sympathize with the despondency of those who represent our nation as in a state of extremity and exhaustion; and neither do we comprehend how it is that taxation cannot be further extended without bearing oppressively on the maintenance and industry of the people. We hold that there is a world of delusion in the invectives upon this subject, whether of demagogues out of Parliament, or of the champions of reform and retrenchment within its walls. There is at least one direction in which taxation may be carried further, without even the semblance, and certainly without the reality of any encroachment on the means of the general population. A territorial impost, anywhere short of the net land-rent of the kingdom, would but trench on the luxury of landlords, without at all trenching on the livelihood of the other classes. And to speak of our yet touching on the limit of our resources, or even being within sight of it, when the equipage, and the splendour, and the thousand effeminacies of luxurious expenditure, are so paraded before our eyes! We are aware that the national debt falls with the weight of a mortgage on every estate in the island—a weight, too, that has of late become more oppressive by the change which has taken place in the value of money. But, looking comprehensively at the matter, these mortgagees should be regarded in the light of landed proprietors. By the national debt, there has virtually been a division between them and the landowners of the territory of the empire. Regarding, then, both the land and the stockholders as in fact proprietors of the soil, and as sharing between them the net rent which accrues from it, who will deny that between these two classes there is at this moment a greater fund for taxation and for the exigencies of the state than there ever was in any former period of the British history? We have only to survey the distance at which, in habit and expenditure, they stand from the necessaries of life; and, looking on this as the intermediate ground on which government might proceed indefinitely to appropriate for its own uses the price of their luxurious indulgences, we venture to affirm that never was there a greater capability than now for enlarging the number and allowances of the public functionaries, or for imparting efficiency and extent to all the departments of the public service. A levy of ten per cent. both upon land and fund holders would at this moment invest

government, if not with a larger nominal revenue, at least with a real power of command over the services of a larger disposable population than the same levy would have done at any former period in the history of our affairs. The funds for such an enlargement of the national revenue do exist in the country, and, without the injury of one economic interest, these funds may be drawn upon, with no encroachment whatever on the sufficiency of the common people, and no other loss to the classes above them than the loss of a splendour and a luxury unknown to their forefathers.

7. By disentangling and keeping distinctly apart from each other the sources out of which a public revenue might be drawn, we are enabled to perceive, in spite of the very prevalent notion to the contrary, how far we yet are from the extremity of our national resources. Even at the time when an additional revenue seems hopeless from any or all the branches of trade put together, there might still be a fund convertible by taxation to the purposes of government, and of greater amplitude than at any former period of our history. It follows not, because wages are sinking in every department of industry, or profits are brought to that minimum condition beneath which the capital of a nation must decay, it follows not, on these accounts, that government has arrived at the *ne plus ultra* of her possible income or possible expenditure. This would be true, if the only way in which a public revenue can be raised is by extracting out of the existent trade of a country some fraction of its gains. Whereas, instead of this, let there be a tax on the net rent of land, and then a certain portion of the trade would of necessity be destroyed; when, instead of drawing, by an impost upon commodities, but a part of its value, the whole gross value of the destroyed trade may in fact be transferred to the coffers of the treasury. The capitalists and workmen disengaged in consequence may be as liberally supported as before in the service of the nation, while the capitalists and workmen who remain may have still the same remuneration in the trade which survives. This, then, is a species of tax to which the commonplace declamations of an overburdened commerce, or an overburdened and oppressed industry, are wholly inapplicable. Both may be overburdened by the weight of their own redundancy, when capital and population are alike in excess; but taxation, when confined to the proper revenue of landlords, is innocent of it all. And the proper test for the capability or the possible extent of this taxation,

is just the power of land and fund holders to maintain a disposable population, who prepare for them the superfluities of existence; and never, may we venture to affirm, was there a greater length and breadth of this capability than at the present moment. Never had government less excuse for foregoing any of the high objects of patriotism, because of inability fully and liberally to provide for them all. We repeat, that it is not the necessity of the lower, but the luxury of the higher classes, which at all stands in the way of our great public interests; and that every one of them might be most generously supported, with but an abridgment to the luxuries of the one class, and with no aggravation whatever to the necessities of the other. It is only because things are looked to with distorted vision, that the retrenchments which are now made at the altar of popularity are hailed as so many acts of relief to the general population; when, if beheld in their true character, they would be regretted by every sound patriot as a sacrifice of the public good to the splendour and effeminacy of the upper orders in society.

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

for them, instead of a proportional part in the shape of duty. What else but an undue sense of the virtue which resides in trade and manufactures, could have led Dr. Smith to assert,* that a commercial country, like ours, could afford no more than a hundredth part of its population for the business of war; else its commerce, deemed by him the very source of those finances by which war is supported, would go into languishment and decay—whereas, though the whole of that immense commerce, which is busied in providing the superfluities of life, were this instant to be annihilated, it would still leave in the hands of the consumers the maintenance of the whole disposable population, out of whom a tenfold greater military strength might be made to arise, than our illustrious economist dared to contemplate. And how else can we explain the egregious error of Mr. Pitt, who confidently foretold the overthrow of France, because, in the ruin of her trade, he conceived that her means of defence and of warfare were utterly exterminated? The truth is, that it was the wreck of her commerce which created her armies. Her disposable population, disbanded from their former pacific employments, flocked in myriads to the standard of independence, and at length of aggression and conquest over all her enemies. Their old employments failed them, but their maintenance did not fail them. It remained in the hands of those who went to be their customers; and, when surrendered by them at the call of patriotism, or the bidding of an energetic government, for the necessities of the state, it was made available for the support of the same population, now transferred from the business of trade to the business of war. This destruction of their trade, on which Pitt founded his calculations of their downfall, was the very thing which made them the scourge and the terror of all Europe. It transformed millions of artisans into soldiers; and in very proportion to their decay as a manufacturing, was their extension and their growth as a military nation. Their fancied weakness turned out to be their real and formidable strength; and in that mighty reaction, which took place on the breaking up of the old system of their affairs, have the principles which we now try to expound received, from

* He at least states what the common estimate is without qualifying or contradicting it. "Among the civilized nations of modern Europe, it is commonly computed that not more than one hundredth part of the inhabitants of any country can be employed as soldiers, without ruin to the country which pays the expense of their service."—*Wealth of Nations*, Book V. chap. i.

the finger of history, their most signal and conclusive demonstration.

9. We gather from this argument that there might be a misplaced antipathy to taxation. We could understand the sentiment, and would also share in it, should it be made to appear of any tax, that it dries up the springs of our economic prosperity, or trenches, in the slightest degree, on the comforts of the poor man and the labourer. But if, on unravelling the mechanism of human society, it becomes evident that there is but the semblance of this effect without the reality, it ought to mitigate our indignation, and in certain cases, perhaps, to transfer our generous and patriotic sensibilities to the opposite side. A tax on the net rent of land is clearly of this description; abridging nothing by its operation but the luxuries of the wealthier classes; and appropriated, as its produce may be, to the extension of the best interests of the commonwealth. The popular representation of the matter is, that, in virtue of our enormous taxes, the minions of government are allowed to fatten on the spoils of the nation, to the further hardship and oppression of its starving multitudes. We believe the juster representation to be, that, in virtue of a sweeping and blindfold retrenchment, the affluent proprietor is enabled to live in greater splendour and delicacy; and that by a further reduction on the hard-won earnings of those who are the public's most useful and laborious servants. The monarchy is shorn of its splendour; the great offices of the state are stripped of their graceful and becoming dignity; the system of public instruction is stinted of its needful allowances; the requisite agency for the business of government is crippled in all its departments; our gallant warriors pine in sordid destitution; science, in the Gothic barbarity of our times, is unfostered and unrewarded; in a word, the glory and substantial interests of the nation are sacrificed—and all with no other effect than so to ease the landed and the funded aristocracy, that they may be more delicately regaled, or more magnificently attired and attended. The tax, we repeat, does not trench on the livelihood of the poor, but on the luxuries of the rich; and statesmen, misled by a false political economy, or looking only at the surface of things, have made surrender, to a very phantom, of the highest objects of patriotism.

10. We confess that, on this subject, we have no sympathy with what has been called the spirit of the age. The very worst effects are to be dreaded from it. Everything now is

made a question of finance ; and science, with all which can grace or dignify a nation, is vulgarized and brought down to a common standard—the standard of the market and of the counting-house. It does look menacing, to take one example out of the thousand which may be specified, that it hinged on one solitary vote,* whether the trigonometrical survey of our island should be permitted to go on—a work which, like the Doomsday-book of England, might after the lapse of a millennium still survive, as a great national index for the guidance of our most distant posterity. It makes one tremble for some fearful resurrection of the old Gothic spirit amongst us—when one thinks that we were within a hairbreadth of this noble enterprise being quashed. And this is the spirit of the age !—an age of unsparing retrenchment ; a regime of hard and hunger-bitten economy, before whose remorseless pruning-hook lie, withering and dis severed from their stem, the noblest interests of the commonwealth ; a vehement outrageous parsimony, which, under the guise of patriotism, so reigns and ravens over the whole length and breadth of the land, and cares not though both religion and philosophy should expire, if but some wretched item of shred and of candle-end should be gained by the sacrifice ; this, though now the ascendant policy of our nation, elevated into power by the decisions of the legislature, and blown into popularity by the hosannahs of the multitude, will be looked back upon by posterity as an inglorious feature of the worst and most inglorious period in the annals of Britain ; the befitting policy for an age of little measures and little men.

11. We are aware of the sacrifices which are now being made at the shrine of popularity. A loud call for economy, in all the branches of the public service, has been met to the extent of a most hurtful reduction, both in the number of our national functionaries, and in their allowances ; without, we venture to affirm, one particle of addition to the comforts of the general population. In as far as the taxation falls upon landlords, then, it but transfers the services of the people to other masters, without effecting necessarily a diminution of their wages ; and the remission of such taxation will but commit them back again to their old employers, and without the increase of their wages. We therefore hold, that those politicians and philanthropists are altogether

* It is but fair to say, however, that the majority of one for the continuance of the survey was in the vote of a committee, which, though it had been adverse, would still have been subject to correction in the House of Commons.

on a wrong track, who act as if this were the expedient by which aught like permanent relief is to be obtained for the working classes of society. Let capital continue to press on the business of the country as before, which it will do, so long as the appetite for wealth preponderates over a taste either for the luxuries which wealth can purchase, or the generosities which wealth enables us to exercise; and let population continue to press on the food of the country, which it also will do, so long as the love of animal enjoyment predominates over a taste for the comforts and decencies which even humble life might attain to; and nothing within the compass of human wisdom can be devised, by which to save either the distempers of our commerce or the destitution of our peasantry. Government will have the mortification to find, that, after having dismantled its various establishments, to the great damage of great national interests, it will have still the same encounter to maintain, (and that, too, in the midst of the weakness and helplessness to which itself has voluntarily descended,) with as wretched, as dissatisfied a population as before.

12. But we have only reasoned, hitherto, on the effect, not of all taxation, but of a special taxation, even that on the net rent of land. But the great majority of our actual taxes appear to fall on profit and wages; and on the incidence and effect of these we reserve ourselves for the following chapter.

NOTE.—Ere the reader can be prepared for the doctrine of this chapter, he must attend to the qualification in § 3 by which it is limited. And he will all the sooner give his consent, if, agreeably to § 4, he advert to the readiness wherewith capital in a rightly governed society, springs up in other hands than those of the landlord. We trust that it may also displace his antipathy to taxation, as if it were the scourge of a country, when in fact, § 8, 9, and 10, it may be the instrument for giving its best direction to the expenditure of the country's wealth, for the best and highest interests of the nation.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE SUPPOSED EFFECT OF TAXES IN AGGRAVATING THE CONDITION OF THE LABOURING CLASSES, WITH THE CONVERSE EFFECT WHICH THE REMISSION OF TAXES IS CONCEIVED TO HAVE ON THEIR RELIEF, AND THE ENLARGEMENT OF THEIR COMFORTS.

II. *On the taxes which seem to affect profit and wages.*

1. When a tax is laid upon net rent, the landed proprietor can claim no indemnification for it, from the other classes of society. There is not a sounder principle in Political Economy, than that it is not the rent of land which causes the high price of agricultural produce—but that the high price of agricultural produce, brought on by other influences, is the cause of rent. The landed proprietor cannot indemnify himself for the tax, by putting, at his own pleasure, a higher pecuniary value on the products of the soil. It is not the will of the landlord which determines their price. The price of corn fluctuates, like that of every other commodity, with the proportion which the quantity of it brought to market bears to the demand. If, on the one hand, the population choose to multiply, though with the surrender of a part of their wonted comforts; this, by adding to the number and competition of the buyers, will raise the price of corn, without any will or exertion on the part of the landlords. Or if, on the other hand, it be the collective will of the population, to forego the pleasure of early marriages, for other and higher pleasures—this may so slacken the demand for corn, that its price, relative to labour, may become lower than before. It is not the landlord, who either raises the price of grain in the one case, or lets it down in the other. He is the mere recipient of a surplus, the amount of which is determined by causes extrinsic to himself and independent of himself. He cannot augment this surplus at his pleasure, so as to indemnify himself for the share which government chooses to assume of it. They take from him the maintenance of a certain part of the disposable population; and, along with this, they take from him the services of that population. But this change does not affect, either the number of the disposable population, or their power of purchasing. These remain unaltered; and so the price of agricultural produce remains the same as before. Landlords, therefore,

have no way of making their escape from the impositions of government; or of shifting the burden from themselves to any other class of society. And, if it can be proved that, in this respect, they stand distinguished both from capitalists and labourers; if these find relief from the taxes which are laid upon them, in the higher prices of what they sell, or in the higher wages of what they work; then, all taxes, however ostensibly laid, in the first instance, will be found, ultimately, to land on the proprietors of the soil.

2. Many are the instances in which it is quite palpable, that the first incidence, and the ultimate effect of a tax, lie on different persons. Perhaps the most frequent and familiar example of this is, when a tax on commodities falls at first upon the manufacturer or the dealer; but he indemnifies himself by raising the price, and so transfers the burden of it to the purchaser. He shifts the imposition away from himself to another; and the question is, whether there are not whole classes of men, who, though they do pay taxes ostensibly, do not, in fact, substantially and really, pay them at all. If a merchant, in particular, can escape from the tax laid on the commodity in which he deals, can he not equally escape from all attempts to reach him by taxation in some other way? If, by raising the price of his article, he can indemnify himself for a tax upon commodities, has he not the same resource against a tax upon profits, or a tax on any of the objects of his expenditure?* Certain enough it is, that a tax on profits cannot be carried to the annihilation of all profit, or a tax on the expenses of living to the annihilation of the livelihood of capitalists, else trade and manufactures would altogether cease. On the first blush of the matter, then, there do appear to be certain compensatory processes, by which we are sure that some taxes are made up for to the capitalists; and which, perhaps, have enough of power and efficacy in them, to make up for all their taxes whatever. In like manner, it seems conceded, that no tax, either upon the person of the labourer or upon his maintenance, can trench so far upon his means, as to leave him without the power of supporting himself

* Mr. T. Perronet Thomson, in commenting on the opinions of an economist, who distinguishes between certain taxes which do fall upon purchasers, and certain which do not, shrewdly, and, in my opinion, soundly observes,—“It would be curious to know how he convinces himself that this is true, when the tax is demanded from the producer under the title of a tax on his commodities, and would not have been true, if the same sum had been demanded from him under the title of a tax on his profits.”

and family, in such a way as shall at least keep up the population of the land. In this department of society too, then, it would appear, that there is a compensatory process, by which the taxes that bear on the subsistence and comforts of the labourer are either partially or entirely made up for, and must therefore be transferred to some other class who bear the burden of them. If it can be proved, that all taxes, affecting the status of the capitalists, are made up for to them by higher prices; and that all taxes, affecting the status of the labourers, are made up for to them by higher wages—this would seem to conduct us to the old doctrine of the French economists, though by a different process from theirs, that all taxes fall ultimately on the net rent of land. The common imagination is, that this is a doctrine which has been long exploded. The reasoning may be exploded, but yet the doctrine may be true notwithstanding, and may be established on the foundation of other reasoning.

3. There is one argument connected with this doctrine which has been occasionally touched upon by economical writers; and did we not hold ourselves in possession of another argument on the same side, still more clear and conclusive, we should have expatiated on it at greater length. Let us briefly advert to it before we proceed to the main reason, on which we ground our general affirmation, that taxes are not paid either by capitalists or labourers, or, to state the principle in more unexceptionable language, that they receive full compensation for the taxes which they do pay; the one in higher profits, and the other in higher wages, than without the taxes they would have received.

4. This argument, which, in point of strength and obviousness, holds in our estimation but a collateral or subsidiary rank, when compared with the one on which we should feel inclined to rest the cause, is still worthy of being noticed, because it helps to explain the speed wherewith a compensation arises to the capitalist and labourer, for those taxes which ostensibly fall upon them. The principle of the argument is, that whatever causes a more rapid, or rather a more copious circulation of money, without at the same time increasing the supply of commodities, raises the money price of them. We can thus conceive one way in which a capitalist might obtain, at least in as far as circulating capital is concerned, an almost immediate compensation for a tax on profits. If, previous to such a tax, there be a hundred millions annually laid out in bringing goods to

market, which are there sold for a hundred and ten millions, this capital is replaced with a profit of ten millions to its owners. But should a tax of ten per cent. be laid upon these profits, this, in the first instance, affects not the ability of those who purchase to the extent of a hundred and ten millions, seeing that the tax is laid upon the capitalists and not upon their customers; and, in the second instance, it enriches government to the extent of one million. Suppose this million to be expended by government in the purchase of commodities, then would the hundred millions of capital, after the tax of one million upon the owners, be replaced by a hundred and eleven, instead of a hundred and ten millions; or, in other words, the tax which they pay to government would reciprocate back upon themselves, in a consequent rise of the money-price of the commodities wherein they deal.

5. And the same is still more palpably true of a tax on the wages of labour. Should a hundred millions be given annually in wages, and government lay an impost of ten per cent. upon the labourers, the ability of the original hirers to make offer of a hundred millions next year for service is not at all affected by such a tax. But then the effect of it is, that it enables government to compete with them effectually in the labour market, to the extent of an additional ten millions; or, in other words, a hundred and ten millions may now be brought annually forward for the purchase of labour, instead of a hundred millions as before. But as there is no additional supply of labour by this process, the money-price of labour would just rise to the full amount of the tax which has been laid upon it. The labourers would obtain a full indemnity for the tax, by the produce of it coming almost immediately back upon themselves. Inasmuch, that were a poll-tax of five pounds a year laid upon each labourer, we hold that an almost instant compensation would take place, by a rise to the same extent in the money-price of labour. He bears it ostensibly, but not actually. In point of semblance it is a tax upon him; but, in point of real incidence and effect, it is wholly upon his employers.

6. Before we take leave of this argument, let us state it in terms of greater generality. Let, on the one hand, the quantity of capital and labour in the country remain unchanged, and, on the other, the power of replacing the capital, and remunerating the labour also remain unchanged—and, however the latter power shall be broken down or divided, profits will remain the

same, and wages the same. The effect of a tax on profit, or of a tax upon wages, would just be to bring an additional quantity of money, to the extent of the tax, into the market for goods, or the market for labour; and, to that extent, raise the money-price of both. The effect, again, of a tax upon net rent, would be to diminish the purchasing power of the landlords, to the extent only, however, that the purchasing power of the government was increased; and, without any increase of money-price, profits and wages would continue in name, as well as in substance, what they were before. The operation of a tax on profits and wages would be nominally to raise the income both of capitalists and labourers; though substantially they would continue what they were. If the tax were laid upon net rent, it would diminish the income of landlords without raising money-prices; and therefore without raising the income of the other two classes, either nominally or substantially. After the imposition of such a tax, the united expenditure of the landlords and government would be equal to the entire expenditure of the landlords before; and under the new system of an expenditure undiminished in its amount, and only changed in its distribution, we should behold both capitalists and labourers in possession of the same money, as well as the same real income as formerly.

7. The same reasoning applies to every tax on those commodities which enter into the maintenance either of capitalists or labourers, so as to show that they can make as effectual escapes from the indirect as from the direct taxes which are laid upon them. We are sensible at the same time of the many evasions which might be practised to obscure, if not to frustrate this argument; and of the many adjustments which it were necessary to make, ere we could fully meet all the difficulties that might be cast in its way. But we feel how superfluous it were to take the more laborious, when there is a shorter and easier path by which to arrive at our conclusion. We think that the argument employed hitherto, serves well to account for the very instant compensation which accrues to capitalists and labourers, when taxes are laid either on their expenditure or their income. But whether this argument shall be sustained or not, there is still another, which proves irresistibly to our minds, that, in point of ultimate and permanent effect, taxes do not fall on either of these classes—a position which will be all the more convincing, if we but attend to the fundamental and efficient principles by

which both the rate of profit and the wages of labour are determined.

8. We shall, in the first instance, keep out of sight the effect which taxation may have in contracting the agriculture of a country; and that, for the purpose of bringing out singly and therefore more clearly, the main reason why, ultimately, the income of neither capitalists nor labourers can be trenced upon by taxation. We shall, after establishing this, take the agriculture into account, in order to complete our whole view of this subject.

9. If we but adverted to the dependence which profit and wages have on a mental or moral cause, we should at once perceive of both these elements, how little either of them can be affected by taxation. Of the first of them, profit, we know that, *other circumstances remaining the same*, it falls with every increase of capital, and rises with every diminution of it. This circumstance will at once let us see that its rate depends on the taste and choice of the capitalists themselves—that is, on the proportion which their inclination to save bears to their inclination to spend. If the whole amount of revenue arising from profit be ten millions in the year, and it be the collective will of the capitalists to spend that sum annually, then profit undergoes no variation. If they spend less than this, capital increases and profits fall. If they spend more, capital decreases and profits rise. With this element brought into the computation, it will be perceived how a tax might be laid, in the first instance, upon profit, and yet in effect not be paid by the receivers of profit. They have only to persevere in their wonted habits of expenditure and indulgence, and they can throw the whole burden of the tax upon their customers. Let it but be their collective will, to spend on their own gratification ten millions in the year, and the imposition upon them of a tax to the extent of one million, need not trench on their ability to maintain this expenditure. If their capital of a hundred millions was, previous to the tax, replaced by a hundred and ten; then, if after the tax they should continue to spend the ten millions and to pay the one, this would reduce their capital to ninety-nine millions; when, in the consequent higher prices of next year, they might have a full compensation for the tax. Let the replacing power, notwithstanding the tax, continue as before, at a hundred and ten millions; this sum, given in return for the ninety and nine, would raise the profit from ten to eleven millions, and so

meet the whole imposition that had been made on this branch of the national revenue. The burden would thus be effectually thrown off from the capitalists, and laid on those who purchase their commodities.

10. And the same would be the result of a tax upon wages. *Other circumstances still being equal*, they fall with the increase, and rise with the decrease of the population. The rate of wages, therefore, has a close dependence on the proportion which the inclination of the people for marriage, bears to their inclination for the comforts and the decencies of life. In other words, it is ultimately decided by a mental or a moral cause. Give the people a high standard of enjoyment, and, rather than sink beneath it, they will postpone matrimony for a season; or, in other words, we should have later marriages and smaller families. Through the medium of popular intelligence and virtue, this result will be permanently arrived at—and through no other medium. The rate of wages is fixed by the collective will of the people themselves. They are the arbiters of their own condition; having absolute control over that element on which there hinges the amount of their remuneration for labour; and, if they choose not to exert that control, there is positively no other expedient by which a commonwealth can be saved from the oppression of an underpaid and degraded peasantry. But if, on the one hand, no devices of philanthropy can save a population of sordid and grovelling habits, from that most over-mastering of all oppressions, the oppression of their own numbers—on the other hand, no weight of imposts can permanently depress a moral and educated people beneath that elevated position which themselves have fixed upon, and which themselves are abundantly able to maintain. This alliance between a people's character, and a people's comfort, is far the most valuable lesson in political science, and is convertible to the most precious applications which can be made of it. We do not think that even the immediate effect, or at least the effect beyond one year, of a tax on wages, is to lessen the remuneration of the labourer; but even if it had, it could have no such effect permanently. It could not reduce the economic state or condition of men, who have an absolute dictation over the proportion between the demand for labour and the supply of it. They can countervail the operation of such a tax by their habits; and, having unlimited command over the supply of labour, they can, by a moral economic check on the magnitude of this supply, sustain, in the

midst of all adverse elements, whether physical or political, the attitude of an erect and well-conditioned peasantry.

11. A tax on profit leaves the capitalists at freedom to embark less of capital on business than before; and failing an immediate rise on the price of their commodities, if, on the average, they choose to keep up their wonted personal and household expenditure, and the tax compel them, for this purpose, to trench upon their capital, they have, at length, a full compensation in the increased profits of trade. A tax on wages leaves the labourers at liberty to marry later than before; and, failing an immediate rise on the money-price of work, if, on the average, they choose to postpone marriage, till they are enabled to enter upon it without any compromise of their wonted enjoyments, they may at length from a lessened population, have an equally full compensation in the consequent rise of the value of labour. A certain average style of expenditure, resolutely adhered to by manufacturers and merchants, could, through the medium of a diminished capital, act upon profit, so as to yield them an indemnification for their tax; and the same principle, a certain average style of expenditure, resolutely adhered to by labourers, could, through the medium of a diminished population, act upon wages, so as to yield them the same indemnification. Both classes, ultimately speaking, are alike exonerated from the weight of taxation; and in the increased price, whether of commodities or labour, the whole burden of it is transferred to the proprietors of the soil.

12. These principles serve to demonstrate, that a tax on commodities falls as little upon capitalists and labourers, as either a tax on profits does upon the one, or as a tax on wages does upon the other. It matters not, whether the attempt to reduce their standard of enjoyment, be made by a direct assessment on their income, or by an impost on the articles which they use. Both attempts can be alike resisted, by a resolute adherence on their parts to their respective standards of enjoyment, and their resistance can by each be carried into effect; that of the former class, through the medium of a retardation, or even a diminution, effected on the capital, by means of an expenditure which they will not consent to reduce; and that of the latter class, through the medium of a retardation, or even a diminution, effected on the population, by means of the moral preventive check, whose effect is to sustain that style and habit of enjoyment among labourers, which they will not consent to let down. It is thus

that their collective will can maintain for them the level, whether it be a high or a low one, in which they choose to acquiesce; and that this level, it is in their power to uphold, in opposition to all taxes, whether on profits, on wages, or on commodities. They hold in their hands, in fact, the two instruments of capital and population, which they might regulate at pleasure; and thus it is, that every tax, which, without such command, would depress their condition, may be effectually countervailed.

13. The general conception is, that dealers can insure their own escape from a tax upon their commodities, by laying it through means of a higher price upon their customers; when that tax is a partial one, or does not reach to all commodities. And the way, it is imagined, in which they do make their escape, is by withdrawing a portion of capital from the trade which is taxed, to that which is not taxed; in which case, the price rises in the former trade, and so transfers the burden of the taxation which has been laid upon it, from the dealer to the consumer. But if this be the only way in which capitalists can escape from taxation, every new tax on commodities, however partial, would be attended by a general fall of profits. The transference of capital from a taxed to an untaxed trade, will of course raise prices in the former, but will depress them in the latter; so as, after an equilibrium is established, to depress somewhat the general rate of profit. If the general rate of profit be ten per cent., and a tax of ten per cent. be laid upon sugar, this would drive off so much capital from the sugar-trade and so raise its price to the consumer. But if there be no other outlet for the withdrawn capital than other trades, then its investiture in these will bring down their profits, till an equilibrium be established among all the trades; when, after this transference, the general profit on all commodities might be imagined to fall down to nine per cent. But at this rate, profit would be subject to successive deductions, with every new tax laid upon commodities, till at length we might imagine a general impost of ten per cent. carried round the whole circle of commerce; when, if there be truth in the representation frequently given, all profit would be annihilated, and so all trade come to a stand from the want of inducement to continue it. But this is so manifestly absurd, that there must be some other outlet for the capital withdrawn from the trade that is taxed, than that of vesting it as capital in other employments. Now it can, and often does, find such an outlet, by being turned to the purpose of

a revenue, and thus absorbed in the expenditure of capitalists. This is the way, then, in which they have a control over profits, and a refuge from the effects of taxation. They can not only withdraw capital from one business to another, but they can withdraw it in part from all business; and, by thus limiting the extent of its application, they can counteract the whole operation of a tax on their commodities, by such a rise in their price, as will shift the burden of it entirely to the consumers. It will be allowed on all hands, that if taxes can be made in any way to fall upon profit, capital will not *accumulate* so fast as it would otherwise have done; and so *future* prices will be higher than they would otherwise have been. And it is just as obvious, that if, in virtue of taxes, capital is not at this moment *applied* so plentifully as it would otherwise have been, *present* prices must be higher than they would otherwise have been. All we need, then, for the establishment of our position, is the *postulatum*, that taxation, which restrains the future accumulation of capital, will also, if the holders of capital so choose, restrain the present application of it. In virtue of the future increase of capital being restrained, prices will not be so low at some future time as they otherwise would have been. In virtue of its present application being restrained, prices are not so low at the present time as they otherwise would have been. In other words, as without the tax prices would have been so much lower, with the tax they are as much higher; and in these higher prices, the capitalist gets his full indemnification. And the labourer can find his way at length to the same immunity. Both have that state of things within their reach, in which they can alike make head, or stand their ground, against the imposts of government.

14. But though the principle we have now attempted to unfold, is competent to achieve a full immunity for these two classes, from the burden of taxation, the effect may be suspended for a time, in consequence of the influence which certain sorts of taxation have upon agriculture. The most interesting conclusions may be gathered from this part of the subject. We have often said of the extreme limit of cultivation, that it, of all others, is the place where the greatest lessons in economical science are to be learned. It will serve to modify some of our former positions, and lead to the establishment of new ones, if we attend to the effect which the different species of taxation produce upon this limit.

15. First, then, a tax on net rent would not restrain cultivation. It might somewhat retard the progress of it; but, certainly, there is nothing in such a tax to prevent the agriculture from being carried as far down among the inferior soils, as if the landlords had been subjected to no such burden. We are quite aware of a retardation that might be caused by a slower accumulation of capital among the proprietors. But capital will arise, and has arisen, in other quarters of society; so that, in fact, its tendency is to overflow beyond the possibility of its profitable investiture, whether in the business of husbandry, or in any other business whatever. In these circumstances, the cultivation will soon be carried as far with a tax upon net rent as without one. The land that is last entered on, if it pay no rent, is subject to no burden from the tax. The land immediately above it in the scale, does pay rent; and this rent is subject to a fractional deduction in consequence of the tax. But the recipient, the landlord, will not now refuse to let out this land, because he only gets half-a-crown, instead of five shillings from the acre of it. Previous to the tax, he does not stop the letting of his land at the point where it only yielded him half-a-crown the acre—and neither will he still. The truth is, that in giving over a farm to cultivation, he commits the whole soil of it, with all its varieties, to the management of the tenant, who will cultivate every acre of it that can yield him a profit; whether or not, over and above this, it yields an excess, which goes in the shape of rent to the landlord. Let this excess be shared as it may between his landlord and the government, it affects not his operations; and that, because it affects not the capability of the land last entered upon, to give him the return of an adequate profit for the expenses of its cultivation. What this profit shall be depends upon himself, or rather upon the collective will of all the capitalists in the land; who, either by their accumulations can reduce the profit, or by their expenditure can uphold, nay, augment it at their pleasure.

16. Again, a tax upon luxuries, in as far as they are used only by the landlord, would just, in point of economic effect, be tantamount to a tax on the net rent. It would not lie as a burden on the cultivation at all. The domain of agriculture would remain as widely extended as before. All the land lying fully within this domain, would still yield a rent to the landlord; while that placed along the margin, or the land last entered on, would retain its capabilities for yielding a satisfac-

tory profit to the tenant, however the rent of the proprietor might be encroached upon by the demands of the government.

17. But, thirdly, a tax on profit, or even on the luxuries used by those whose revenue lies in profit, has a limiting effect on cultivation. We have already proved how it is, that capitalists can find their compensation, either for a tax upon income, or upon the commodities on which that income is expended. Should they choose to maintain their wonted establishment, and pay all their taxes to the bargain; this latter payment, by encroaching on the capital, keeps up the profit; and the tax is paid, not out of their income, but out of the higher prices now laid on the commodities in which they deal. This, in the first instance, will operate by a contraction on the agriculture, from adding to the price of the second necessaries of life, and so adding to the expenses of farm management. And besides, like all other capitalists, farmers will refuse to embark more of capital on their business, than what they can obtain a satisfying return for; or, in other words, they will refuse to enter on the cultivation of land which returns not a certain net profit to themselves; or which enlarges not that profit when its power is trenched upon, of commanding for them their wonted enjoyments, by the imposition of a tax on the articles which they use. This, then, is the effect of a tax which goes to limit the income of capitalists, or to limit the amount of their enjoyment in the expenditure of that income. Farmers will not carry their agriculture so far down as otherwise they would have done. They will stop short at that better soil, out of whose returns they can both pay the tax with the augmented expenses, and remunerate themselves. The agriculture is contracted; or, the effect of such taxes is a lessening of the country's subsistence, a lessening of the country's population.

18. And, lastly, the same is still more palpably and largely the effect of a tax, either on wages or on any of those commodities which enter into the maintenance of labourers. The land last entered on must at least yield a produce, which can feed the agricultural labourers employed on it, and their secondaries. But by a tax, either on the wages of labour, or on any of those commodities which enter into the maintenance of labour, more than this is exacted from the last cultivated land. It must not only be able to feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries, but it must at least be able to feed as many more as can

be subsisted by the produce of the tax. If a portion of such land require the labour of five agricultural workmen, and they again require the labour of five others to uphold them in the second necessities of life; that land must at least be able to feed the families of ten workmen. But should the taxes, whether on wages or necessities, be equal to a fifth part of the labourers' income, then no land can be entered upon without loss by these five direct labourers, which is not able to feed at least twelve labouring families. All such taxes, therefore, operate to the contraction of the agriculture; and so, eventually, to the diminution of the numbers of the people. And conversely, the remission of these taxes would, as if by the removal of an obstruction, let out the agriculture to poorer soils than have ever yet been attempted. It would be followed by an increase of the means of subsistence; and, eventually, by an increase of the population.

19. A tax then on profit, a tax on wages, or a tax on any of the commodities which are used by capitalists or labourers, will tell on the limit of cultivation. The imposition of these taxes has the effect of drawing in, and the removal of them the effect of letting out, the agriculture. The immediate effect then of the former measure, were a fall of wages, because of a reduction in the quantity of food, without a corresponding reduction all at once in the numbers of the people; and also a fall of profit from the reduction that would take place, not only in the agriculture of the country, but in all the business of providing for the necessities and luxuries of a society, whose extent was commensurate to the agriculture; and so a reduction in the business of the country, without a corresponding reduction all at once in its capital. Yet, though the first effect of these taxes is to depress both profit and wages, the ultimate effect in which it settles down, is to depress the revenue of the landlords. The capital will gradually recover its rate of profit, in the process of its own declension; and the population will gradually recover their rate of wages, in the process (we admit a melancholy one) of their own decay. After these processes are consummated, we see the whole of these taxes virtually transferred to the proprietors of the soil. They have, in the first instance, to pay a higher price for the commodities which they use, and the labour which they employ. They, in the second instance, pay, by its being withheld from their rents, the whole addition which taxation lays on the expenses of husbandry. *These two together*, if there be truth

in our argument, *should make up the whole revenue which accrues to government.** But beside making up for the tax in this way, they have to undergo a distinct and additional loss in the limitation of the agriculture. The rent of those soils, which taxation may have compelled the farmers to abandon, forms but a small part of this loss;—for they are further compelled by it to abandon those extreme degrees of cultivation, extending to the whole land that is under the plough, which, before the tax, may have been profitable, but which, after the tax, have ceased to be so. They are thus forced to relinquish the difference between the

* The position, that all the revenue drawn by the state from the *natural population* is in effect taken from the landlords, is so much the more startling, when one compares the accounts commonly given of the landed rental of Great Britain, with the actual amount of the public income. The rental is frequently estimated at beneath sixty millions annually, whereas the public revenue has at times exceeded that sum; and it is a most natural question, How the doctrine of our text can be made to harmonize with the arithmetical and experimental truth in this matter?

The following statement may serve to explain this difficulty, and to elucidate various of the positions which we have had occasion to make in our reasonings upon the subject.

Let us assume sixty millions as the landed rental of the kingdom, and that the public revenue is even as large as sixty millions also. The question is, How, in these circumstances, can it be made out, that the proprietors of the soil would not be losers, if a commutation were made of all our present taxes, and the whole amount were laid on the net rent of land? How is it possible that this rent can bear the burden of a transference, that would seem, *prima facie*, to annihilate the whole wealth of the landlords?

Though our reply to this be on hypothetical data, it will be quite enough to prove what the elements are which serve for an explanation of the difficulty. Let us therefore, still proceeding on assumptions, take the interest of the national debt at thirty millions; and, considering the fund-holders as mortgagees, or as co-proprietors of the land, the whole taxable wealth may, in this view, be regarded as ninety millions.

Let us further imagine the expense of living on the part of the affluent, to have been doubled by the actual system of taxation; or, in other words, that were there no imposts on commodities and other objects, these proprietors of ninety millions' income could have commanded the same amount of comfort and enjoyment with an expenditure of forty-five millions. Then it is quite palpable that they would not suffer, though all our present taxes were abolished, and replaced by an income-tax of 50 per cent. on land and fund holders.

But such a tax would only yield forty-five millions to government, and there remains fifteen millions to be accounted for. According to Mr. Colquhoun, whose estimate is understood to be a moderate one, the number of cultivated acres in England and Wales alone, amounts to upwards of thirty millions. We have already seen how, by taxes on commodities, the expenses of husbandry are raised. Let us imagine them to be so raised ten shillings an acre. This makes a deduction from the rent of fifteen millions on the whole; a sum, therefore, paid to government by the landlords, because effecting a diminution to that extent in their incomes. This completes the proof, that after taxation has had its full effect on profit and wages, or when these recover their ultimate compensation, they are the land and fund holders—or, generalizing the expression, by regarding the mortgagees as joint owners of the territory, they are the proprietors of the soil—who pay all taxes.

When asked then, How the landed proprietors, with only sixty millions a year of net rent, can be said to bear the whole expenses of the state, even though these should amount

products of the more and the less strenuous cultivation. By drawing in the agriculture, they have not merely to give up a *belt* of inferior land, lying, as it were, without the limit of the cultivated domain ; but they have to give up a *stratum* of deeper cultivation within the limit, and co-extensive with the whole length and breadth of the territory. So enormously do the landlords suffer from taxes, which, though ostensibly laid upon others, fall really, and with accumulated pressure, upon them-

to sixty millions in the year ? our brief reply is—First, that in the additional expense which they incur by taxation as at present constituted, they pay annually	30 millions.
That their mortgagees, the national creditors, do also, in the same way, pay	15 millions.
And, lastly, the landlords sustain a reduction of rent, from the additional expenses which taxation brings on husbandry, to the extent of	15 millions.
Making out of these items the whole revenue of government, or	60 millions.

Suppose all present taxes abolished, this would be followed up by a rise of rent to the landlords, to the amount of fifteen millions ; making their whole revenue seventy-five millions, which, added to the revenue of the national creditors, would afford one hundred and five millions for the whole taxable income of the country. A tax of about 57 per cent. upon this sum, would furnish an income to government as large as before. There would, by this change, be a hardship to the fund-holders, in that they had to pay 57 per cent. on their income, in exchange for the relief of only 50 per cent. in the expenses of their living. There would be a proportional benefit to the landlords, who, in the increased rent of their lands, would receive an addition of 25 per cent. to their income ; and, along with it, only an addition of 7 per cent. to the exactions of government. This advantage over the fund-holders, may, of itself, supersede the necessity of any such adjustment, as we have suggested in Appendix G. between these two classes, on the event of an abolition of the corn laws.

But the advantage to the landlords does not terminate here. They would receive a greater addition to their rent than ten shillings an acre, or fifteen millions from the whole of that land which is already in cultivation. The rise of ten shillings an acre would be afforded from the land *as at present* cultivated. But the same relief from taxes, which permits an additional rent of ten shillings an acre from this land, would also let out the cultivation to inferior land, and allow a more strenuous cultivation over the whole of the cultivated territory. Over and above the fifteen millions, which make up all the expenses that taxation lays on the present husbandry, landlords would receive something in the shape of rent from an extended husbandry ; that is, both from a new agriculture, which would reclaim a belt of inferior land, and from a more intense agriculture, which may be said to reclaim a stratum of the whole. We might imagine additional doses of capital, furnishing in succession, nine shillings, and eight shillings, and seven shillings, down to one shilling an acre, in rental to the landlord, as the product of that more intense culture, which, before the remission of our present taxes, would have been unprofitable. The arithmetical mean of these numbers, or five shillings an acre, would furnish no less than seven and a half millions of additional rent to the landowners. And if the belt of inferior land should furnish only half a million, then eight millions of rent, from the extended agriculture, must be added to the fifteen millions of additional rent from the relieved agriculture, making an addition in the whole of twenty-three millions to the rent of land, as the fruit of that commutation of the taxes, the very cautious, but at length total adoption of which, we feel inclined to recommend.*

* See Appendix, H.—On the gradual reform of our Financial System.

selves. So great would be the advantage, though few or none of them perceive it, if they would but commute all the taxes upon commodities into a territorial impost upon net rent. Capitalists and labourers are the temporary, but landlords are the principal and the permanent sufferers, by the taxes in question. They lose, in fact, a great deal more than the government receives. They at length have not only to pay, in advanced prices and the additional expenses of husbandry together, the full amount of

Let us conclude with a short recapitulation, to place in one view before the reader, the benefits which the landed interest would receive from this great change in the financial system of the country.

We have supposed the present income of landlords to be sixty millions, and that the public income is of the same amount. Of this the fund-holders, though they should pay only 50, instead of 57 per cent., would contribute 15 millions.
And the landowners paying 50 per cent. also, or a rental of 83 millions, 41½ millions.

Making an income to government (only 3½ millions inferior to what it was,) of 56½ millions.

Even though this sum of three and a half millions, instead of being taken from the fund-holders, were taken, by an additional territorial impost, from the landlords, they would still have thirty-eight millions to expend, after the charges of living had been reduced one-half; which is tantamount to seventy-six millions in the present state of things. In other words, they would have as much benefit by the proposed change, as if, with the continuance of the present prices, they were to receive an addition of sixteen millions, or of more than 25 per cent. to their present incomes.

The following extract from Mr. Perronet Thomson's Essay on the True Theory of Rent, may still further illustrate our argument.

It is said by a writer of name in economical science, that, "the fact that tithes, and other taxes on raw produce, do not form a deduction from rent, but go to increase the price of produce, is obvious from this circumstance, that the tithe of expensive crops, and which require a great expenditure in their cultivation, frequently amounts to *four or five* times the rent of the land. The Rev. Mr. Harlett, by far the ablest advocate of tithes, and whose authority cannot therefore be questioned, informs us, that the tithe of an acre of hops, raised on land worth forty or fifty shillings an acre, is, after deduction of drying and duty, generally worth from three to four pounds; and he further states, that he had known seven or eight pounds paid for the tithe of an acre of carrot-seed, where the land was not worth twenty shillings! In such cases, it is plainly as great an absurdity to affirm, that tithes fall exclusively on the rent of the landlord, as it would be to affirm, that a *part* is greater than a *whole*."

To which Mr. Thomson makes this distinct and decisive reply :—

"The whole of this is a confusion of ideas, arising from the two meanings of the word *rent*.

"When a tax or tithe is said to form a deduction from rent, this manifestly *means, from the rent as it would be without the deduction of the tax, and not as it is after the deduction.*

"Nobody ever said that the eight pounds, which is the tithe of an acre of carrot-seed, is taken out of the twenty shillings, which is left for the landlord afterwards; but that it is taken out of the nine pounds, which is the residuum, after paying the expenses and necessary profits of cultivation, and that it is because eight pounds is taken for tithe, that only twenty shillings is left for the landlord."

the taxes ; but, in virtue of the straitened cultivation which has taken place in consequence of them, they have to meet the charge with a proportionally less income than they would otherwise have had. Immediately, and ostensibly, these taxes bear hard upon the other classes ; but they are truly the landlords on whom the whole weight of them ultimately falls—and that, not merely with a permanent, but with an aggravated pressure.

20. What disguises the truth upon this subject, is, that in the immediate or the apparent, we lose sight of ultimate and abiding consequences. The tax upon wages, or upon aught that enters into the maintenance of the receivers of wages, will be felt, (irrespective of its effect in limiting the agriculture of a country,) and is indeed a real hardship on the payer of the tax for the first year of its imposition. A part of what he has got, or would have gotten that year, has been fairly taken from him ; and that, before any compensation could have arisen from the larger demand of the government for labour, or the larger ability on their part to support it. But in a single year, we believe, a compensation arising from this source would be made good ; when the tax would only be paid by him in appearance, while in reality, and through the medium of his advanced wages, it would be paid by his employer. Still the semblance has the same exasperating effect upon his feelings, as if it had been the reality. And it is most natural for him to conceive of government as his natural enemy, and standing in the way of his comfort ; and more especially, when the remission of the tax would operate as substantial a relief to him *for one year*, as he suffered of substantial hardships for one year at the first imposition of it. This remission would prove a real boon to him for one year, and an enlargement beside for a brief season longer, by letting out in some degree the agriculture ; when, first, by a fall in the money-price of labour, and then by an increase of the population, he would soon find, in spite of all that he promised to himself from the abolition, that he was in circumstances of as great straitness and penury as before.

21. And the same holds true of the profit on circulating capital, where the investiture can be contracted immediately, and in one year a full compensation can be had for any tax which may have been laid upon it. But a remission here too would be felt as a boon at the first ; and, in as far as it tended to let forth the agriculture, would enlarge somewhat, and for a

season, the operations of trade. We are not to wonder, then, if the appetency for immediate relief, and an enlargement however short, since not seen to be so, should create as intense a desire, on the part of merchants and manufacturers, for the abolition of the taxes which bear ostensibly upon them, as if this were to translate them into a condition of sufficiency and ease which was to abide for ever. It is no less the truth, however, that should this remission take place, a larger application of capital at first, and a rapid accumulation of it afterwards, would speedily bring on as limited returns, after the abolition of these taxes, as are experienced at present. It is not the capitalists, but their customers, who pay all such taxes; and, in the long run, they are only the customers who would feel the relief of their being done away.

22. But if the truth lie concealed in the case of wages and profit on circulating capital, it lies under deeper concealment still in the case of fixed capital. When a tax is laid on the profits of the latter, its investiture cannot be contracted so suddenly, and therefore the effects of the tax cannot be recovered so suddenly, as in the other instances. The cotton manufacturers cannot let down the number of their cotton-mills with the same facility, that certain other manufacturers, who operate with a circulating, rather than a fixed capital, could abstain from hiring the wonted number of workmen. The tax, therefore, is not so speedily countervailed in the case of a fixed, as in that of a circulating capital. The compensation is reached at length, and in a course of years,—not by this capital being withdrawn, but by its being suffered to decay to a certain extent without being replaced. It may thus require some years before the proprietors of fixed capital can be reinstated in their wonted gains, when at length the whole burden, both of their taxes and of all others, falls upon the rent of land; whether that rent be given for the original powers of the soil, or for those powers aided and extended by the successive applications of a capital so fixed as now to be immovable, and which has realized an amelioration on the land that has been the growth of centuries, and will never pass away.

23.* Had the taxes at present under consideration had no

* It is surely unnecessary to dwell on the obvious effect of such a commutation as we recommend, in augmenting the value of all fixed money-incomes; and so far, in laying a burden, without any equivalent compensation, upon the landlords. If the pecuniary allowances to all public servants should remain the same, it were tantamount to an augmentation of their pay, and an augmentation, therefore, of the burden upon the tax-payers.

effect in contracting the agriculture, we hold that sooner or later their whole effect on the clear income of capitalists and workmen would have been countervailed by a rise in the money-price of commodities and the money-price of labour. But they do contract the agriculture; and the effect of this is, that both these classes take a longer time of reaching their compensation; and that, by a gradual and intermediate process of decay, we should at length be landed in a smaller society, and a smaller capital for the conducting of its business. But, with the same standard of enjoyment as before, among our merchants and our peasantry, we should behold as well-paid labour, though now a reduced population; and as well remunerated, though now a reduced capital, as before.

24. We are not insensible to what has been alleged as the likely effect of such a process. It very possibly might give a shock to the standard of enjoyment in both classes; and permanently, or for the space of some generations, degrade it. The taxes in question, by the limitation which they impose on agriculture, do operate, just as a large encroachment of the sea would, or as a blight on the quality of the soil. This bereavement of territory, or this curse of barrenness, would, by a lessening of the country's food, lead, through a midway passage of penury and distress, to a lessening both of the capital and population. But the apprehension is, that the people, thus familiarized to privation, would lose the ideas of comfort, the respectable taste and habits of the better state from which they had fallen. They would undergo, it is feared, a moral change, so that the moral check might, in efficacy and vigour, fall beneath the exigencies of the occasion. There is a certain recklessness, a desperation of character, that might ensue from the more desperate condition in which they shall have been placed; and, while it is admitted, that any enlargement in their means may yield but a temporary augmentation to the comfort of families; the reverse process of an encroachment on their means, may, by an operation purely mental, permanently and irrecoverably degrade them beneath the higher ground which they now occupy.

25. But, practically, we are not called upon to stop at this contemplation. The more cheering alternative is within our reach. In the reform of our financial system, the readiest and most convenient changes are all in the opposite direction. Every commutation of a tax from commodities in general use, to the rent of land, lets forth the agriculture, instead of contracting it.

The people are translated into better circumstances; and they may be taught, in the season of intermediate abundance, to have a permanently higher demand for the enjoyments of life than before. They may be raised to a higher status; and of that status they may be enabled to keep the permanent occupation, in virtue of their higher standard of enjoyment. Were the economic only followed by the moral enlargement, then, instead of a brief evanescent holiday for the people of our land, the whole platform of humble life may be elevated, and made to sustain an erect, and independent, and prosperous commonalty, to the most distant ages.

26. But we have failed altogether in our general argument, if we have not made good the position, that the economic without the moral, will, in the long run, achieve nothing for our families; affording us only a larger society, but, along with this, a proportionally larger mass of want and wretchedness than before. The successive stretches which are made in respect of room and of abundance will soon be overtaken; whether these proceed from a gradual relaxation of the corn laws, or a gradual remission of the taxes which bear on the mercantile and industrious classes. The full effect of these two measures, even were they perfected, would not secure a greater addition to the food of the country, than we have received during the last twenty years from the natural progress of our agriculture. And who will affirm that, with our larger population to our larger means of subsistence, we are not in circumstances of as great difficulty, and as closely beset all round with the feeling of straitness and limitation as we ever were? There is no other specific, we repeat, for the economic well-being of our land, than that of moral and Christian education. One vain expedient after another may become the object of the popular cry, and the popular confidence: and they may yield, too, a momentary ease. But on the great scale of national policy, and with the view to an abiding and comprehensive benefit which shall be felt throughout in society, and last for generations, it will be found that, without intelligence and virtue among the people themselves, they, one and all of them, are but specious and delusive mockeries.

27. Yet it ought never to be forgotten that, powerless and insignificant as all merely economic objects are, when there is a reckless and degraded population, they nevertheless form the great moving forces by which the changes that take place in the progress of society are determined. It matters not to the men

of the existing generation, whether future generations will have a benefit or not, from the measures they are so clamorously and intensely set upon. The great prevailing appetency with them, is for the present relief, the present enlargement. Though a free corn trade should only ease the commerce and population of the country for a very few years; this is enough to enlist all the energies, both of the multitude and of the mercantile world in its favour. Though the remission of the taxes which bear upon the maintenance or employment of the industrious, be but the momentary loosening of a bandage, immediately followed up by a growth, which will cause the pressure to be sensibly and really as great as before; this does not make the complaint less impetuous, or the demand for relief less urgent or less influential. Though it be true that, on the removal of every artificial limit, there will be but the felt enlargement of very few years, and then as close and besetting a confinement from the natural limit as was ever before experienced; still the impatience under the existing restraints is as loudly expressed by the country, and will at length place government under as strong a necessity for yielding to it. They are not the evils of posterity, nor yet the evils which, in a few little years, will come upon themselves, that practically affect men. They are decided by the feelings of the present, and not the anticipations of the future. They, in fact, have no clear nor correct anticipations upon the subject. The sure and present relief by which all will be eased for a season, and many of them will individually be enriched, is truly all that they care for; and so the cry for emancipation, whether from taxes or prohibitions or monopolies, is as loud and general, as if an everlasting prosperity were to be the result, or a millennium of abundance to all the classes of society.

28. There is a world of delusion in these anticipations. Yet it is quite the wisdom of our statesmen, in this particular instance, to proceed in the current of the general feeling. We are far from the opinion, that *vox populi* is *vox Dei*; yet, on the present question, it so happens, that the demand of the many, runs in the direction which is best suited, both to their own interests and the interests of all. Never was there a more fortunate conjunction of a popular with a sound policy, than in the example before us. Government have it in their power, by a series of commutations from taxes on commodities to taxes on income, at once to ingratiate themselves with the community

at large, and to augment that territorial wealth which forms the source and the sustenance of all other wealth in the country. Doubtless the hopes, the extravagant hopes, of the manufacturing and commercial classes would be signally frustrated; but so also would the extravagant fears of the landed and agricultural classes. The proprietors of the soil would be the only class who should *individually* feel richer in consequence of the change. The subsequent enlargement of wealth amongst the trading classes, would soon be so overtaken by the increasing capital and population, that, *individually*, there would be as great straitness amongst them as before. But then, they could no longer charge their distresses upon government. It would be palpable, that the over-speculation of capitalists, or the overpopulation of the community at large, were the real causes of every economic calamity that came upon the land. The heart-burnings of political rancour and disaffection, would no longer come to be associated with the depression or the vicissitudes of trade. Government would be relieved from the burden of all that odium which so endangers the cause of order and authority in the commonwealth; and thus nothing, we are persuaded, would contribute more than the reign of a sound political economy, to sweeten and harmonize the politics of Britain.

29. And it were no small advantage, if landlords were made to bear the whole burdens of the state ostensibly, as they do really; that the importance, the paramount importance, of landed wealth and of the landed interest, would stand forth, nakedly and without disguise, to the recognition of all men. So that it were well for them, if compelled, even though against their will, to pay all taxes. The men who hold in their hand the necessaries of life, have the obvious superiority over the men who but minister the superfluities or the comforts. They have the natural ascendancy; and we think it wholesome and befitting that they should have the political ascendancy also. We hold it the most exceptionable feature in the modern scheme of representation, as being a violation of the rightful and natural order, that the agricultural interest is not sufficiently represented in Parliament. We think that, in partitioning the matter between the landed and the commercial, the supreme importance of the one, and the merely subordinate or subservient character of the other, have not been enough adverted to. But, perhaps, the very violence thus done to the natural propriety of things, may speed the manifestation of the truth upon this subject.

The proprietors of the soil have been a vast deal too tardy in learning the lessons which relate both to their own and their country's wellbeing. It is better that the repeal of the corn laws, and a reformed system of finance, should both be forced upon them. They will maintain their ground notwithstanding. They may be overborne for a season; but their indestructible wealth will at length appear manifest to all men, as being that which constitutes the main strength and support of the nation. It will even make head against the inequalities of our representative system, and secure for them, in opposition to every device and every provision in the framework of our constituency, the ascendancy in Parliament—an ascendancy which will the more readily be deferred to, when it becomes clear as day, that they indeed bear all the burdens of the commonwealth. The lords of the soil, we repeat, are naturally and properly the lords of the ascendant.*

* In Sir Henry Parnell's interesting work on Financial Reform, we meet with much that we approve, but with much also that we should feel inclined to modify.

In the first place, we cannot sympathize with his zeal for retrenchment, believing as we do that if taxes were rightly laid, and the produce of them rightly expended, they admit of being most beneficially increased for the best interests of the nation; and with no other sacrifice than a sacrifice of luxury and splendour on the part of the landed proprietors.

Again: we agree in the desire that the taxation should be lightened which falls upon manufactured goods, whether at the earlier stage of their preparation, on the raw materials, or at the later and ultimate stage, on the finished articles. But it depends on what the species of commodity is, whether we shall think the tax to be productive of economic injury to the nation. Let the commodity in question be one of the higher luxuries; and, for the sake of greater distinctness to our argument, let us conceive that it is consumed only by landlords, who expend a million on the purchase of it. A tax of half a million upon this commodity, whether drawn from the raw or the wrought material, would just have the effect of limiting the enjoyment of the customers to one half of what it was; and, without lessening the means or maintenance of the population at all, would only distribute them differently from before—one half of those employed in this manufacture being transferred, but as well supported in the service of the state. And, conversely, relief from such a tax would doubtless extend the manufacture; yet in no way extend the comfort of labourers, to whom the only change would be a change of employment back again from the service of government to that of individuals. In the whole reasoning of the work upon this subject, we may observe no obscure traces of the prevalent, the almost universal conception, that a manufacture yields something more than its own products; and that it not only employs, but supports the people who are engaged in it.

The only taxes productive of economic injury to the nation, are those which make the maintenance, whether of labourers or capitalists, dearer than before. This, in the way we have often explained already, must limit the agriculture; and will proportionally limit the population, and the amount of industry in the land. On this principle, we hold that the taxes on tea and sugar, which enter largely into the maintenance of all classes, do more to lessen the amount of British industry, than any tax would on the raw material of the silk manufacture, which would do little or nothing to abridge the employment of la-

NOTE.—The doctrine of this chapter is the same with that of the French Economical School of the last century—and this is enough with the generality of readers for its summary condemnation. But as we rest it on a wholly different principle, it is a doctrine which we cannot relinquish unless that principle be disposed of. It is briefly announced at the end of § 1, and is founded on the relief which is open both to capitalists and labourers from all taxes. We do not reckon on the speedy adoption of it by the majority even of real thinkers; but must confess our own exceeding value for it as demonstrative, § 10, of a stability that is beyond the reach of taxes in the people's comfort, which will be high if the people's character be high. Like many other lessons in the science, the real effect of a tax upon commodities can best be learned at the extreme limit of agriculture, § 18, where we may perceive, § 19, that the only real bearers of these taxes are the landlords, on whom, in fact, they fall heavier by being laid upon commodities, than if the whole produce of them had been raised by a direct tax on their own incomes. Still, the appearance of their falling on the other classes, § 20, and more especially on labourers, ought in all sound policy to be avoided; and more especially as the commutation which we propose, § 25, has the effect of enlarging agriculture. Still the effect even of this will be but temporary—the only real specific, § 26, for a high standard of enjoyment being the education of the people. It is for the sake, however, § 27, of such temporary enlargements that the popular cry is most vehement; and it were well if, § 28, rulers knew when it is that, not with safety alone, but with positive good effect, the cry might be yielded to. This is truly one of the instances in which a sound political economy might pave the way to a sound politics—which by a series of gradual approximations to a terri-

bourers on the whole, however much it might abridge the particular employment of silk-weavers.

Further: though we cannot agree with the author of this important work in his views, either as to the additional capital that would have been in the country but for the national debt, or as to the need of an extreme economy in peace, that we might be enabled to meet the expenses of a war; yet we hail, with cordial satisfaction, all his proposals and views on the subject of an income-tax, into which, in fact, all other taxes might be beneficially commuted, and which might, in every case of great and expensive emergency, be carried to such an extent as to supersede loans. It were well if a beginning could be made now, though it were by an imposition so small as of one or two per cent.; that, in the first place, all pretext for discontent on the part of the labouring classes might be done away; and, in the second, an end be put to our present system of ultra and unsparing economy.

torial impost, might at every step ameliorate the financial system, while it conciliated more and more the general favour of the multitude. In this view the whole doctrine of the incidence of taxes is one of the greatest practical importance. It is scarcely necessary to add that the reasonings of this chapter are only applicable to a country which mainly subsists on its own agricultural produce. Taxes on the capitalists and labourers of an excrescent population, are in effect paid by landed proprietors abroad.

CHAPTER X.

ON TITHES.

1. AMONG the questions which now engage us, there is a most important distinction to be observed between the ultimate and the immediate effect of any given change in the circumstances of a society. We have affirmed, that the remission of taxes on wages or profits, or the commodities used by capitalists and labourers, would let out the agriculture among poorer soils than had yet been entered on; and thus the first effect would be a plenty and cheapness of the necessaries of life, and an increase of business, not merely in agriculture, but in trade and manufactures, from the larger supplies that would then be required for the various wants of an increased population. There would be an intermediate season of abundance and prosperity to the poorer classes, and we are not to wonder if the taxes which obstruct the commencement of such a season should be regarded as a burden upon the labourers. But without an elevation in the standard of enjoyment, this season would be temporary. An increasing capital would soon fill up the new fields which had been opened for its profitable investiture, after which the gains of the merchant might become just as limited and precarious as before. An increasing population would soon bear as hard as at present on the augmented food of the country, and thus the wages and comforts of the peasantry be just as stinted as they are at this moment. Everything, in fact, short of a moral economic check on the multiplication of the species, and that through the medium of the people's education and improved habits, will turn out but an ephemeral expedient for enlarging

their means of enjoyment, and raising their status in the commonwealth. Without this we shall behold, after an interval of brief prosperity, the very straitening in their circumstances, and hear the very outcries of complaint that we are now exposed to. There will, in virtue of the change, be a larger, but not necessarily a happier society—more of absolute produce, both of land and labour, we allow, but a produce shared among a number so much greater, that we shall at least have the same proportion of individual distress as we have at this moment. Capitalists will have to complain of as low and precarious profits as formerly—labourers, of as overstocked markets and miserable wages, and frequent visitations of commercial depression and distress, as formerly. Society would undergo a speedy expansion, and a sort of heyday prosperity be felt during the progress of it; yet after the transition, and that a very quick one,* had been accomplished, might there in every way be as great a mass of wretchedness, or rather one of larger and more unmanageable dimensions than before. We cannot, in these circumstances, regard taxes so much in the light of a burden upon the people, or the remission of taxes so much in the light of a deliverance to the people. That it would be followed up by a temporary enlargement in their circumstances, we most willingly allow, but the only class who would reap a permanent benefit, and a benefit placed beyond the reach of chance and fluctuation, are the landlords. They would have the whole advantage of the cheapness, induced both on the articles of private expenditure, and on the operations of husbandry, by the abolition of the present taxes—insomuch, that they would lose nothing though government should levy the whole amount of the taxes from themselves; and besides, they would have a clear and uncumbered gain from all the enlargement which had taken place in husbandry. They would derive a new rent from soils formerly beyond the pale of cultivation, and, what were of vastly more consequence, they would derive an augmented rent from all their old soils, in virtue of the now more strenuous cultivation which, with the lessening of farm expenses, could be profitably expended on

* The quickness of the transition would arise from the rapidity wherewith the population advances upon any augmentation that takes place in the means of subsistence. Suppose that a given reform, whether in tithes or taxes, opened the way for subsistence to an additional million of population, the extreme shortness of the time wherein this can be overtaken may be inferred from the fact, that from 1803 to 1812 upwards of a million was added to the population.

them. The change that we venture to recommend would spread an augmented richness and value over the whole of their property. It were for their incalculable benefit, could they only be made to perceive it, that all taxes were commuted into a territorial impost. They would then appear ostensibly what they are really—the alone contributors to the public revenue—the only class in the community out of whose wealth the expenditure of government was defrayed. Every pretext, on the score of taxation at least, for the discontent of the other classes in society, would be swept away. The chief inflammatory topics, by which it is that demagogues keep alive the fermentation of prejudices and political antipathies in our land, would be wholly done away, and the lords of the soil would henceforth hold that undisputed sway in the commonwealth, wherewith, by the very nature of their property, they are so rightfully invested. They would prodigiously augment their wealth by the commutation that we now recommend, and they would augment tenfold both their security and their influence.

2. But they are the urgencies of the present, and not the anticipations of the future, which are the great moving forces that operate in society. If the remission of taxes yield but an immediate relief, though only for a short period, to the existing generation, this is enough to create an intense appetency and clamour for the removal of taxes. It explains, and perhaps justifies, the popular outcry against them. But it is a weighty consideration for the legislature, that though by unsparing retrenchment they may silence for a little hour the discontents of the nation, there is a gathering pressure that will surely and speedily recur, when the country will be again involved in the same difficulties, and the government, stripped of its efficiency and its means, will be less able than ever to withstand it. The champions of economy are not aware, we think, of the very short-lived deliverance which all their efforts will ever effectuate for the people of the land. It is right that government should be relieved from the odium of being their extortioners or their tyrants; but this might be as well done by a commutation of our existing taxes as by a simple abolition of them. With every reduction of a tax upon commodities, were there the substitution of a centage on the net rent of landlords, this, without any injury to them, would at once conciliate the affections of the people, and preserve a requisite agency for the service of government in all its departments. It is the way to reconcile the

necessary support of government with the utmost demands of liberalism; and, in these days of fearful conflict between the two elements of order and liberty, we believe that nothing would more effectually harmonize them than this discharge of the general community from all the burdens of the State, along with the distinct and total imposition of them on the proprietors of the soil. We want the whole weight of our taxation to lie upon them visibly, even as we think that it lies upon them virtually and substantially. They would be indemnified by the cheapening of all commodities, consequent on the removal of the present duties; and, more than indemnified, they would be rewarded by the new rents yielded to them from the enlargement of the agriculture.

3. Meanwhile, and under the continuance of the present delusion, great public objects might be sacrificed, and that, too, under the guise of patriotism; and not with the semblance only, but under the real impulse of a generous philanthropy towards the poorer orders. And certain it is, that the remission of taxes would yield an immediate, although a briefly ephemeral relief to them, while the ultimate and permanent effect would be to augment the luxuries of the higher classes. The question, Shall we impair, or let down, the needful establishments of the country, that we may insure the blessings of well-paid industry to the families of the land? is altogether different from the question, Shall we let down these establishments, that proprietors may live in greater splendour, or be more deliciously regaled than heretofore? Now, the former is only a question for a moment, and the benefit which it contemplates for manufacturers and workmen will speedily be snatched from them in the progress of capital and population. The latter is the real state of the question; and it is from it, and not from the other, that we would characterize the policy, and estimate the effect of that economical mania which is now so prevalent, both throughout the community and in the councils of our nation. It is certainly in its abiding, and not in its temporary consequences, that we should be disposed to read the character of any measure which might be proposed to us; and on this principle we hold, that, speaking with a view to the permanent fruit of it, we cannot but regard this work of retrenchment as carrying in it a substantial boon only to the landlords, while, to the working classes of society, it may turn out but the phantom and the mockery of a blessing. We hold it unfortunate, that, on this question, all the

seeming, and all the sentiment, should be on the side of unsparing retrenchment, when, in substance and in very truth, there is nothing accomplished by it but the sacrifice of the most noble, or the most essential of public objects, at the shrine of vanity—the permanent result of it being, not that the poor shall live in greater comfort, but that the wealthy shall luxuriate in greater splendour and effeminacy than before. This will be the final upshot of our present economical reforms, and this the conclusion to the lying promises of our reformers—the promises, we think, however, not of deceivers, but of deceived. We object not to their immediate demand, but rather desiderate, with them, a reduction or a removal of our present taxes—only, however, if followed up by the substitution, in their place, of a tax on the net rent of land. Were it rightly perceived between what two things it was that the real opposition lay, we should feel as if the cause of taxation might be advocated with a more assured countenance, and a more intrepid voice—for then it would become palpable that the support of public objects might be called for in the spirit of purest benevolence and of loftiest patriotism—not in opposition to, or with any encroachment on, the comforts of the poor, but in opposition to, and only with partial encroachment on, the superfluities of the wealthy.

4. Tithes, as at present levied, are in the very predicament of those taxes which restrain the progress of agriculture. Like them, they oppose a barrier to the entrance of the cultivator on poorer soils than the last which has been occupied; and like them, too, they prevent the superior soils from having so deep and thorough a cultivation as they otherwise should have had. Under this system cultivation is not so extensive, because prevented from going forth on so poor an out-field as it might; and neither is it so intensive, because prevented from doing its uttermost on the land already under process of husbandry. Without the burden of tithes, fresh land might be taken in, so long as it is able to feed its agricultural labourers and their secondaries, and yield to the tenant a remunerating profit. But, with this burden, the land is required to do all this, not from its whole produce, but from only nine-tenths of its produce. And so the cultivation is sooner arrested, having now to make an earlier stop, at land from which more is exacted, and therefore at better land. Cultivation makes its last effort at the point where it ceases to be profitable; and this will be all the sooner, when required to do, with nine-tenths of its produce, that which, in a

natural state of things, it would have been left to do with its whole produce. At this rate, the cultivation will stop short at land at least a tenth better than that to which it might otherwise have stretched itself. We can offer no computation as to the extent of intermediate soil, between the natural and the artificial limits, which is thus left uncultivated; but certain it is, that, in virtue of tithes, the operations of husbandry must be confined within narrower boundaries.* We are aware that the system is not fully acted on. As far, however, as it is carried, it is an incubus upon our agriculture. And so the immediate effect of its abolition would be to enlarge the domain of cultivation; and, by an increase of food, to diffuse for a time a greater plenty over the land.

5. Still the ultimate effect would be the same from the abolition of tithes, as from the abolition of taxes on the necessaries of life. It would lead to an enlargement of the wealth of the landowners; while to the population, if their standard of enjoyment be not raised, it would lead to no other enlargement than an enlargement of their numbers. We should have a more numerous, but not a better-conditioned peasantry than before. Still it would yield a sensible and immediate, though but a temporary, relief to the working classes. And it is this, perhaps, which forms one of the most imminent dangers of the Church of England. Economists tell us, and in these days of extremity and pressure, that tithes are a burden on the consumer, and add to the price of the necessaries of life; and certain it is, that their doctrine would have the appearance of being experimentally verified, *in the first instance*, by the speedy reduction of price that would ensue on the abolition of tithes. This is quite enough to give the men of the present generation a pressing and a practical interest in the removal of tithes. Nor would it cool their appetency after this reform, though told, that, in a very few years, we should behold a population in as great straits and difficulties as before; and should find, that, in point of ultimate effect, the measure had operated exclusively and permanently to the enrichment of the landlords. They, in the long-run, would

* The amount of the contraction suffered by agriculture in consequence of tithes, is much greater than is often estimated. There are calculators who reason on the supposition that we only lose a belt, that is, the out-field and inferior land, which, but for tithes, might have been brought under tillage. Now, in addition to the belt, we lose a stratum; or that additional produce which would be raised over the whole territory from its most strenuous cultivation.

monopolize the whole benefit of the proposed change. It is the immediate, however, and not the distant effect, which tells on the feelings and wishes of the public; and, certainly, the English Church is placed in the awkward and unfortunate predicament, that it stands in the way of an immediate, though but a temporary, enlargement to all the classes of society. This is enough to rouse a mortal hostility against it; and accordingly we find, among all the other adverse influences, the strong expectation of a great economic good in the downfall of that venerable hierarchy; helping still more to exasperate and alienate the minds of a people, not only loosened of all attachment to the Church of their forefathers, but bent, we fear, upon its overthrow.

6. And here we cannot but signify our regret, that the doctrine of the economists, upon this question, should be framed in the terms of the immediate and temporary effect that would take place on the abolition of tithes, and not in the terms of the ultimate and abiding effect that would ensue from it. We doubt the philosophy of such a procedure, and we are quite sure of its mischievous tendency. It is true, that if tithes were abolished, then, on the instant, grain would become lower; and also, that at this instant of time grain is higher than it would have been, had tithes been abolished a year ago. But the actual price of grain is not higher than it would have been, had there never been tithes in the country, or had they been abolished a century, or even but ten years ago. We should have had a larger, but not a wealthier peasantry than now; the land yielding a greater produce, but the land peopled up to that produce; and its labouring families, therefore, in the very condition, whether of penury or of comfort, in which we now behold them. The abolition of tithes would just do for England, what the recess, to a certain extent, of the sea from its shores would do for it, on supposition that the new land were shared in proportional quantities among the existing proprietors. The population would flow over on this newly-formed territory, till the whole margin that had been superadded to the island was taken into occupation. Capital would find a fresh field for its investiture; and a season of intermediate cheapness and plenty would encourage, for a time, the multiplication of families. But who does not see that profit and wages would speedily subside again to their wonted level; and that, after a bright interval of prosperity, we should behold only a richer aristocracy, but a commonalty as stinted in their means and maintenance as before? We think

it all-important to the question of the real incidence of tithes, that the removal of them would but temporarily insure a higher wage to the labourers; whereas it would permanently insure a higher rent to the landlords. It is this which inclines us to represent them, not as a burden on the people, but as a burden on the proprietors of the soil. We dispute not the force of the temptation, on the part even of the general community, to be rid of them; seeing, that to them also, a brilliant though brief season of prosperity would ensue from it. Yet, ultimately and everlastingly, the gain would not be the people's, but the landlords'; and we therefore cannot but lament, that science should, in this instance, have lent itself to a popular delusion. That it has practised any unworthy *reticence*, is not to be imagined; but certain it is, that the whole truth has not been told by it. The consequence has been, the semblance of an unnatural coalition between the principles of philosophy and the worst passions of the multitude; and, if not a louder, at least a more formidable and effective outcry than ever, against the greatest and the best of our national institutes.

7. The error of the Ricardo system of Political Economy on the subject of rent, has been well characterized by Mr. T. Peronet Thomson, as the fallacy of inversion. It confounds the effect with the cause. It is not because of the existence of inferior soils, that the superior pay a rent; but it is because the superior pay a rent, that the inferior are taken into occupation. There does not occur to us any logical term, by which to denominate the fallacy that is now under consideration. But it is not less a fallacy notwithstanding. It confounds the temporary with the permanent; or rather, gives that virtue and distinction to the former, which belong only to the latter. In assigning the incidence of tithes and taxes, the disciples of this school would represent them as a burden on that class, who can only suffer from them for less than half a generation; instead of being a burden on that class, who, after the lapse of this ephemeral period, would have to bear their whole weight, and that during the whole currency of their existence. And conversely, it is certain, that if these impositions were done away, the relief would be felt, in the first instance, and for a few fleeting years, by the labourers; but the old pressure would gather upon them speedily, when the relief would, wholly and for ever, be felt only by the landlords. Science has, in this instance, made a most unworthy descent from that high ground which she ought never

to abandon. She has forsaken the proper objects of her contemplation, which are permanent results, and not brief or fugitive accompaniments; nor does it extenuate, but rather gives a tenfold aggravation to the charge, that, in so doing, she has ministered new strength to the prejudices of the blindly or wilfully disaffected; and exasperated still more that fierce and frenzied clamour, which nothing will appease, but the subversion of all authority and order in the commonwealth.

8. It will be the subject of infinite regret to every enlightened patriot, if, for the sake of what at best will yield but temporary relief, and ease them of public clamour and discontent for a moment, our legislature shall barter away the best securities for a nation's safety and perpetual well-being. It will be particularly grievous, if, to lighten a pressure on the community, that is sure in a few years to recur with all the strength which originally belonged to it, the best instrument for putting into operation the only sound expedient for the amelioration of the people's circumstances, even that of Christian education, shall be stripped of its efficacy, or done away altogether. All other expedients will be found to terminate in mockery. They at best but enlarge the bulk of society, without any reduction, save for a short-lived moment, of the individual or the family distress which abounds in it. They may cause the limit to recede, and to widen somewhat; but they restrain not the pressure within that limit, which is the real cause of a general penury among the poorer orders of the commonwealth. A vessel might be made more capacious than before; but this will not alleviate the distension upon its sides, if there have been no abatement of the elasticity from within. Now the whole effect of the common expedients is, not to ease the distension of the vessel, but only to make it more capacious. Home-colonization, for example, will yield no indefinite harbourage, and yield no enduring relief to labourers. Neither will the devices, however multiplied and ingenious, for finding them employment. Neither will any possible accumulation on the part of capitalists—nor any conversion, we may add, of revenue into capital, as when government lavishes its millions upon public works, for the occupation of the people. Neither will all the openings of foreign trade, though pushed to the uttermost of its practicable extension. Neither will the remission of taxes—and, lastly, neither will the abolition of tithes. But what the abolition of tithes cannot do, that great institute, which is now supported by tithes, may do. The one expedient

but widens the field of occupancy ; and that to be speedily filled again with the same pressure of inconvenience as before. The other does not widen the field of occupancy, but it may do better ; for, by the efficacy of its moral lessons, it may lay wholesome restraint on the amount of occupation. And this, not with tyrannic force, but by a mild and grateful influence on the hearts and habits of the occupiers. Through the medium of Christian instruction, a rightly organized church will do more for the economic comfort of the families of the land, than all the other schemes of philanthropy and patriotism put together.* It will indeed be the egregious blunder of men, looking to the wrong quarter for the permanent emancipation and enlargement of our people, if, in grasping for a short respite from their ills, the hold shall be irrecoverably lost of the only instrument by which their comfort and their independence can be ultimately secured. At a time when churches and schools would need to be multiplied, when what may be termed the educational apparatus of our land would need to be greatly extended, instead of being mutilated and curtailed, it bodes peculiarly ill for the future destinies of the nation, that the authority of a reigning school has lent itself to that menacing outcry, which, if carried into effect, would annihilate an order of men, with whose efforts in the cause of popular instruction stand associated the best hopes and interests of England. The difference between the one set of expedients and the other, is this :—The object of the former is to make room for a pressure which yet no expansion can alleviate ; the object of the latter is to restrain and regulate the pressure itself. Under the operation of the one, the people may still be pressing on the limit of the means of subsistence. Under the operation of the other, the people, in obedience to their own taste and sense of dignity, will keep themselves a little way, and therefore comfortably, within this limit. The former alone will never achieve the result of a well-conditioned peasantry, let the physical abundance be what it may. The latter can make good the spectacle of thriving families, even in the midst of scantiest natural resources. It is thus that we behold, in rugged and intractable Norway, a flourishing population, while China, in spite

* We are sensible that we here assume the superior efficacy of an *established church* for the religious education of the people. For a fuller exposition of our views upon this subject, and of the reasonings by which we endeavour to support them, we refer to two former works, the one entitled, “*The Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation,*” the other, “*On the Use and Abuse of Literary and Ecclesiastical Endowments.*”

of boundless fertility, labours under the want and wretchedness of its teeming millions. It is thus also that England, though enlarged in the culture of its territory, if withal stunted in the moral culture of its inhabitants, may grow in population and penury together ; while, whether her soil be liberated from the bondage of tithes or not, she, in virtue of an efficient system of instruction, might realize the blessings of abundance in all her parishes.

9. But we would do both. That is, we would both maintain the church, and relieve the agriculture ; and so at once enlarge the room, and, through the medium of religious instruction, keep up that wholesome influence on the habits of the peasantry, which best serves to mitigate the pressure arising from the recklessness and brutality of a neglected population. The clergy, in particular, should rejoice in the church being exonerated from the odium that now lies upon it—should be the first to hail and to help forward the consummation of a measure, by which the hierarchy of England might be extricated from a position so obnoxious, as that of even appearing to stand in the way of the nation's wealth, or the comfort of its families. The reformation of the present system were an incalculable blessing to the Church of England ; and that, not merely because it would disarm the hostility of statesmen and economists, but because it would do away the topic of a thousand heart-burnings in every parish of the kingdom. And, in like manner, as we have pleaded, not for the abolition, but the commutation of taxes ; so would we plead, not for the abolition, but the commutation of tithes. The support of the clergyman would no longer operate as a bar to agriculture, if given either in land, or in right proportion, not to the produce, but to the net rent of landlords. At this rate, the existence of an established and endowed priesthood, would no more obstruct the progress of cultivation, than would the existence of landowners as a distinct order in society. They would, in fact, be joint proprietors along with them ; and, whether restricted to their own separate estates, or sharing in the rent of their parishes at large, they would stand completely innocent of all cumberance upon the soil. It were a relief to agriculture, but a far greater relief to the church. It is only the extension of the one that is limited by the present system, but the very existence of the other is threatened by it.

10. But it ought not to be overlooked, how much the wealth and interest of the landlord would be augmented by the proceed-

ing, even though not only a fair, but liberal commutation were granted to the clergyman. He can well afford to negotiate the matter equitably, for to him the enlargement would be incalculable. By the consequent descent of the agriculture among inferior soils, and, commensurate with this, a more intense cultivation of all the superior ones, he would extract a greater rent than heretofore from every acre of his property; and thus (after a full equivalent had been rendered to the church for its tithes) there would, over and above, accrue much clear gain to himself. It were hard, indeed, if the alleged prejudice of the church to the other classes of society were the cause of its overthrow; when, by a simple modification of its revenues, the general community would receive all the enlargement which it can possibly look for, and the proprietors of land be greatly enriched to the bargain. But should the latter look and long for more than this, they are seeking their own aggrandizement by means of an unprincipled spoliation. We have heard much of the rapacity of a sanctimonious priesthood. But there is danger, and that to the best interests of the state, from another species of hypocrisy; lest the country should be rifled of its moral and literary provision, and that too under the guise of patriotism—a specious covering for the dishonest selfishness of men, who, in the most emphatic sense of the term, would be the pests and plunderers of the commonwealth.

11. In point of principle and effect the analogy is perfect, between the commutation of the tithes and the commutation of those taxes which, bearing either on the operations of husbandry or on the maintenance of those who are engaged in it, add to the expenses of farm management. By the abolition of all such taxes, there is a fully tantamount addition made to the rent; so that the landlord could, without loss, bear the substitution in their place of an income-tax upon himself. By the abolition of tithes, there is a corresponding similar addition made to the rent; and so that the landlord could, also without loss, minister, in a direct way, as liberal support to the clergyman as before. In both cases, then, an equivalent compensation is thus made out to him. But in neither case does the reaction in favour of the landlord stop here. The removal, whether of the taxes or of the tithes, gives scope both to a more extensive and a more intensive agriculture; to a surplus produce, both from a belt and from a stratum, neither of which had been entered upon before. The landlord obtains not merely an equivalent,

but an overplus: first, in the new rent which accrues to him from the reclaimed—and, secondly, in the additional rent which accrues to him from the more improved territory.

12. In the commutation of tithes, we behold a still more beneficial adjustment to the peculiar circumstances of Britain, than in the commutation of taxes on the second necessities of life. The latter commutation lowers, and that permanently, the money-price of labour; and so would make us still more an exporting country, and land us in a still larger excrescent population than before. It is true, that it would also extend the home agriculture, so that there might not be a larger proportion of the excrescent population to the natural, after this commutation than before it. But the like advantage which there is in the commutation of tithes, is not subject to this deduction. There is nothing in this commutation that should permanently reduce the money-price of labour; so that from this quarter we are not exposed to any increase of the excrescent population. We should derive from it, however, a large increase of agricultural produce, and so a large increase of the natural population, which will therefore lessen the proportion of the excrescent to the natural. By the abolition of tithes there will both be a larger expenditure on the part of landlords than before; and a larger agricultural population, whose second necessities, consisting, in many things, of imports from abroad, as tea and sugar, will require a larger exportation from this country to pay for them. And so many of those exports which wont to be met by agricultural produce in return for them, may, after this change, be met by luxuries and goods of another description. It is thus that, with every extension of our agriculture, there may be an increase of British exports, without any increase of our dependence on other lands for the first necessities of life. We may have a greater number of export manufacturers, and yet, in virtue of our extended agriculture, they may be subsisted on home-produce, and so fall into the natural population. The cause of our having an excrescent population is, that, ere our foreign markets are saturated with British exports, the ability of our inland consumers to purchase the goods and the luxuries which come in return for them has been fully overtaken. When the exports go beyond this point, no other return-import can be beneficially disposed of, but agricultural produce, which goes to form and to subsist an excrescent population. Now every stretch given to our agriculture does increase the ability of our inland

consumers—whether they be the landed proprietors, who in consequence have a larger revenue to spend; or a larger agricultural and secondary population, who, though furnished by an enlarged agriculture with the first necessaries, will derive many of their second necessaries from abroad. In this way, the return of commodities for commodities is longer kept up, without coming to the necessity of importing food from other countries in exchange for the manufactures of our own. In virtue of the larger exportation that may now be carried on without the return of agricultural produce, it is possible that foreign markets may be saturated with our goods, ere they need to be paid for in that produce. The enlarged agriculture may enable us to raise a sufficient quantity for ourselves. It is thus that the removal of every let or hindrance in the way of our agriculture, lessens our dependence for food upon other lands; and that the abolition of tithes, in particular, may suffice to absorb our excrescent, either partially or altogether, into a natural population.

13. In virtue of our proposed commutation, the church may be upheld without injury to any economic interest; and it is therefore all the more unfair, that economists have lent the authority of their speculations to inflame still more the popular hostility against it. Never was there a more unjust or misdirected indignation. The support of a priesthood has been set in opposition to the general comfort of families. Its only opposition is to the greater wealth and luxury of landlords. The men who do something are eyed with jealousy, because in possession of an interest and a property, which, if not theirs, would but serve to enlarge the affluence and useless splendour of the men who do nothing. Never were the feelings of generous and high-minded patriotism more egregiously misplaced, or the public good more in danger of being sacrificed to the mere semblance of a principle. We often hear of the omnipotence of truth; and that the prejudice of many ages, the deep-laid institutions of many centuries, must at length give way before it. If the ecclesiastical establishments of our land shall be of the number which are destined to fall, and that because the temporalities which belong to them have been pronounced by the oracles of our day as an oppression and a burden on the general population, then, instead of truth being their judge or their executioner, they shall have fallen at the hand of cunning and deceitful witnesses, they shall have perished in the midst of strong delusion, at the mandate and by the authority of a lie.

14. When power gets into the hands of the multitude, the

danger is, that it may be exercised not for guidance but for destruction. They generally act by impulse, and not by discernment; and, if only possessed with the idea, or rather with the watchword, that the church is an incubus on the prosperity of the nation; no voice of wisdom will arrest the determination of sweeping it utterly away. We hold that a church establishment is the most effective of all machines for the moral instruction of the people; and that, if once taken down, there is no other instrumentality by which it can be adequately replaced. We are aware that it may be feebly and even corruptly administered; but the way to rectify this, is not to demolish the apparatus, but to direct its movements. We should hail the ascendancy of the popular will, if it proceeded on this distinction; and, instead of deprecating, should rejoice in the liberalism of the present day, did it but know how to modify so as not to extinguish. It is because democracy, instead of a regulating power, is a sweeping whirlwind, that we dread its encroachments. It is hers, not with skilful fingers to frame and adapt the machinery of our institutions; but, with the force of an uplifted arm, to inflict upon them the blow of extermination. We are abundantly sensible that the reaction of this tremendous energy is never called forth, but when provoked by the doings of a corrupt and careless government; and that, had our national churches been virtuously patronized, and vigorously and well administered in all former days, they had had nothing to fear at this moment from the hostile or vindictive feelings of an alienated people. And yet it were surely their more excellent way, if, instead of passing sentence of annihilation on the church or rifling it of its essential support, they were simply, by the authority of their opinion and will, to influence the patronage. Never had public sentiment a greater control over the proceedings of government than at this moment. And it may well make us despair of any good to society from its merely political ameliorations, if, at the very time when the collective mind of the nation could, in virtue of its rising strength, impress the most beneficial direction on the most beneficial and best of our national institutes—the first use it made of the acquisition was not wisely to regulate, but wantonly to destroy.

15. We cannot afford to expatiate on the superior efficacy of a church establishment—a lesson which we have abundantly urged and expounded elsewhere.* But never, without the peculiar

* In our work, more especially, entitled, "On the Use and Abuse of Church and College Endowments;" beside a few chapters in "The Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

facilities and resources of such an institution, will there be a full supply of Christian instruction in the land. A practical heathenism will spread itself over the rural provinces, and will deepen and accumulate more and more in our cities. When the people are thus left to themselves, and, in great majority, have forgot and forsaken the decencies of a Christian land, all economic or external resources will be of no effect on the comfort of families, given up by this time to profligacy and utter recklessness. It is vain to look for a well-conditioned peasantry, when, brutalized into a state of moral and religious indifference, they are wholly bent on animal indulgence, and, in reference to all the higher sensibilities of our nature, are in a state of hopeless and immovable apathy. The expense of a well-organized and purely-administered church, otherwise lavished in unproductive consumption on the luxuries of the affluent and the idle, would be repaid many times over, if we, in consequence, beheld among the people a higher standard of character, which never fails to be accompanied by a higher standard of comfort in society. But when once the moral interest is sacrificed, there is no enlargement of the economic interests or capabilities which can possibly make up for it. A church may be so conducted as to secure and perpetuate the one; and it may be so provided for as not to trench, by the slightest iota, upon the other. In these circumstances its overthrow were a most grievous perversion—an act of national madness, having its rightful consummation, first, in the anarchy of the state, and then in the growing vice and wretchedness of the people.

16. Whatever the coming changes in the state of our society may be, there is none that would more fatally speed the disorganization and downfall of this great kingdom, than if a hand of violence were put forth on the rights and revenues of the Church of England. Even with the present distribution of her wealth, it will be found, that the income of her higher, as well as humbler clergy, has been vastly overrated; and nothing, we believe, would contribute more to soften the prejudices of the nation against this venerable hierarchy, than a full exposure of all her temporalities, grounded on the strictest and most minute inquiry. And certain it is, that, with the best possible distribution of this wealth, it will be found hardly commensurate to the moral and spiritual wants of the now greatly increased population. If all pluralities were abolished, and the enormous overgrown towns and cities of the land were adequately provided

with churches, it would be found, that the whole of the existing revenues would hardly suffice for a requisite number even of merely working ecclesiastics. We cannot imagine a policy more ruinous, than that which would impair the maintenance of a church that has long been illustrious for its learning, and that promises now to be the dispenser of greater blessings to the people, than at any former period of its history, by the undoubted increase of its public virtue and its piety.

NOTE.—The subject of tithes is analogous to that of taxes; and the same reigning principle applies to both. They form a burden on the land-owners; and we refer to § 6, 7, for the estimation in which we hold that philosophic theory that would represent them as a burden on the general population—whereas they should be regarded as the patrimony of the working classes, appropriated to the support of an institute designed for blessings of the highest order to them and to their families, § 8. Nevertheless we plead for their commutation.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE DISTINCTION MADE BY ECONOMISTS BETWEEN PRODUCTIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE LABOUR.

1. SUCH is the influence of language upon thought, that, to the practical effect of mere epithets, may be traced some of the most mischievous delusions, by which the views and sentiments of men have ever been perverted. We hold the definition, by economists, of productive and unproductive labour, to be an example of this; and that it is not only unsound, when looked at in strict relation to their own science, but pernicious, because of the opposition which it has suggested between the moral and the economic good of society. It has laid discouragement on certain employments most conducive to the well-being, because, according to the established nomenclature, not conducive, but on the contrary, prejudicial to the wealth of the nation. And as wealth is a term which stands associated, in almost every imagination, with the power, and greatness, and security of the state, as well as with the family and individual comfort of its members, we are not to wonder, if, in respect to such high interests, it has been

recommended, as the best policy of a government, to abridge and economize to the uttermost, in the maintenance of unproductive labourers. To this class have been referred, the ministers of religion; and whose support, accordingly, has been represented as a burden and a bane to the prosperity of the commonwealth; because a deduction from those funds, which, instead of being lavished on unproductive, might have been expended on the maintenance of productive industry. We hold it, therefore, a proper appendix to our argument on the operation and effect of tithes, that we should bestow some thought upon a definition, which has laid disparagement, not on ecclesiastics alone, but on many other orders of men, whose services are indispensable, either to the public interests of the state, or to the private and personal comfort of families.

2. The wealth of a country has been defined to consist in the produce, by which is meant the *material* produce, of its land and labour; and they only are regarded as productive labourers, who add to the amount of that produce. He only is a productive labourer, by this definition, who adds by his work, to the value of some tangible, and therefore, some vendible commodity; a commodity which might be laid up in a storehouse, or exposed for sale in a market. A clergyman is clearly excluded by this definition, unless in so far as he shares in the manufacture of that tangible commodity, a volume of sermons, from the class of productive labourers; and so also is the schoolmaster, and the physician, and the lawyer, and the judge, and the soldier, and the statesman. We may guess from this enumeration, what those interests of the commonwealth are, at which many of our economists are disposed to look suspiciously and hardly. But their proscription extends further than this; for menial servants, and musicians, and players, and all in fact whose industry has not impressed some marks of its operation, more or less durable, on some marketable commodity, are ranked by them among the unproductive labourers in society. Some of these are certainly not the most useful and respectable of functionaries; and, associated as they are with the former by the common epithet of unproductive, we are not to wonder, if certain of the professions have been viewed with a degree of jealousy by our economic patriots, as creating an obstacle in the way of some great and prosperous enlargement, or as being a heavy deduction from that maximum of good which the country might else have realized.

3. And yet, to expose the utter futility of this distinction, let

us think for a moment how much it amounts to. One man's labour ministers to my enjoyment, through the medium of a tangible commodity; another man's labour ministers to my enjoyment, without this intermedium. The confectioner, whose delicious morsel I swallow, is a productive labourer; the musician, whose delicious tune I listen to, is an unproductive labourer. And yet, what economic injury is sustained, though I should pay the one as much for his performance, as I pay the other for his preparation? The gratification to me is equal, or rather greater in the music than in the eatable, seeing that I preferred it. The maintenance to him who administers the enjoyment is the same, whether I have chosen to spend my custom on the productive, or the unproductive labourer. And thus it makes no difference to the wealth of the country, whether the consumers incline more to those gratifications, which come through the vehicle of a tangible commodity, or to those which, without such intervention, yield the same, and perhaps a superior enjoyment. The labourers who are supported by the wealth, are equally well supported on either supposition; and the proprietor who spends the wealth, by being left to purchase that which he likes best, is only permitted the exercise of a liberty, without which, wealth would lose part of its value, and cease to be so desirable.

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

or frequency of the service. A suit of clothes may last with me a year; and, during the whole of that time, I have a use and an enjoyment in the wearing of them. But, with their price, I may hire for a year, the attendance of a menial servant; and so experience, for the same length of time, the daily benefit and convenience of his labour. And besides, in point of endurance, there is often a vast superiority in the effects of the unproductive over those of the productive labourer. To the physician, I may owe the continued health of a lifetime—to the lawyer, the preservation of my family estate, along a line of successive generations—to the soldier, the independence of my nation for centuries—to the clergyman, the virtue of the people and the imperishable good of their eternity. So that the effect of the one species of labour, may be as lasting as that of the other; and there is really nothing in this particular characteristic which at all justifies the distinction that has been made of them.

5. In the case of productive labour, there is often a long interval of time between the exertion, and the fulfilment of the object for which the exertion was made. The cloth may have been manufactured many months before it is worn—when, meanwhile, it occupies a place among the goods of a warehouse, and might during that period be registered as one of the constituent parts in the actual wealth of our nation. But surely there is nothing in this delay which intervenes between the performance of the industry, and the whole purpose for which the industry was set agoing, that can at all attach a preference to the labour which ministers enjoyment through the medium of commodities over that labour which, without such a medium, still ministers enjoyment. The gratification arising from music, comes immediately on the back of its execution—the gratification that lies in the use and consumption of a manufactured article, might not commence for a great many weeks after the completion of it. If there be any difference here, it should be in favour of that process where there is the least delay between the aim and the accomplishment; or where the labour and the thing laboured for come the nearest together. When a process of busy action is entered upon, which is to terminate in the attainment of some object of desire, it is surely better that we should have to wait a short rather than a long time for it. The power of realizing any fulfilment that our heart is set upon, is all the more valuable, the more speedily that we are able to realize it. So that, on this particular ground, there seems no superiority in produc-

tive labour, according to the economic sense of the term, over that which is unproductive.

6. It would be impossible to maintain this distinction against the many examples which might be alleged in opposition to it. A manufacturer of fire-arms, by the definition in question, is a productive labourer. The soldier who uses the fire-arms, and but for whose use of them they would never have been fabricated, is an unproductive one. The cook within doors is unproductive. The confectioner out of doors, though the very same work is done by him, would be recognised and honoured as a productive labourer. Yet both impress additional value on a tangible commodity—only, in the former instance, we want the shop; and so in the hands of the cook it is not, as in the hands of the confectioner, a vendible commodity. A singer, or even a performer on a musical instrument, is unproductive. But the maker of the instrument is a productive labourer—and should it be an instrument that can perform of itself, such as a musical automaton, then we should have a clear addition to the wealth of the country, without the alloy or the deduction of any unproductive labourer having at all to do with it. It is thus, we should imagine, that a thousand manufacturers of Æolian harps must be regarded with all complacency by our economists, as undoubted contributors to the material produce, which, by their definition, is tantamount to the wealth of the nation. But should the demand be changed from inanimate to living music, and the thousand artificers be transformed, of consequence, into so many vocal performers—we must suppose that at this transition a reduction of wealth has taken place, although all the labourers are as well maintained, and all the employers are better pleased than before. We have already stated that a preacher of oral sermons is unproductive; but that, should he publish a volume of written sermons, he forthwith stands out in the capacity of a productive labourer. In short, without regard to that which is nevertheless the real *terminus ad quem* of all trade and manufactures, even the enjoyment of consumers; and without regard to the reward or maintenance of those who are engaged in them, for the maintenance is in every way as liberal, whether they are employed in the capacity of productive or unproductive labourers—this definition proceeds on some mysterious virtue which is figured as residing in the mere vehicle of the enjoyment. Unless that vehicle be a piece of matter, wealth, and all the blessings of which the term is comprehensive,

are conceived to be somehow impaired by it. In a word, they cannot conceive how wealth should be in anything, unless it be a something which the hand can handle. Without this, all is unsubstantial in their eyes. And though, by one mode of expenditure, health, and security, and virtue, and education, and justice, and science, are purchased for the community at the hands of so many unproductive labourers; yet if, by another mode of expenditure, other blessings, however inferior, but unlike to these, laid up in packages or bales of merchandise, are purchased from the hands of productive labourers—economists there are, both in and out of Parliament, whose whole philosophy would enjoin them a contempt for the airy nothings, and a long-ing appetency for the bales.

7. The principle against which we contend, assumes a different form in the argument at least, if not in the convictions of those who admit the value of a work, even though done by unproductive labourers; but who desiderate more of that work for the same money, or, in other words, that the work shall be done more cheaply. With the principle of this demand we have no quarrel. It applies equally to both kinds of labour. It is just as desirable that the machine of a literary or ecclesiastical establishment should become more effective, as that a stocking-machine should become so; and if, in virtue of this, either enough of literary and religious instruction can be rendered, or enough of stockings can be made for less money than is now expended on these objects, the community would just have the more to expend on other objects, and the enjoyments of human life be multiplied of consequence. We do not fear to bring either our church, or our schools and colleges, under the examination of a tribunal that shall adopt this principle, and shall honestly proceed on it. We believe the conclusion would be, that the educational apparatus of our island, whether in respect of Christian or literary tuition, was defective both in extent and provision; and we should hail it as a subject of patriotic congratulation, if, at the expense of an inroad on that wealth which is now lavished on material objects of expenditure, more ample allowances were given for the support of religion and learning, even though it should lead to the multiplication of the unproductive labourers in our land.

8. In this preference of the productive over the unproductive labourer, there lies a subtle delusion, by which the political economy, both of many a student and of many a statesman, is

pervaded. One distinction between the two species of industry is, that the products of the former cannot, from their very nature, be tangibly laid hold of, and in this shape be made the subjects of any commercial transaction. Whereas the products of the latter have generally an intermediate stage to pass between the labourer and the consumer, during which they are exposed to sale in a shop, or have to undergo, in some form or other, a process of marketing. Now they are the shop and the market, which, in the eye of many a politician, are the great symbols of national prosperity. A work done by a cook within doors, is not so gratifying to their patriotism, as that done by a dealer in pastry without; because it deprives them of the agreeable spectacle of so much trade. There would not be the same amount of ostensible buying and selling under the one arrangement as the other. It matters not their being told that the consumer may be better served at the hands of the unproductive than at the hands of the productive, or, at least, served in the way he himself likes better; and that the labourers, under either system, are equally well remunerated for their industry. In addition to these two interests, which appear to be the only essential interests in the transaction, there is another, which we should like our mercantile economist distinctly to define, but which, we are sure, he will find to be impossible—because really it has no existence, save in his own shadowy imagination. He cannot state any rational difference to our national wealth, between what is contributed by the well-paid manufacturer of a musical instrument, and the equally well-paid performer on that instrument; or even though, without an instrument, he should only perform with his own voice. Under either economy, the labourers are equally well paid; and, under the actual economy, the employer is better pleased. It is a most unmeaning preference, that under the one there is an apparatus of counters and customers, which is wanting in the other. There is a deep-laid imposition here, and by which the gravest of our legislators have often been bewildered—when idolizing trade, as if it were the fountainhead of a wealth to which it owes its own dependent and subordinate existence; and which, apart from its own commodities, or rather, from the gratification which consumers have in the use of these commodities, has not one earthly interest belonging to it that either patriot or philanthropist ought to care for.

9. But more than this. The distinction that we are endeavouring to expose, stands associated with certain notions on the

subject of capital. Material products are conceived to have this advantage over immaterial, that they alone can be laid up as capital, and in that capacity be made to subserve the object of future production. This is not exactly true. The immaterial products of security wrought out for us by our warriors, or of health by our physicians, or of the people's equity and sobriety by our clergymen, subserve industry and the enjoyment of its fruits, just as any of those commodities do, which may have been accumulated for the support of future labour. And besides, there is no advantage in the laying out of capital, if that capital is not to be replaced, which it only is by the expenditure of consumers. The outlay incurred in production by the one party, is ever regarded as wasteful and undesirable, unless it be met by an adequate return made in the expenditure of the other party. Now it so happens, that this expenditure may as effectually replace capital, in the case of unproductive, as in that of productive labour. A master tailor may not have more capital than the master of an orchestra who heads a party of musicians. The capital by which the one is enabled to pay his journeymen, and to uphold his very scanty implements of labour, is often not so great, as the capital by which the other is enabled to pay his performers, and to uphold the apparatus of an opera. So that the expenditure by attendance on a place of entertainment may, in fact, subserve the maintenance of a larger capital than the expenditure incurred by the purchase of clothes. But the short way of disposing of this consideration is, that it serves no earthly interest or end, to accumulate capital beyond the power or possibility of its being advantageously invested. Up to that point, there is no fear of capital being maintained. This is a matter which regulates itself. To give a preference for productive over unproductive labour, that the products of the former may be laid up in store for future production, is a process which must soon run itself aground; and, altogether, the interest in question is of vastly too secure and independent a character, to require that we shall proceed on any arbitrary definition whatever, for the purpose of upholding it.*

10. Altogether, then, the distinction seems to be nugatory in principle; and withal, mischievous in application. The agricultural class, or those who are employed in raising the first necessaries of life, are all of them, in the sense of the definition,

* The reader will perceive that the error involved in this definition, is connected with the error that capital admits of indefinite accumulation.

productive labourers. The secondary are chiefly, though not exclusively so; there being a demand, even among our general population, for education, both in Christian and in common scholarship; and which they frequently pay out of their own wages. And who can deny that, by this part of their expenditure, even though it goes to the support of unproductive labourers, they secure a blessing to the land, which nothing could compensate, if their revenue were wholly laid out on tangible commodities; And then, as to the disposable population, it positively signifies not to any economic interest which is worth the caring for, according to what proportion they shall be divided into productive and unproductive labourers. It altogether resolves itself into the taste and inclination of their employers; and to this it should be altogether left. It were a deduction to them from the value of their wealth, if not at liberty to spend it in the way they like best. In as far as they have a preference for commodities prepared by our own countrymen, their demand will go to sustain home manufacturers; and we shall behold so many of the disposable population engaged in this species of industry. In as far as their preference is for the luxuries of other climes, we shall behold so many more of the disposable population engaged in the business of shipping, or of export manufactures, wherewith to purchase commodities from abroad. And in as far, again, as their preference is for a retinue of servants, or for theatrical amusements, or for the education of their families, or for enjoyments of any sort, yielded directly and without the intervention of material products; in so far will the disposable population consist of those who are termed unproductive labourers. What the proportion shall be, is a matter of no signification whatever, to any one interest which should enter into the computation of national prosperity or national greatness. It will not affect the extent of the disposable population. It will not affect the amount of comfort or abundance diffused throughout the members of it. It will neither affect the revenue of government, nor its power to enlist what proportion it may, of the disposable population into the service of its own establishments. It will neither affect the prosperity nor the numbers—it will only affect the employments of the population. And in whatever way the expenditure of consumers is apportioned, between productive and unproductive labourers, while to them a maximum of gratification is secured by their being suffered to spend their wealth as they will; we shall behold, under all the pos-

sible varieties of their taste and demand, the state equally powerful and flourishing, and comprising within its limits as great a number of thriving families.

11. We have entered at so much length into this argument, because we think the political economy of our day bears a hard and hostile aspect towards an ecclesiastical establishment; and we have no doubt, that to this, the hurtful definition of Smith has largely, though perhaps insensibly, contributed. The services of a church are mainly performed by unproductive labourers; and, from this single circumstance, we can imagine, on the part of a deluded patriotism, many a secret wish and aspiration for its overthrow. It is therefore of all the more importance, to expose the futility of the distinction that has been made upon this subject; and, setting aside, as a frivolous and unmeaning accessory, the presence or the want of a tangible intermedium, by which the good of any service is conveyed to us, we would found the question between one distribution of employment and another, wholly and exclusively, on the nature and magnitude of the good itself. We should not be afraid to rest upon this issue the cause of a religious establishment, even though the spoils to be gathered from its overthrow were capable of being diffused, in the form of a secure and permanent increase, to the physical comforts of the population at large. But we hold ourselves to have a far mightier argument on our side, in that the result of such a catastrophe were but the enrichment of our landed proprietors, and that no appropriation of the wealth of the church can prevent this from being the ultimate destination of it. Even though allotted in the first instance to the necessities of the state, and followed up by the remission of taxes, this, after affording scope for a season to the increase of population and capital, would but pour the wealth of our ecclesiastics into the bosom of the landed aristocracy at the last. We have already explained how that scope might be afforded, and yet the church be upholden in all her temporalities; and after this, on weighing the only real terms of the alternative, a moral good to the community against a large accession to the splendour and luxury of our landlords, we cannot hesitate for a moment on the question, whether the exchange of the one for the other would prove a bane or a blessing to our nation.*

* We gladly observe in the pages of M. Say, a recognition of immaterial products, as forming an addition to the wealth of a country. The revenue of our landlords, in as far as it is spent by themselves, is absorbed in unproductive consumption. The taxes and the

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

13. The united expenditure of the clergy and the landlords, gives as great an impulse to trade, and as large a support to labourers, as would the entire expenditure of the landlords, had there been no clergy, and our ecclesiastics been so many small proprietors. That, then, is an interest clearly not affected by the institution of an established church. Apart from such a provision, its revenues would have yielded so much enjoyment to possessors of land; but, in their present state, they yield as much enjoyment to the holders of our ecclesiastical benefices; so that, looking to the subject under this view likewise, there is no

tithes which they pay, go to the support of public functionaries, or are consumed productively; and if, on the one hand, the former be paid to a well-administered government, and, on the other hand, the latter be commuted and paid to a well-administered church; then taxes and tithes (the very reverse of what has been ascribed to them,) go to enrich, and not to impoverish a nation. The civil, and military, and ecclesiastical labourers, give a return in their services for a revenue that would otherwise have been expended without a return, and the value of these services forms a clear addition to the amount of national wealth.

loss incurred by the system for which we are contending. But again, landlords are under no positive or prescribed obligation, of rendering any service to the community for their share in the produce of the soil. Clergymen are; and though they should fall short of discharging their whole obligation, yet, should they discharge it in part, and so as that some positive balance of good to society is done by them on the whole, to that extent is society benefited by the Church, and to that extent would society be a loser should the Church be overthrown. Theirs is not, to use the language of some of our economists, unproductive consumption. That of the landlords is. Let immaterial products be included along with material, as Say and others would, in the enumeration of a country's wealth; and the institution of a church may serve, not to impoverish, but to enrich a community. It is the means of turning so much unproductive into productive consumption. Without a church, the whole of our ecclesiastical wealth would have been in the hands of those who give no return for it. With a church, we have the returns of all its usefulness—its theological learning—the protection which it affords against a desolating infidelity—the service which it renders to the morality of the commonwealth—and, above all, to the eternal well-being of the individual members who compose it. These are not the less substantial, that they enter not into the common definition of wealth, as consisting in the tangible produce of land and labour. Let tithes and taxes be but commuted as they ought, and, in the hands of a purer church and a purer government, it will become quite obvious, that they do indeed augment the national wealth, in the best sense which can be annexed to the term—turning that produce, which would otherwise have been idly or unproductively consumed, into an instrument of the highest benefits and blessings to society.

NOTE.—It will at once be seen, how much the definition on which we have animadverted in this chapter, is implicated with the errors and perversities of the mercantile system, (see § 6 and 8,) by which processes are held in higher estimation than their results. It is well to remark too, as in § 9, that it is bound up with the mistaken view which is commonly taken of capital. But its far most serious evil is the perverting influence of it on the policy of statesmen, misled by it into a coarse material utilitarianism, at the expense of the highest objects of philanthropy and patriotism.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE LAW OF PRIMOGENITURE.

1. ANOTHER of the vague imaginations for the relief of the country, and for the diffusion of a greater comfort and abundance through all its classes, is the more equal diffusion of property. The expenditure of the landlords seems by many to be regarded in the light of an abstraction from the maintenance of the other orders of society—as if this very expenditure did not consist in a transference to the industrious, of sustenance and support for their services. In spite of this obvious consideration, there does obtain the expectation of a great enlargement, to ensue from the abolition of the law of primogeniture. And certain it is, that, in the politics of our day, there is a growing and gathering strength of opposition to the system, which guarantees our landed aristocracy in the possession of their ample and unbroken domains from one generation to another. We have already said, that the advocates of a more equal partition of the land, should, on this ground at least, befriend an established church, by which, at all events, one species of partition is carried into effect. This, however, is in no way our argument for such an institution—it being of far less importance in our view, that property should be more equalized, than that property should, if possible, be placed to a greater extent than now in the state of having a public service and obligation attached to it; and that, consequently, less of it should be left in the state of simple and unconditional ownership. We happen not to think, that a more equal division of the land is in itself desirable; and far less, that the indefinite subdivision of it would prove a blessing to the country. Let us shortly contemplate the effects of such a process, in the train of which, if once entered on, there would follow both political and economical effects of the utmost magnitude. It is not only, however, because of these that we invite attention, but because we hold it to involve a question of professional importance, as bearing on the subject of the incomes allowed to ecclesiastics, as well as to all the other public functionaries of our land.

2. The effect, then, of an indefinite subdivision of the land,

would be to lessen indefinitely, not the population on the whole, but that class of them which goes by the name of the disposable.*

3. The landed proprietor, in expending that surplus produce of his estate which goes under the name of rent, must himself be upheld in the first and second necessities of life; and so far must he draw on the services both of the agricultural and the secondary population. But whatever he is able to expend over and above, he, by our definition, expends upon luxuries; and in so far he upholds a disposable population, who, by our definition also, are employed in preparing them. Let us imagine him able to expend the maintenance of four such; but that, in the next generation, his estate is divided into two parts, each having a separate proprietor. The surplus produce has now to maintain two proprietors in the first and second necessities of life, instead of one. It was formerly divided between the essential maintenance of one proprietor and four labourers of the disposable class—it will now be divided between the essential maintenance of two proprietors and three labourers of the disposable class. At this point one of the disposable population has been withdrawn, and a proprietor has come in his room. At the next descent, should the same rate of subdivision hold, we shall have four proprietors on the land which originally belonged to one, and, instead of four of a disposable population, attached by service to the property, there will only remain one of that description. At the next descent the whole of the disposable population, formerly

* We must not, however, ascribe to the largeness and integrity of its landed estates alone, the very great proportion which the disposable bears to the other two classes of labourers in Britain. Both its more perfect system of leases, and the superiority of its methods and machinery, whether in farm work or in manufactures, contribute to the same result. They cause that, by means of a much smaller agricultural and secondary population, the same amount of food is raised in Britain than perhaps in any country of Europe; leaving a greater surplus of hands for the service of the affluent in the preparation of luxuries, or for the services of the state. This is the real secret of a power and political greatness so much beyond the absolute population of our island. It is not by its absolute, but by its disposable population, that the strength of a nation is to be estimated. We are much behind France in respect of the former, but not of the latter comparison.

And as we have adverted to the varieties of land-letting, we would only remark, that there is surely nothing in these which can at all obscure a truth that so announces its own evidence, as the utter incapacity of land which but feeds its agricultural and secondary labourers, for yielding a rent in any shape. If, over and above this, its cultivators can render personal services, or pay taxes, or afford part of the produce to their superiors; these are not the same in kind as the money rents of Britain; but still they are varieties of rent, and proceeding too from the same cause—from a surplus produce, or a superior fertility in the soil, over that which could but remunerate the expenses of its husbandry.

attached to the owner of the property in question, behoved to disappear. The surplus produce would not in fact be equal to their maintenance in the first and second necessaries, or to what may be called their essential maintenance; and their owners behoved to help out their support by entering on that part of the gross produce which is detained for the expenses of the husbandry, which they could only do by sinking partly into the agricultural, or partly into the secondary class of labourers themselves. The tendency of such a system, then, is to extinguish the disposable population, in as far as their services are attached to the proprietors of land, and to substitute a merely agrarian population in their room, each perhaps labouring at the husbandry of his own scanty portion, and it to be frittered into still smaller shreds and pendicles with the rising up of the next generation. The disposable population would not be annihilated, even with the farthest consummation of such a process. There still behoved to be so many attached to the service of capitalists, who, in expending their profits, would be enabled, as at present, to purchase the luxuries of life for themselves and for their families. Mainly, however, our landed aristocracy would disappear; and, whether as it respects the state of society, or the direction and distribution of employment among the people, we know not how a greater revolution could be effected on the internal economy of our nation than by the abolition of the law of primogeniture, and the enactment, in its place, of a law of equal inheritance among the children of a family.

4. Now assuming, what we surely need not prove, that the agricultural produce of a country, in this comminuted state, is not, and cannot be greater, than when the land is parcelled out into sizeable and well-stocked farms, it will be obvious that there is no security whatever for the better economic condition of an agrarian than of a disposable population. The moral preventive check might operate with equal efficacy in both; and if this check be wanting, the distress of both is equally unavoidable. The want or the well-being of a nation resolves itself exclusively into this, and, apart from this, there is no expedient which can be devised that will ultimately and permanently serve to elevate the comfort of the poorer orders. We have indeed many experimental symptoms within our reach of the misery incidental to a mere agrarian population. In Ireland, the degradation of the peasantry has been ascribed to an indefinite subdivision in the occupancy of the soil; and the very same result may be looked

for in the indefinite subdivision of its ownership. In those country hamlets, the erection of which has been encouraged by the attachment of a slip of land to each of the tenements, what an amount of want and of wretchedness is often realized! A headlong deterioration in the circumstances of the people is just as possible and likely under this agrarian system as any other. Nothing, in fact, will save the community at large from the miseries of an oppressed and straitened condition but an elevation of the popular character and mind; and more especially of this expedient of family equalization may it be said, that while ultimately it cannot restrain the people from descending to as low a grade as they would have done under any other economy, it at the same time weakens to an incalculable extent the general interest of the State, besides preventing the formation or the increase of certain other and subordinate interests, which best serve to grace and to dignify a nation.

5. What we mean by the general interest of the State, is the interest which lies in the amount of its public revenue, and its consequent command over the services of the population. It is quite evident, that all those enlisted in the direct service of government, provided that their whole time is given to it, must belong to the disposable class—as, with a given population in the country, and a given standard of enjoyment among them, neither the agricultural nor the secondary classes can possibly be trenched upon. It is out of the disposable population, then, that a government draws its soldiers, and sailors, and civil servants, and all the agency of its various establishments, on the supposition of this public service being not their occasional, but their perpetual occupation. Even then, before we have entered upon any financial consideration, it must be obvious that, whatever limits the disposable population, lessens the power of a State to extend its permanent establishments. It may command the temporary service of all its citizens—it may compel each man to be a soldier, and thus enact a composition of professions between the civil and the military; but it cannot, consistently with the full benefit that lies in the separation of the professions, or in the division of employment, it cannot have such numbers at its disposal, when by any cause an abridgment has taken place on the disposable population. The landed property, which has four disposable labourers attached to it, can be so taxed as to place a greater quantity of labour under the control of government, than when, by its first division, the number of such

labourers is reduced to three; and still more than when, by its second division, the number is reduced to one. Or, to exhibit the same thing in money, if an estate be worth two hundred pounds a year to its one proprietor, and fifty be allowed for his essential maintenance, then the sum of a hundred and fifty pounds may be regarded as the taxable fund that is yielded by the property; but, after it comes into the hand of two proprietors, there must be the deduction of a hundred pounds for their essential maintenance, and the taxable fund is thereby reduced from a hundred and fifty to a hundred. It is thus that, by every step in the process of subdivision, a reduction takes place in the amount of that produce which government can reach by its taxations. A territorial impost could not raise so much from a country divided into small as into large properties, without a far greater sense of depression and discomfort on the part of its owners; and these may at length be so multiplied, that, reduced to the necessaries of life, they could pay no such imposts at all. It is thus, we think, that the law of primogeniture stands essentially connected with the strength and power of a nation, and that every government is sure to wax feeble under a system by which the land crumbles into fragments. At every new subdivision the disposable population is lessened, and just because the surplus maintenance which went to uphold them is lessened, there being always a greater and a greater proportion of it absorbed by those agrarians, who are left to multiply without limit on a soil that will soon be unable to sustain them. The people individually are not more comfortable, while collectively their strength and greatness must decline. France, under her present system, and in spite of the convulsive efforts made by her in seasons of great public excitement, has entered, we believe, on a sure process of decay, and, without a more comfortable peasantry than before, will she sink in the long-run beneath the pre-eminence once held by her among the nations.

6. We are aware that, generally, it is not by an income-tax that the public revenues in the different states of Europe are raised. Still the argument holds, in as far as they are raised by a tax on the luxuries of our landed proprietors. This is a source of income to government that is perpetually lessening, under the system of territorial division; and its tendency is to land the nation in that state when nothing will remain for taxation but the profits of capital and the wages of labour, and such commodities as enter into the consumption of capitalists and labourers.

We have already explained how the effect of such taxation is to limit the agriculture, by causing it to stop all the sooner in its progress downward among the inferior soils, the last soil entered on behoving to be of such capability as will not merely yield a satisfying remuneration to the capitalists and labourers, but yield, over and above, the payment of all the taxes to which the capitalists and labourers are exposed.* One great recommendation that we insisted on of a tax upon net rent, is, that it lays no such impediment on the progress of cultivation, insomuch, that if the whole of our national revenue were drawn from the landlords, they would not only have a full compensation in the cheapness of the commodities used by them, but, in addition, they would have an enlargement of their income by the agriculture being relieved of its present obstructions, and let out to the uttermost limit of which, apart from taxation, it is capable. There is thus a double infliction attendant on an indefinite subdivision of the land. It necessarily confines the taxes to such objects, that they oppose the extension of the husbandry, and thus limit the natural produce of the country, while it lessens that proportion of it which can be made available to public or national objects. In counterpart to this, there is a double benefit in that system of larger properties, which would admit of the revenue of government being wholly territorial. It would both enlarge the national wealth, and enlarge that proportion of it which might be devoted, through the means of taxation, to any of the objects of patriotism. The nation might become both individually richer, and collectively stronger than before.

7. This double benefit speaks strongly in favour of the law of primogeniture. Under this law, and with the system of larger properties to which it gives rise, there is room for a higher territorial impost, insomuch that the whole public revenue might be raised by a tax upon net rent. And were the method resorted to, of making the centage of imposition higher as the income was

* So much do we hold this to be the truth, that, if there is soundness in our principle, it is still the land which yields all the taxes, even after it may have been so subdivided, as that all which bears the semblance of rent shall be annihilated. The mere capitalist finds a refuge from taxation in higher profits, and the mere labourer in higher wages. It is the residuum of farm produce, over and above that which defrays the natural expenses of farm management, that pays all the public revenue; and it is conceivable that, in that payment, it may be so wholly absorbed as to be lost sight of altogether. That land should be able to sustain this burden, it must be of a superior quality to that which forms the natural limit of the agriculture; or, in other words, the agriculture must stop at a higher point of fertility than it otherwise would do.

higher, a much greater amount could be levied for the public service, with less of individual hardship to those on whom the taxes had been laid. The proprietor of ten thousand a year could not only part with a larger sum annually, but with a larger proportional sum than the proprietor of a thousand a year. But this is not the only advantage of the system for which we are contending. Government can not only obtain, in consequence of it, a greater fraction of the country's wealth, but the wealth itself becomes absolutely greater. Every other tax but one on net rent, more especially if laid on articles of general consumption, contracts the agriculture of the country; and, along with it, the dependent and subordinate interests of the population, and the trade and the manufactures. With the commutation of all general taxes into one on net rent, every artificial limit to the extent of cultivation is done away, and the wealth of the country is carried forward to the uttermost of its capabilities. Government is not only enabled, first, to raise a larger proportion; but, secondly to raise that larger proportion from a larger subject. This is the way by which to draw the maximum of public revenue for the benefit of all public interests; and that, by an imposition on landlords alone, without even so much as the semblance of hardship on the community at large; a way by which taxation may be carried, if necessary, beyond all former example, and without hurt or heart-burning to the general population.

8. The topics of popular invective often cross each other. The loudest against the burden of taxation, are also the loudest against the law of primogeniture. Little do they know that this law might be the instrument of a great and general immunity to the people; that by the help of it, taxation, though levied and expended for the benefit of the whole, might be transferred in full to the landlords—these objects of their fierce jealousy—who yet would not be injured by the commutation, but would only become ostensibly, what they are really, the sole tributaries of the commonwealth.

9. We have before said, that, had no land yielded more, in return for the labour bestowed on it, than enough to feed the agricultural workmen and their secondaries, the whole species behoved to be engrossed with the cares of providing for a subsistence. There could have been no leisure for higher and more dignified occupations. It is interesting thus to connect the fertility of the soil with a disposable population, and with all

which that population renders for the pleasures of human life, and the embellishment of human society. It is the overplus produce of land, after that the agricultural labourers and their secondaries have been fed—it is out of this, in fact, that law, and protection, and philosophy, and the ministry of religion, and art, and all that goes to decorate and to dignify human life, are upholden. It is because this overplus is possessed in quantities large enough, not only for the essential maintenance of its owners, but for enabling them, by the maintenance of others, to purchase a thousand gratifications both for the mind and the person—it is because of this, that the luxuries, whether of a more sensual or refined character, so abound in society. We feel quite assured, that a system which would fritter down this overplus into indefinitely minute portions, must tend to vulgarize a community, by absorbing, in the mere subsistence of an ever-increasing multitude of owners, what is now divided in subsistence for those who yield, in return for it, a thousand elegancies and enjoyments, that would have been otherwise unknown. It is no adequate reply to this, that these enjoyments and elegancies are monopolized by a few; for, by the controlling power of the state, the fund, out of which they are purchased, can be drawn upon indefinitely, not for the support of political interests alone, but for the support of Christian education and a national literature, and other benefits, of a high order, that are diffused among the many. Such a system of landed property, is not only the best fitted to enrich and enable a government for the support of liberal institutions and the effective patronage of genius, but the system is in itself a guarantee for the maintenance of enough of leisure, among a class sufficiently numerous to form an extensive reading public, and call forth the exhaustless varieties of an authorship, that is ever keeping the mind of society in vigorous play, and adorning it with the graces of taste and cultivation. So that, altogether, with the size and integrity of our landed estates, would we associate a greater amount of mental power and cultivation—both the benefits and the beauties of a more intellectual and polished commonwealth.

10. When it is alleged that, under the existing system, the luxuries worked up by the disposable population are monopolized by the few, the imagination is, that were the system broken down, by the abolition of the law of primogeniture, the same amount of luxury would be diffused throughout a vastly greater multitude. But the truth is, that, in virtue of the process which

would ensue, the disposable population would constantly be lessening, and the luxuries they rendered would every year be diminished in their amount. The tendency is to an ultimate state, where, instead of luxuries or elegancies being divided among many landed proprietors, these proprietors would be unable to afford any luxuries or elegancies at all. Even for their own comfort, it would have been as well that they had been labouring in the ranks of the disposable population—as labouring, each in sordidness and straitness, on some little acre, from which the subsistence of a family could hardly be extorted. The drudgery of an artisan, in the manufacture of luxuries, is not worse than the ignoble drudgery of an over-crowded agrarian population. Under the system in question, the manufacture of second necessities might be kept up in its original extent; but the manufacture of luxuries would be indefinitely diminished. There would thus be very few, if any, of the landed proprietors that could command any of the higher enjoyments of life. There would also be fewer or smaller capitalists in the land; and, instead of our present beautiful gradation, we should behold a general levelling of all conditions, and nearly the whole of human society reduced to one common state of penury and toil.

11. And it is not true, that, in virtue of elegance, and luxury, and leisure, being the inheritance of a few, there is not a blessing in the present system of things to the whole mass of society. Under the opposite system, there would be nearly one unbroken level, the whole of which behaved, in time, to be as sunk and degraded as is the state of our present labourers. Now it is a level, rising into frequent eminences, of greater or less height, and of radiance, more or less conspicuous. And what we affirm is, that, from this higher galaxy of rank and fortune, there are the droppings, as it were, of a bland and benignant influence on the general platform of humanity. There is one very palpable evidence of this in the moral effect of a residing gentry; and we might also allege the consequent economic good of such a distribution, seeing that the moral and the economic in society are so intimately blended. The truth is, that the very elevation of mind and manners, caught as if by infection from the higher, forms our best security against an extreme wretchedness in the lower orders. If the people were once inoculated with a higher taste for the comforts and decencies of life, the else difficult, or rather, unresolvable problem, of a secure and permanent sufficiency for all their wants, would receive its most effectual accom-

plishment. And we appeal to general observation, if the symptoms of such a taste are not greatly more frequent and conspicuous around the habitations of our rural aristocracy. And, independently of its virtue in raising and refining the general tone of the people, it is surely, reasoning on the capability of things, a vast accession to a community, when there is in it a quantity of mind disengaged for general speculation, and therefore, if under patriotic and enlightened direction, in a state for devising the best institutions and the best economy of things for the well-being of a nation. Law, and education, and charity, and all the collective interests of a state, are more likely to be put on their best footing—not, we admit, where arbitrary and despotic power stands associated with great property, but where regulated freedom and respectable property are blended. We feel quite assured, of every land of law and liberty, that, with an order of men possessing large and independent affluence, there is better security for the general comfort and virtue of the whole, than when society presents an aspect of almost unalleviated plebeianism. And it is of the utmost importance to the argument, that the breaking down of this affluence would ultimately do nothing for the enlarged sufficiency of the lower orders. Whatever beneficent effects, then, can with justice be ascribed to the existence and secure establishment of such an affluence—these we have all to the bargain. They form so much clear gain to the commonwealth; and though, at first sight, the whole good of it may appear to be absorbed by the children of fortune, there is, besides this absorption by them, a reflection on the commonwealth at large—a secondary influence, that is felt throughout the extent of society, and which goes down to the very humblest of its members.

12. For the best construction of a social edifice, in every large country like ours, we would have a king upon the throne—not rising like a giant among the pigmies, or as an unsupported May-pole in the midst of a level population; but borne up by a splendid aristocracy, and a gradation of ranks shelving downwards to the basement of society. We doubt if the other monarchy could stand; or if France, with its citizen king, amid a mighty and ever-increasing swarm of smaller and smaller agrarians, can maintain its present economy for a single generation. We think of our own political fabric, that it not only affords a vastly greater number of noble and graceful spectacles, in the minarets and the blazing pinnacles which crowd its elevation—

but that, abstracting from the degradation which has been caused by its accursed law of pauperism, it would have had a more elevated basement in its well-conditioned peasantry, than any other country or kingdom of the civilized world. It is not for the sake of its ornaments and its chivalry alone—it is not for the sake of these chiefly, that we want the high rank and fortune of our aristocracy to be upholden. It is because we think there is a soul in chivalry, which, though nursed in the bosom of affluence, does not cloister there, but passes abroad from mind to mind, and lights up a certain glow of inspiration throughout the mass of a community. Let it only be a land of intelligence and freedom—and we think that, where there are nobles, the common people are not so ignoble; and that, while the property of the rich, though scattered, as by the law of France, into innumerable fragments, would not add by a single iota to the average comfort of our plebeian families; yet the presence of the rich infuses a spirit that, by dignifying their characters, enables them, through the medium of their own habits and exertions, to dignify their condition also. It is thus, we hold, that there are materials in Britain, for the composition, altogether, of a finer, and higher, and happier society, than there are in America; and that, without one taint of the pusillanimous in the spirit of our people, there might be a deference to rank, and withal a truer greatness of soul and sentiment, than republicanism, with all its coarse and boastful independence, can ever realize. We would therefore, on the whole, leave the existing framework of our own community undisturbed; and, instead of letting down the peerage of our realms to the external condition of our peasantry, we should rather go forth among the peasantry, and do all that lies within the compass of education, both to elevate their standard of comfort, and to pour such a moral lustre over them, as might equalize them, either to peers or to princes, in all the loftiest attributes of humanity.

13. We again recur to the absenteeism of Ireland, in support of our argument. The crying evil of that land, is not that the wealth of its proprietors is withdrawn from its shores. Even though detained and spent amongst them, yet, did the people continue as reckless, and of as degraded habits as now; then, through intervention of the sure principle of population, we should only behold a larger, but in every respect as wretched a community. The benefit of a residing gentry lies, not in the money which they spend, but in the moral and humanizing

effect of their presence. The peasantry, under this influence, would soon cease to be so degraded; and through the medium, not of external aid, but of their own internal principles and tastes, would attain to a more secure and respectable sufficiency. The popular cry, and on sound economic grounds too, is for a residing gentry; yet, with marvellous dissonance thereto, there is another cry for the spoliation of the church, that would, in fact, annihilate the best supplement for a residing gentry, which Ireland at present enjoys; we mean a clergy bound, in a vast majority of instances, to dwell and to officiate among the people. There is also a well-founded cry against the absence of proprietors. But they are little aware, that the cry for a system of pauperism, is a cry for that which will rivet this calamity, and make it irrecoverable. We do not say, that a compulsory provision for indigence will banish its large landed proprietors from Ireland, but it will annihilate the order altogether. For the non-residence of the gentry, it will bring on what is far more hopeless—the non-existence of a gentry; when the population, the victims of the most insensate experiment, that, in opposition to all the lights both of observation and argument, was ever attempted by statesmen, will remain in as great destitution, and withal in greater helplessness than ever.

14. We know that there is a mighty force of sentiment and natural affection arrayed against the law of primogeniture. But here is the way in which we would appease these feelings, and make compensation for the violence done to them. We would make no inroad on the integrity of estates; or, for the sake of a second brother, take off a portion, to the extent of a thousand a year, from that domain of ten thousand a year, which devolved by succession on the eldest son of the family. We should think it vastly better, if, by means of a liberal provision in all the branches of the public service, a place of a thousand a year lay open to the younger son, whether in the law, or in the church, or in colleges, or in the army, or in any other well-appointed establishment, kept up for the good and interest of the nation. We would still have the estate to support the younger branches; yet that, not by the violation of its integrity, but by a more severe taxation than our politicians of the present day have the courage to impose. Under the one system, the second brother would have his thousand a year, but give no return for it in any kind of service. Under the other system, he would also have his thousand a year, and the public have the benefit of a duty

and a service from him to the bargain. Instead of a rustic idler, we should behold him a public functionary; and, under this arrangement, therefore, we should combine, with a provision for the younger branches of families, a greater efficiency and amount of public service; a remedy against the destitution of younger children, and withal, a better-served nation. The one system only proposes a single object—a provision for younger children; and this object, in the course of that indefinite comminution which must take place upon the territory, would at length be completely unattainable after a lapse of generations. The other system proposes a double object—a provision for younger children, along with a fully-equipped and full-paid agency in all the departments of national usefulness. And this object could be permanently upholden. The integrity of estates is not necessarily violated by a large taxation on the owners of them. Through the organ of government, each estate may be looked upon as loaded with jointures for the sake of the younger members of families; who, at the same time, instead of simple receivers, have to labour, in some vocation or other, for the benefit of the community. And believing as we do, that the real incidence of the taxes is upon land, we would enlist all the forces of natural sentiment and affection on the side of a larger revenue to government, and a larger allowance to public functionaries of all orders. We would infinitely prefer, that these feelings, generous and natural as they are, took a direction towards the increase of taxes, than towards the abolition of the law of primogeniture. But it were well, in the present delusion, if these taxes were laid directly and ostensibly upon land. The whole work of retrenchment, that is now the favourite cry of patriots, both in and out of parliament, proceeds, we think, on a short-sighted view, or rather a total misunderstanding of the real interests involved in the question. A large taxation is just a right corollary to the law of primogeniture. And the nibbling economy of those who would cut and curtail in all directions, is most perversely at variance with the consistent and comprehensive policy of every country where that law is in operation.

15. It will not for a moment be imagined, that, while we would apportion a much larger amount of the nation's wealth to the objects of public service, we contend for any hereditary or family right to that portion, on the part of the younger brothers of our aristocracy. It should lie open to the competition of all the worth and talent which may exist in any quarter

of society. In the exercise of a virtuous patronage, it should always be disposed of to those who can give the largest return for it, in the value of their services. It is because of the greater ascendancy which the public mind has over the counsels and the doings of government, than at any former period, that we feel both the safety and the advantage of a more largely-provided and better-paid agency in all the departments of the state, and of far more generous allowances to public and professional men. Now that the public mind has become more influential, we should like that the part it took were to direct the machinery of our national institutes, rather than to impair or to destroy it. This machinery the public will not grudge to see extended, after that, under a reformed system of finance, it shall have become patent to general observation—that, with the law of primogeniture, the whole expense of supporting it is really drawn from the eldest sons of our landed families. And we contend for no more, in behalf of the younger sons, than that they should be admitted on equal terms to the competitions of this then larger and wealthier preferment, along with men of the requisite intelligence and accomplishment from all other classes of the community.*

16. It may be asked, if there is such a benefit in the size of estates, how far ought that principle to be carried; and would it really be desirable, that the territory of our island were shared among a few large proprietors, each having a domain equal to a principedom, and so with the entire annihilation of such a gentry as compose the actual landed aristocracy of Britain? We admit, though the subject be, from its nature, not very definable, that there is an extreme in that direction too, against which, however, we have a sufficient practical security in the existing order of things. But with the law of equal division in families, there is no security against the rapid descent of the nation into the opposite extreme. The land would speedily be frittered into shreds; and, under the load of an agrarian population, ever augmenting and accumulating, the best interests of the community would most certainly be overborne. Having these views, it is with us a theme of gratulation, that there should be a law of primogeniture; but we would earnestly contend, that this law, and a liberal provision for all public functionaries, should go hand in hand. This is the way of reconciling the highest interests of the public

* It is thus that taxation accomplishes what ought to be the popular object, of placing within the reach of general society, a portion of that wealth which would otherwise be restricted to hereditary proprietors.

with the rights of families; and that without injury to any of those economic objects, against which all taxation, however imposed, has been so unfairly set in opposition. We rejoice, more particularly, to think, that a church may be upheld in all its endowments, without being, in any right sense of the word, an incubus upon the nation—while it serves to mitigate the hardship which has been imputed to the law of primogeniture. We are aware that this is not the precise and proper argument for a religious establishment; yet, convinced, upon other grounds, of the vast utility of such an institution, we cannot but regard it as one beneficent consequence of the law in question, that it enlists on the side of a church the warmest affections of nature, the sympathies and feelings of domestic tenderness. We are aware of the reckless and unprincipled patronage to which this has given rise; and that a provision for younger sons has been viewed as the great, if not the only good of a church, by many who hold the dispensation of its offices. It is this which has alienated from the establishment so large a portion of the community; and if the abuse of an institute were a sufficient argument for its destruction, perhaps the Church of England will be found to have sealed its own doom, and to have brought upon itself the sentence of its own overthrow. But we still hope the impetuous spirit of the times may be tempered with discrimination, and that it will be judged better to direct the machinery than to destroy it. An apparatus, in its own nature beneficial, may have been perverted to evil; yet the way is not to demolish or cast it aside, but to regulate its movements.

NOTE.—We appeal to the views of this chapter, § 3, as a specimen of the command which our division of labourers into three classes gives over questions of greatest practical interest. The effect on the public revenue which would ensue from an abolition of the law of primogeniture is, we trust, quite palpable from § 5. But what we chiefly value in this law is, (§ 8 and 9,) that it reconciles the benefits and all the best objects of a high conservatism with the most valuable rights and interests of the people. It is because Conservatives and Radicals look each to their own special objects with but half an eye (§ 10, 11, 12,)—that they stand arrayed in such fierce hostility against each other—and did they but take a comprehensive enough view of society and the relation of its various parts, they might come at length to understand how much their real interests are at one.

In particular, § 13, they who expatiate, and with so much justice, on the evils of a non-resident gentry, would not clamour so loudly for a law under the operation of which they would soon be landed in the still greater and then incurable evil of a non-existing gentry. And still more, if they but understood the real incidence of taxation, they would give up their indignancy against a large and liberal provision for all the branches of the public service, as in § 14—where the law of primogeniture is affirmed in vindication of a great national revenue, for national objects. Such a revenue, in fact, may be regarded as a common good, expended for the public benefit, and open to the competition of all for a share in it who may have talent or patriotism for the public service.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON EMIGRATION.

1. THE felt necessity of emigration from a country is, in itself, a practical evidence that its resources are not illimitable. We may be assured, that if other remedies for the destitution of the people were at hand, they would have the preference over this. Could home-colonization, or the invention of new employments, or the increase of capital, or the openings of foreign trade, have furnished ready and withal indefinite resources for our population, we should never have witnessed to any great extent among them, a disposition to renounce the scenes of their infancy, with all the charms and associations of home, for the chances or the perils of distant and unknown lands. We have already endeavoured to prove how it is, that the commutation of taxes and tithes must make room for a larger population; though that room would soon be occupied to the full; and after a brief season of general prosperity among all the classes of society, there would ensue the same straitness and difficulty as before. Proving that, in every direction, and on all sides, there are limits at home, which throw back, as it were, the tide of our increasing numbers on the general community, and produce a feeling of pressure and discomfort there; against which, relief is sought by an efflux of population from a land that is too narrow for them. We have now only to estimate the strength and the efficacy of this expedient, after

which we shall enter, though briefly at this time, on the question of public charity; the last of all the expedients, which, if tried, and found wanting, would seem to land us in the conclusion—that, either there is a helpless and irremediable necessity for extreme and extensive want in human society, from which, by no practicable device, can society be protected; or that, if there be a specific against this overwhelming calamity, it must be different from any of the expedients which shall have yet passed under our review.

2. When the agriculture of a country arrives at its limit, there is a pressure that would not be felt, but for the tendency of the population to increase. But long before this limit is reached, is the pressure felt; because the tendency to an increase in the population, exceeds the rate of enlargement in the agriculture. The probability, then, is, that even emigration will not remove, will not eventually alleviate, the distresses of our land. The same cause which outstrips the enlargement within, may also outstrip the efflux abroad. Certain it is, that the colonies of Britain, notwithstanding their perpetual draft on the families of the mother country, (and many of them but too powerful absorbents for our excess of population, from the balefulness of their climates,) have still left us in a condition of difficulty; scarcely, if at all, lessened by the outlet which they afford every year to such a number of adventurers. But this may be made a matter of computation. The capability of increase in the population, may be estimated with tolerable accuracy; and the extent of emigration requisite for lightening the pressure of our redundancy, may be estimated along with it; and that, with an approximation to the truth, sufficiently near for the purposes of a practical argument.

3. Population, when permitted its full development, by an unbounded supply of the means of subsistence, can double itself in fifteen years; and we proceed on a computation greatly more moderate than this, when we affirm, that for an emigration, sufficient to allow an unchecked multiplication of our species in the British islands, there behoved to be at least half a million of human beings transported annually from our shores. The expense of so mighty a transportation, and the magnitude of that immense flotilla, which would need to be upheld for the business of these annual shipments, are of themselves sufficiently startling; and might well disabuse us of the idea, that any very effectual relief can be ministered, by this expedient, for the wants

of our population. But we may properly add the ever-increasing difficulty of new settlements abroad, after that the most accessible and best portions of territory had been occupied. It is no great recommendation of a scheme, that the longer it is prosecuted, it is always becoming more impracticable; insomuch, that every successive year must witness another augmentation both to the cost and the labour of it. Neither can we admire, as a sound or lasting expedient, for keeping right the overflowing population of one country, a process that hastens onward every other country to the same consummation. We should greatly prefer an expedient that would equally apply to all countries; and that would not lose its efficacy, even though the globe should throughout be peopled up to its capabilities; and the millennial era had arrived, at which we beheld a general fulness and prosperity in all lands. But the near, the practical consideration is, that the relief afforded even now, by all the emigration which even the most sanguine of its advocates can count upon, is but an insignificant fraction of what a population, left to its own unchecked spontaneity, would need; and every future year, this relief would become more insignificant.

4. Now here is the evil of every partial, and, at the same time, ostensible relief, against the effects of a mischief that is brought on by the general recklessness of the population. It adds to that recklessness; and so may aggravate the pressure on the one hand, more than it alleviates that pressure upon the other. This we hold to be the precise operation of a public charity, instituted for the supplies of general indigence. The power of it is overrated, greatly overrated, beyond the product of it; and so it relaxes the economy and the providential habits of the people to such a degree, that it falls greatly short of supplying the poverty which itself may be said to have created. It is thus too, that in a country, the system of whose interests and affairs is much complicated by the multiplication and variety of its resources, we should look for a more oppressive redundancy of people, than in a country of simpler economy; in Britain, for example, where the people have commerce and colonies, and the demands of various and lucrative professions to count upon, than in Norway, where the necessary limit of population is not so obscured by complexity; and which limit, therefore, in consequence of being more distinctly seen, is more decisively acted upon. It is thus that the growth and enlargement of towns, though powerful absorbents for the population bred in country

parishes, has not relieved, has, we think, on the contrary, augmented the pressure that is felt in the country; and it is thus also, that the rise of colonies, the demand from both the Indies for men from Britain, has excited, we do believe, a greater overflow of population, than it can possibly draw away from us. And we have just as little faith in the virtue of emigration. We dread, that any vacancies left behind it, would not only be filled, and that immediately; but filled in a greater degree of compression than before. It would form just another of those resources, which, by adding to the general delusion, might aggravate the general distress. A very slight relaxation in the providential habits of the people—and more especially in the habit of providential marriages—would suffice for this. And though the spontaneous emigration of families should be left to itself, we do fear, that a public, a proclaimed, a national system of emigration, would but enhance the evil it was devised to remedy.

5. Whenever emigration prevails, it is the evidence of a country where the population presses on the means of subsistence, from which pressure it seeks to be relieved by successive discharges. We believe that a regular system of emigration would certainly bring on and perpetuate such a state; and surely far more desirable, than that a people should thus press on the limit of their own home resources, were it, that they kept comfortably and somewhat largely within the limit. The effect of emigration has been compared to that of a safety-valve. But a safety-valve in the boiler, implies a great force of distension within; and surely it were better for every land that the distension were prevented, than that it were only relieved and kept down to a certain maximum, which cannot be sustained without a strongly felt violence and discomfort within the borders of the territory. The alternative may be stated within a short compass. It were better that the population should not be carried up to the extreme of what the country can bear, by the recklessness of the people, than that it should be kept down to that point by emigration. We may be sure that every country is throughout in a suffering condition, which requires to be disgorged, from year to year, of its redundant families. There may be a few spirits alive to the charms and the romance of adventure, to whom emigration would prove a lure rather than a terror. But, averagely speaking, there must be a great experience of distress and destitution, to account for the voluntary exile of thousands from the land of their forefathers. It must be no

light evil from which they are making their escape, when, in the act of doing so, they forego all the recollections of their boyhood, the scene and the dwelling-place of their dearest intimacies. Now, in respect of the economic condition of a people, it may be said, with peculiar justness, that if one member suffer, all the members suffer along with it. The destitution which forces a certain number, though it should be a proportionally small one, from the land of their nativity, is the symptom of a general destitution and distress through the country at large, or at least in the profession to which they belong. And rather, infinitely rather than a system of things which encourages a population up to the necessity of emigrating, would we prefer, that, in virtue of smaller numbers, the population fell somewhat beneath the employment which remunerates, or the food that sustains them.

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

houses; but not without first inflicting a sore degradation on the price of labour, and, what is worse, continuing to overhang, as by a perpetual load, the labour market; thus depressing, and that permanently, the comfort and sufficiency of the whole body of labourers. And the very same, we predict, would be the consequence of a regular and extensive plan of emigration. It would at all times encourage into being, a certain fractional excess of people, beyond the number who can be accommodated in decent sufficiency within the borders of their own land. And so the alternative would need to be entertained, whether they will prefer an exile abroad, or the pittance of a scanty remuneration for their industry at home. But it is an alternative not confined to them. There are not two rates of wages; one for the overplus, whom, indeed, it were impossible specifically and individually to single out; and another for the general mass of the operatives in society. All are brought down equally; and, as in the other instances, this attempt regularly and systematically to provide for a small aliquot part, ends in the infliction of a universal calamity. So utterly powerless, or rather, so positively mischievous, is every expedient for the amelioration of the people, that but adds, through the medium of their own improvidence, to the excess of their numbers. The high road to their collective comfort and independence, and there is no other, is their collective virtue, and intelligence, and worth. Off from this, both they and the patriots, or philanthropists who care for them, will find themselves alike helpless and bewildered. They may institute a thousand devices—schemes of benignant promise—smiling charities of goodly pretension and gracious aspect. They will all terminate in nothing, or worse than nothing. They smile but to betray.

7. We feel quite assured, then, that the country is in a dis-tempered condition, which is in the state of a vessel constantly running over. Rather than this, it should be in a state somewhat short of fulness. That policy must be very questionable which provides an egress, but at the same time encourages an ingress, that will certainly equal, and even tends to overpass it. In other words, emigration is anything rather than a specific for the wants of a country; and just because it stimulates population. The abstracting process will yield no relief, if the replacing process be more than proportionally excited thereby. And amid the general impotency of this and all the former expedients for the permanent comfort and wellbeing of the population, we

feel shut up as to our only specific, to the operation of that moral check which regulates and restrains the increase of our species.

8. Yet though emigration, absolutely and of itself, can do no permanent good, but the contrary; there are, however, certain transition states in the history of a nation, and certain processes of domestic and economical reform, which perhaps it may subserve as a temporary expedient. Certain it is, that no scheme of emigration holds out such an incentive to population as does the scheme of public charity which obtains in England; and we have sometimes thought, that if the more innocent of the two schemes could for a time be rendered subsidiary to the abolition of the more hurtful one, it might be the fit subject of a great national experiment.* Emigration, though futile and ineffective of itself, may still, as subsidiary to other schemes, be worthy of all the attention of government. It is well to discriminate between those purposes to which it is utterly incompetent, and those to which it may at least act as an important auxiliary. When advocated on the former ground, it lies open to a precipitate rejection; while, if viewed on the latter ground, it may recommend itself even to our soundest economists, as a great and beneficent scheme of national policy. When considered separately, and as a mere expedient for taking off an excess of population, we deem it to be utterly insignificant and useless. But not so, when conjoined with other schemes of internal or domestic economy; and rightly adjusted, not to the impracticable object of clearing away the excess of our people by yearly abstractions, but to the higher and more hopeful object of preventing that excess.

9. It is thus that it might be brought to bear, in England, on the reformation of their pauperism. There can be no doubt that the provision held out by this system of charity has slackened the operation of the preventive check all over the country. It has multiplied and precipitated marriages in every part of the land. It has superseded the prudence and economy of the people; and such is the relaxation of these habits, that a fearful burden, both of vice and wretchedness, now lies upon the commonwealth, with little prospect indeed of any alleviation.

* We are sensible that, by this allusion to pauperism, we anticipate the regular progress of our subjects; but we feel that it might be done without violence, seeing that the majority of our readers must be already enough occupied with the evils of the system. Furthermore, our remarks on pauperism in the next chapter will be but succinct and general, it being a topic on which we have sufficiently dilated in former publications.

The legislator, as if hopeless of a remedy, seems afraid to look at it. The spreading and deepening still further of a great popular corruption is the inevitable result of letting it alone; and yet the attempt to meddle with it appears to carry along with it the tremendous hazard of a great popular violence.

10. We think that the pauperism of England, even in its mildest, and some contend, its original form, has done great mischief. To have vested with a legal claim of relief, even the impotent and the aged, must have had its effect in creating a more reckless and improvident peasantry, and so speeding unnaturally onward the rate of population. But the more recently admitted claim of the able-bodied to relief has had a still more direct and obvious tendency the same way. It, in truth, acts as an immediate bounty upon marriage. It is no restraint upon the parties in this step that they are without wages. In many of the English counties they have recourse upon the poor-rate, and obtain an allowance from it for each member of the household. In these circumstances we are not to wonder at the immense number of juvenile marriages in England. The merest stripplings have been known to enter into this alliance. They even threaten the parish vestries, that, if not more liberal in their dispensations of relief, they will marry and bring upon them the additional burden of their wives and families. In some instances the vestries have felt themselves obliged to rent, and even to furnish houses for the reception of the newly-married couple. Who can question the effects of such a system? The whole of English pauperism may be regarded as a system of artificial incentives to population. But that part of it more especially which consists in the maintenance of able-bodied labourers without employment, and which therefore acts as an encouragement to all the youth of both sexes in the land, supplies the most direct and powerful of these incentives.

11. For ourselves, we do not approve of the late partial attempts which have been made for the reformation of English pauperism, by separating the question of a legal relief for the able-bodied from the question of a legal relief for the impotent poor; since we hold that there is a practicable method for gradually getting rid of the whole. In either way, however, emigration might be of powerful avail as an auxiliary; and may, in particular, be adapted in a way peculiarly beneficial to the case of those able-bodied poor who make application to the vestry, either because they are without employment, or because

they receive for it inadequate wages. It were well could the alternative of emigration be offered to all such applicants; in which case, the legislature might be less scrupulous in repealing, even *instantly*, the application of the poor's fund to the relief of able-bodied labourers; or, if they choose to go more gradually to work, it were still an important enactment, that all new applicants from among the able-bodied, all who made application for the first time should be thus dealt with—that is, should be refused parish relief, but should at the same time be met by the offer of certain facilities for emigration.

12. When a scheme of emigration is thus tacked, as it were, to a scheme for the reformation of pauperism, it changes altogether its character and tendency. It, by itself, would stimulate population even beyond the relief which it could effectuate. But, when thus conjoined, it might help to restore the preventive check to its proper force; and do a great deal more by its salutary influence on the habits of our people at home, than by all its successive shipments of the redundant families abroad. Even the latter service, however, is important in this view that by it are chiefly carried off the breeders of the future generation—the parents of incipient families, who at present make application because of their increasing numbers—or the young men who meditate, and even menace the parish vestries with an impending marriage, that they might make good a larger claim upon the poor's rate. Every cargo of these effectuates not only a certain, but a great prospective relief to the land—a relief which can only be neutralized by a still further relaxation in the prudential habits of those who are left behind, even that relaxation for which the system of pauperism is so deeply responsible, but which every encroachment upon the system must at least serve to diminish, if not to do away.

13. It is, therefore, to its wholesome reaction on the prevalent and popular habit in regard to matrimony, that we should look for the chief benefit of any such compound arrangement as is now contemplated. Emigration, separately, would cause no such reaction; but emigration, coupled with the abolition of all right or claim to parish relief at home, would operate, and that instantly, as a check to those juvenile marriages which are now so frequent in England. A young couple often will marry, though altogether without means of their own, on the prospect of immediate accommodation, however scanty, being provided for them by the parish at home. But it is utterly a mistake to

imagine, that there is aught half so alluring to their eyes, in the prospect of a fearful ocean and an unknown wilderness beyond it. Of the ten who would marry, in the certainty of its being followed up by a parish allowance, we feel confident that there are nine who would not do the same thing, with no other prospect than that of having to renounce for ever the land of their childhood. They would pause, and cast about, and wait the means of their own independent maintenance, ere they should throw themselves upon a necessity so revolting to nature. In other words, they would feel compelled to a postponement of the matrimonial alliance, or to that measure which, after all, is the great, nay, the only step by which to resolve the problem of relief for the miseries of an overpeopled land. The refusal of parochial aid to the able-bodied, might safely be coupled with the alternative offer of assistance for their emigration; for, in the vast majority of instances, the alternative would not be taken: and so the people, committed to their own expedients and their own capabilities, would simply be restored to that state in which we behold the workmen and the peasantry of every other country in Europe. The labour-market of England, freed from the disturbing force of its present artificial pauperism, would henceforth be left to the operation of natural principles; and, in a few years, not by the drainage without of emigration, but by a resurrection within of prudential habits, it would cease to be so oppressed and overladen by the number of labourers. It is when thus adjusted to other and greater schemes of reform in our domestic economy, that the scheme of emigration becomes really hopeful. While viewed barely as an expedient for taking off the redundant families of our land, we fear that it can only be looked upon with distrust; and that all those who are most enlightened in the philosophy of public and political affairs can have no value for it. But it instantly acquires a character of worth and of importance, when adapted to the object of beneficial legislation upon so high an interest as the pauperism of England; and if it should serve to reconcile both Parliament and the public to such enactments as would mitigate, if not do away, the evils of a system that has proved so hurtful to the comfort and the moral habits of the population. However slight our estimate may be of the absolute relief which emigration can afford, yet, regarded as subsidiary to the amendment of English pauperism, we should be sorry if the scheme were to be altogether lost sight of; it being possessed of those capabilities, and sus-

ceptible of those bearings, which make it altogether worthy of being entertained as a great and comprehensive scheme of national policy.

14. For, *first*, however desirable the enactment may be which should abolish the application of the poor's fund to the able-bodied, yet there is an apparent harshness or inhumanity in the proceeding fitted to revolt both a generous public and a generous Parliament. Now, emigration is fitted to remove this moral barrier in the way of a most salutary reform. The men who are thus discarded from their wonted resources, are not thrown into a state of absolute helplessness. They have emigration between them and entire want. There is something given, or rather something offered, for that which is taken away. It is not by a deprivation, but by a compromise, that they are dealt with. There are many of our legislators who would never have consented to the deprivation, yet may perhaps agree to the compromise. And this scheme of emigration will have effected a high service, if it shall but speed onward a right and a wise legislation, in a matter that ranks among the very highest of our national questions, and than which there is none wherein the strength and prosperity of the kingdom are more vitally interested.

15. And, *secondly*, there is nothing which should very much startle us in this scheme on the score of its expense. We believe that the number who will emigrate is greatly overrated. We are not to form our estimate upon this subject by the number of those who have enlisted themselves as the members of Emigration Societies. Many even of these, however zealous and active now in their applications to government, would feel the preponderant attraction of home, when the outfit, and the voyage, and the everlasting leave of their native land, all looked at them in good earnest. It is true that necessity will force men to any sacrifice; and we can scarcely imagine a better test of such necessity than this offer of emigration. It will be found, then, we predict, that a great many of those who are now most clamorous for this relief will not avail themselves of it; and that the vast majority of those able-bodied in England, who at this moment are receiving parish allowances, would discover some other method of finding for themselves, rather than encounter the peril of an untried enterprise, and the pain of an eternal separation from the country which gave them birth. On these accounts, government might, with all safety, meet the expense of such a scheme; and it is an expense that every year

would lessen. For the colonies abroad, in proportion as their richer and more accessible territory was occupied, will hold out continually weaker allurements to emigration; and the country at home, in proportion as it was lightened of its surplus families (not by abstraction, however, but by non-production, as we have already explained), will have stronger attractions, in the ameliorated state of the people, for detaining them within its own shores. It is thus that the number of applications, so great, perhaps, at the first, as to appear quite formidable, would perpetually decline; and it would be found that all the expense incurred, if indeed subservient to the proposed amendment in the system of pauperism, were the cheap purchase of so mighty a reformation.

16. But, *thirdly*, the expense might not be defrayed by government at all. It might be advanced by government on the security of the land, and repaid, after a period of years, by the emigrants themselves. Or it might be paid by the parishes from which the families do emigrate; and turn out, after all, a cheap substitute for the far heavier expense of supporting these families at home. Still, however, we hold the chief recommendation of the scheme to lie not in any primary or absolute virtue which it possesses of itself, but in the important function which belongs to it, as the auxiliary of another scheme for ridding the country of its greatest moral and political nuisance. We think, that, if only adapted to this object, the government might refrain from all that awkward legislation, by which it is proposed to save the country from the recurrence of that excessive population under which it labours. There is no doubt, that so long as pauperism holds out an artificial encouragement to marriage, the gap which any emigration, however large, may leave behind it will speedily be filled and followed up by as great an overflow as before. But the way to correct this is not to lay restraint on the erection of cottages—not to neutralize the artificial encouragement by an artificial prohibition—not to counteract the violent or unnatural legislation in one direction, by the opposing force of a legislation as violent and as unnatural in another direction. The way to get rid of this whole complication, is to abolish the one, and refrain from the other. By simply doing away the application of the poor's fund to the support of able-bodied labourers, you restore the preventive check to its own proper and original energy; after which the case may fearlessly be confided to the workings of liberty and nature.

NOTE.—It is all-important to remark, as in § 5 and 6, that the destitution which forces a few to emigrate is the symptom of a like destitution among many; and that emigration therefore cannot be the specific for a permanent amelioration of the state of the lower classes. We explain in § 8 and § 12 what the causes are, by which nevertheless it may be adopted as a scheme of subserviency to another more general and effective scheme for the good of the people.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON A COMPULSORY PROVISION FOR THE INDIGENT.*

1. THE last topic which we propose to discuss, in this catalogue of expedients for the removal of want from the human family, and the secure establishment of a general prosperity and abundance in its place—is a legal and compulsory provision for the poor. It stands distinguished from all the former expedients, in one important particular. Its object is, not the creation, but the division, of wealth. Its proposal, unless in so far as it seeks employment for the poor, is, not to create additional produce, but to share the existent produce of the land more equally. It opens up no new resources; neither does it stimulate nor impart greater fertility to the old ones. It proceeds, not in the way of production, but in the way of partition; and, without enlarging the country's stock, would part it differently from before. We have tried to demonstrate the futility of all the other schemes, when taken by themselves, for the economic amelioration of the species—on the ground that, without the moral check by which

* In excuse for the very rapid survey of pauperism here, we beg to state, that elsewhere the subject has been treated by us at much greater length and detail. The following are the titles of the various publications:—"The Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation,"—"Speech before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, explanatory of the measures which have been successfully prosecuted in St. John's Parish, Glasgow, for the extinction of its compulsory Pauperism,"—"Evidence given (by us) before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1830, on the State of the Poor in Ireland,"—"The Influence of Parochial Associations for the Moral and Spiritual Good of Mankind." But, perhaps, the most complete view of our principles and methods in regard to the management of the poor, and with the least expense of time or labour on the part of the reader, may be had in a pamphlet entitled, "Statement in regard to the Pauperism of Glasgow, from the experience of Eight Years."

to restrain the numbers of mankind, the addition made to human subsistence would speedily be overtaken, or swallowed up in the tide of an advancing population. But, in the scheme now under review, we behold no addition made to the stock of subsistence; and it may well discharge us from the obligation of an instant faith in its efficacy, when we, moreover, think that, of all the expedients, it is the most fitted to destroy the moral check, and so to call forth an augmented population, without the benefit of any augmented produce, by which to meet the new demands itself had created.

2. It is evident, that every levy upon property for the support of the indigent, trenches on the means of its owners for the employment and maintenance of the disposable population. There is no new provision created under such an economy. A part of the old provision is simply transferred, or withdrawn, from the sustenance of one class to the sustenance of another class. Every additional impost that is laid upon me in the shape of poor's rate, lessens my ability to support those industrious who are remunerated for their services by my expenditure. Supplies are provided for the destitute in one quarter of society, at the expense, not of my enjoyments alone, but of privations to those who minister these enjoyments in another quarter of society. And, accordingly, it has been well observed, that, for all the visible relief effected by a poor's tax, there is as much of real though unseen poverty created among those, who have not yet entered within the territory of pauperism, but stand, a countless and untold multitude, around the very margin of it. The distress is not swept off from the face of the community. It is only shifted to another, and generally a far more deserving class of sufferers—to a mass of respectable families on the verge of destitution; struggling against the hard necessity of descending amongst the throng of sturdy applicants for a legalized charity; and all the more hopeless of relief, that the springs of gratuitous benevolence have been well nigh dried up, by the heavy impositions which the artificial or compulsory system has laid on the upper classes of society. It is thus, that, by a sort of festering and spreading operation, the sphere of destitution is constantly widening in every parish, where the benevolence of love has been superseded by the benevolence of law. Generally speaking, every year, or at least every decade of years, the pauperism, like a moral leprosy, makes a wider sweep among the families than before.

3. We are not to wonder at such an effect, when we advert to the mighty stimulus which this system of public charity gives to population. It releases the people from all care or concern about the consequences of their precipitate matrimony. This step is not delayed as in other countries, till the necessary outfit and preparation for a family establishment shall have been completed. All restraint is taken off, in the way of early marriages; and the people, abandoned to improvidence, multiply without limit, and beyond the capacity of the parish to find them in profitable employment. And the principle, on which a small excess in the number of labourers works a great reduction in the price of labour, then comes into sure operation. It is the same principle with that on which the price of necessaries fluctuates more largely, with minuter variations in their supply, than the price of luxuries. A man can more easily give up a fraction of his wonted allowance in the latter than in the former. He can more easily slacken his demand for the one, upon any short-coming in the supply, and so prevent an inordinate rise of price. But he cannot so well slacken his demand for the other; and so, in virtue of the more intense competition, there will be a disproportional rise in the price of the more important, because essential commodities. The price of bread will rise greatly more than a tenth, perhaps a third, though the crops should be deficient only by a tenth. And thus it is, though in a reverse way, that the price of labour falls greatly beyond any increase which may have taken place in the number of labourers. The demand for employment, when like to be deficient, is just as intense as is the demand for necessaries, when these are like to be deficient. Employment, in fact, is the great vehicle through which the people arrive at the necessaries of life; and when, by the superabundant supply of labour, there is a relative deficiency of employment, its wages will oscillate as largely in consequence, as does the price of the first necessaries of existence. A very slight overplus of workmen, will create a very sensible and general reduction in the price paid for their work; and thus, by the connexion which obtains between a system of pauperism, and an increase, even though it should be small, in the numbers of the people, is pauperism responsible for a very sore depression in the condition and circumstances of the whole body.*

* And as a small increase in the numbers of the people might operate a large depression in their circumstances, so might a small reduction in their numbers operate a large relief. An improvement in their moral and prudential habits would very speedily effect an im-

4. There is no such effect to be apprehended from the ministrations of spontaneous and individual benevolence, injudicious though it occasionally be in its objects and its doings. There is no such system or certainty in its operations, as would lead to the same general dependence that is now felt in England, on the allowances of a legal charity. Individual charity can withdraw itself at pleasure, and will naturally decline the protection and encouragement of the worthless. But worthlessness, and that too of the grossest description, can compel, in its own behalf, the dispensations of the legal charity, and cast upon it the burden of all its own extravagance and folly. We have no such consequence to fear, from the fortuitous and free gratuities of the philanthropist, as from the regulated ministrations of the parish vestry, which are conducted irrespective of character, and require no other qualification than the actual indigence of the applicant. In the concerns of private benevolence, there is a delicacy felt on the one side, and a discrimination exercised upon the other; which, confined withal to incidental cases, form effectual guarantees against any general relaxation of moral or providential habits, as the fruit of its liberalities. But the benevolence of law holds out a wholesale bounty and temptation to improvidence. It has changed the timid supplications of want, into so many stout and resolute demands for justice. The cry of the distressed few for pity, has been strangely transformed by it, into the cry of a whole population for the redress and rectification of their grievances. All the tenderness of charity on the one hand, and all its delicacy on the other, have been put to flight, by this metamorphosis of a matter of love, into a matter of angry litigation; and we now behold the formidable array of a multitude, fired with a sense of oppression against the upper classes of society, when, in fact, it is the oppression of their own numbers that has sunk them into a state of abject prostration, from which, while the present system continues, no wisdom and no benevolence of man can save them.

5. This system of legal charity is replete with all sorts of mischief. In the first place, by a direct tendency to multiply its objects, there is more of unprovided want in every region it lights upon, than there would have been without its ministrations. Beyond the margin of its operations, there is a far greater mass

provement in their economic condition; when, with not much fewer people than before, we should behold this change in the distribution of them—a larger secondary and a smaller disposable class of labourers.

of unreached and unrelieved misery, than we should have had *in toto* had no such system been instituted. In other words, public charity, so far from narrowing the territory of human wretchedness, has widened and extended it; and thus left a greater field than it at first entered on, for the exercise of that private charity, which it has at the same time weakened, both in its means and its motives. It has deadened, as is patent to all observation, the charity of relatives, the charity of immediate neighbours, the charity of the affluent. It has therefore wrought a double mischief, creating a greater amount of indigence than before; and congealing the sources, whence, in a natural and undisturbed state of things, this indigence would have looked for its relief, and not been disappointed. By every step it moves in advance, instead of approaching its primary and professed object, which was to curtail the sufferings of the poor, and if possible overtake them, it recedes to a greater and more hopeless distance away from it. In its economic design, which was to lessen or altogether remove the wants of the population, it has been foiled, and that most signally—so much, that, in very proportion to the largeness of its dispensations, do we behold a more straitened and distressed, and withal, a greatly more dissatisfied peasantry.

6. But if it have deviated from the true economic interest, it has more widely deviated from a still higher object of patriotism, even the moral interest of society. So intimately blended, indeed, are these two elements, that in every step of that degenerating process, which a compulsory provision for the poor never fails to originate, the economic and the moral deterioration go hand in hand. For how it is that indigence has been so multiplied under this system? Not alone by the imprudence which it has generated; as may be seen in the reckless marriages, and in the relaxed industry and economy of the people. But also in the vice which it has generated; the low and loathsome dissipation; the profligacy of both sexes; with all the mischief which proceeds from idleness, and through which the pauperism of England has become so deeply responsible for its immoralities and its crimes. And how is it, again, that charity has waxed cold? Because law has endeavoured, however unsuccessfully, to cut off the occasions and the calls which nature had provided for its exercise. Hence the abandonment of children by their parents, and the desertion of parents by their children back again. Hence the frequent spectacle, in every parish, of runaway husbands, and of nearest relatives alienated in affection, because released from

the obligations of duty to each other. And not only have the ties of relationship been broken, but the ties and sympathies of neighbourhood. The charity of law has superseded the charities both of home and neighbourhood. By absolving the people from all mutual care, it has well-nigh stifled within them all the feelings of mutual kindness. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is the question practically put by those whom nature designed to be the guardians and the helps of each other; it being a question prompted by the lying promises of the system under which they live, and which has undertaken, though it never can fulfil, the guardianship of them all. And it has not only weakened the cement which binds together the contiguous parts of the social edifice, but it has effected a menacing disruption or rent between the higher and the lower divisions of it. There is in England a gulf of separation between the rich and the poor, exemplified, we believe, in no other land; where the parties regard each other as natural enemies—the one challenging what they feel to be their rightful allowances; the other resisting what they fear to be interminable, and at length ruinous demands. The barriers of property have given way before the tide of an unrestrained population; and there is now a close and fierce conflict, between a sense of rightful possession on the one side, and the unappeased urgencies and wants of an ever-increasing multitude upon the other. The poor look to the rich as hard-hearted oppressors, detaining with stern gripe what nature and humanity pronounce to be theirs; the rich look to the poor as so many poachers on their domain. Compassion on the one side, and gratitude on the other, are alike unknown. The golden line of life, reaching from the apex of society to its basement, is severed; nor can we imagine, in consequence, a state of greater precariousness than that into which this system of public charity has brought us; or one that bodes more fearfully for the good order, or rather the stability of the commonwealth. It has, in fact, vitiated and distempered the whole breath of society in England. There now sits an unnatural scowl on the aspect of the population, a resolved sturdiness in their attitude and gait; and, whether we look to the profane recklessness of their habits, or to the deep and settled hatred that rankles in their hearts, we cannot but read, in these moral characteristics of this land, the omens of some great and impending overthrow.

7. And it adds to our hopelessness, that the growing disposition on the part of rulers, is not to retrace this sore evil, but

rather to rivet and extend it. In the face of all the English experience, Ireland, we fear, is about to welcome the footsteps of this most baleful pestilence,—the worst visitor, in the midst of all her grievances and wrongs, that ever lighted on her shores. It is in those counties of England where public charity has done its uttermost, that distress lifts the most appalling outcry; and yet is this the very specific, which, with their eyes open, our statesmen are on the eve of administering, as their infallible remedy for the distress of Ireland. What has led to outrages of greatest atrocity in the one land, is to be transferred, and that with the design of quelling and allaying for ever, all outrage and discontent in the other land! The mightiest known stimulant of population, is now being brought to bear on the most over-peopled country in Europe. And to organize a nation yet in the wildness of its infancy, that system is to be introduced, which is evidently breaking up the frame-work of a society, where law, and civilization, and order, have had their abode for centuries. It is often by impulse, and not by reason, that public sentiment is drifted along; causing a tide in the affairs of men, which no wisdom, no experience can stem. There seems at times, a blind and headlong necessity even in the moral world, which can no more be withstood than the currents of the ocean; transitions in the history of nations, during which, man, as if struck by impotency, stands in passive and trembling abeyance, till the hurricane have blown over him; till the sweeping anarchy, resistless as the onset of the elements, have spent its violence, and the high ordinations of Providence are fulfilled.

8. In the treatment of this controversy, romance and reality have been confounded together; and the lessons of sober experience have been as little regarded, as if they were the reveries of unsubstantial imagination. What truth, for example, of firmer and homelier cast, or more remote from the visions of fairy land, than the strength of the parental and relative affections? Or what admits of being more familiarly verified, than the promptitude of that mutual sympathy and aid, which obtain in every neighbourhood, when some signal visitation of distress has come upon any of the families? It is by stifling the exercise of these principles, and laying arrest on these undoubted and universal processes, that a public and legalized provision for the poor has wrought one of its deadliest inflictions on the cause of humanity, by closing far kindlier and more effectual sources of relief than itself has opened. Yet this plain statement, capable though it

most decisively be, both of arithmetical, and observational proof, is ridiculed and resisted, just as if it were a fond or high-coloured illusion, drawn from some fictitious region of Arcadia. Shall we refrain, it is asked, from a tax on the Irish absentees, that scope and opportunity might be left for some rare or romantic elevation of virtue among the Irish peasantry? Now, the virtue for which we contend, in our opposition to a poor's law, is neither rare nor romantic. We object not to any amount of taxation on the landed absentees of Ireland, if the produce of it shall be usefully or even innocently applied. But, if applied in a legal and public way to the relief of indigence, we affirm, on the known laws of human nature, and on the grounds of a manifold experience, that—multiplying, with the one hand, the objects of destitution, and intercepting, with the other, those numerous, though unseen supplies, which circulate, at the bidding of nature, among the households, and throughout all the vicinities of the land—it will act, by a sort of two-edged malignity, in aggravating the individual distress, and along with it, the moral and political distempers of Ireland.

9. Moreover, the influence of a poor's law on the state of general comfort in a land is complicated with many other influences; and this has thickened still more the difficulties of the question. The common people of England stand palpably higher in the scale of enjoyment than those of Ireland; and this is enough for an impatient or immediate decision, with minds which have only room or comprehension for but one idea. It is forgotten that, irrespective either of the want or presence of a poor's law, the people of England and Ireland admit as little of being compared together, and differ as widely in their circumstances as the peasantry of Norway do from the straggling hordes of Kamschatka. The law, the commerce, the industry, the Protestantism, the advanced civilization of England, have elevated the habits and state of the general community there; and would have done so still higher, had it not been for the depressing and counteracting influence of their poor's laws. The misgovernment, the yet untutored rudeness, the want of humanizing intercourse between the higher and lower classes, the dark and degrading Popery which obtain in Ireland—have kept down the tastes and comforts of the general community there; and these would have sunk still lower, had a poor's law been superadded to the other causes of a people's degradation. The way to escape from the bewildering influence of this complexity is to

look to England singly, and compare the different parts of it ; or to Ireland singly, and compare the different parts of it. In the one country a poor's rate is universal ; and where do we find the most distressed and dissatisfied peasantry ? Just in the southern counties, where the levies and the expenditure of public charity are the largest—proving that the genuine effect of the system is to depress and not to elevate. In the other country, the want of a poor's rate is universal ; and where, again, do we find the least distress and the lightest burden of mendicity ? Just in those northern counties where a Protestant education and Protestant habits are to be found—proving, on the other hand, the omnipotence of moral causes, and that, after all, the true sources of a nation's wellbeing lie deeply seated in the mind and character of the population.

10. Could one divest himself of all philanthropy and patriotism, and place every human feeling in abeyance, save a mere philosophical interest in the question—he might hail the experiment of a poor's law in Ireland. But there were a cruelty in this, like that of the cold-blooded physiologist, who, in his experiments on animated nature, could inflict every species of torture for the verification of a doctrine. We believe the attempt, whenever it is made, will be a most instructive one—but at the fearful expense of greatly augmented distress, and at length of entire and uncontrollable anarchy to the land. With the consequent insecurity and fall of property, one of the greatest holds of social order will be broken ; and, in the scramble which must ensue, we can perceive no other result than the confusion and the conflicts, and withal, the growing penury and straitness which attach to a state of unlimited agrarianism. There will be a rapid equalization of fortunes—terminating, if not anticipated by some great political explosion, in the equality of a common and overwhelming wretchedness. Had England, in this goodly endeavour to assimilate Ireland to herself, but laboured to impart of her real and substantial blessings, and given to her sister island the light and the liberty and the industrious habits of her own population—this had been some atonement for the misrule of centuries. But instead of this she presents her with the virus of that moral gangrene wherewith herself is infected ; she deposits the seeds of that disease under which she is now ebbing onward to dissolution ; and, in the dotage of her own expiring weakness, holds out to the willing acceptance of a deceived people that which, under the semblance of a benefit

and a boon, is laden with the misery of future generations.*

11. But to return from this digression. So long as a compulsory provision for the poor is the established system of any country, the great, the only specific for its economic wellbeing is kept completely at abeyance. It is the sure and rapid advance of population which gives such powerlessness, or leaves such a short-lived efficacy to every other expedient. No augmentation of resources from without can keep head against the stimulated over-growth of this all-devouring energy from within. There may be perpetual accessions to the bulk, but none whatever to the comfort of society. A more unfortunate device could not have been imagined, by which to neutralize the good of all possible enlargements from whatever quarter they may be afforded to us. No enriching process, whether by agriculture or by home and foreign trade, or by the removal of existing burdens, will countervail that process by which, under the system of a bounty for the multiplication of the species, one and all of them must be so speedily overtaken. The pressure may for a time be slackened; or a few short respites of felt ease and enlargement may mark our successive advancements towards the state of a greater community than before. But the tide of population, and more especially when urged forward by pauperism, that arch-destroyer of all prudence and principle among the families, will keep us permanently sure of at least one unchanged and unchangeable element—and that is, as wretched a community as before. If, in virtue of a moral restraint, consequent on the growing taste and education of our people, their numbers could be kept sufficiently within the limit of their means; this of it-

* Some have assimilated an endowment for the relief of indigence to an endowment for the support of literary or Christian instruction. The two cases, so far from being at all alike in principle, stand in direct and diametric opposition to each other. We desiderate the latter endowment, because of the languor of the intellectual or spiritual appetency; inso-much that men, left to themselves, seldom or never originate a movement towards learning. We deprecate the former endowment, because, in the strength of the physical appetency, we have the surest guarantee that men will do their uttermost for food; and a public charity, having this for its object, by lessening the industry and forethought that would have been otherwise put forth in the cause, both adds to the wants and detracts from the real worth and virtue of the species. And, besides, there is no such strength of compassion for the sufferings of the moral or spiritual that there is for those of physical destitution. An endowment for education may be necessary to supplement the one, while an endowment for charity may do the greatest moral and economic mischief by superseding the other. Relatives and neighbours could bear to see a man ignorant or even vicious. They could not bear to see him starve.

self would be the unfailing guarantee of a general and widespread abundance, whether with or without any external augmentation. But with the utter recklessness engendered by a poor's law, all such hopes must be given to the wind. And whatever reforms may take place, whether in the political or economical systems of our land, let all taxes and tithes and monopolies and inequalities of right or privilege be done away, with the continuance of this single law, the power and promise of all these expedients will utterly come to nought; and we shall have no other prospect before us than one of helpless and ever-increasing deterioration.

12. But the full effects of such a system will be anticipated by its own violent overthrow. From its very nature it cannot last; containing, as it does, within itself, the sure seeds of dissolution. The radical error of a poor's law consists in its assigning the same treatment to an indeterminate, which is proper only to a determinate virtue. The virtue of humanity ought never to have been legalized, but left to the spontaneous workings of man's own willing and compassionate nature. Justice, with its precise boundary and well-defined rights, is a fit subject for the enactments of the statute-book; but nothing can be more hurtful and heterogeneous than thus to bring the terms or the ministrations of benevolence under the bidding of authority. This fatal mistake involves in it a great deal more than a mere scholastic incongruity, or but the commission of violence on an abstract principle. So nicely adapted is the mechanism of human society to the axioms of the most deeply, if but soundly philosophical jurisprudence, that any law which contravenes these, will soon betray the flaw in its principle, by the palpable mischief which it works on the face of the commonwealth. The claims of justice are definite and precise, and withal, strictly accordant to the natural sense of morality; so that the law which enforces these, while it compels the observance of certain intelligible limits and lines of demarcation, is acquiesced in by the general mind of society. But the law which would enforce charity can fix no limits, either to the ever-increasing wants of a poverty which itself hath created, or to the insatiable desires and demands of a population, whom itself hath corrupted and led astray. Under this system all is lax and precarious and indefinite. The holders of property can see no end to the exactions of pauperism. And the nurselings of pauperism, with their constantly-increasing number and necessities, will overpass

every limit in their aggressions upon property. The growing alarm on the one side, the growing distress upon the other, form the sure elements of an interminable warfare, which, if not prevented by timely reformation, must at length effervesce into an anarchy that will alike sweep off all the good and evil of present institutions, and make room on the desolated void for the foundations of a new-modelled commonwealth.

13. We should most gladly abjure this whole argument, could we think that the charity of law at all lessened the amount of human suffering, or that distress was not far more effectually as well as kindly met by the charity of spontaneous nature. Could the ministrations of relief have been provided for by law and justice, then compassion may have been dispensed with as a superfluous part of the human constitution; whereas the very insertion of such a feeling or tendency within us, is proof in itself, of a something separate and additional for it to do; of a distinct province in human affairs, within which this fine sensibility of the heart met with its appropriate objects, and, by its right acquittal of them, fulfilled the design which nature had in so endowing us. But by this unfortunate transmutation, this metamorphosis of a thing of love into a thing of law, this invasion by justice beyond its own proper domain on the field of humanity—nature has been traversed in her arrangements, and the office of one human faculty has been awkwardly and mischievously transferred to another. And the effect is just what might be always anticipated, when the laws and adaptations of Divine wisdom are contravened by the short-sighted policy of man. Justice should have been left to do the things of justice; and humanity to do the things of humanity. But by the aggression of the one upon the other, this beautiful and beneficent order has been thwarted, and the consequence has been a very sore aggravation to the ills of society. By the interference of law with the business of charity, a twofold mischief has been wrought. Human distress has been multiplied, and human compassion, its natural protector, has been weakened and paralysed. And by the truly unfortunate meeting of these two consequences, there has been left, as the compound and aggravated result of both, a tenfold burden of *unrelieved* suffering upon the community. We say not, that the charity of compassion would have overtaken all the distress. But we say, that the charity of compulsion has fallen many times short of it, beside the bitterness and the poison which it infuses into the *morale* of society; lighting

up a thousand jealousies and heart-burnings between the poor and the rich ; and converting an interchange of good-will on the one side, and gratitude on the other, into a conflict of fierce and rancorous antipathies between these two great parties in the commonwealth.

14. It forms no exception to our principle, but is rather its legitimate consequence, that, while we deprecate a legal and compulsory provision for indigence, there is a certain species of public charity that we advocate to the uttermost. There are certain distresses incidental to humanity, the inflictions of necessity and nature, which cannot be too openly or too liberally provided for. There is all the difference that can be imagined, in point both of principle and effect, between an institution for the relief of want, and an institution for the relief of disease. The one multiplies its objects. Not so the other. The one enlists the human will on its side. The other will ever remain the object of painful reluctance and revolt to all the feelings of our sentient nature. Open a door of admission for the indigent, and we shall behold a crowd of applicants increasing every year, because lured thitherward by the inviting path of indolence and dissipation. Open a door for the admission of the diseased, and we shall only have a definite number of applicants. Men will become voluntarily poor, but they will not become voluntarily blind or deaf, or maimed or lunatic. It is thus, that while an asylum for want creates more objects than it can satisfy ; an asylum for disease creates none, but may meet all and satisfy all. Public charity has been profuse where it ought not, and it has also been niggardly where it ought not. It is a disgrace to our philanthropic age, if infirmaries, or dispensaries, or asylums, whether for the cure of mental and bodily disease, or for the keeping of that which is incurable, are left to languish from want of support, or compelled to stop short, ere the necessity for which they were instituted has been fully and finally overtaken.

NOTE.—The only points which we single out in this chapter for the more special consideration of the reader, are, 1. The transference of distress which a compulsory provision for the poor makes, and in a more aggravated form too, § 2, from those whom it relieves to those who do not enter within the territory of pauperism, but are close upon its margin. 2. The falsehood of the analogy which has been pleaded, in vindication of the system, between an endowment for indigence and an endowment

for education, (see foot-note to § 11). 3. The difference, both in principle and effect, between a public charity for the relief of indigence, and one for the relief of disease.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE.

1. WE are now drawing towards that great conclusion, for the sake of which we have described the very lengthened course of our bygone argument. We have laboured to demonstrate the futility of every expedient, which a mere political economy can suggest for the permanent wellbeing of a community. At best they but tend to enlarge the absolute wealth of a country, without enlarging the relative comfort of the people who live in it. They may conduct to a larger, but not on that account to a happier society. They may tell on the condition of families during those brief and evanescent seasons, when the population is somewhat in rear of the wealth; but, on the moment that this distance is overtaken, there will be the same straitness and discomfort as before. In new countries there might be a career of sensible advancement for centuries to come. But in old countries, if we count only on external resources, or the increase of means for the support of a population, leaving their numbers to proceed as they may, there is positively nothing which can save us from the habitual state of felt insufficiency and narrowness. There may be gleams of prosperity during the fluctuations, or the few short and successive stretches of enlargement which are yet in reserve for us. But all around, and in every possible direction, there is a besetting limit which the mighty tide of an advancing population tends to overpass, and which, being impassable, throws the tide back again upon general society; charged as it were with a distress and a disorder that are extensively felt throughout the old countries of the civilized world. The only question remains, then, Is there no way by which the tide can be arrested, before it comes into contact and collision with the barrier that repels it? Or, can the redundancy be prevented by a moral and pacific influence, rather than checked by the evils of extreme poverty, or that destroying turbulence

which so often results from the distress and destitution of an overpeopled land?

2. The high road, then, to a stable sufficiency and comfort among the people, is through the medium of their character; and this effectuated by other lessons altogether than those of political economy. We object not to the utmost possible illumination of the popular mind; nor do we share in the antipathies of those who would refuse science to the multitude. It is not, however, by the instructions of the economic, but by those of a higher school, that the best economic condition of society will at length be realized. It is possible for men to bear an essential part in the workings of a mechanism, of whose principles and whose theory they are altogether unconscious—just as the planetary masses are unconscious of the magnificent regularity to which their own movements have given rise. The moving force that is to advance the general multitude to a better and higher condition than they now occupy, will not be brought to bear upon them by the demonstrations, however just, of any theory; and, in fact, the right impulse, and the right habit, have often been exemplified, and by large classes of peasantry, before the theory of population was ever heard of. It is so in Norway; and, most assuredly, without any inoculation of principle from the school of Malthus. It was so in Scotland long before the promulgation of his doctrines. In both countries they realized in practice what, in system and philosophy, they did not understand. A moral and intelligent peasantry, imbued with a taste for the respectabilities of life, mixing prudence and foresight with every great practical step in the history of their doings, holding it discreditable to enter upon marriage without the likelihood of provision for a family—such a peasantry have more than once been exhibited in the annals of the world, and may be made to reappear. If by any means the elements of such a character can again be put together, and made general in society, we should behold the exemplification of the Malthusian doctrine, with or without the comprehension of its principles. It is not, most assuredly, the study of these principles that will germinate the character; and it is from another quarter altogether, than the demonstrations of political economy, that we are to obtain the fulfilment of those blessings to society, which the science can only point out without being able to realize.

3. On no other subject does Christianity more evince its immense importance to the wellbeing of society. In the first place,

it is quite palpable that they are its earnest and devoted teachers, who have the greatest power in drawing the multitude to their lessons, and establishing for themselves that most secure and deeply-seated of all popularity, which is grounded on the sacredness of their office, and on the subserviency of its faithful ministrations to the comfort, and the virtue, and the dearest interests of families. The mere disciples of a general literature or politics, little reflect on the prodigious force of that moral ascendancy which is possessed by a parish clergyman, who superadds, to the attraction of his pulpit, the charm and the efficacy of his household services; and who, by the countless attentions of an unwearied Christian benevolence, has ingratiated both his person and his cause with the hearts of those among whom he expatiates. His direct aim is neither to purchase a reputation for himself, nor even to advance the temporal comfort of his people. It is to prepare them for immortality; yet, in the single-hearted prosecution of this object, he becomes the all-powerful, though, perhaps, the unconscious instrument of those secondary, those subordinate blessings, which form the only ones that a mere worldly philanthropist cares for. The truth is, that the lessons of the gospel which he teaches, are all on the side of reflection, and sobriety, and that loftiness of character which consists in the predominance of the moral over the animal nature of man. A disciple of the New Testament, whose views are sublimed by its doctrines and its hopes, has gotten a superiority over the passions; a certain nobility of soul; a reach of perspective to distant consequences, whether on this or the other side of the grave; an ascendancy of sentiment over sense; and withal a refinement and elevation of taste, which, though caught at first from converse with spiritual and eternal things, still adheres to him, even when busied with the interests and concerns of the present life: and these, altogether, form the best guarantees against that impetuous appetency, which first leads to early marriages, and afterwards lands in squalid destitution the teeming families that spring from them. And, besides, in that book there are so many pointed admonitions, that each should provide for himself and for his own household; such a preference for the single state, when the married endangers a man's Christianity, or his performance of its duties; such great examples, as well as precepts of independence—especially by Paul, who says, that "if a man will not work, neither should he eat," and who himself laboured with his own hands for the supply of his own

necessities, rather than be burdensome; that, as the undoubted effect upon the whole, the honest and frequent perusal of Scripture by a Christian people, does associate, in their minds, both the present and the prospective cares of a family with the solemn duties of religion. This is not a picture, but a reality, often exemplified in the abode of a cottage patriarch—where, along with his Christianity, we may witness a sufficiency, and a cast of elevation, not to be found in the houses of the irreligious and the unholy. The very library of old and favourite authors upon his shelves, is but in keeping with the general fulness of a tenement, usually better stocked and provided than that of any of his fellows. The Christianity of the man has engendered a wisdom, and a consistency, and a self-command, that led him to begin well in his entrance upon a family; and so to build up a respectable sufficiency, which, with a reckless and precipitate commencement, he could never have attained. An individual Christian is generally in better comfort and condition than other men. A whole parish of Christians would be a parish of well-conditioned families.

4. But here it is of importance to remark, that, for the production of a general economic effect, we have not to wait the production of a general Christianity. When expatiating on the connexion between these two elements, we have often to encounter a certain shrewd incredulity, as if an expectation of a more elevated state for the majority hung on the fulfilment of a prior expectation, which is in itself Utopian—even that the majority shall be converted. The imagination is, that, for the purpose of any great or sensible effect in this way, the religious character must be of co-extensive magnitude with the economic improvement; whereas there is no truth, of which the most faithful and experienced of our clergymen have a firmer, though it be a melancholy assurance, than the exceeding rarity of conversion—there being many streets in our cities, many parishes in our land, where, in the high sense and significancy of the term, the number of real Christians might not reach to one in fifty. And the question therefore is, How can we anticipate either a general economic, or a general moral effect, through the medium of a Christianity, which, in respect of its saving and spiritual influence, makes such little way among the families? But here it is not adverted to—and we admit it is indispensable to the force of our argument—that the secondary influence of Christianity goes a great way further than its primary or direct

influence. For every individual whom it converts, it may, by its reflex operation, civilize a hundred. We have the palpable exemplification of this in Sabbath-schools, where, in a few weeks from their commencement, we may perceive a decency, and a docility, and an improved habit of cleanliness and order, long before there is ground for the assurance, that even so much as one of the pupils has yet been Christianized. And what is true of children in a school, is alike true of grown-up people in a parish—where the regularities of Sabbath observation, and the humanizing influence of ministerial attentions, and the general recognition of what is right, and reputable, and seemly, have all been in force, perhaps a century ago, and been handed down, with increasing effect, from generation to generation. It is of the utmost argumentative value upon this subject, that one man of decided piety, in a little vicinage, will impress, if not his own piety, at least the respectability of his habits and appearance, on the greater number of its families. They can admire, and even imitate, the graces of his character; they can aspire after, and even realize, the decencies of his condition; without so much as comprehending, or far less sharing, the unseen principle which has germinated them all. It is thus that Christianity has elevated the general standard of morals; and so spread a beneficent influence, far and wide, among the many, beyond the limit of its own proper and peculiar influence upon the few. It is this which gives it the property of a purifying and preserving salt in every community of human beings; and that, not merely in respect of those virtues which enter into the moral character, but also in respect of those virtues which are essential to the economic wellbeing of a people. Ten righteous men among the thousands of Sodom would have saved that city from destruction; and a like proportion would, in our modern day, save the thousands of general society from that utter debasement of profligacy and wretchedness, into which, without the presence of Christianity in the midst of them, they will inevitably fall.*

* We are aware of no country which presents a more interesting field for observation than Holland—because none, perhaps, so close upon the extreme limit of its natural resources; and, therefore, none so dependent on the moral habits of its population for their economic wellbeing. We have great value for a recent communication from that part of the world, which appeared in the Sunday-School Teacher's Magazine; and from which we present a few extracts:—

“I have spent five months, since last September, in Holland; living, for the most part, in an inland town, whence I could extend my walks into the rural and fishing villages around me; seeing much of the outward manifestations of character among the people.

5. But we must here remark, that, for the purpose of a general economic improvement, to be brought about by the means of Christian education, a gradual abolition of the compulsory provision for indigence, which now obtains in England, and hangs menacingly over Ireland, seems to us indispensable. We can anticipate no rise of wages, no elevation in the state and suffi-

But in Holland, such is the public provision for the instruction of the lower orders, that every child is within reach of a good day-school, of which few do not actually enjoy the advantage. These schools, moreover, though themselves rather of a general than purely religious nature, are not meant to supersede, but to harmonize and co-operate with the catechetical instructions of the churches throughout the provinces. Thus religious knowledge is widely diffused; though, in respect to it, much of course depends on the comparative purity of doctrine and discipline, as well as on the comparative degrees of vital godliness, which are found in the different communions and congregations to which the parents may belong. Not only so, but although the public day-schools have had far more attention paid to them of late years than at any former period, still education has for a long time been so common and so cheap, that almost all old persons are found able to read.

"Thus, what your readers and their friends are striving to effect for their dear *mother-country*, our Dutch neighbours have already, through the good providence of God, actually accomplished, for what they call their beloved *father-land*. Surely, then, it must be interesting to the former, to know what, if nothing more, are the outward and obvious results of such a measure of success in their own favourite enterprise—an enterprise so intimately affecting the character and happiness of the millions that now people Great Britain and Ireland."

"The first feature in the lower ranks which strikes a Briton on coming amongst the Hollanders, is the almost universal decency of manners and dress which prevails amongst them; and that in spite of the extent of poverty which is found in these once flourishing, but now much-decayed provinces. Your readers will ask, why there should be so much poverty?—the reply to which is easily furnished out of history."—"We must not therefore impute it to education, that there are many thousands of poor families and individuals in Holland; but ought rather to investigate what the effects of that peculiarity have been on a people among whom this grievous extent of poverty has been the inevitable result of quite different circumstances.

"I am now referring to the external manners and appearance of the lower ranks in Holland. It is remarkable that persons, travelling there about sixty years ago, represent the lower classes as very boorish in their manners, and as intemperate in the use of ardent spirits. But I found them invariably respectful, and willing to oblige me; while, as to intemperance, if it was to be found at all, it must have been very much hid from public notice, for I could not perceive either drunkards or brawlers in any quarter, either in town or country, during my whole residence among them. That they are universally sober, I dare not affirm; strong liquors, of various kinds, were very common, and very cheap; the damp nature of their climate, and the seafaring habits of many of the people, present a kind of apology for drinking; yet, in spite of all this, I must again affirm, that they are very far superior at present to the British in this respect.

"But to what are we to ascribe this change for the better, in the course of the last sixty years? Not certainly," &c.—"May we not rather cite the following causes? First, The extension and improvement of daily schools, which began just about sixty years ago, and which have been continued, under all the changes of government, up to the present day. Secondly, To the awakening effects of public calamities, and the humbling influence of foreign domination on the members of the Presbyterian and other Protestant churches, to

ciency of the working classes, from any efforts to instruct and Christianize them, however strenuous, if the pauperism and the education are to go on contemporaneously. We, in the first place, feel quite assured, from the moral influences of this public charity, that it operates as a dead weight on the ministrations of the clergymen, and stands most grievously in the way of their success. But, in the second place, however vigorous and effective his exertions may be, at the most, and while the present system of poor's laws continues, we shall have two distinct populations, each marked by opposite extremes of character. The clergyman, on the one hand, may reclaim hundreds to principle and sobriety, who shall form a wholesome and better class of peasantry. But the parish vestry, on the other, remains an attractive nucleus, around which there will gather and settle, in every little district of the land, a depraved and improvident class, whom the temptation of this legal charity has called into being, and who will bid inveterate defiance to all the moral energy which might be brought to bear upon them. The very presence of such a class, even though but a fraction of the community, will, with their reckless habits, depress and overbear the general condition of labourers. A very few supernumeraries, we have seen, will suffice for this effect. So that whether the temptation to improvidence operates on all the people, or only on part of them, still that redundancy is generated which tells so adversely on

which about two-thirds of the people are professedly attached. The Dutch, like the Israelites of old, were the children of many prayers, and the heirs of many privileges : but they also, in the pride of their hearts, forgot God : he therefore in mercy visited them with the rod of his chastisement. They were brought low, and were, many of them, led to cry unto the Lord in their distresses ; and the Lord has had pity on them, and made his own work revive in the midst of them.

"The outward decency, I might rather say, the respectability of the lower ranks, included a very remarkable observance of the Lord's-day ; such, indeed, as I did not expect to find on any part of the continent of Europe," &c.

"I cannot conclude without remarking, that the absence of the poor's laws seems to be one of the chief blessings of Holland. By having no compulsory assessments, the virtues of liberality and active benevolence are called out far more abundantly ; and, by constant exercise, acquire a far higher degree of real practical vigour, than they could otherwise do amongst the rich ; whilst the poor are grateful, frugal, and industrious. In short, all the lovely fruits of mutual Christian love and respect seem thus to be fostered, which might otherwise be injured or destroyed. I was particularly pleased with the mild and contented looks of many of the aged poor, and with the care and good housewifery shown in the apparel both of adults and children belonging to that class. I need not add that in their food they are equally simple and contented.

"Such, then, are the remarks I find myself compelled to make, with respect to perhaps the best educated poor in Europe," &c.

the general rate of wages, and so on the comfort and circumstances of the population at large. Education will make head against mendicity. It will make head against poverty in any other form than that of being fixed and legalized, and invested with the power of challenging, as its right at the bar of justice, that relief which should have been left to the willing sympathies of nature. But shielded and encouraged as it is in the parishes of England, it will stand its ground against every attempt to dislodge it from those innumerable fastnesses which it now occupies; and in spite of every counteractive, whether by the Christian or literary education of the people, will it remain an incubus on the prosperity and comfort of the lower orders.*

6. And we have further to remark, that as we look for no sensible improvement in the condition of the lower orders in England, while their present system of pauperism remains, we as little look for any sensible or general improvement in their character, by the means of education, if that is merely to be the education of letters, and not the education of principle. It is not scholarship alone, but scholarship impregnated with religion, that tells on the great mass of society. We have no faith in the efficacy of mechanic institutes, or even of primary and elementary schools, for building up a virtuous and well-conditioned peasantry, so long as they stand dissevered from the lessons of Christian piety. There is a charm ascribed to the scholastic system of Scotland; and the sanguine imagination is, that by importing its machinery into England and Ireland, it will work the same marvellous transformation there, on the character of their people, that was experienced amongst ourselves. But it is forgotten that a warm and earnest Christianity was the animating spirit of all our peculiar institutions, for generations after they were framed; and that, wanting this, they can no more perform the function of moralizing the people, than skeletons can perform the functions, or put forth the faculties of living men. The scholastic is incorporated with the ecclesiastical system of Scotland; and that, not for the purposes of intolerance and exclusion, but for the purpose of sanctifying education, and plying the boyhood of our land with the lessons of the Bible. The scholarship of mere letters, might, to a certain extent, have diffused intelligence amongst the people; but it is mainly to the

* In further illustration of this argument, see "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation," vol. iii. p. 388, quest. 272.

presence and power of the religious ingredient that the moral greatness of our peasantry is owing.

7. A commonplace politician is mainly ignorant of the connexion which obtains between the religion of a people and the various civil and economical blessings which follow in its train. This single lesson, if but prized and proceeded on as it ought, were to him the greatest enlargement of political wisdom; and numerous are the practical corollaries which flow from it. More especially, would it lead him to uphold an ecclesiastical establishment; but on very different grounds from those on which, in the spirit either of high-state toryism, or of high-church intolerance, it is so often contended for. There is with a class of thinkers, whom we have now in our eye, the vague imagination of a certain security derived from the connexion between church and state; insomuch, that, if this connexion were dissolved, they would apprehend the immediate downfall of all our social institutions. And we have no doubt, that, if any of the church establishments in our empire is to be exterminated, it will be in the spirit of a general undirected frenzy, that will not be satiated on any terms short of a wasteful and wide-spread overthrow. They will share in a common fate, because the objects of a common hostility. But this still leaves unexplained, the precise connexion, in the way of cause and consequence, between the existence of a religious establishment, and the stability of the general order of things. It is not because, through the lordly dispensation of its patronage, the higher orders are conciliated; or because, through the hereditary veneration of which it is the object, the lower orders are conciliated. These will be found but frail securities, on a day of wild and lawless innovation; and, without the revival of a diffused Christianity in our land, that day will speedily overtake us. It is thus that a religious establishment is of no value, but as an instrument of Christian good; and it is this, and this alone, which should recommend it, either to the politician or the patriot. It is simply, as the best machine for the extensive Christianization of the families of a land, that it is at all worthy of being upholden; and, it is obvious, that, to this effect, a reckless, unprincipled, and unholy patronage, makes it altogether useless, perhaps worse than useless. It is our conscientious belief, that an establishment is an indispensable safeguard against a desolating flood of irreligion, but only in as far as that establishment is virtuously patronized. In other words, without the demolition of our existing machinery,

but through its means, and provided that right and efficient men be appointed to work it, we hold that the country may still be saved. And, humanly speaking, its Christian instructors will be its only saviours. These reformers of our national morality will be the only reformers that will do us good. This is the great specific for the people's wellbeing; and, however derided by the liberalism of our age, or undervalued in the estimation of a merely secular politics; still, it is with the Christianity of our towns and parishes that the country is to stand or fall.

8. Our ecclesiastics are too little versant, and have therefore too little respect for the importance of political economy. And our economists stand at fully as wide a distance from things ecclesiastical. Both seem alike unconscious of the strong intermediate link that is between them, seeing that the chief objects of the one can only be accomplished through the successful exertions of the other. It was for the economists to have discovered the connexion between a virtuous peasantry, and, through the consequent effect on population and wages, the greater sufficiency of their means, and their higher status in the commonwealth. But, while it was for them to perceive and point out this connexion, it is for the practical educationists alone, and pre-eminently for the Christian educationists, to make it good. The one may demonstrate what the essential condition is, on which the economic wellbeing of the common people turns; but it is for the others, and for them only, to realize the condition. It is for them principally, or rather for them exclusively, to supply that element, wanting which, there is an utter impotency and failure, in all the doings and all the devisings of our politicians, either to bring about or to uphold a prosperous society. No enlargement in the means of subsistence can be of any possible avail, if so rapidly followed up as heretofore, and still more if exceeded by the irrepressible advances of the population. At this rate, a larger community would be but a larger mass of wretchedness, a wider field of heartless and sickening contemplation to every lover of the species. What he longs to rest and regale his eye upon, is the joyous spectacle, not of overcrowded, but, through the medium of cheerful, because well-paid industry, of comfortable families, substantially fed, respectably attired, and as respectably lodged in their snug and decent habitations. There is room, and there are resources in the country, not for an indefinite, but for a certain, and that a very large, yea, for a constantly, though not a quickly, increasing number

of such families. Beyond this number, we have no taste for mere multitude, for a swarm of human creatures, for a reckless and ragamuffin crew, overborne by that most grievous of all oppressions, the oppression of their own redundancy. If such be the general *morale* of the working classes, it is vain to look either for peace or plenty within our borders. The object will bid defiance to all agriculture and all commerce. At most, these can but stretch out the wealth of a country, but without any sensible enlargement, if there be a stretching out of the population proportionably thereto. Each successive expansion will, in this case, be but a temporary shift, a brief postponement of the evil day, the support or suspension, for a moment, by some frail tenicle, ere the nation is precipitated into a gulf of wretchedness or anarchy. It would seem to argue a growing sense of desperation among our public men, that their schemes of patriotism and philanthropy are so thickening of late upon us; while but a semblance of relief, or, at the best, a short-lived respite will be all the result of them. It is by the efficacy of moral means, working a moral transformation, and by that alone, that our deliverance will be effected; and little do the mere advocates of retrenchment, and colonization, and public works, and poor-laws, and other merely political expedients for the amelioration of the people—little do they know how utterly powerless all these enterprises are, while the Christianity of the land is unprovided for, and its Christian institutions are left inoperative, from the want of zealous and energetic labourers to fill them.

9. And perhaps this indifference or incredulity, on the part of politicians and political economists, lies much deeper than we have yet ventured to say. It may be something still more hopeless than ignorance. We fear, that with many of them, it may be distaste and antipathy. There is a certain style of Christianity a lifeless, inert, and meagre style of it, which is tolerated in general society. But when it comes to be Christianity in earnest, the Christianity that speaketh urgently and importunately to the consciences of men, the uncompromising Christianity, that enjoins the holiness of the New Testament in all its spirituality and extent, and asserts the doctrine of the New Testament in all its depth and all its peculiarity—such a Christianity has been very generally denounced as fanaticism; and its faithful evangelical expounders have very generally had a stigma affixed to them, and been outcasts from the patronage of the state. And yet this is the only Christianity that will either

attract or moralize the population; and that, not because of its deceitful adaptation to vulgar prejudices, but because of its truly Divine adaptation to the actual workings of the human mind, and the felt necessities of human nature. While this enmity to the truth as it is in Jesus operates in the hearts of our rulers, it is perhaps a vain expectation, that the civil and political importance of its being sounded forth from the pulpits of our land shall come to be recognised by them. On this subject, they may have been struck with judicial blindness; and ere Christianity shall manifest its power to regenerate our social condition, and overspread the land with prosperous and contented families, perhaps it will first vindicate itself on our ungodly nation, in the utter dissolution of an economy which disowns it, in the vengeance of some fearful overthrow.

10. But however blind our mere earthly politicians may be to the rationale of that process by which man is regenerated into a new moral character, they clearly apprehend the connexion between the existence of such a character, and the economic well-being either of the country or of the individual who possesses it. Grant but the general ascendancy of principle, and, along with this, you will have a prudence and a prospective caution, and a superiority to mere animal or constitutional impulses, which must necessarily insure the habit of later marriages, and so of smaller families. And then, of itself, by a law of political economy, which can no more be contravened than a law of nature, the state of the common people will necessarily be raised. There are only two ways in which to augment the price of labour,—either by a diminution of the supply, or by an increase of the effective demand for it. But the whole of our preceding argument goes to prove, that this demand for labour cannot be carried beyond a certain limit. There is a necessary limit to agricultural produce, or, in other words, to the maintenance of labour, without which there can be no effective demand for it. Consequent to this, or rather almost identical with this, there is a limit to that employment, for the produce of which there might be obtained in return the subsistence of the labourers. There is a limit to the extension of that capital, the accumulation of which has been regarded by many as the grand specific for the indefinite employment and maintenance of the labouring classes. There is a limit to the extension of foreign trade, which has been imagined to afford a field for the profitable industry of our workmen, as unbounded as are the resources

and magnitude of the globe. There is a limit to any brief or temporary enlargement, which might ensue on the commutation of taxes and tithes. We would not say that there is a limit to the enlargement, for we hold that no enlargement whatever of the means of subsistence would accrue to the community from the abolition of the law of primogeniture. So that we should hold it utterly hopeless to obtain a secure and permanent elevation in the state of the working classes by a mere increase in one term of the proportion—that is, in the effective demand for their labour. The proportion will remain as unfavourable to them as before, should there be a like contemporaneous increase in the other term of it—that is, in the supply of labour, or in the number of labourers. It is because the rate of advancing population may outstrip the rate of enlargement in any one of the resources now specified, or in all of them put together, that in every stage of the progress of society there may be felt a continued pressure on the means of subsistence. But it is in the latter stages, it is in old countries where all the barriers recede most slowly, because nearest to the place of their extreme and ultimate attainment, and where, at the same time, the power and tendency of increase on the part of the population are as great as ever—it is there where the pressure is felt most strongly—more in Britain than in America, for example—more in the Netherlands or in France than in Russia. It is this increase in the supply of labour up to, and often beyond the increase in its demand—it is this rapid occupation, or rather overflow by the one of every enlargement that is made in the other—it is this which sustains, under every possible advancement in the resources of the land, the pressure of the population on the food, and makes the problem of their secure and permanent comfort so very baffling, and as yet so very hopeless.

11. In the futility of every attempt permanently to relieve the wants, or to raise the comforts of the people, by means of an increase on one term of the proportion—the effective demand for labour—we are shut up, as our only refuge, to a diminution of the other term—that is, the supply of labour. The only expedient which we have yet considered, and which proceeds by an operation on this second term, is that of emigration. We have tried to demonstrate how impotent and ineffectual this expedient is, and how utterly unable we are, by all the successive drafts or transformations of families that we shall ever make, to prevent the fulness, even to a distension, of people in the land. We feel

assured, that it is not by drawing off the redundancy of the population, after it is formed, that we can uphold a well-conditioned state of society, but by preventing the formation of that redundancy. In the whole round of expedients, we are persuaded that this is the only one which, however obnoxious to sentimentalists, can avail for the solution of a problem otherwise irreducible. It has been the theme, sometimes of ridicule, and sometimes even of a virtuous, though surely a misplaced indignation, its distinctive excellence being, that it harmonizes the moral and economic interests of a community, and indeed can only take effect in proportion to the worth and wisdom of our people.

12. In the political economy of Dr. Smith, society is prosperous only when in progress. He confines his view only to one term—an increase in the demand for labour, or in the means of its support. He adverts not to the general prosperity that might ensue by a mere operation on the other term, or by a moderation in the supply of labour. He looks only to the augmentation of physical means, and perceives not that when these are stationary, it is still in the power of moral causes to uphold what he terms a hearty state of the commonwealth. It was not otherwise to be expected; for his work, great and enlightened though it be, was long prior to the clear and convincing expositions of Malthus on the subject of population. And, accordingly, he makes the condition of the labourer to depend *entirely* on the state of society, in regard to the progress which it is making in wealth; that if this be on the increase, the condition is prosperous—if stationary, dull—if declining, miserable. According to him, the wages of labour must be higher in an advancing than in an advanced state of society, insomuch that, after the wealth of a country has attained to its maximum, its industrious classes, comprising the large mass of the population, are worse off than when the country was only proceeding to the maximum. Now this were necessarily and universally true, if wages depended only on one element—that is, the extent of the effective demand for it. When the means for the maintenance of labour increase, and so, for the time being, are somewhat ahead of the population, the competition is in favour of the workmen, who receive larger offers, and a larger maintenance, in this state of relative plenty. But should the population be encouraged by this state of things, the absolute plenty may remain, but the relative plenty is at an end; so that, with a population again pressing on the means of subsistence, the competition is against the workmen, each glad to find employment, though

with but an inferior and scanty remuneration. This process has been repeatedly exemplified in the history of states; and it would seem to warrant the apprehension of some stern and mysterious necessity for the hopeless, the irrecoverable degradation of the lower orders, whose prosperity would thus appear to be in the inverse proportion of the country's abundance—insomuch, that to reach the extreme wealth of a land, might be to reach the extreme of depression and despondency for the great bulk of its inhabitants—as in China, the teeming productiveness of whose soil forms no guarantee against the constant want and wretchedness of its common people, or even the periodical starvation of millions.

13. Such instances speak strongly for the utter inefficacy, in the long run, of all those expedients which go but to enlarge the maintenance of labour, and so the effective demand for it. That there have been many such successive enlargements, and that there are more still in reserve, even for the oldest and most civilized countries of the world, may be most readily admitted; yet they form no security against either a continuous pressure all along, or a severe ultimate pressure, augmenting, perhaps, and becoming more intense and intolerable with every approach that is made to the extreme limit of the country's resources. There is not yet a state in the world where the actual capabilities for the maintenance of a population do not fall short of the potential capabilities, and, with every new advance of the former upon the latter, there will of course be a slackening, as it were, of the pressure—a certain relief from that feeling of straitness, to which, in almost every stage of its progress, the population of a country is exposed. Yet this may be just a putting off of the evil day; and it does afford but a gloomy perspective to the lover of his species, when, as he looks forward on the economic advancement of society, he perceives an ultimate barrier, beyond which there can be no enlargement, and no possibility of mitigation. We confess that our anticipations are greatly more cheering, believing as we do, that, even in regard to earthly prospects and earthly prosperity, a much brighter destination is in reserve for humanity. We admit that there is a necessary and impassable limit to the extension of the physical resources of the globe, so that if the enlargement of these were our only confidence, as it seems the confidence of most of our economists, we should give up, in despair, a permanent amelioration in the state and circumstances of our general population. Our confidence, then, is not

in the enlargement of those physical resources, from whence we are to count on an increase in the effective demand for labour. It is chiefly, I might almost say exclusively, in the efficacy of a moral cause, from whence we are to look for moderation in the supply of it. When this is brought into operation, we shall find that the wages of labour do not necessarily sink with the cessation of a country's advancement in wealth; that, even through the latest stages of this advancement, wages may indefinitely rise, and, after the stationary ultimatum shall have been reached in all the countries of the earth, still there will remain a way by which the industrious classes might be upheld in higher prosperity and comfort than at any bygone period of the world's history they had ever realized.

14. The two expedients, then, of pauperism and education, stand very broadly and discernibly contrasted with each other, in the influence they respectively have on that proportion which we have now dwelt upon. By the one, the proportion is turned against, and by the other on the side of, the population. The one increases, the other lessens, the ratio of the numbers to the food. There is no withstanding of this operation; and there is no withstanding of its consequence. And the adoption of both expedients together were most grievous impolicy. The one would neutralize, or rather, the one, like the rod of Aaron, would swallow up, would absorb the other, and be itself of paramount influence, at least on the economic state of the lower orders. The pauperism which enlisted all the sordid and sensual appetencies of our nature on the side of improvidence, would prevail in the struggle, over all the moral counteractives of any system of education, however wise, and however energetic. The contest between a good and an evil principle, should no more be sanctioned or set agoing, by the reigning power of the state, than it is by the reigning power of the universe. In Scotland, they ordained education for the people; and in all those parishes, which stand sufficiently aloof from the contagious neighbourhood of England, do we behold a peasantry sustained in comparative comfort and virtuous independence. In England, they ordained a poor-law; and the cry of distress and discontent is just the louder, in proportion to the lavishness of its ministrations. In Ireland, they propose to ordain both education and a poor-law. This were the Manicheism of human government, and a frightful disorder will be the result of it. Did the evil barely neutralize the good, so as to make on the whole an inno-

cent composition of the two ingredients, it might be viewed with less alarm. But it will be found not to be an innocent, but a mischievous composition. Burke had the sagacity shrewdly and instantly to perceive this. His was the wisdom of intuition, so that, without formal development, or the aid of any logical process, he often, by a single glance, made the discovery of a great principle; and, by a single word, memorably and felicitously expressed it. That education is the cheap defence of nations, is one of the weightiest of those sentences, or oracular sayings, which have ever fallen from any of the seers or sages of our land. And he characterized, with no less force and justness, the other expedient for the amelioration of his country, when he pronounced, of a legal charity for the relief of indigence, bearing on its forehead the smile and promise of a benevolence which is never realized—that it was downright fraud.

NOTE.—The only remark which we feel disposed to make upon the reperusal of this chapter, is on the close practical affinity between the work of the ecclesiastics and the objects of the economists—and yet the grievous lack of sympathy or of a common understanding between these two classes. Nevertheless, and however few there may be in consequence who enter on the walk of this speculation, we are aware of few lessons more deeply interesting and important, than those which teach the reciprocal influences that pass and repass between the moral character and the economic comfort of a people.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

1. POLITICAL Economy has had great influence on the politics of the world. The two are distinct from each other in themselves—nevertheless, in practice they are so intimately blended, that if the former were but well understood and consistently acted upon, the results in the latter department would be quite invaluable.

2. One palpable example of this, is the effect of an enlightened Political Economy, in doing away the commercial jealousy of nations. The objects of that jealousy were, in the general, alto-

gether meaningless—the preservation of a monopoly or of a colonial dependence, or of some exclusive privilege, which, when wrested from the state, that had lavished in their defence an enormous amount both of blood and treasure, was found after all to have been of no real or intrinsic worth to the country that possessed them. It is thus that empires and states have entered fiercely into contest for interests which were altogether illusory. We do not happen to think that the system of free trade will lead to any sensible enlargement of wealth in almost any land; and that they who calculated upon this, did not advert to the existence, or at least to the proximity of a natural limit, lying a very little way beyond the artificial one, and by which all commerce as well as all agriculture is bounded. Nevertheless, and however disappointed and defeated in their sanguine anticipations many may have been as to the economical effects of the system, its moral effects, in that it cancels a topic of ever-recurring controversy, and by which the peace and brotherhood of nations were kept in perpetual hazard, give an importance and a value to the policy of the free-trade system, which are beyond all computation.

3. Now, what is true of foreign, is alike true of home politics. An enlightened Political Economy would not only do away much of the jealousy which springs up among different nations; but would do away much of the jealousy and hostile feeling which are still so prevalent between the different orders of a state. For example, if the real incidence of the taxes be upon land, what a world of misconception and of malignant passion would be saved, were taxes laid ostensibly as well as virtually upon the landlords. Or, if not prepared to act on a conclusion still so remote from all the ordinary notions upon the subject, what a practical reconciliation it would effect between the wealthier and the poorer classes, were taxes universally removed from the necessaries of life, and universally laid on income or on unquestionable luxuries. We believe, that though the whole of our public revenue were raised by means of a territorial impost, it would ultimately add nothing to the burden which now lies on the proprietors of the land; and that they, when fighting against such a commutation, are fighting in defence of an imaginary interest. We believe that the same observation applies to the abolition of the corn laws; and that, if both the commercial and the financial reforms were gradually, but at length completely and conclusively effected, the lords of the soil would

find their wealth unimpaired, and their influence prodigiously raised by it. When once divested altogether of the character of monopolists, and, still more, when declaredly and obviously the only tax-payers in the kingdom; we can scarcely imagine the vast moral ascendancy which they would henceforth acquire in all the affairs and deliberations of the commonwealth. Such would be their substantial gain, and we honestly think without the deduction of one farthing from their revenues, though they should both quit the monopoly, and take upon themselves the whole burden of the taxes. And what a death-blow would be thus inflicted on the vocation of demagogues! What a sweetening influence it would have on British society, after the false medium was dissipated, through which the high and the low now look on each other as natural enemies! Such a Political Economy as this, had it preceded, would also have superseded all those tempestuous politics which are now in agitation. Parliamentary reform, left without any ulterior object, would have been felt as if uncalled for; or at least the rancour, the exasperation, and bitterness, now connected with the prosecution of it, would have been completely done away.

4. The landed aristocracy have partly brought this upon themselves, by their blind resistance to all innovation, and by their tenacious adherence to what they imagine, but falsely imagine, to be their own indispensable interest. Had they paid all taxes, and left all trade unfettered, there would have no political sacrifice been required of them; and they would have remained in the undisturbed possession of their natural, their rightful inheritance, as lords of the commonwealth. But the democracy of England, fired by a sense of injury, have now made head against them; and may, perhaps, wrest from them, by force, that which ought to have been freely and willingly conceded in the spirit of an enlightened policy. We should rejoice in such a compromise between the two parties, as that both a full commutation of the taxes, and the full establishment of commercial liberty, unshackled by impositions or restraints of any sort, were at length effected, but effected gradually. What we fear in the present spirit of reform, is its impetuosity, and that it may not only, without the necessary delay, precipitate right changes, but, without the necessary discrimination, may hurry a new legislature into wrong changes. There lies a noble field of improvement before them, in rightly shifting the burden of taxes; in emancipating trade, and that without reserve or

limitation; above all, in providing, amply and liberally providing, both for the Christian and literary education of the people. But there is a waywardness of innovation which might carry ruin and overthrow in its train, and of this they will have to beware. They should meddle not with the national debt, save in an equitable adjustment of the taxes; else they will pass a sentence of confiscation on one set of proprietors to the enrichment of another set of proprietors, and these are exclusively the proprietors of the land. They should meddle not with the Church, save to commute its tithes, and virtuously to control its patronage; else they will inflict an irreparable blow on the moral and literary wealth of the nation, and that to the relief and enlargement of no one class, but still of the landed proprietors. They should meddle not with the law of primogeniture; else they will institute a process, under which the state must wax feeble, and even our commercial greatness must disappear; our towns dwindling away, both in prosperity and in magnitude, and a numerous, but finally a wretched agrarian population rising up in their room. Lastly, they should meddle not, either with the monarchy or the peerage; for both a vigorous executive, and a certain *vis inertiae* of hereditary prejudice, are as indispensable to a right politics, as both the helm and ballast of a vessel are indispensable to a right navigation. In a word, instead of demolishing the framework of any of our existent machinery, we would have them but to guide and to animate its movements. And it is precisely because we stand in dread, lest, through the stages of our future history, the sail should predominate over the ballast, so as to make the vessel of the state veer and vacillate with every wind of speculation, that we feel as if the national security were bound up, in our having more of an agrarian, and less of a mercantile Parliament.

5. Still it is all-important to remark, that the internal changes which we have ventured to point out, will no more open up an indefinite career of economic enlargement and prosperity, than free trade can. They will afford a certain stretch for a somewhat larger population, but they will do no more; when we shall at length find a natural limit far more hopeless and impracticable than the artificial one, there being no reserve beyond it. In these circumstances—that is, when the means cannot be made larger for the population, it becomes abundantly obvious, that nothing can save us from the miseries of a straitened condition, but a population small enough for the means. The highway to

this is education. And this is a precious use of the enlargements which are still before us, and by which the families of the land are translated for a time from extreme misery, into a state of comparative ease. They then become fitter subjects for education, than when sunk in the distress and desperation of abject poverty. When viewed in the light of absolute or ultimate resources, we have no great value, either for the removal of prohibitions from the corn trade, or for the removal of tithes and taxes from agriculture, or finally for emigration. But when these expedients are viewed in the relation of subserviency to the education of the people, (because they afford a temporary lightening of the pressure that is now upon their families; and along with this, a spirit, and a leisure, and a means for their moral and literary culture,) in this light they may prove of incalculable service to the good of humanity. But still the position remains, that it is education, and that only, wherein the whole positive efficiency lies for a permanent amelioration in the state of the lower orders. Education is the specific; and the other expedients are at best but the circumstances for a more fit and powerful ministration of it. But the whole effect of these expedients, when once put into operation, will speedily be exhausted. The favourable opportunities which they afford, last but for a season only. They are opportunities which cannot be recalled; and if not improved for the purposes of a general education, they will leave the state of the population more irrecoverable than before.

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

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

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—PAGE 34.

ON THE RENT OF LAND.

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

The process is this :—On land of a given quality, and anterior to its being rented, the produce, or its price, is shared between the workmen who laboured it, and the capitalist by whom it is occupied. But there are two reasons why this state of things might not be stationary—the one connected with the taste and choice of the workmen; the other, with the taste and choice of the capitalist. The workmen may be willing, rather than forego the pleasures of matrimony, to part with some other of their personal

enjoyments, by entering soon upon this alliance ; even though it should be so soon as that, through the medium of an increased population, they shall have at length to work for less wages than they might have otherwise preserved. And the capitalists may be willing, rather than forego the pleasures of accumulation, to part with some of their personal enjoyments, by sparing what they might have spent, and vesting the produce of their parsimony in business—even though, through the medium of an increased capital, they shall have to trade for less profit than they might otherwise have been able to sustain. Thus, the increase of capital, and the increase of population, are the real impellent causes, why the wages and profit, which went to absorb the whole produce of land of a given quality, do not now absorb it. The competition between the labourers, now in greater number, on the one hand, and the more numerous or greater capitalists, on the other, is such, that less than the whole produce is now shared between them, and the difference, wherever land is appropriated, goes to rent. Farmers, in the existing state of profit, and wages, and cultivation, are willing to pay this rent, for leave to settle on a land which formerly paid none ; and should it so happen, that there exists inferior land beside that which is rented, and whose produce is just less than that of the other by the difference of the rent, farmers will be equally willing to settle on this inferior land, paying no rent at all. But, most assuredly, it was not the existence of the inferior, which originated a rent for the superior soil. It is not because farmers had descended to a worse land, that they are willing to pay rent for a better—but because they were willing to pay rent for the better, if they could have got it, they descended to the worse. The existence of the worse land, so far from originating a rent upon the better, prevented it from rising so rapidly as it would have done—because it afforded an outlet for the excess of population and capital ; and thus slackened, for a time, their competition on the better land. The real cause of the rent, is this more strenuous competition of labourers and capitalists, now more numerous than before ; and this cause, assigned by Dr. Smith, ought not to be superseded, as if it were a distinct and different cause, by that which, in fact, is but a consequence from itself. This inversion of the truth has led to vicious conclusions in political economy ; and, as is the effect of every false principle, it has mystified the science.

Rent is not a creation by the will of the landlords, but a

creation by the collective will of the capitalists and labourers. Wherever there is property in land, it is the unavoidable result of the one class choosing to multiply, and the other choosing to accumulate, beyond the capacity of the higher soils to sustain them. It can only be done away with by the abolition of that property; or, in other words, by turning the country into a large common, and dissociating all the activities of individual interest and hope from the business of cultivation. Labour would cease to attach itself to any given portion of the territory, if there were no fence of property by which the fruits of this labour might be guarded. This property has been termed monopoly, and all the odium which attaches to monopoly has been cast upon its holders. But the truth is, that the landlords are altogether innocent of the rent, which has flowed in upon them *ab extra*, not at their own bidding, but at the bidding of those who complain of its oppressiveness. The employer of labour would have had his workmen at a higher wage; but another stepped forward and implored to be taken in at a lower wage, who, if refused, would have been in fact the more aggrieved sufferer, or at least the more helpless outcast of the two. The owner of the land would have let his farm at a lower rent; but in the importunity of capitalists, higher rents were offered; and he, by refusing these, would in fact have disappointed the most eager among the competitors. The landlord is passive under this operation. He is the subject, and not the agent in it. The primary and the moving forces lie with the labourers on the one hand, and with the capitalists on the other; the former, through the medium of an increased population, having brought on a lower wage than otherwise, by necessity as irreversible as any law of nature; and the latter, through the medium of an increased capital, having by the same necessity brought on a lower profit than otherwise. The difference goes to rent. The complainants of it are themselves the makers of it. That the origination of rent should be rightly understood, is a thing of far mightier interest to the commonwealth, than the mere intellectual comprehension of a process. It is an incalculable loss to the working classes, when the real cause of their sufferings is misconceived. It bewilders the friends of humanity from the path of amelioration. And, besides, it provokes a thousand undeserved antipathies—being the fruitful cause of those many heart-burnings and jealousies by which society is so grievously distempered.

Rent is inseparable from property in land, and can only be abolished by all the fences and landmarks of property being swept away from our borders. The effect would be as instant as inevitable. The cultivation of the fields would be abandoned. The population would be broken up into straggling bands,—each prowling in quest of a share in the remaining subsistence for themselves; and, in the mutual contests of rapacity, they would anticipate, by deaths of violence, those still crueller deaths that would ensue in the fearful destitution which awaited them. Yet many would be left whom the sword had spared, but whom famine would not spare—that overwhelming calamity under which a whole nation might ultimately disappear. But a few miserable survivors would dispute the spontaneous fruits of the earth with the beasts of the field, who now multiplied and overran that land which had been desolated of its people. And so by a series, every step of which was marked with increasing wretchedness, the transition would at length be made to a thinly scattered tribe of hunters, on what before had been a peopled territory of industrious and cultivated men. Thus, on the abolition of this single law, the fairest and most civilized region of the globe, which at present sustains its millions of families, out of a fertility that now waves over its cultivated, because its appropriated acres, would, on the simple tie of appropriation being broken, lapse in a very few years into a frightful solitude, or, if not bereft of humanity altogether, would at last become as desolate and dreary as a North American wilderness.

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

To assimilate the two, and confound all distinction between them, it is said that land is as much a machine, and the preparation of food as much a manufacture, as are the machines and the preparations of any other commodity. Now, without objecting to this, as being a thing of mere nomenclature, there remains one important reality by which to distinguish them. Food is the first necessary; other commodities are but second necessities, or the luxuries of life. The increase of food will surely be followed up by an increase of population. The increase of luxuries, or even of second necessities, will not always, will not necessarily be so

followed up. Should corn become permanently more abundant than before, it would in the first instance fall in price; and a fall in such a large and essential branch of family expenditure, would, by translating men so much sooner into circumstances of ease and plenty, multiply, and hasten on the marriages of labourers. A fall in the price of mere luxuries, such as carpets or pictures, or expensive wines, would have no such effect: and even a fall in the price of second necessities, as of stockings for example, would have scarcely any effect, excepting through the medium of agriculture, and by its influence on cultivation in the way that we have already explained.* This is the reason why food cannot permanently remain as a drug in the market. It in fact creates a market for itself, which other manufactures do not. The peculiarity of the former commodity lies here, that though its supply may be overdone for a year or two, it cannot be overdone permanently, because there is a virtue in the commodity to extend, and that indefinitely, the demand for itself; so that, let the supply be kept up and augmented as it may, there will, in the necessity of things, spring up an equivalent demand by which to uphold its price in the market. The same thing cannot be said of other manufactured commodities—not even of second necessities. The supply of shoes may be overdone year after year, greatly beyond the number of feet that wear them; because there is almost nothing in the mere production of these shoes to multiply the feet. But the supply of loaves cannot be so overdone year after year, because greatly beyond the number of mouths to eat them; for there is everything in the production and increase of these loaves to multiply the mouths. It is true, that on that event the feet will be multiplied too; and with the increase of demand for food, there will also be an increase of demand for other things, or the products of other manufactures. But these manufactures have to wait the progress of agriculture, which itself has to wait for nothing but the development of its own energies and means. Agriculture has the command of both the terms which enter into the determination of price—immediately of the supply, and mediately, while rapidly, of the demand. Manufactures have but the command of one term; and they, by outdoing its progress, are exposed to the perpetual check of gluts, and bankruptcies, and losing speculations.

Now the rent of land is ascribed by Ricardo and others to a blemish whereof air and water are altogether free, and which,

* Chap. i. § 9.

in consequence, yield no rent. In land there is a descending gradation in the quality of its soils ; and the last of these which has been reclaimed, and which is the least fitted for the production of food, is alleged to be the cause of rent upon all the rest. But there is no such descending gradation in the quality of air ; no difference, for example, in the strength of its atmospherical pressure at different places, if on the same level, so as to make it more powerful at one place than another for giving impulse to machinery. And hence, according to the advocates of the new theory, there is no air rent. But the great, and indeed only efficient principle of rent is here overlooked. It is very true, that if, within the limits of some square miles on the earth's surface, there were air of tenfold property and power, then, all circumstances being equal, it would afford rent to the proprietors of such a small and favoured territory ; and just because all the manufactured commodities that could be produced within limits so narrow, did not satisfy the actual demand for them. But grant a certain definite number of these square miles, along with a right local disposition of them, and rent would cease altogether, whatever the descending gradation was in the qualities of the remaining atmosphere. The truth is, that the demand for such commodities as are wrought off through the instrumentality of steam-engines, is limited by the actual numbers of mankind ; and, by means of a very few square miles of the requisite atmospherical pressure, the world could be super-saturated with these commodities ; so that all the air over and above this, whether of equal or inferior quality to the former, would lie a useless drug in the hands of those who should seek a rent for the use of it. Whereas, not only is the demand for those commodities which are produced by farms, or land machines, enlarged with every eventual increase in the numbers of mankind, but every addition to these commodities creates an addition to the numbers. The existence of a land, and the non-existence of an air rent, cannot, with propriety, be referred to any difference between the two elements, in respect of the gradation of their qualities. The difference is altogether resolvable into the nature or virtue of their respective products ; the one of limited demand, being straitened within boundaries which itself cannot enlarge ; the other widening the boundaries of its demand, and in the very proportion too of every new addition which is made to its own quantity. The simple cause of a land rent is, that the best farms, or the best machines for the manufacture of food,

work off an excess of this commodity, over and above that share which the capitalists and labourers employed about it choose to put up with for themselves. That they should so choose, is owing to the competition of other capitalists and other labourers, whom the agriculture itself may be said to have brought into existence, and all of whom would be willing to occupy the best machines for the same share, leaving the excess to go in shape of rent to their proprietors. And they of course would be equally willing to be put into occupation of the inferior machines at inferior rents, or of the worst machine that can be wrought with a profit at no rent at all. Rent is not owing to a blemish, but to a superiority in land machines over all others. They, in the first instance, can do what the others cannot; not only satisfy the actual demand of present customers for their produce, but, by every addition to this produce, can proportionally add to the number of their customers. And the vast majority of them can do what the other species of machines do not—they can work off a greater amount of their own appropriate commodity than will remunerate the capital and labour bestowed upon them; and thus leave a surplus by which the industry is upheld that works off a thousand blessings to society.

It would remove the blemish ascribed to the great instrument for the preparation of food by our mercantile economists, (who have overlooked altogether the distinction, in point of virtue and effect, between the products of agriculture and those of manufactures,) could the business of the two, so unlike in their products, be likened in their processes. It is conceivable, that materials for the sustenance of human life could have been extracted, without let or limitation, by chemical manufacture, as by some treatment of decomposition and recomposition, for example, on the air which we breathe; and that the food of a differently constituted species could have been manufactured this way, in such abundance, that it would more than suffice for the alimentering of as many creatures as the earth could accommodate with room to stand upon. This were an economy of things more suited to the taste of those who have cast reproach upon land, because of its limited capacities; and it were curious to trace the effects of it. The whole of the accessible atmosphere would come, in the course of population, to be engrossed; and then, if the air were appropriated, though with no gradation in its qualities, all that would be necessary for an air rent, were, that the food produced more than sustained the producers, and

so afforded an excess that would go in the shape of revenue to its owners, and be expended by them on a disposable class of labourers. There would still be an air rent as at present. In this respect there would be no change; but there would be another and very important change, were the supposition realized of an indefinite capability in human art for the support of an indefinite population. Should it be absolutely and altogether without limits, the effect, however undeniable, is so very extraordinary, that we are almost afraid to mention it. There is a certain point, beyond which, if human beings were multiplied, a serious inconvenience must be felt, from the mere crowding and compression of their excessive numbers. This is obvious enough, should it take place within the limits of any separate locality; but it would be as surely and severely felt, if, in virtue of a production of food, *ad libitum*, it did take place over the whole surface of the globe. The human species would then become as sordid and miserable, as those maggots appear to be who swarm on some mass of hideous putrefaction. The herrings that accumulate and condense in the western bays of our island, are said to push the outskirts of their shoal upon the beach. And better surely that there should be such a limitation in the powers of the land, and such an utter impotency in human art to multiply beyond a certain point the means of subsistence, than that the great human shoal should be protruded at its extreme margin into the sea, and serve for food to the fishes there waiting to devour them. Rather than that this goodly earth of ours should be turned into a human ant-hill, is it better for man that he should have uncumbered fields—that he should have open and spacious solitudes to which he might have occasional escape from its more crowded receptacles, and might, on the ample domain of nature, company with nature's elements, and inhale their freshness. It is no interest, and ought to be no care of his, that the terrestrial space on which he walks should be so overpeopled; or that, for the mere sake of numbers, human beings should multiply to suffocation. The number of His derived and dependent family, is the care of Him who sitteth on high—and most nobly hath He provided for it. He who hath the command of infinity, hath enriched its mighty tracts with innumerable worlds; and, without overburdening the one we occupy, He finds accommodation and space for the innumerable myriads of creation. Better far than that from the vomitories of human mechanism, there should go forth indefinite subsistence

for indefinite multitudes—better far that this should have its fixed and impassable limits, and that men, with the glorious arch of heaven above their heads, and with an ample platform beneath them, should walk forth in largeness and liberty, the privileged denizens of nature.

There is an optimism in the actual constitution of the land, as in everything else that has proceeded from the hand of the Almighty. Had its fertility been limited to the maintenance of agrarian and secondary labourers, we should have had no disposable population; and neither science nor civilisation would have arisen, to bless and to adorn the companionships of men. Had its fertility been unlimited, or could the powers of human art have extracted, without measure, the necessaries of life from any quarter of nature, the species would have lived in greater sordidness and misery still, on an earth laden by its wretched, because its overcrowded generations.

NOTE B.—PAGE 53.

ON MACHINERY.

THE impression against machinery has in it somewhat of the same subtle delusion which we have attempted to expose in the text. There is blended with it the imagination, that employment is creative of something else beside its own products. For the apprehension of many, and that not confined to the immediate sufferers, is, that with the introduction of every new method for abridging or superseding labour, there is the disappearance, not for a time only, but the permanent disappearance, of a resource to the labouring classes. The idea of their maintenance is strongly bound up with their occupation; and that, however remote, as in the case of buckle-makers, the product of their industry is from the materials of their food—just as if, because buckles were to be no longer fabricated, the bread that went to sustain the fabricators, was to be no longer forthcoming; or as if the effect of such transitions was any other than merely to change the direction of industry, without impairing, in the least, those stores of human aliment, by which as great a number of industrious is sure to be upheld in circumstances of as great sufficiency as ever.

We dispute not the evils, though but the temporary evils,

that result from those transitions of employment which are caused by machinery. They form a strong claim on the aid and tenderness of the benevolent, when families, in large masses, are, for a period, thrown out of employment; and what were still more healthful, they form a strong call on the manufacturing class of labourers more particularly, to cultivate those providential habits, by which, in virtue of their accumulations, they might be enabled to weather the seasons of suspension and change, to which every people of mechanic and highly artificial industry are so peculiarly exposed. Nothing is more to be deprecated among a people so peculiarly circumstanced, than those institutions which discharge them from the care of themselves, and from all prospective regard to their own necessities—the consequence of which is, that they are perpetually kept on the brink of destitution; and so are landed, in total helplessness, on those occasions when, either by a depression in trade, or by an abandonment of old methods of industry, thousands are reduced to a state of temporary idleness.

The vindication of machinery from the charge of its adverse influence on the comforts of the poor, has been made to rest upon different grounds. It is not the true vindication, that the making of the machines opens so great a source of employment, that the making and working of them together take up as many hands as did the making of the commodities without the machines; for, in this case, there would be no abridgment of labour, and no advantage to master-manufacturers in setting up the machinery. And it is not a sufficient vindication, that, when an article is cheapened by machinery, the demand for it is so much enlarged, as still, in spite of the abridgment in labour, to require as many, if not more, labourers for its preparation as before; * for this, though true of many, perhaps of most trades, is not true of all. The ultimate and substantial vindication is, that, however the demand may vary or be lessened for particular kinds of work, the fund, out of which the wages come, is left unimpaired. The maintenance abides with us, whether the counterpart employment abides with us or not; and we may be very sure, that this maintenance will continue to be discharged on labourers, if not for the very work, at least for some kind of work or other. The distress and inconvenience of the change are evils; but they are the only evils.

* This is the chief argument, very strikingly illustrated, of an admirable little treatise which has appeared lately, entitled, "The Working Man's Companion."

Machinery does not impair the fund out of which industry is supported—neither does it lessen the amount of industry, but only alters the distribution of it, and makes it more productive than before. In manufactures, the same quantity of a given article is furnished with less labour—but I continue to employ and support the same labour as before, either by extending my use of that article, or by allotting the sum which its now greater cheapness has left in my hands to the purchase of some other accommodations. The war against machinery is a war against human enjoyments.

In agriculture, it is also the effect of machinery to have the same work accomplished with fewer hands. And this, as before, does not diminish the population, but only changes the distribution of them. It may transfer so many from the agricultural, to the disposable class. If fewer farm-labourers are required than before, proportionally to this, a larger surplus-produce will go to the landlord than before; for, just as the consumpt or expense on the farm is lessened, rent will be increased. These two effects meet and correspond—the augmentation of rent, with the augmentation in the number of the third class of labourers. One of the most important effects of agricultural improvement is, that it enlarges the disposable population.

But machinery, both in agriculture and manufactures, is attended with another effect of a still more vital character, and one on which most essentially depend the general comfort and sufficiency of our existing generation of labourers. We have already demonstrated, that the limit of cultivation is pushed forward by every invention which makes the labour of workmen, either in the agricultural or secondary classes, more effective than before. If, in virtue of certain machinery, all that enters into the maintenance of an ordinary labourer can be prepared by fewer hands than formerly, this opens the way to a descent among poorer soils than formerly; and the more perfect such machinery is, the greater is the length to which agriculture is extended. Now, to that extreme limit the population have multiplied; and from that limit must the agriculture again recede, if such machinery shall be forcibly put down. It will affect the general supply of the population with food, just as a permanent visitation of blight or barrenness would; so that the vindication of machinery stands on much higher ground than merely its subservience to the enjoyments of the wealthy. It will react most calamitously on the very classes who are most outrageous in this

cause—it will stint the supply of first necessities—if, in terror or subjection to the tyranny of the multitude, either our farming or manufacturing capitalists shall be forced to discontinue their machines and implements of labour.*

And the reflection here occurs, that in proportion to the high and artificial state of improvement which any country has reached, will the distress be; should law, and security, and social order, in that country, from whatever cause, whether by invasion from without or by anarchy from within, come to be suspended. With every step in the progress of such improvement, has there been an onward step in the cultivation of the soil; till, corresponding to its high-wrought and extreme husbandry, the land has been filled with an extreme population. But without the utmost protection and deference to the rights of property, and confidence in distant returns on the outlays of capital, and safety from that violence which never comes in a shape so formidable to the resources of the nation, as when directed against the apparatus of our farms—such a high style of husbandry cannot possibly be upholden. The effect will be most tremendous; and far more severe than in a land of coarser husbandry, which in its days of peace has not been elaborated forward to its extreme resources, and so, in its days of warfare or misrule, will not be thrown backward upon that extreme necessity, to which every territory that is at once fully cultivated and fully peopled, would, in these circumstances, be most certainly exposed. This consideration should operate powerfully at present, in the fearful conflict that is now at work between the two elements of liberty and order. Were there to be a season of insurrectionary violence in these islands, we believe, on the principle which we have just stated, that England would suffer more than Ireland; and that, in point of intense and intolerable wretchedness throughout its families, it might then be said, “There has been no such distress in any land, or such wrath upon any people.” Amid the contests of partisanship, the high and great principle should never be lost sight of on either side—that, in the preservation of justice, and authority, and good government, no country in the world has so mighty a stake as our own; and that, even by the partial relaxation, but still more by the subversion of these,

* The threshing-machine, beside helping down the agriculture to inferior soils, has a still more direct influence on the supply of food, by the more entire separation which it effects of the grain from the straw.

will the comfort of no other people, and the prosperity of no other land, experience so calamitous an overthrow.

NOTE C.—PAGE 71.

ON HOME-COLONIZATION.

THERE are very few countries which do not present large tracts of land, on which the experiment of home-colonization may be tried. The question then is, Why are they at present unoccupied? There can be no doubt, that in such a country of law, and security, and enterprise as our own, they would have been cultivated, could they, at the existing rate of profit, have remunerated the farmers. This is an object which may, with all safety, be left to the guidance of personal interest, and to the sharp-sighted intelligence of men calculating and scheming for their own individual advantage. It is not the want of capital which accounts for the non-cultivation of land in any country teeming with capital like our own; but an apprehension, either on the part of occupiers or of money-lenders, that if capital were embarked on the cultivation, it would not be returned with an adequate profit, and perhaps even be lost partially or altogether. And if individuals would find it a losing speculation, we have no reason to believe that corporations, still less the largest corporation of all, the government, would find it a safe one. We may rest assured that, down to such land as will barely remunerate the outlay and expenses of its cultivation, the capital in the hands of individuals has not only reached this limit, but is pressing upon it closely, and is even wasting itself on vain attempts to pass beyond it. And so we may safely assume, that in any old country, which has long been in favourable circumstances of peace, and civilisation, and order, for the development of its natural resources, if land hitherto uncultivated has been pitched upon for the purpose of home-colonization, it is land of a lower fertility than what can repay the expenses of its own husbandry with a fair profit to the cultivator.

But passing over the element of profit, which forms but an inconsiderable fraction of the whole return, it may be said of the soil which is entered by home-colonization, that it is not able to feed its agricultural labourers with their secondaries; and

that, therefore, a full complement of labourers cannot be applied to such land, without a lessening of the disposable population. Not but that, in country parishes, a sufficient, an overflowing number of agrarian workmen might be had for the enterprise; but, supported as it must be by a tax, the produce of which formerly went to the purchase of luxuries, there of consequence must eventually be so many of the disposable population thrown out of employment. Still, in spite of this circumstance, there would be a relief afforded upon the whole by such a measure, to the general pressure under which the community laboured from the excess of its own numbers. For the disposable labourers thrown out of employment would form but a fraction, and in the first instance it might be a small fraction, of the whole number enlisted in the undertaking. If the land they began with yielded subsistence for nine-tenths of the essential labourers connected with it, then, on the supposition of a hundred men being employed, only ten would need to be transferred from the disposable class to the agricultural or secondary; and the return yielded would form a clear addition, in the food of ninety labourers, to the previous means of subsistence in the land. This number of idlers would be translated, not into what can rightly be termed profitable employment, but into employment that, with the help of a tax providing for one-tenth of their maintenance, enables them to make out and complete the whole of it. The advantage of such a scheme over that of all other charity-work, is quite obvious. The forcing of a manufacture beyond its natural limit, produces no food; and by edging in, as it were, to a share of the pre-existing food, so many of the superfluous population, it but condemns the whole population, each to a scantier portion than before. The forcing of agriculture beyond its natural limit does create a clear addition to the food of the country; and if carried to a great extent, it may for a season, and before the population have had time to overtake it, yield, in the cheapening of the first necessaries of life, a sensible relief to the community at large.

This holds forth an inviting outset for the scheme; but it is well to mark its progress, and, if indefinitely carried forward, the final result of it. Once the natural limit is broken, and the *deficient* soils are entered on, the cultivation cannot proceed downwards, but by an increasing tax on the wealthy, and larger and larger drafts on the disposable population. At each successive descent, a temporary relief may be experienced; but with

the same recklessness and relaxation of habit on the part of labourers, the pressure of a redundancy in our numbers will ever and anon recur with the same intensity and feeling of straitness as before. We should at length touch on the ultimate and impassable boundary of such a process, when, for the purpose of upholding it, the wealthy had to be taxed till they were reduced to the necessaries of life, and the last man of the disposable population to be withdrawn, in order to make out the requisite labour on the last, and therefore most deficient soils which had been entered on. We should then be landed in a more populous nation, yet not have a single disposable individual within its confines. Each would labour for his own essential maintenance; and all the interest or enjoyment connected with the services of a disposable population, behoved to be abandoned. This is what may be termed the extreme possibility of the system; but it would never be realized. It would surely break up, and that long anterior to such a consummation. Landlords, subject to an indefinite and ever-growing taxation, would at length cease to feel an interest in the administration of their own property. They would not continue to be the receivers of rents, when this was so nearly tantamount to being the mere organs of transmission, through whom the surplus produce of the superior found its way to the deficient soils, and was there absorbed in the expenses of a profitless and ungrateful cultivation. It is fearful to contemplate the issues, after that property had thus been undermined, and the ancient ties had been dissevered which connected the soil with its original possessors. The occupiers of the barren, might then turn in fierceness to the occupiers of the fertile land, on the wonted channel of conveyance, in the person of the landlord, having at length given way. A lax sense, or an imperfect arrangement of property, in a country yet but thinly inhabited, and of unbroken capabilities, is still so prolific of disorder, as to verify the maxim, that a state of nature is a state of war; but this disorder must be thickened and aggravated tenfold, should the same dissolution take place in a country of teeming population, and whose very deserts now swarmed with a host of colonized paupers that had overflowed the natural limits of the agriculture. In the scramble that ensues, we shall perhaps have to witness another of those dread calamities which may be awaiting us, and which we fear nothing will avert, but a timely moral and Christian education of the people, along with the gradual abandonment of certain inveterate errors

which have been suffered to distemper the social economy of our land.

Such being the natural outgoings of the system of home-colonization, this alternative should be carefully weighed at the commencement of it—Whether it is better that the people should, by a right preventive check on their own number, have room and sufficiency within the natural limit of the agriculture, or should be encouraged to multiply beyond that limit by a scheme, the proposal of which has met with great acceptance from many patriots and philanthropists in our day? It is utterly a vain hope, that we shall ever, by means of such settlements, escape from the pressure of a redundant population; and a momentary slackening of the pressure is the most that we can expect from it. And this descent among the deficient soils to make room for a surplus population, is sure to be accompanied by a descent in the circumstances of the general population. The very circumstance of the soils being deficient, implies the necessity of a charitable intervention, in order to complete the maintenance of those who are there colonized. But, generally speaking, when the hand of charity is stretched forth, and more especially in behalf of a whole multitude, it is not for the purpose of upholding them in that state of average sufficiency which obtains among labourers, but only for the purpose of saving them from starvation; not to keep them in comfort, but to keep them in existence. These home-colonists, if the system be carried to any sensible extent, will not be on the footing of independent labourers earning a respectable wage, but on the footing rather of paupers, or the dependants of a vestry, who have their supplementary allowances doled out to them, with that niggardly reluctance which usually marks the proceedings of an organized system of relief. Here, then, we have a population encouraged and virtually called into being, who are constrained by their situation to live beneath the par of human comfort and subsistence, and whose very presence in the land will act as an incubus with overhanging pressure on the general condition of our peasantry. They form a body of reserve, from whom masters may indefinitely draw, in every question of wages between themselves and their servants; and by means of whom, therefore, they can, as in a market overstocked with labour, bring down indefinitely its remuneration. We hold then, in addition to every other evil of the system, that, once it is entered on and continues to be extended, the working classes will be sealed thereby to irre-

coverable degradation. It is at its outset, then, that every enlightened philanthropist should take his stand, and at once proclaim, that nothing will serve the exigencies of a land brought to such extremity as this, but a vigorous application of moral causes. We hold it as being of inestimable benefit to all the classes of society, that cultivation should stop with the last land which yields a profit to the farmer, after having fed both its direct and secondary labourers. The momentous question is, Shall we step beyond this limit, or keep within it? By the former, we enter on a headlong process of degradation, through which we obtain, no doubt, a larger, but withal a more wretched peasantry. By the latter, we restrict ourselves to a smaller produce, and a smaller population, keeping the disposable class entire; but leaving it possible, by indefinite moral and literary cultivation, indefinitely to raise the comfort and condition of all the classes. There is a beautiful harmony here, between the interest of the landed proprietors and the interest of the general community. Landlords, on the one hand, would be left in full possession of their rents, and in full command of the disposable population. The general population, on the other, would be retained within the boundaries of a soil, fully able, even at its worst extreme, to maintain the families who laboured it. It is a big alternative; and the most opposite results are suspended on it. Either the population would be restrained within the natural limits of the agriculture, and might be raised by moral culture into higher and higher states of sufficiency; in which case the rent of landlords would be kept up, or if encroached on at all, (and we should rejoice in such an encroachment,) it would be by the higher wage of a now improved and independent peasantry. Or this rent would be wrested from them by the necessities of a pauper peasantry; in which case there would, along with a letting down of the revenue of the landlords, be a letting forth of the population on deficient soils; and so, a landing both of the higher and lower classes of society in one common degradation.

This process is as good as already entered upon in England. The pauperism of that country may be regarded in certain of its modifications as a method of home-colonization in disguise. In as far as the wages are paid out of the poor's rate, in so far may the farmer be induced to bring down his agriculture among soils that cannot repay the natural expenses of their husbandry. Of course he cannot afford to do this without paying a less rent

to the landlord than he could have otherwise afforded; and indeed, in many districts of England where the redundancy of people has been most severely felt, there has been a partial remission of the rent, for the express purpose of enabling the farmer to take the parochial applicants into employment. The work of his farm may by this time have been fully engrossed up to the limit of that agriculture which can remunerate itself. But better it is to have a partial return from the labour of these supernumeraries than no return at all. Better keep them in employment, though it should yield but a fraction of their maintenance, than keep them in total idleness. Now this is the virtual commencement of a scheme of home-colonization, and offers indeed a distinct exemplification of its several parts and consequences. The people who are thus admitted to country labour can only find occupancy among those extremes of cultivation, where the additional produce is unable to maintain the additional men who have forced themselves into service. They cannot raise enough for their own support, to complete which rents are encroached upon; or, in other words, an agrarian population is multiplied and upheld at the expense of the fund for the support of the disposable population. From this quarter then, from towns where employment will languish, may we expect an additional invasion on the already overpeopled land; and therefore upon that part of it which lies beyond the natural limit of cultivation. It is fearful to contemplate the result if the present system of England shall be longer persevered in. There is nothing more likely to bring on a crisis than this unnatural accumulation of people; and nothing more certain to aggravate its miseries and horrors when it shall come to be realized. If, during a period of turbulence and disorder, the agriculture shall be at all relaxed (and what more likely, from the loosened and lessened interest of the administrators of landed property, in estates that become every year less valuable and more vexatious to them?) or if, during the same period, the now artificial economy of parish management shall be suspended, so that either the produce shall be diminished, or the existing distribution of it shall be deranged—we cannot imagine a more fearful perspective than the famine, and the mutual ferocity, and all the evils of anarchy which will then be let loose upon our suffering families. There are clearly elements at work towards such a consummation; and far more imperative therefore than the necessity for a reform in the politics is the urgent necessity

for a reform in the economics of England. The one opens a much higher walk than the other for the wisdom and benevolence of true patriotism. In younger countries there may, by an enlargement of means to the population, be a comparative ease and tranquillity for centuries to come. In a country brought as ours near to the uttermost verge of its resources, the only effectual and lasting remedy is to check the advances of the population upon the means. And nothing, we repeat, is competent to such an effect, but a gradual abolition of the poor's laws, along with the instant and vigorous application of moral causes. Village schools, and well-served churches, and zealous parish ministrations, and a universal system of popular education, into which the lessons of the gospel of Jesus Christ largely and pervadingly enter,—these form the main elements or means of our nation's peace and our nation's greatness.

NOTE D.—PAGE 86.

ON THE NATIONAL DEBT.

THERE is one conclusion from the argument in the text, which appears to us inevitable; and which, paradoxical as it may appear, we hold to be amply borne out both by reason and experience.* We can perceive no flaw in the deduction, should it only be granted that the capital displaced from business by loans is repaired, not by the parsimony of capitalists, but by the privation of customers—an inference that comes direct from the most elementary principles in political economy; and which is abundantly countenanced by the phenomena, both of the high profit that takes place in seasons of borrowing, as indicated by the low price of stocks, and by the obvious resuscitation of the withdrawn capital which must take place every year, as indicated by the unimpaired sufficiency of capital for all mercantile and agricultural concerns.

The views, then, presented in the text on the subject of capital,

* We subjoined the greater part of this argument some years ago to a former work, entitled "The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns;" but the extraordinary nature of the conclusion, and its immense practical importance, if true, as being decisive, we would not only say of the vital impolicy, but of the prodigious infatuation, nay, insanity of the funding system, have led us to insert it in this place.

have suggested to us the following important practical inference, in regard to the policy of the funding system.

The sum borrowed by government is withdrawn from commerce and manufactures, and must, to the extent of its power in producing commodities, and bringing them to market, lessen the supply of these commodities.

The price of these commodities rises in consequence, and to such a degree, too, that the sum will be replaced; so that, in the course of a little time, the capital, restored to what it was by the operation of the now higher profit, will be as fully commensurate to the business of the country as before, when profits will again sink to their wonted level.

But should the same sum be borrowed next year, the same deficiency of capital will occasion another year of deficient supply, and of those consequent higher prices and profits which are the unavoidable result of it. The deficiency will again be filled up as before; and it will not be for the want of a capital to borrow from, that government shall be arrested in this career, however much it may feel itself arrested by the insufficiency of the taxes necessary to defray the interest of the increasing debt.

There might, however, be successive yearly borrowings for a considerable time; and in this way, government has provided itself with means, over and above its annual revenue, for defraying the expense of our lengthened wars. If there be truth in our reasoning on the subject of capital, this will continue to act upon prices and profits just as long as the practice of borrowing lasts. There will be as great a sum replaced every year, as shall both uphold the capital that is actually vested in business, and, over and above this, shall afford to government a loan, equal to that of the preceding year. But should the loan not be wanted, should the sum that government went to absorb in this way not find its usual investiture, it will seek an investiture in trade. It will, in fact, restore the trading and manufacturing capital to the state in which it would have been, had government not made these yearly abstractions from it; and, with the now larger capital, there will be a fall of prices and profits.

The important deduction to be made from this argument is, that when government defrays any of its expenses by borrowing, it does so by a method which is doubly more burdensome to the country, than when it defrays the expense by taxes raised within the year.

Should government borrow twenty millions for the exigencies

of the current year, there are, in that year, twenty millions' worth less of commodities brought to the general market than there would otherwise have been. But there is nothing in this transaction between government and so many of the capitalists of the nation, that can affect either the power or the inclination of buyers to purchase. There is as effective a demand as before, but a diminished supply—the same expenditure on the part of customers, but, on the whole, twenty millions' worth less of enjoyment in return for it.

Had government, instead of borrowing, raised the twenty millions by additional taxes, the community, no doubt, would have had twenty millions less to spend; but they would not have had the high prices to encounter, which are consequent on those abstractions of capital produced by government-loans. It is quite the same thing, whether the community shall go to market with the usual amount of money for purchases, but with prices raised to the extent of twenty millions; or shall go to market with twenty millions less of money, but with the usual prices. In either way, it suffers the loss of twenty millions' worth of enjoyment; or, in other words, it suffers no greater loss by being taxed to the extent of twenty millions, than it does by this sum being borrowed from the money-holders or capitalists of the land.

Under the borrowing system, the public are subjected, through the medium of higher prices, to the expense of repairing deficiencies, occasioned by government-loans, in the capital of the nation. The public could as easily, through the medium of higher taxes, have yielded, direct to government, the whole amount of the sums borrowed. The ability, on the part of the nation, to keep up the capital, in spite of the repeated drafts made upon it by borrowing, indicates the same ability to withstand equal drafts, if made upon it by immediate taxation. The whole sum borrowed for any year, though primarily and ostensibly raised from the money-holders, is in fact raised from the public—and raised, too, *within the year*. The burden could have been as easily borne, if the whole sum borrowed had been raised within the year by a direct levy. It makes no real difference, whether bereft of a given amount of enjoyment by means of higher prices or higher taxes.

It is thus that the national debt has all been virtually paid once, and yet remains to be paid over again—paid, in the first instance, as it was contracted, by the high prices consequent on

a deficient capital ; and to be paid, in the second instance, to the actual creditors, either by a liquidation of the principal, or by a perpetual interest.

The hardship on the nation would not have been greater, though all the money borrowed had been raised by taxation, than the hardship actually borne *at the time* when the loans were contracted. And there is not a period of our bygone history, even though the years of profusest expenditure should be fixed upon, in which we were not just as able to render, in additional taxes, all the sums that were raised by borrowing, as we were able to support the augmented prices consequent upon the loans ; and by which, in fact, the whole amount of these loans was drawn from the community, to repair the abstractions which had been made upon the capital.

The difference, then, between the system of raising money by loans, and that of providing for all the expenses by taxation, is that, while in both ways the same pressure is made *at the time* on the comfort of families, in the former way there is the formation and growth of a great national mortgage, which remains to oppress and enfeeble the country. In either way, the state may obtain exactly the same supplies ; but, in the former way, it obtains them at a double expense to the nation. The present burden is just as heavy in the one way as in the other ; over and above which, there is a prospective burden equal to the present, which the system of borrowing leaves behind it.

Notwithstanding, however, loans are more popular than taxes, and just because their double mischief is disguised. The people do not feel that government are taking the money out of their pockets by borrowing, though this is virtually done, and at the time too, in the shape of higher prices, if not in the shape of higher taxes. They think that a loan only entails a distant calamity, although the full weight of it is felt in a present calamity. But this is not perceived, and blindness reconciles them to a sore infatuation.

To conclude, then ; the whole sum wanted for the service of the year should be raised by taxation, and the expedient of a loan should never be resorted to. Besides the economic argument for this policy, which appears to us irresistible, we hold the very unpopularity of it to be an additional recommendation. It would restrain the public appetite for war. Government would not enter so readily upon any rash or wanton undertaking, if the whole expense of it were not only actually felt, but consciously felt in taxes palpably imposed for the purpose of defraying it.

A more cautious and pacific spirit would thenceforth actuate the councils of the nation.

Mr. Tooke, in his able disquisition upon high and low prices, seems not to have fully adverted to the distinction in point of effect, between a war expenditure that is defrayed wholly by taxes, and a war expenditure that is defrayed partly by loans. He is right in asserting, that the money which is in the hands of capitalists, is as much spent as would be the same money in the hands of government; and that, therefore, when transferred from the one to the other, there is no greater demand thereby created to bear on the general market, and so to raise prices. But it should be considered, that though such a transference gives rise to no greater demand, it gives rise to a less supply; and that this will raise prices just as effectually. The twenty millions borrowed by government from so many of our capitalists, might all have been spent by the latter within the year, in the outlays of their business; and so have told as effectually on general prices, as the same sum spent by government. But the borrowing has caused a cessation of this business, insomuch that there are twenty millions' worth less of commodities brought to market, for the supply of the families of the land. Meanwhile, their demand for these commodities is the same, and the money which they bring to purchase them is the same; and so the price rises to such a degree, that they must be satisfied with twenty millions' worth less of comforts than they would have had, had no such borrowing taken place. It would have been no greater hardship on the community, if, taxed to the extent of the whole loan, they had gone with twenty millions less of money to market, when the prices were not exposed to the influence of the borrowing system in raising them.

That profits are raised by the government loans, seems palpably enough indicated by the effect of these loans on the price of stocks. It is not any apprehension for the security of government, that can account for the whole depression of the funds, at the period of large and frequent loans to meet the exigencies of a war. It arises in great part from the drafts which are made on the capital of the nation, and from the necessary effect which the consequent diminished supply has upon prices and profits. The descent from 90 to 50 in the three per cent. consols, during a great part of the French wars, argues a high rate of profit throughout the whole of that period. So long as it lasted, the community were exposed to all the higher prices for the various

articles of comfort; and we have no doubt, that, by this difference of price alone, the whole sums borrowed, enormous as they were, actually passed from their hands to replace the deficiencies of the capital. The sum of five hundred millions then added to our national debt, was paid away by the people in higher prices; and better far it would have been, if, instead of this, it had been paid away by them in higher taxes. It was actually paid, yet still remains an incubus upon the nation.

And the conclusion is not essentially different, although the supplies of government should be raised, in the first instance, by the pure operation of credit, rather than by actual borrowing. Suppose, for example, that a sum so large as twenty millions should be raised within the year, in the shape of exchequer bills. There is, in this case, no abstraction of monied capital from any department of business, and therefore no raising of general prices from this cause. But there is an increase of prices, and to the same extent of twenty millions too, by another cause; that is, if not by a diminution of the money that formerly went to the side of production, at least by an increase of the money that now goes to the side of demand. The truth is, that, by the device in question, no less than an additional twenty millions are brought to bear on an aggregate produce of the same pecuniary cost as before. Through the currency and reception of these bills, a given cost of produce meets with twenty millions more in the market than it otherwise would have done, and average or general prices rise to that amount. Government brings the whole force of this extra competition to raise the price of that which cost but the same as formerly; and the effect of this extravagance on its part, is precisely the same with that of a similar extravagance on the part of landlords, who may be conceived to spend collectively, in one year, twenty millions more than their income. There is a consequent rise of prices to this amount, which goes to enrich merchants and manufacturers, and to constitute them either the creditors of government, who, in the act of funding their bills, bring a permanent mortgage upon the nation—or the creditors of landed proprietors, whose expenditure in like manner brings a mortgage upon their estates. In either case, the whole effect is a rise of prices; and not a reduction, but a rotation of property.

There is still a third way in which this matter can proceed; and it is worthy of being noticed, because of the important explanation on another subject to which it is subservient. The

monied capital, vested in the actual business of the country, might be rated, as before, at a hundred millions; and be returned, in ordinary times, by the sum of a hundred and ten millions. If reduced to eighty millions by a government loan, we have already seen, how, in one revolution of the economic cycle, it might be fully restored by the operation of a diminished supply upon prices. But the likelihood is, that the remaining capitalists of eighty millions may not confine their operations to what they can barely do with their own proper capital. They may super-add the power of credit to that of capital, which, in the circumstances supposed, they can do with all the greater safety, because of the large return of a hundred and ten millions to eighty millions that is now awaiting them. Let us imagine, then, that in virtue of being trusted to the extent of ten millions, they can lay out ninety instead of eighty millions on the extension of their business. This would reduce their profits for that year from thirty to twenty millions; making, therefore, the reparation of the capital a slower process than it might otherwise have been. The sum of ten millions, by which their profits would have been augmented, has passed from them, and taken some other direction, which remains to be inquired into.

It seems obvious enough, then, that as by this device of credit they have brought ninety instead of eighty millions to bear on the outlays of their business, the money price of all which they had to purchase must have risen in this proportion. The chief of these purchases must be raw materials and labour. Confining ourselves to the latter, it may be stated as a general position,—That when the operations of trade are extended by credit, the money price of labour rises. In the particular instance before us, it will do so unquestionably. The mere loan of twenty millions to government will have no effect in this way; for though they are thereby vested with an additional command to that extent over the labour market, which they will of course make use of in adding to their naval and military establishments, yet the power of the capitalists from whom they have borrowed this sum is as much diminished; so that still, after the transaction, the joint demand of the two parties for the services of men, may be measured by the same sum, as the entire demand of the capitalists before that the borrowing took place. But should these capitalists, by means of credit, bring ninety millions instead of eighty to bear upon the market—then, with the help of the twenty millions now in the hands of government, a hundred and ten millions, in the place of a hundred, will go to the

purchase of service and materials together, and so raise in that proportion the money price of both of them. And should government, by such a measure as the issuing of exchequer bills, add to the effect of these doings the operation of a pure credit on their side—there may, between the parties, be a hundred and twenty, or a hundred and thirty millions, instead of a hundred expended within the year, and that chiefly in hiring the services of men. A war, whose expenses were defrayed by taxation within the year, might have no such effect; but the various expedients so much resorted to, of loan and anticipation, have all of them the obvious and certain effect of advancing, for the time, the money price of labour.

Now this advance in the money price of labour, must, we think, tell directly on the money price of all that is purchased by labourers. More especially will it have the effect of raising the money price of grain—that being a first necessary of life. Not that it will necessarily give them a greater command over this prime article of subsistence—for, with only a given quantity of corn in the market, a mere advance of nominal wages can have no effect in sharing it out more liberally to the population. Still, however, it will have effect on the nominal or money price of corn. If all the buyers of an article have more to give for it than usual, that more will be given. There may not, in consequence, be the acquisition of a greater share by each; but there will, at least, be an endeavour after it, which is quite enough for raising the money price to all. Mr. Tooke, the able and distinguished author of the “*Essay on High and Low Prices*,” has, we think, succeeded in showing that the frequent scarcities of that season go far to account for the high price of corn during the time of the French war. But we have no doubt that the war itself had a share in it. The greater waste and consumption of provisions in the shape of government stores for a navy or army, than by the same number of men in the pacific walks of life, would of itself be an item of no inconsiderable influence—particularly, as a very slight increase of demand tells more powerfully on the price of an article of main necessity, than it does in the case of all other commodities. But the chief effect of war, we apprehend, in raising the money price of agricultural produce, stands connected with the explanation which we have just given—an explanation into which we should not have entered, but for the light which it seems to cast on another interesting phenomenon that we shall now advert to with all brevity.

The question is, How comes it, that during a season of high money prices, there should always a stretch take place in the cultivation of land? This was remarkably exemplified during the last war with France, at which time many a before out-field territory was reclaimed, and, generally speaking, a more thorough cultivation spread itself over the island at large. Now it appears to have all the certainty of an axiom, that no land can be entered on agriculturally, unless the produce yielded in return can feed the agricultural population and their secondaries, besides yielding a profit to the farmer. But we have every reason to believe, that profit was higher throughout that whole season of large borrowings and low prices of stocks, than at ordinary periods; and, in as far as this element is concerned, the cultivation should have been straitened, rather than enlarged; whereas it was the opposite process which took place, and which calls for explanation.

Certain it is, that a higher money price for corn can have no effect on what may be called the natural barrier of cultivation. It cannot make the land that is beyond more fertile or less difficult to labour than before. It cannot impart to it the capacity of feeding more than its own agricultural workmen and their secondaries, if it wanted this capacity in times past; and, if it remain short of this, it is short of the possibility of being cultivated with a profit. Under all conceivable changes in the value of our denominations and our coins, there is still the stubborn necessity for the direct and indirect labourers on any given territory, being, at the very least, fed from the produce of it. One can imagine a fall of substantial wages, in which case the men would either be worse fed, or be willing to put up with fewer of the second necessaries than before. This would admit a stretch in the cultivation. But it is doubtful whether, on the whole, labourers were worse off during the war than in ordinary times. With the higher prices, there were also higher money wages; and it was, in fact, a rise in the money price of labour which, partly at least, effected a rise in the money price of food. So that, with both the higher profits and the higher wages of that period—which, of themselves, ought to have contracted the agriculture—it is extraordinary, and requires explanation, that still the agriculture should have been extended.

We do not see how a high money price of corn should extend cultivation, if all the expenses of the husbandry, as estimated in money, rose in the same proportion. If the profit of agriculture

kept as high, and, still more, if it rose higher than usual; and if the direct and indirect labourers obtained the same share of the produce as food to themselves—then, but for one circumstance, there does not appear the possibility of cultivation being extended, merely because money prices have risen. That one circumstance, which applies more to Britain than any other country, is taxation—and a taxation affecting, in a material degree, the expense of agricultural operations. The truth is, that in virtue of such taxation, the last land has more to do than merely to feed the direct and secondary labourers, beside yielding a profit to the farmer. Over and above these, the produce which is drawn from it goes to feed an additional population in the employ and service of government. It is taxation, as at present conducted, which forces this destination upon it. There are still taxes on many of the second necessities of life; and taxes which make the implements and whole apparatus of farm labour more expensive than otherwise. But a high money price of corn does not add to the pecuniary amount of these taxes; and this alone will suffice to account for the additional scope and outlet which that price allows to husbandry. For the sake of illustration, let us conceive that, when grain is at the average price, a hundred pounds' worth, raised from the last land, is divided in this proportion—that sixty pounds defray the natural expenses of the husbandry, and thirty pounds more the taxes, leaving a profit of ten pounds to the farmer. Then let the money price rise from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds, and even though the natural expenses should rise in the same proportion, yet with the taxes, as estimated in money, being stationary, there would ample encouragement be afforded for the extension of the culture among the inferior soils. For, on the supposition now made, the natural expenses would rise to ninety pounds, which, with the taxes still at thirty, would leave no less than a profit of thirty pounds—or a three times greater profit to the farmer than usual. But he could afford to cultivate at a profit much inferior to this; and therefore can afford, and will feel encouraged, to enter on the cultivation of inferior soils.

And we may now see how it is that in the time of war, in as far as its expenses are defrayed, not by taxes but by loans, there should often be such a general heyday feeling of prosperity throughout the land. The truth is, that a mere increase in his money receipts, will give one a certain sense of prosperity, or of

getting on in the world—though, in virtue of a proportional rise in money prices, he may have no greater command than before over the enjoyments of life. A general rise in money rents and wages, and withal, in profits, will beget the fancy, and even the sensation of prosperity, among the three great classes of society—the feverish exhilaration of high health, without the sound or entire possession of it. Meanwhile, and contemporaneously with this great nominal and apparent increase in the means of the general community, there must, in counterpart to the higher prices and profits of such a season, fall a real weight of suffering, without disguise and without palliation, somewhere. And it is by the mere money annuitants of all classes that the pressure is chiefly felt—who draw their stated income, and, with the same nominal revenue as before, have to encounter that excess of prices which we ascribe to the operation of the funding system; and by which we hold that its immense levies are drawn, even at the time or within the year, in the shape of higher prices from the pockets of the population—as well as laid in the shape of a permanent mortgage on the country.

If our reasoning be valid on the effects that take place during the contraction of the national debt, it will further serve to establish the converse effects that would take place during its repayment. By the one process capital was turned into expenditure; and there instantly ensued high profits and prices to repair the deficiency. By the other process expenditure would be turned into capital; and there would as instantly ensue low profits, or rather prices beneath prime cost, and consequent losing speculations to absorb the superfluity. If, when twenty millions were borrowed, the public had to pay these twenty millions in higher prices; then, should these twenty millions be repaid by a tax, that tax would be again paid back to the public in lower prices. Should government establish a property-tax, and apply its produce wholly to the liquidation of the national debt, it would bear far more lightly on the community than they are at all aware of. To them it might bear the semblance but not the reality of distress. The great distress would be among merchants and manufacturers from the glut of capital. As by the one process a moneyed interest was formed, tantamount to the whole value of the national debt; so by the opposite process, the whole of this immense interest would be swept away. It would afford the most impressive exemplification possible to all our views on the subject of capital. Losses and bankruptcies

innumerable, would follow in the train of this great regurgitation. The newly-created capital would seek everywhere but in vain for a profitable investiture. It would force its way into Ireland and more distant places; and might be the means of a temporary relief from the pressure of our excessive population, both by its reflux on our agriculture at home, and by the impulse it would give to schemes and undertakings of emigration abroad. Our landlords, the ultimate payers of taxes, are not aware of the easy terms on which they might get quit of the mortgage which oppresses them. It comes upon them as a burden at the first, after they had already borne it in high prices. They might cast off the burden at their pleasure; and that, not by a dishonest cancelment of the debt, but by the literal, honest, and full repayment of it. The heavy taxation, while it lasted, would be compensated by the low prices; and permanent relief from the interest of the national debt would be obtained without the expense of a sacrifice.

There is only one qualification that we can think of, in any way affecting these conclusions on the subject of the national debt. In as far as the money is lent by foreigners, there is no abstraction of capital from the business of the country, and no consequent raising of prices. In as far as it is repaid to foreigners, there is no addition made to the capital within the country, and no consequent lowering of prices. And the same may be said of all those repayments, which, instead of being vested either in the home or in the return foreign trade, are carried forth of the land on any enterprise of colonization. Bating these, there would be a mighty lowering in the price of all those articles on the production of which there was so much more of capital, and in the purchase of which there was so much less of expenditure than before—such a lowering, in fact, as would very nearly, if not fully, compensate for the extraordinary taxation, by means of which the liquidation of the debt is effected.

NOTE E.—PAGE 112.

ON PROFIT.

IN a recent theory of profit, the native and immediate forces by which it is determined have been lost sight of—so as to

carry a mysticism into the science, in all those places of it where profit enters as an element into its reasonings.

On this subject Dr. Smith's principle is the right one, and should have been adhered to. All other circumstances remaining the same, profit is lowered by the increase of capital, and raised by the diminution of it. It is equal to the difference between the cost and the price of commodities—between the sum laid out by one party on the production, and the sum laid out by another party in the purchase of them—between the amount of capital employed, and the amount of its returns. Let the latter be stationary, and it is quite evident that profit will vary with the former, but in an inverse order—the profit being large when the capital is small, and small when the capital is large; or even being extinguished, nay, converted into loss, which is a possible and frequently realized thing, when the capital is so large as either to equal or to exceed the returns which it meets with.

It had been well that both the language and reasoning of Dr. Smith had been retained upon this subject. The proper and immediate cause of a fall in profits, while the effective demand for commodities remains unaltered, is an increase of capital without a corresponding increase in the returns that are made for it. It is determined by the state of competition between capitalists, or rather between the capitals which they hold. If these increase either in number or in magnitude, without a proportional increase in the returning power, by the opening up of new lands, and the consequent increase of population; then profits must decline with the progress of accumulated wealth in society.

Consequent on this accumulation of capital, and antecedent to this fall of profit, there must have been an extension of the business of the country, in all the various branches of its trade and manufactures. And this extension will take place in the business of agriculture, as well as in any other. - The same circumstances which lead men to extend their transactions in commerce, though with the prospect of a less return than before, will lead them to extend their transactions in agriculture, with the prospect of a less return than before. In other words, land of inferior fertility and produce will, by the operation of this cause, be taken into cultivation. This concern, like every other, will fluctuate with the fluctuations of profit and interest in society. Should there be a fall of interest, and a consequent

facility of borrowing, in any particular year, or period of years, farmers will be induced to attempt soils that had not been previously entered. So soon as men are satisfied with a less return, they will carry the plough to a poorer territory than before. This is one of the many phenomena that must ensue from an augmented capital, and a reduced rate of profit; and not peculiar to the affairs of husbandry, but exemplified in every other walk of enterprise and speculation.

Yet this phenomenon, but the subordinate result of a law having a distinct principle of its own, has itself been magnified into the principle; and a controlling force has been ascribed to that which is only the determinate consequence of a prior force, determining the rate of profit. The effect has been mistaken for the efficient. The produce of the land that is said to yield no rent, is conceived of as representing the aggregate of wages and profit. At most it is but the measure, and not the determinator, of the sum of these two. The wages of labour are not low, nor is profit either, because land of an extremely poor quality has been taken into cultivation; but this land has been taken into cultivation, because wages and profit are low. If wages be low, it is because labour, or the number of labourers, is in excess. If profit be low, it is because capital is in excess. But competition, the moving force in both instances, has been well-nigh lost sight of. The land last cultivated has furnished some of our later economists with the materials of a formula—where the three elements of rent, and profit, and wages, have been made to enter, as symbols do into an equation, by means of a few transpositions upon which, the whole doctrine and philosophy of the subject has been newly cast, and are held to have been infallibly expounded.

And it is curious to observe the proceeds of this new mode of reasoning, through which, by a certain dexterous algebraic play, results are elicited the most unexpected, and certainly the most opposite to all experience. One specimen may suffice. When once the produce of the last cultivated land enters as a sort of fixed quantity into an argument; then, representing, as it does, the sum of wages and profit, it will follow of course, that when wages rise, it can only be at the expense of profit, and when profit rises, it can only be at the expense of wages—the one being high when the other is low, and conversely. The strange conclusion educed from this is, that by increasing the wages of labour, we are on the high road to the underselling of our neigh-

bours in foreign markets; because that the dearer the labour expended on the preparation of export articles, the cheaper can it be afforded when presented for sale. And the reason of this is, that profit being just as much lower as wages are higher, we make a saving on the cost of the article, with every new transfer in the course of its sales or stages of preparation, till the ultimate price may, in fact, be very much reduced by the repetition of this effect at each of the successive centages. And hence the paradox in question, advanced too with a sort of axiomatic certainty. It is a striking example of the extravagance into which men are sure to fall, when, forsaking the obvious and real principles of a subject, they give the precedency, over all sense and all experience, to the categories of a school.

We shall be saved from all such devious conclusions, if we only keep in sight the proper and immediate causes by which both wages and profit are determined. There is a greater identity of principle between them than is commonly adverted to. The one depends on the proportion which the quantity of labour bears to the effective demand for its products; and the other, also, on the proportion which the quantity of capital bears to the effective demand for its products. Or, just recurring to the old language and style of conception upon this subject, we should say, that the one varies with the intensity of the competition among labourers for employment, and that the other varies with the intensity of the competition among capitalists for business. Should there then be a high standard of enjoyment among labourers, they will not marry so as to overstock the country with population; and so, just because their taste is high, their wages would be high: thus landing us in the important and delightful conclusion, that the people, collectively speaking, have their circumstances in their own hands—it being at the bidding of their collective will, whether the remuneration for their work shall be a scanty or a sufficient one. The same principle has not been extended to profit, though it be as strictly applicable to the one element as to the other. It is for each capitalist to determine how much of his profits he shall expend on personal or family indulgences, or how much of them he shall reserve for additional outlays upon his business. Should there be a general and voluntary descent among capitalists in respect of expenditure, this of itself, by adding to the investments in trade, would produce a general fall of profit. Whereas, by means of expenditure in this class of society, profits might

be sustained at any given level—a level as much determined by the standard of enjoyment, or collective will of capitalists, as wages are by the collective will of labourers. However simple and obvious this consideration may be, yet the most important, and as yet unnoticed conclusions are deducible therefrom. Our only inference at present is, that there is no headlong necessity in any state of society, for either a wretchedly low wages or a ruinously low profit. Both, in fact, are dependent on moral causes. There is a moral preventive check, which, if put in steady operation throughout the labouring classes, would keep wages high. And, however little adverted to,* there is an analogous check, which, operating among capitalists, would keep profit high. Instead of wages being necessarily low when profits are high, or conversely; both may rise contemporaneously, or fall contemporaneously. In other words, there is still a high-way open to us, both for a well-conditioned peasantry, and a prosperous order of merchants and master-manufacturers in the land. There is no irreversible fatality in that march of agriculture among the poorer soils, which has been represented as bearing down profit and wages. Instead of this, profit and wages may each, in any point of the progress, make their own resolute stand, and arrest the march of agriculture. Let labourers, on the one hand, make a stand for higher wages, (and this they can only do effectively, by refraining from over-population :) and let capitalists, on the other, make a stand for higher profit, (and this they can only do effectively, by refraining from over-speculation :) and then, so far from their condition being overruled by the state of the husbandry, they may jointly overrule that state; and, just by the position which they might voluntarily unite in keeping up, may they both lower the rent of land, and somewhat limit its cultivation. Instead of being borne down by the tide, they could withstand and stem it; and instead of lying prostrate before the absorbing rent of the landlords, they might prescribe their own bounds to the wealth of the proprietors of the soil, which it could not overpass.

This is the only effectual, but withal peaceful and legitimate way, in which the other two classes of society can make head against the landlords. Rent, profit, and wages, have been denominated the three ingredients of value. We confess, that though at the expense of, and by an encroachment on the first,

* It is but justice to state, that this principle has been distinctly adverted to, and ingeniously illustrated by Mr. Thomas Perronet Thomson.

we should like the two last admitted to a larger relative share than they have at present ; or, in other words, that the standard of enjoyment both among capitalists and labourers were higher, though, as a necessary consequence, the proprietors of the soil behaved to live less luxuriously, or less splendidly than before. This consummation is not to be arrived at through the medium of a contentious politics, or by the triumph of what has been called popular rights. It will be altogether a moral victory, which can only be gained and perpetuated by dint of popular intelligence and worth. Let workmen, having a proper control over their appetite for present enjoyment, abate of their reckless improvidence ; and capitalists, having a proper control over their appetite for gain, abate of their reckless and excessive speculation ; and we should soon witness both a higher wage and a higher profit. Instead of the action and reaction being only between these two elements, so that when the one rises, the other must necessarily fall ; the action and reaction are shared among three elements, even profit, wages, and rent—so that the two first may draw indefinitely upon the last ; and, with the fall of rent, profit and wages may rise, and that contemporaneously. We are aware, that, on this taking place, there might be a contraction of the agriculture ; the lowest land having to yield a larger produce for the now increased remuneration of the farmer and labourers than before. But our decided preference is for a happier and more prosperous, even though it should be a somewhat more limited society.

NOTE F.—PAGE 125.

ON FREE TRADE.

THERE is an artificial limit to the extension of trade created by monopoly ; and it is a very general conception that, after its abolition, all let or limitation is thenceforth done away. But there is also a natural limit which is felt, when the power to produce, on the one hand, is put forth to a greater extent than can be met by the power to purchase, on the other. There is palpable intimation given of this in those glutted markets which are the result of over-trading. Even Dr. Smith does not seem to be sufficiently aware how closely placed the natural barrier is to the artificial one, though somewhat exterior to it. He was too intent on the destruction of the one to have adverted much

either to the existence or nearness of the other ; and, accordingly, the idea most commonly suggested by the perusal of his work is, that if the wall of monopoly were only taken down, there would thenceforth be room for an advancement altogether indefinite in prosperity and opulence. Hence the brilliant but unfulfilled anticipations of Canning, and Robinson, and Huskisson, on the opening up of new markets, and the removal of old fetters from the enterprise of British merchants ; hence, too, the mania communicated, as if by infection, from their speeches, and which spread itself, in a spirit of wild and ruinous adventure, over the land. The secret of that deep and general delusion which exists in the minds of men, as if the capabilities of foreign trade were perfectly inexhaustible, was fully let out, when, on the artificial check of monopoly or legal prohibition being done away, they, with an utter disregard to so much as the existence of a natural check, launched forth into all the varieties of unbridled speculation. The consequence was inevitable. On the taking down of the interior wall, they entered as if now on an indefinite career, but soon ran their heads against the exterior wall, which was situated at but a very small distance on the other side of the first. The consequent check and revulsion were felt throughout the whole commercial world. There may have ultimately taken place a slight, but scarcely a sensible enlargement. Certain it is, that the sanguine hope of this enlargement was soon followed up by a disappointed feeling of straitness and difficulty ; and the gluts which took place, both on the abolition of the East India monopoly, and on the more general adoption of the liberal system, give palpable evidence how closely, though somewhat on the outside of the artificial barrier, commerce is beset with a natural barrier, beyond which she cannot overpass.

We are not, therefore, of the number of those who rate very high the economic advantages of the system of free trade. It will not much, if at all, enlarge that wealth which is in the hand of merchants, though by its means we may perhaps obtain a greater abundance of foreign commodities at the same cost, or obtain them cheaper than before. There will thus be a certain, though, we apprehend, a small addition to the enjoyment of consumers, which, in spite of the constant preference given by mercantile economists to the means over the end, to the benefit of producers over the benefit of customers, is really after all the great and only end of commerce. We can even imagine a slight extension given by means of free trade to agriculture, in as far

as we may possibly, through it, obtain at a cheaper rate, either some of the materials of husbandry, or some of those articles which enter into the maintenance of husbandmen. Yet notwithstanding this our humble estimate of the advantages of free trade, in an economical point of view, there are certain attendant moral benefits, if we may so term them, which render the adoption of the system one of the best and wisest achievements of an enlightened national policy. In the first place, it cancels a thousand heart-burnings at home. The admission of one class to a particular trade, with the exclusion of all others, is felt by the community at large to be an injustice and a wrong; and it is well when this, and every other rankling topic of disaffection, are, as much as possible, done away. Government incurs a prodigious waste of popularity, whenever its policy stands associated in the public imagination with the failures and fluctuations of trade; and were it for nothing else than to free itself from the burden of this unnecessary odium, it were far better that it stood palpably dissevered from the affairs of commerce altogether, or at least that it never interfered with them, save for the purposes of a revenue, and for the maintenance of the interests of justice. But the system is not more favourable to domestic than to foreign tranquillity. The government which upholds it not only stands forth in a fair and conciliatory aspect to its own subjects, but also to other nations. The abolition of the restrictive system in commerce, is in fact the abolition of the sorest exasperations and jealousies which have taken place among the states of the civilized world. There is, therefore, a very high philanthropic interest involved in the maintenance of the opposite system. It is on the side both of internal and external peace. It would quiet many a discontent within our own territory, and dry up the teeming fountain of most of our modern wars.

Yet we are not without our fears that the system of free trade may retrograde, instead of advancing towards its secure and lasting establishment, throughout the coming periods of our history. A liberal politics forms no guarantee, but, we doubt, the opposite, for a liberal political economy.* This is a subject on

* On this subject I am happy to find that I can appeal to the authority of Mr. Senior I refer to the following extracts from his work on "The Mercantile Theory of Wealth":—

"If the unhappy prejudices that now exist on this subject should continue, and if the extension of representative governments should increase the power of public opinion over the policy of nations, I fear that commerce may not long be enabled to retain even that degree of freedom that she now enjoys."—"I have perfect reliance on the knowledge and good intentions of our present ministers—but very little on the knowledge possessed by the

which the popular and the philosophical mind are not at all in harmony; and the very admission into Parliament of so large an influence from the will of the humbler classes, may, after all, endanger the cause of sound legislation on every topic where the seeming and the substantial interests of the community are at variance. We are not afraid of any monopoly in favour of the few, to the exclusion, from certain trades, of the many in our own land; as the will of the many, when rendered effectual in consequence of a freer and fuller representation, will completely overbear any partiality of this sort. But we do fear that prejudice and partiality may again have the ascendant in the regulation of our commercial policy with the people of other lands; and that, in an assembly of mercantile legislators, there may, by mutual connivance, be a protection awarded to each of the separate trading interests, however paltry or local it may be, against the rivalry of foreigners. We can even imagine that, in virtue of a more democratic government, there might be a more headlong propensity to war; and certain it is, that the popular mind, more especially when inflamed by the cupidity and sensitive alarm of the trading classes, is not always on the side of a pacific policy. It seems all the more imperative in these circumstances, that, with every stretch of the elective franchise, there should be a corresponding stretch of education, and of larger intelligence among the people, lest, in the scramble of personal or provincial interests, that calm and comprehensive wisdom should be lost sight of, which ought to characterize the legislation of every great empire.

country at large. And if ministers are unsupported by the country at large—if each class, in turn, is to be permitted a complete or a partial monopoly, and, bribed by this sacrifice of the general and permanent interest of the public to its own partial and immediate advantage, to allow others to clamour for the power to exercise a similar oppression—if ministers are not aided by the public voice in their struggles against individual rapacity—we shall tread backwards, and with greater rapidity, the few steps which we have so laboriously gained. Slowly and reluctantly, and as if parting from our dearest friend, we have begun to withdraw from the restrictive system. If once we begin to re-approach it, I am justified by all experience in the fear, that, in our retrograde motion, we shall not stop at the point at which we originally set out. It will have been an unsuccessful rebellion against popular prejudice; and, like all unsuccessful rebellions, strengthen and consolidate the ruling power.

“ In a representative government, where each individual may proclaim, in their utmost exaggeration, his sufferings and his fears, where the power arbitrarily to do good is chained by the same fetters which restrain the power arbitrarily to do evil—where, in short, public opinion is omnipotent, and is, on these subjects, so ill-informed, and therefore so easily misdirected—there appears, at first sight, no limit to the extent to which individual interest, popular prejudice, and national jealousy, might not carry the system of exclusion.”

NOTE G.—PAGE 149.

ON CORN LAWS.

FOR the sake of its moral benefit, we know of no achievement more urgently desirable than that of a free corn trade. There is not a more fertile topic of clamour and burning discontent all over the land; and, were it but effectually set at rest, we are aware of nothing which might serve more to sweeten the breath of British society. The interest of cheaper food, is not the only one concerned in the abolition of all those restraints which have been laid upon its importation. There is, beside this, a special interest felt, by that numerous class who are engaged in the business of export manufactures, or export merchandise. The limit of our imports determines the limit of our exports; so that when the one trade comes to its *ne plus ultra*, the other must also be brought to a dead stand. They mutually limit and determine each other. So that the advantage to our export commerce, from a further enlargement of our imports, opening, as it would, a fuller and freer exportation, and telling most favourably for this great branch of trade upon the foreign exchanges, is really one of the most urgent forces that is now operating on the side of an unrestricted corn trade. We shall therefore attempt a brief exposition of what we hold to be the leading principles, and the likely results of such a measure.

First, then, though there should, on the event of an instant and total abolition of the corn laws, be such a reduction of price, as would translate the population into circumstances of larger comfort and sufficiency—we cannot imagine that this would be more than temporary. The proportion of the food to the population might be increased at the commencement; but, reasoning on human nature, and on all experience, this would soon be followed up by the old proportion of the population to the food. Such a regress of the ocean from our shores, as left behind it a million of rich arable acres, would cause an instant and large descent in the price of grain. But no one thinks that a permanent cheapness would be the result of it. The difference between one census and another, though only at the distance of ten years, may well convince us, how speedily the former balance between demand and supply, and so the former prices of food,

would be restored. Yet even still, however frequent and familiar the topic is with economical writers, the great majority of our landholders seem blind to the peculiar and characteristic excellence of that commodity in which their wealth lies. It is a commodity which never can be so multiplied, as permanently to glut the market. By the stimulus which its abundance gives to population, it is very sure, in the long-run, to create a commensurate market for itself. Unlike to other commodities, it has the virtue of increasing the demand for itself, just as the supply is increased. This single circumstance should help, and perhaps, above all others, to tranquillize the fears of our landlords, and to give them a feeling of conscious strength and superiority over all the fluctuations to which commerce, in every other of her departments, is liable. They are the holders of the necessaries of life; and, in virtue of being so, theirs is an upper and secure region, where they enjoy, without the possibility of dethronement, an entire and essential command over the services of men. They misunderstand their own situation, when they participate in the tremulous anxiety of merchants. Their wealth is as indestructible as are the laws and elements of nature; having in it that character of permanency, which belongs to the processes both of the physical and the moral world—based as it is on the capabilities of the soil, and the constitution of humanity.

But let us attempt a closer treatment of the question. We would, in the second place, remark, that there seems nothing in the freest importation of corn, which, *of itself*, should permanently contract the agriculture of our own land. The reason why the poorest of our cultivated soils has been entered on is, that still it had enough of capability for feeding its agricultural labourers and their secondaries, beside yielding a surplus to remunerate the farmer. This reason is not at all affected by the admission of foreign grain from abroad. The capability which had brought down the agriculture so far, would still remain after the abolition of all corn laws. We are aware of a possible cheapening of the article at the first, which, by translating the people into better circumstances, might raise, for a time, the quality both of their food and their secondary accommodations. While this lasted, the poorest soil which cultivation had formerly reached, might not be able to yield the now higher remuneration for labour; and there might, for some very brief season of years, be a receding of the home agriculture, from the extreme limit to which it had been carried. But without a permanent rise in the

popular standard of enjoyment, this could only be temporary. The people would again multiply to the now more abundant food; and this they would just continue to do, till agriculture should recover the very limit from which it had, for a short interval, retired. When the wages, estimated in grain, had become as low as formerly, the agriculture of our own country would then become as large as formerly. Throughout the gradation of soils, the same differences in respect of produce would obtain between the superior land, and that which is said to yield no rent. Or, in other words, the rent of all land, *estimated in produce*, the corn rent of all land, would, in spite of foreign competition, be just what it wont.

But it follows not, that though rent in kind would, after a season of disturbance, settle at the same point which it did formerly, rent in money would therefore do the same. And this, in the peculiar circumstances of Britain, may most severely affect the substantial income of landlords. The thing apprehended is, that, on the opening of our ports for the free admission of corn from abroad, there would be a fall in money prices—and so, a fall in money rents. It would matter not to the real interest of our proprietors, if this fall in money prices extended, and in like proportion, to every other article of enjoyment. There would then, in spite of the declension in nominal income, be the same real command as before over all the comforts and conveniences of life. Were labour, and the products of labour, to become as much cheaper as corn had, then the same corn rent would purchase as great an amount as before of all that entered into the use and maintenance of families. But there is a special cause, in our own country, to prevent this. Though every other ingredient in the price of commodities should fall as much as corn, there is an ingredient which remains, and must remain, in a great measure stationary. There can be no proportional remission of taxes to compensate this fall of money prices. There might, had government nothing else to do with a revenue, than meet the outgoings of its present expenditure; for then it might proportionally lessen the allowance of its various functionaries; and, with a money expenditure reduced in all its branches, maintain the public service in as great strength and effectiveness as before. But along with its current and actual expenses, which might fall with the price of all other things, the revenue is also charged with the permanent interest of an old and heavy debt, which no retrenchment can alleviate, save the retrenchment of

a partial bankruptcy. This is the capital reason, why, though the money price of grain falls, the money taxes cannot be made to fall proportionally; and it is this, chiefly, which gives to landed proprietors a real and substantive interest in high money rents. The great national mortgage of our public debt has the same effect generally, that private mortgages have on the holders of individual estates, personally and particularly. They become substantially as well as nominally richer; by the augmentation of their money income; because then the interest of their debts forms a smaller proportion than before of their whole revenue. And the converse effect takes place on a fall of money income. In other words, it is the existence of our national debt which gives to the possessors of the soil their only rational interest in the corn laws; and the likeliest method by which to harmonize the discordant views and feelings of all parties upon this subject, were an adjustment between the land and the fund holders.

We hold it impossible to effect any right adjustment between these two classes, but by means of taxation—the topic of one of our subsequent arguments; ere we have overtaken which, we can attempt no complete solution of the difficulty in question. But, meanwhile, we can state what appears to us the likelihoods in regard to the future money price of corn, on the event of the abolition of the corn laws. It can be treated, we think, in no other way than as a speculation of likelihoods; the certainties of the subject being, from the very nature of the case, unattainable, but through the medium of experience. Beforehand, we can only offer hypothetical results—or the results that would ensue on certain given suppositions, which, anterior to an actual trial, we have really no means of verifying.

We have already stated, that, with every addition to our crescent population, there behoved to be a fresh and extended draft of corn from abroad; which, by each enlargement of the importation, would become dearer than before. There ensues a very speedy augmentation of difficulty, and so of expense, in the transport of grain, when, in consequence of the need for increased supplies, it must be fetched by inland carriage, even for small distances, from such places as are inaccessible to navigation. With every enlargement of these distances, corn would be landed dearer in our own country; and one can imagine, that, from this cause alone, the dearness, in an unrestricted state of things, may at length be equal to that dearness which is the effect of our present prohibitions. There would on the event of

a total, and, at the same time, instant abolition of our corn laws, be a desultory fall of price to the utmost consternation of the landed proprietors. But with this abolition of the present restraint on importation, there were the abolition of a present restraint on population also—the excrescent portion of which would, from the commencement of this new era of liberty, grow to a magnitude, that, owing to the number and uncertainty of the elements concerned in the process, is at this moment undefinable. Certain it is, therefore, that there would be a recovery, to a certain extent, from the first cheapness, occasioned by an immediate abolition, if that, instead of the far wiser step of a gradual abolition, were actually resolved upon. But we hold it beyond the reach of all human anticipation, to say how far this recovery would proceed—or whether it would fully restore the money price of grain, so as to work out a full compensation to our landlords, for the loss of that protection which they at present enjoy.

For who can compute the situation of that point, at which, in the state of perfect liberty, the underselling power of Britain will be exactly balanced, by the expense of its farthest and heaviest importation? The equipoise would at length be gained; but there are too many influences beyond the reach of precise calculation, for our being able to say when. Every augmentation, on the one hand, of our foreign manufactures, may either lessen their price in foreign markets, or add to the expense of their transit, when their superabundance is forwarded from nearer to more distant places of sale; and every consequent augmentation, on the other hand, of our imported food, enhances the dearness of it: so that the tendency, from the very first, is towards a limit, however impossible to foretell where this limit is to be, or after what increase of our excrescent population it will proceed no farther. We do not know how far, or how long, the industry and ingenuity of our own countrymen are to keep ahead of the industry and ingenuity of the people in other lands. We cannot answer for the number or extent of those regions abroad, where there shall be a constant preference of British goods to their own home manufactures, even though returns must be made for them in agricultural produce. We cannot tell the degree in which the encouragement of the industry, and the consequent increase of the numbers, of their own people, will absorb their agricultural produce, and make it an article of scarcer and dearer exportation. There is no foreseeing what the new mate-

rials, and what the new processes of industry may be, which shall spring up in other parts of the world; so that many of our present customers may be led to seek nearer to their own doors for those articles of taste and of enjoyment, which they now fetch from our far distant island. We cannot anticipate with certainty on either side of this question; neither how far the perpetual additions to British industry and skill shall extend our superiority, nor in how far the rivalry of other nations shall at length deduct from it. There are a thousand possibilities concerned in this matter, through which we can no more see our way, than we can through the contingencies of the weather. They are like the unassignable quantities of an indeterminate equation, which lead but to a dependent or conditional result. We cannot decide beforehand the proportion which, when things are left to their free course, our extrinsic shall bear to our natural population. It lies undisclosed in the womb of futurity; and both the resulting population and the resulting price that would ensue from a free state of things, must be left to the verifications of experience.

Yet, in the face of all this uncertainty, we feel no hesitation in affirming, both the expediency and the rightness of a free trade in corn. That it would land us in a larger excrecent population than we have at this moment, is little to be doubted. How much larger, we have not the means of calculating. Our own impression is, that it would not be nearly so much larger as is commonly anticipated. We should not be surprised, if, in a free race of improvement among the nations, the excrecent population of Britain did not, eventually and ultimately, amount to one-tenth of its natural. There are certain physical inequalities, which might maintain for us a permanent superiority over other lands, even after all the moral inequalities had subsided. Still we cannot imagine, that, with every advantage we have for commerce, our trade should overlap our agriculture, so far as to extend our population beyond a small fraction of the number maintained by the produce of our own territory. And even though it should be a large instead of a small fraction, we would still advocate the cause of freedom. The evils apprehended from this are two. There might first be a considerable reduction in the money price of food, to an extent which, if not provided against, would depress the substantial, as well as the nominal income of our landlords. And, second, there might be a precarious dependence on supplies from abroad, which might

subject us, at times, to an aggravated suffering, in the event of a general scarcity. Yet we would incur both these hazards, rather than we would the certain and urgent evil of a dissatisfied population; who feel, and perhaps with justice too, as if defrauded of their rights, by the compulsory restraints of the legislature on the importation of food. We hold, that an immunity from this sore heart-burning were cheaply purchased, even with the risk of every evil which may have been felt or foretold as the probable consequence of liberty. It were right that it should be a gradual, but, ultimately, a complete emancipation.

It is remarkable, that the first of the apprehended evils, that is, the injury done to the landlords, would become lighter, just as the second, or the dependence of our country on foreign supplies, ever increasing with the increase of our extrinsic population, became more aggravated. It is obvious, that the greater this population became, the heavier would be the expense at which we had to fetch agricultural produce from abroad, so that the money price of corn would rise in this country; and there is no saying how nearly this might effect a full compensation to the proprietors of the soil. But though it should fall short of this, the real injury to the landlords, by a fall in the money price of corn, stands chiefly connected, as we have already remarked, with the inequality to which it would give rise between them and the fund-holders. And should this inequality be adjusted, the injury would be in a great measure repaired. Now, we can perceive how this might be brought about by a rule of conditional taxation. For the sake of example, let us imagine that all assessed taxes, and all those taxes on commodities which bore on the general enjoyments of the people, were abandoned; and that there was substituted, in their place, an income-tax of 20 per cent. on land and fund holders to be exacted equally from both classes, when the average price of wheat for the preceding year had been sixty shillings a quarter. A scale of variations in the tax could be made to quadruple with a scale of variations in the price. When wheat fell beneath sixty shillings by successive differences, there might be a series of corresponding diminutions on the income-tax of land-holders, and of increase on the income-tax of fund-holders. And the converse of this could be made to take place, when wheat rose above sixty shillings. We should thus, with all the various conceivable changes in the price of wheat, have the land-holders paying 19, or 18, or 17 per cent., and so downward in the scale

in cheap years, and in dear 21, or 22, or 23, and so upward in the scale; while the charges on the fund-holders would stand on the opposite side of par. The same rule of equity might be extended, even to private mortgages upon land. We enter into no further details or modifications upon this plan. It is offered merely as a suggestion, and as being precisely of that character that is adapted to a measure of which the issues are uncertain. The conditional nature of the scheme meets, and is accommodated to, the uncertainty; and if it serve no other purpose, it may at least demonstrate, that an adjustment which shall harmonize the main interests of this complicated question, is not impracticable.

The second apprehended evil we hold to be far more serious than most of the advocates for a free corn trade seem disposed to allow. The dependence of a country, to any great extent, for the subsistence of its population, on other and distant lands, we hold to be a fearful element of insecurity and weakness. It is this which accounts for the ephemeral duration of many of those commercial states, that have figured their brief and brilliant hour in the history of the world. When their commerce abandoned them, the stamina, not of their greatness alone, but often of their very being, abandoned them. Or, if they do abide, theirs, like Venice, has been a shrunk and shrivelled existence; and that, just in proportion as their now extinct commerce did at one time overlap their agriculture. Our comfort, in reference to Britain, is, that though this may take place to a certain extent, it will not do it far. An excrescence will be formed, but such as may at any time be thrown off without impairing the substantial wealth or greatness of our nation. This accretion to our trade, consequent on the abolition of the monopoly in corn, which so many look to with triumphant anticipation, we should look to with alarm, did we conceive that it would effect a mighty proportional addition to our commerce—and only look to with toleration, because of its believed and hoped-for insignificance. It is vain to affirm that Britain, when thus extended, would rest as firmly on the motley foundation of home and foreign agriculture, as she would if, within her natural limits, she rested exclusively on her own proper basis. The advocates for freedom reason badly on this subject, when they speak of the dependence between us and other countries being reciprocal—or that they depended as much on our manufactures, as we on their food. The distinction is overlooked here, (and this is a

cause of error in many other departments of Political Economy,) between the necessaries and conveniences, or, still more, between the necessaries and luxuries of life. They can want our handiwork, but we, with a large surplus population, could not want their food. Our comfort is, that it will not be large. If it were, we should at times be exposed to visitations of fearful calamity—a calamity that might be alleviated, but would not be averted, by the stored and accumulated grain of former years, of which the advocates on the side of liberty conceive that it might ever be in readiness for such an emergency.

Any apprehension we have from a repeal of the corn laws, is for the country at large, and not for the landlords. There might be immediate loss to them, from a change in the power of money; but even this could be made up by an adjusted taxation. After which we see nothing else but their increasing wealth and importance, in every new addition made to the excrescent commerce and population of the land. Their estates would rise in value, just as the contiguous land of a great city does, with every enlargement in the number of its houses and families. And every season of universal scarcity, while the cause of severest suffering to the British community, would prove a harvest to the British landlords. They would have a fearful command over the services of the disposable population. The high prices of such a period, enhanced by such an accumulation of human beings upon our territory, would mightily enlarge their fortunes, or clear away the debts of their former extravagance. It may be recollected how the famines of 1799 and 1800 redounded to the sudden prosperity of agriculturists. We should anticipate, under the reformed system, a still more frequent recurrence of like fits and intervals of prosperity. The holders of the necessaries of life, therefore, may well give all their apprehensions to the wind. With the certainty that the population will increase just as their commodity increases, from whatever quarter it may be brought, they have nothing ultimately to fear in the consequences of an unexcepted freedom. They, at all times, and amid all changes, will be lords of the ascendant. They alone stand on firm vantage-ground, and should of all men be exempted from those mercantile jealousies, by unworthily acting upon which, they have dissevered, both from their persons and their interests, the affections of the people.

But the most important consideration of all, or, at least, that which harmonizes most with the general object of our work, is,

that however great the immediate relief of a free corn trade may be, it would at best be temporary, and, at the end of some brief period, would at length cease to be the minister of a greater abundance to each of the families of the land than they at present enjoy. The produce of our home agriculture is mightily increased within the last thirty years. Yet who will affirm that this has secured aught like a permanent sufficiency and comfort to the people? It has given us a larger, but not a more prosperous commonalty than before. And, without a change in the taste and moral habitude of the working classes, this will infallibly be the result of all the additional supplies that we shall ever obtain from foreign agriculture. The increase of their numbers will follow close on the enlargement of their food; so that, at the end of the process, nay, even throughout the process, there will scarcely be the sense and perception of any greater sufficiency than before. By all means let the boon be granted. Let the freedom of this trade be restored perfectly, though progressively—that government may withdraw itself from the obnoxious attitude of appearing to stand in the way of the people's subsistence. Let this semblance of hostility between the governors and the governed be for ever obliterated; for, however insignificant the material, the moral benefit that would ensue is incalculable. The material enlargement from this, as from every other source that we have hitherto attended to, would be but temporary in its duration, and limited in its amount; and, after it had reached its maximum, we should only behold a larger, but in every way as straitened a population as we do at present, or as we have done in the past stages of our history. Like all the other external capabilities of our state, it will soon be overtaken. The only sure remedy is an internal one. The people cannot, by any possibility, indefinitely provide from without, for their growing numbers. But by the moral operation of prudence and principle from within, they can accommodate their numbers to their provision. However wide the limit may be, yet, if they inconveniently press upon it, there can be no feeling of largeness. However narrow the limit may be, yet, if they keep sufficiently within it, this of itself, as among the peasants of sterile Norway, will give the feeling of largeness. In a word, this whole argument on foreign trade, and more especially on the foreign trade in corn, but leads to one repetition more of the oft-repeated lesson—that it is not by the force of material resources, but by the force of moral restraints, we shall at length

realize the spectacle of a general comfort among thriving and well-conditioned families. In other words, there is no other power than that of Christian education, which can chase away the economic or political distempers of our land; which can either conduct us at the first, or keep us permanently afterwards, in the state of a peaceful, and contented, and flourishing society.

NOTE H.—PAGE 180.

ON THE GRADUAL REFORM OF OUR FINANCIAL SYSTEM.

PRACTICAL men, with their contempt for theory, which almost always is a contempt for generalized truth, receive with incredulity every affirmation which relates to a state of things that greatly differs from the present state, with whose details and familiarities they are often so minutely conversant. It greatly concerns, therefore, the advocates of every change from one state to another, that the transition which they recommend should be made out in a way as gradual and safely progressive as may be; and that, not merely for the purpose of avoiding those substantial inconveniences which all sudden and desultory movements are sure to bring along with them, but for the purpose also, if possible, of reconciling those alarmists, whose resistance to innovation forms the great barrier in the way of all improvements.

It is the dictate of true wisdom, that nothing, save where principle or urgent necessity is involved, should be done *per saltum*—but that everything, when possible, should be done by a process, or without violence to that great law, both of nature and of sound politics, the law of continuity. It follows not, because we recommend a complete change or a complete abolition, that we therefore want the instant change or the instant abolition of anything. However firm our conviction of the expediency of certain measures, yet we should desire, in the act of carrying them into accomplishment, never to forget the deference which is due to existing interests, or even to existing prejudices.

On this principle we should deprecate an immediate, although we are friendly to a total abolition of the present corn laws. This should be made to take place by a gradual relaxation in

fractional instalments, as of a tenth annually, whereby they might be wholly done away in ten years; at which rate, we feel confident that, before the termination of the process, all parties would be experimentally convinced, how much they had been influenced by the veriest bugbear, in their opposition to a free corn trade.

Yet there is one vestige of these restrictions which we should feel inclined to retain—not as a relic of the old system certainly, nor yet as a protection to British landlords; but for the sake of a small addition to the public revenue, which it were most rightful and legitimate to raise from this particular source. The truth is, that these importations of grain, although exaggerated by the fancy of many, in respect to their future and eventual magnitude, will land us in a somewhat increased population, and perhaps place us in a somewhat more precarious state than we might otherwise have been. A somewhat larger establishment, both civil and military, may be required by this extension of our numbers; and it is but fair, that the excrescent population should in some way or other be made to defray the additional expense which their own residence amongst us shall have created. We have already stated our reasons for thinking why taxation should be shifted away from commodities altogether, and more especially from those which are in general use, whether among capitalists or labourers. But we confess, that, for the purpose of reaching the excrescent population, we should not object to a slight duty, as of five shillings a quarter on imported corn—to be remitted only in years of scarcity. So far from this being in contravention to any doctrine of ours, we hold that not only would it be consonant with strict principle, but that the theoretic perfection of our scheme would rather be completed than impaired by it.

But neither should the general commutation of all taxes into a territorial impost be adopted immediately. It should be done by a series of particular commutations, each of which would lighten the community of some distinct burden, till the whole was, in the course of years, transferred by successive centages on the income of our landed and funded proprietors. The work of reform should begin with those taxes which bear on the essential maintenance of labourers, till every vestige of an imposition on any of their comforts was completely done away. It might then proceed to a similar relief from house, and window, and all assessed taxes. If one-third of these were taken off annually

and commuted, we should be wholly delivered from them in three years. The reform might thus be made to move onward from one commodity, or object of taxation, to another—while, at each step, the administration would gather new popularity, and earn, at every distinct act, a fresh sentiment of gratulation and gratitude from the country at large. Long before the process was consummated, the landlords, however alarmed for the system at the first, would have the experimental conviction of its perfect innocence, nay, of its great positive benefit to themselves. At all events, did their fears turn out to be very obstinate, or even incurable, the process might be arrested at any given point; when, instead of a large income tax to cover all our present duties, they might be saddled with a very moderate one, in lieu of the most obnoxious of our present burdens. It is thus, that without endangering their own prosperity in the least, but, we think, most materially advancing it, they have it in their power, by successive peace-offerings, to mollify the turbulent spirit of the age, and establish their own influence and security on a firm basis for many generations. We know not a more effectual method of charming away a rancorous politics from our nation—or a method by which the discordant elements that are now so busily at work in the midst of British society, could be more readily and fully harmonized.

But it may be long before the doctrine is admitted, that all taxes fall ultimately on land, and still longer, before it is proceeded on in the business of legislation. The conviction that it were expedient to commute many of our most irritating taxes into a *general income-tax*, may take the precedency, for many years, of the conviction that it were fair and equitable to commute all taxes whatever into a territorial impost. And we should be thankful, if the former conviction were proceeded on till the latter was fully established. It were infinitely better than the present universal system of taxation upon commodities, that there should be an income-tax, although it did include the mercantile along with the landed classes. We believe the latter would pay all; but, leaving this question to be settled afterwards between these two classes, there is another question more urgent still, and demanding an immediate settlement; we mean the question between the higher and the humbler classes in society. An income-tax on the former, to the ostensible relief of the latter, would wrest their most formidable weapon from the hand of demagogues. It were the grand specific, we be-

lieve, for appeasing the outcries of public discontent, and so of warding off from the cause of public order and tranquillity, the principal danger to which, in these perilous times, it is exposed. And it were a cheap purchase of security to the payers, for it would just be making them pay openly, what, though in disguise, they now pay substantially and really.

And we would not only concede, for a time, a part of our theory, to the demand of those who prefer a general to a territorial income-tax: we can even admit, that the main objects of financial reform might be achieved, although the commutation from commodities to income were not universal. There are certain establishments, as the post-office for example, which might be upheld, and continue to yield a revenue to government, though without the penalties and restraints by which it is at present guarded as a monopoly. There are even certain articles of enjoyment, as the higher wines and other undoubted luxuries, which may be taxed to any extent, without affecting the comfort of the lower classes. But sugar and tea enter far too largely into the system of their maintenance to be thus classified; inso-much that the abolition of the tax upon these would lead, at no great distance of time, to the cheapening of labour, and so to the extension of agriculture. This tax, therefore, should be wholly commuted; and, in short, if aught but an income-tax is to be retained, it should stand exclusively associated with the enjoyments and expenditure of the wealthy, so as not to leave even the semblance or the shadow of any hardship on the working classes of society.*

With such views, we cannot share in the patriotic enthusiasm which is felt on the subject of retrenchment. Our patriotism and philanthropy incline us the other way. In common estimation, the demands of the public service are regarded as so many encroachments on the general comfort of society. In our estimation, they are but encroachments on the luxury of one class, and that is the landed proprietors; and we cannot regard with complacency the abridgments which are made, either in the number or the support of national functionaries, when we believe that the only effect will be to enlarge the means of the aristocracy, and enable them to live in greater splendour or delicacy

* It would more fully accomplish this desirable object, if the income or property tax, instead of being levied by a centage on the whole income, were levied by a centage on the excess of that income over a certain fixed income, beneath which taxation should not be carried.

than before. So far from taxation having been carried to its extreme limit, we believe it was never at a greater distance from the limit than at this moment; and to substantiate the position, we make our confident appeal to the growing number of those families in the country who are elevated above the condition of labourers, to the increased profusion of their tables, and the increased magnificence of their houses, and furniture, and equipage. In other words, there is still, with all the outcry of our being an over-burdened people—there is still a larger fund for the additional imposts of government, than at any former period in British history; or, which is the same thing, a larger disposable population, who, with but the surrender of luxury on the part of private individuals, can be spared for enlarging the civil, and the military, and the educational, and all the useful or respectable establishments of the nation. When told, as we often are, that no trade can bear to be taxed any further, our reply is, that it is not the trade which furnishes the tax. Trade is but the channel, and not the fountainhead, of all the supplies which come into the treasury. It is not commerce, but its customers, who pay all taxes; and these are, mainly, the holders of the maintenance of labour. They can bear to be further taxed, so long as they indulge in articles of enjoyment which might be dispensed with; and, in giving up these, they might abridge or annihilate many a trade, yet without destroying the sustenance either of its capitalists or labourers, which, instead of being destroyed, is but transferred into the coffers of government. By this process we but exchange the products of commerce and manufactures for public benefits; and we repeat, that instead of stinting any goodly or desirable objects of patriotism, never was there a time when they might be more freely and bounteously extended. Having such views on the real effects and rationale of taxation, we cannot give our admiration or approval to the scurvy economics of the day. To our eye, they have the characteristics of selfishness and sordidness; and we can see nothing in these paltry savings of government, but a surrender of great public interests, that the ignoble gratifications of sense or of vanity may be left unimpaired.

One great benefit of our proposed commutation were, that it would break up the association which now obtains between lofty and high-minded patriotism on the one hand, and this wretched penuriousness on the other. It might perhaps break up too, that low arithmetical politics which has had too long the ascen-

dency in the councils of the nation. It would bring the real sides of the alternative clearly and undisguisedly into view; making it quite palpable, that the maintenance of the general population was in no way affected by taxes; so that, after this element had been discharged from the reasoning, it would become manifest as day, that taxation and the public service might be indefinitely extended, without one earthly interest but that of the landlords being made to suffer from it.

There is one obvious effect that would ensue from this great change in the financial system of the country. It would lower the money price of manufacturing labour; and so by cheapening it would enlarge our exports. The taxes at present do not neutralize; but they so far countervail the natural advantages of British industry, as to bring us sooner than otherwise to the limit of our exportation. By enlarging this limit, and so extending our foreign markets, we should certainly export a greater amount of manufactures than we do at present; and this would seem to land us in what we certainly do not hold to be a desirable object, the increase of our excrecent population. It should be recollected, however, that the same remission of taxes which would cheapen manufacturing, would also cheapen agricultural labour; and so would both let forth the agriculture upon inferior soils, and spread a more strenuous cultivation over the whole territory. There would then, along with the extension of our commerce, be an extension of our agriculture; so that the one might possibly not overlap the other to a greater extent than before. The return imports for the additional exports need not consist of additional agricultural produce to feed the then larger excrecent population. They may consist of additional foreign luxuries, to be purchased by the landed proprietors, whose then larger revenues from the extension of the agriculture should enable them to live more sumptuously than before; or they may consist of additional second necessaries—so named, because, though imported from abroad, they do, in fact, form objects of demand, and so enter into the maintenance of the general population. We have already adverted, and with feelings of gratulation, to the dissimilarity between Britain and those smaller states, whose importance and glory departed when their commerce abandoned them. The difference lies in the amplitude of our agricultural basis, so that although commerce should forsake our shores, we should find a resource and a harbourage for almost all the population who are now employed in it. Now, whatever adds to the agricultural

basis augments this security; and the remission of all taxes which bear on the maintenance of labour has clearly this effect. It is tantamount to making the country a larger one than before; and the likelihood is, that with all the facilities given by this financial reform to manufacturing labour, yet with the commensurate facilities given at the same time to agricultural labour, the excrecent population might not have a greater proportion to the natural after the change than before it.

SYNOPTICAL VIEW OF THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
THIS VOLUME.*

It has not been our object to deliver a regular system of political economy. It has been to establish the following specific proposition—That no economic enlargements in the wealth and resources of a country can insure aught like a permanent comfort or sufficiency to the families of the land. Followed up as these enlargements are by a commensurate, or generally by an overpassing increase of the population—the country, while becoming richer in the aggregate, may continue to teem with as great, perhaps a greater amount of individual distress and penury than in the humbler and earlier days of her history. In these circumstances, the highway to our secure and stable prosperity is not so much to enlarge the limit of our external means, as so to restrain the numbers of the population that they shall not press too hard upon that limit. But the only way of rightly accomplishing this, is through the medium of a higher self-respect, and higher taste for the comforts and decencies of life among the people themselves. It is only a moral and voluntary restraint that should be aimed at, or that can be at all effectual; the fruit, not of any external or authoritative compulsion, but of their own spontaneous and collective will. This is evidently not the achievement of a day, but the slow product of education, working insensibly, yet withal steadily and surely, on the habits and inclinations of the common people; begetting a higher cast of character, and, as the unfailing consequence of this, a higher standard of enjoyment; the effect of which will be

* The foot-note references to books in this article are to former publications of the Author, wherein some of the principles of the present work have been stated and defended.

more provident, and hence both later and fewer marriages. Without this expedient no possible enlargement of the general wealth can enlarge the individual comfort of families; but, as in China, we shall behold a general want and wretchedness throughout the mass of society. With this expedient no limitation in the way of further increase to our wealth will depress the condition, though it will restrain the number of our families; but, as in Norway, we shall behold the cheerful spectacle of a thriving, independent, and respectable peasantry.

But though our main object has been to exhibit such proofs and illustrations as may have occurred to us for the establishment of this position; and though we do not profess to have unfolded in our volume, Political Economy, according to the forms and in the nomenclature of a science; yet a political economy, such as it is, may be gathered out of it. We may not have accomplished the regular construction of a system, be it right or wrong, but we have at least furnished the materials of one; and we conclude with a brief exposition of its leading principles and peculiarities.

1. The division of the labouring population into the agricultural, the secondary, and the disposable. It presents many new and important relations in the science of political economy. No ground will be cultivated (unless by the interference of some artificial and compulsory legislation), that is not at least able to feed the agricultural population employed on it, and their secondaries. Hence the higher the standard of enjoyment is among the people at large, the greater will be the secondary, and the less will be the disposable class; or corresponding to this, the greater will be the wages, and the less will be the rent, while at the same time the more limited will be the cultivation, because of the larger produce that will be required from the soil last entered on, to feed the larger number of secondaries.*

2. That the great aim of every enlightened philanthropist and patriot is to raise the standard of enjoyment, even though it should somewhat lessen the rent, and somewhat limit the cultivation. That there must be less food raised in virtue of this narrower cultivation; and hence a somewhat narrower society. But that this, with general comfort among the families, is vastly preferable to a more numerous society, with all the consequent miseries of an over-peopled land.

3. That there is no other method by which wages can be kept

* "Extent and Stability of National Resources."

permanently high than by the operation of the moral preventive check among the working classes of society; and that this can only be secured by elevating their standard of enjoyment through the means both of common and Christian education.*

4. That however menacing an aspect the policy, whose object is to raise the condition of the working classes, may have on the interest of the landlords by encroaching on the rent of land—yet they have every security for a great and growing revenue notwithstanding. Such, in the first place, is the strength of the principle of population, that there is no danger but wages will be kept sufficiently low, and cultivation be carried down among the inferior soils sufficiently far. And besides every improvement in the methods of husbandry, by lessening the agricultural population needed for the work of farms—and every improvement in the powers of manufacturing industry, by lessening the population needed for preparing the second necessaries of life—will serve to increase the disposable population who are at the service of the landlords, and, along with this, the rent out of which this third class of labourers is maintained. The improvements which are ever taking place in the powers of labour will greatly more than countervail any diminution effected by the moral check on the number of labourers; or, in other words, the standard of enjoyment may rise, and yet the income of landlords rise along with it. Human industry, aided by human skill, is ever becoming more productive; and, from this cause, if workmen will only assert and make good their own proper share of the increased produce, there are abundant means for the comforts both of the proprietors and of the general population being enlarged contemporaneously.†

5. That high wages are not necessarily confined to the period when the wealth of society is in a state of progressive increase; and neither does it follow, that, when this wealth has attained its maximum, and become stationary, the wages of labour must be low. That it remains in the collective power of labourers to sustain their wages at as high a level in the ultimate, as in the progressive stages of the wealth of a country. That the moral preventive check on population can achieve and perpetuate this result, but that nothing else will do it.

6. That in every country where the laws are efficient and

* "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation," being Volumes XIV., XV., and XVI., of the Original Works.

† "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

equitable, and the people are industrious, the cultivation of the soil will, under the guidance of personal interest and enterprise, be carried to the extreme limit of its being profitable. That, in these circumstances, to enter on a scheme of home-colonization, is to extend the agriculture beyond this limit, or, in other words, to enter upon soils which will not repay the expenses of their cultivation. That such a process can only be upheld by taxation, or by turning so many of the disposable population either into agrarians or secondaries. That the process reaches its ultimatum when the last man of the disposable population, withdrawn from the preparation of luxuries, is converted into an agricultural or secondary labourer. That this implies a state of things, when the whole rent of the land is absorbed in the expenses of a pauperism, now accumulated to the uttermost. That by the time when such a consummation is reached, and probably long before it, the landowners, loosened from all interest or care in their estates, would abandon the administration of them. That when once the tie of property was broken, there would ensue an immediate dissolution of society. That the occupiers or labourers on the inferior soils, now deprived of the essential support, which, through the medium of their proprietors, they drew from the superior ones, would turn, in violence, on the more fortunate occupiers of the better land. And finally, that, whatever temporary respite society might obtain from a scheme of home-colonization, it is a scheme which, if persisted in, must have its final upshot in the most fearful and desolating anarchy.

7. That this contemplation suggests two distinct limits—one, the extreme limit of a profitable, another, the extreme limit of a possible cultivation. That, by abstaining from schemes of pauperism, and, instead of these, giving the whole strength and wisdom of government to the best schemes of popular education, we shall keep within the former limit, and, with an untouched disposable population, whether for the luxury of proprietors, or for the public objects of a sound and enlightened patriotism, we may have, at the same time, the general population in a state of respectable comfort and sufficiency. But if, transgressing the former limit, we enter, with our home-colonists, on unprofitable soils, and so make way towards the latter limit—from that moment, in thus making room for a larger, we are on the sure road to a greatly more wretched society than before; and degrade throughout the condition of the working classes, while we at

once impoverish the landlords and enfeeble the state, by trenching on the disposable population.

8. That no trade or manufacture contributes more to the good of society than the use or enjoyment which is afforded by its own commodities; hence the delusiveness of that importance which has been ascribed to them, as if they bore any creative part in augmenting the public revenue, or as if, apart from the use of their commodities, they at all contributed to the strength or greatness of the nation; and hence, also, the futility of the common distinction between productive and unproductive labour.*

9. That although commerce reacted most powerfully on agriculture at the termination of the middle ages, so as to introduce a new habit of expenditure among the landlords, and mightily to extend the cultivation of land, yet, now that the habit is firmly and fully established, we are not to imagine, though any given branch of trade or manufactures should be extinguished, that it will sensibly throw back the agriculture; for that no proprietor would let down the cultivation of his estate, because the failure or fluctuation of particular trades had placed beyond his reach some of his wonted enjoyments. That he would still be at no loss for objects on which to spend his income; and that, therefore, a large income would be as much his earnest aim and his felt interest as before.

10. That there is, therefore, a misplaced and exaggerated alarm connected with the decay or the loss of trade. That the destruction of a manufacture does not involve the destruction of the maintenance now expended on manufacturers; and that the whole mischief incurred by such an event would be to them a change of employment, along with a change of enjoyment to their customers; after which we should behold, in every country subsisted by its own agricultural produce, as large a population as well maintained as before.†

11. That they are chiefly the holders of the first necessaries of life, or landed proprietors, who impress, by their taste and demand, any direction which seemeth unto them good, on the labours of the disposable population.

12. Grant but industry and protection, and then capital will be found to have in it as great an increasing and restorative power as population has; and that any policy for fostering, or any fears for the decay of the one, are as chimerical as the same

* "Extent and Stability of National Resources."

† Ibid.

policy or the same fears in reference to the other; and that capital can no more increase beyond a certain limit than population can.*

13. That the diminution of capital, occasioned by excessive expenditure, whether public or private, is not repaired so much by parsimony as by the action of a diminished capital on profits; and that the extravagance of government or of individuals, which raises prices by the amount of that extravagance, produces only a rotation of property, without any further diminution of it than what arises from the somewhat higher rate of profit, which an increased expenditure brings along with it, and which higher rate of profit must, to a certain extent, limit the cultivation of land.

14. That trade is liable to gluts, both general and partial; that no skilful distribution of the capital among particular trades can save the losses which ensue from a general excess of trading; and that the result is the same, whether the undue extension has taken place by means of credit, or from an excess of capital.

15. That the rate of profit is determined by the collective will of capitalists, just as the rate of wages is by the collective will of labourers—the former by the command which they have, through their greater or less expenditure, over the amount of capital; the latter by the command which they have, through their later or earlier marriages, over the amount of population. That by raising or lowering, therefore, the standard of enjoyment among capitalists, profit is raised or lowered; that, in this way, both classes may encroach on the rent of land, and share its produce more equally with the landlords.

16. That when the agricultural produce of a country is equal to the subsistence of its population, its foreign trade is as much directed by the taste, and upheld by the ability, of its landed proprietors, as the home trade is.†

17. That it is not desirable that the commerce of Britain should greatly overlap its agricultural basis; and that the ex-crescent population, subsisted on corn from abroad, yield a very insignificant fraction to the public revenue.‡

18. That, nevertheless, there should be a gradual relaxation of the corn laws, and ultimately a free corn trade, with the exception of a small duty on importation, for the single purpose of

* "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

† "Extent and Stability of National Resources," and "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

‡ Ibid.

a revenue to government, by which to meet the expenses to which it is subjected, from the addition made by the excrement to the whole population.

19. That the abolition of their monopoly in corn would not be injurious to the British landlords, saving that the increase thereby given to the value of money might create an inequality between them and the fundholders,—which inequality, however, could be rectified by means of an adjusted taxation.

20. That, probably, a free corn trade would not burden the country with a large excrement population.

21. That Britain has little or nothing to apprehend from the loss of her colonies and commerce; but that a change of employment to the disposable population, and of enjoyment to their maintainers, would form the whole result of it. And that though, historically, foreign trade did, at the termination of the middle ages, stimulate agriculture, yet that now, under all the possible fluctuations of trade, there is perfect security for the cultivation of land, on to that point at which it ceases to yield any surplus produce to the landlord.

22. That, with the exception of their first brief and temporary effect on wages and the profits of circulating capital, and of their more prolonged effect on the profits of fixed capital—all taxes fall upon land; the interest of its mortgages being included.

23. That this doctrine, though now regarded as one of the exploded errors of the French economists, should not share in the discredit attached to their school—if upheld by other reasonings, and made to rest on other principles, than those of the economists. That the grounds on which our conviction in this matter is established, were never once recognised by these economists—that is, the dependence of wages on an element over which labourers, collectively, have the entire control—we mean population; and the dependence of profit on an element over which traders, collectively, have the entire control—we mean capital.

24. That, to estimate the whole effect of taxes upon land, we should add to the effect of them, in aggravating the expenditure of landlords, the effect of them in lessening their receipts. That every tax which bears on the profit or maintenance of the agricultural capitalists, and which bears on the wages or maintenance of the agricultural, and their secondary labourers, and generally, which enhances the expenses of farm management—creates a deduction, *pro tanto*, from the rent. That, for the

commutation of all taxes into a territorial and funded impost, there would be a full equivalent to the landlords—first, in the lessened expenses of their living; and secondly, in the enlarged rent of all the land now under cultivation. And that they, over and above, would obtain more than an equivalent, in the new rent which would accrue from the more extended cultivation of their land, now unburdened of all those taxes by which the cultivation had formerly been limited.

25. That the effect of tithes, in contracting the agriculture of a country, is the same with that of taxes on capitalists, or labourers, or the instruments of husbandry; and that the abolition of both would, in the first instance, enlarge the comforts of the general community; but, at last, would prove exclusively a boon and an enlargement to the landlords.

26. That tithes and taxes ought not to be abolished, but commuted, as there ought to be a more liberal provision for the various branches of the public service; and, more especially, for the support of the literary and ecclesiastical establishments, the endowment of which is indispensable to high scholarship, and to the full Christian instruction of the people.*

27. That the extreme limit of taxation is the landed rental of the kingdom; and that, were taxation carried to this limit, it would place the great bulk of the disposable population in the service of the state.

28. That the capabilities of the nation for defensive war are greatly underrated—they being at least commensurate to the extent of the disposable population.†

29. That the superior influence of Britain over other nations in distant parts, is due to her exports; and that if, instead of her lighter manufactures, she had to export raw produce, her power in offensive war would be lessened, while she might continue as strong in defensive war as before; and that, therefore, the balance of power is a topic of needless and misplaced anxiety on the part of British statesmen.

30. That the national debt is tantamount to a general mortgage on the land of the kingdom, and that it has occasioned no diminution of capital—the absorption of capital by the government loan of any particular year, being replaced next year by the operation of the diminished capital upon profits.

31. That if the expenses of a war are raised within the year,

* "On the Use and Abuse of Literary and Ecclesiastical Endowments."

† "Extent and Stability of National Resources."

they do not enhance general prices ; but that, in as far as they are defrayed by loans, prices rise, and so that the excess upon the whole is equal to the sum borrowed.*

32. That the national debt is therefore a double burden upon the community, having been already paid once in the excess of those higher prices which are consequent upon each loan ; and to be paid a second time, either by a perpetual interest, or by the liquidation of the principal.

33. That the nation is as able to pay the expense of any war by taxes within the year, as by taxes and loans together—seeing that in point of fact, it does pay the loans within the year too, in the higher prices which these loans have occasioned.

34. That the law of primogeniture is essentially linked with the political strength, and other great public interests of the nation.

35. That, on the whole, no enlargement of our economical resources will suffice for the wants of a population, who are under no moral or prudential restraint on the increase of their numbers. That the effect of each successive addition to the means of our subsistence, will, in that case, be only a larger, but not a more comfortable or better-conditioned society. That however numerous, or however successful the expedients may be, for adding to the amount of national wealth—they will be nullified, in point of effect on the sensible comfort of families, by the operation of but one expedient more, which shall insure a proportional, or beget a tendency towards greater than a proportional, addition to the national population. That a law of compulsory relief for the poor is precisely such an expedient ; and that so long as it is in operation, every other device which philanthropy can suggest, or even an enlightened political economy can sanction, will turn out to be futile and abortive.†

36. That but for this disturbing force, which so unsettles the providential habits of the people, and so undermines every principle, whether of nature or Christianity, to the spontaneous operation of which the care of the poor ought always to have been confided—society might undergo a very speedy amelioration. Because that a very small excess in the number of labourers, effects a very large and disproportionate reduction in the price of labour ; and therefore, by a reverse process, it might only require a very insignificant fraction of relief from the numbers of

* "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

† "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation," and Pamphlets on Pauperism, *passim*.

the people, to operate a very large relief on their circumstances and comforts. That emigration for the lessening of the number, and the various other economical expedients for the enlargement of the means, will be of but slight and temporary effect, so long as the law of pauperism shall maintain the population in a state of perpetual overflow. But that, if these were related to a scheme for the gradual abolition of the pauperism, they would smooth the transition from a system of compulsory, to one of natural and gratuitous relief; after which, it were in the power of common, and more especially of Christian education, indefinitely to raise the habits and tastes, and, along with these, to raise the economical condition of the people.

THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF A RIGHT MORAL
TO A
RIGHT ECONOMICAL STATE OF THE COMMUNITY,
WITH OBSERVATIONS ON A RECENT CRITICISM IN
THE EDINBURGH REVIEW.

[FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1832.]

P R E F A C E.

WE are now aware of at least ten different reviews on a work entitled, "Political Economy in connexion with the Moral State and Moral Prospects of Society," and of these the majority are hostile to the principles of the Volume.*

Yet, in the following Pamphlet, we have singled out the article in the Edinburgh Review, as the only subject of our reply.

Our main reason for this is, that the Journal now mentioned still adheres to the Malthusian doctrine of Population; so that its opposition is more confined to such tenets as are peculiar to ourselves: whereas the other adverse criticisms of any weight, from the standing and authority of the periodicals in which they appear, all proceed on the assumption of that doctrine being erroneous; and hence, are rather directed against the views of Mr. Malthus, than against those which are properly our own.

That the rate at which population would increase, if the adequate means of subsistence were at all times within reach, greatly exceeds the rate at which the means of subsistence can increase, with all the aids and practical openings, which either the mechanical arts, or the sound and liberal policy of governments could afford to human labour—we have long regarded as a position, founded both on the widest possible experience, and the clearest possible demonstration. This is the one doctrine, which—whether in respect of evidence by observation, or of deduction by reasoning—is more like a truth in mixed mathematics, than any other doctrine in the philosophy of human affairs.

* We have since seen the "British Critic," which concurs with us in the main lessons of our work.

Such being our strong convictions on the side of Mr. Malthus, we could not but lay our account with the strenuous opposition of all who differ from him. And this opposition, come when it may, was sure to be an impassioned one. The controversy in fact has long, in regard to all essential principle, been exhausted; and has now become a contest of feeling, rather than a contest of argument. Were it but a hostile conviction that stood in the way of the Malthusian doctrine, one might hope for the removal of it. But the case is different, when, instead of this, it is the revolt of pained and irritated sentiment, which, so far from being allayed, is exasperated the more, in very proportion as the lights of arithmetic and experience are made to shine upon the question. One might know how to manage a mere resistance of the understanding; but when it is resistance in the shape of a sensitive antipathy, it becomes more difficult to deal with. We might regret it. But we do not well see how we can redargue it.

The likeliest thing to it which we recollect, in the history of human controversies, is the state of parties on that celebrated question in moral science—"the Liberty of the Will." There is such a semblance, at least, of irrefragable reasoning, on the side of those who affirm the progressions of the mental, to be as certain and necessary as those of the material world—as, if not to have persuaded, at least very much to have provoked their antagonists. There is, we believe, in many instances, an honest apprehension for the interests of virtue; and hence, a moral indignation against the doctrine of necessity—all the more vivid, in proportion to the strength of that argument by which it is supported. And it is even so with the recent, and not yet generally received doctrine of population, which, whenever it is proposed, comes into conflict with an amiable though we think mistaken solicitude, for the interests of humanity—an instant repugnance of the heart against what is resented and recoiled from as a cold-blooded speculation.

But there is another species of resentment, less pure and generous in its origin, under which it is possible that a reviewer may be tempted to commit an act of injustice. It not unfrequently happens, and more especially in an age when the politics and the political economy have such a reciprocal influence in moulding and modifying each other; insomuch, that a doctrine in the science is often made the Shibboleth or the watchword of a party in the State—that a leading Journal, at once the organ

and the representative of all its adherents, signalizes itself by some favourite principle, of which it undertakes the championship; or by some specific of healing virtue for the distempers of the nation, of which it becomes the ostensible and the declared patron. It is thus that no science, perhaps, is placed in circumstances more unfavourable for the calm and dispassionate investigation of its doctrines, than Political Economy; nor can we imagine an influence more darkening and disturbing, or one more unfriendly to the progress of sound opinions—than when, amid the heats, whether of commercial or civil partisanship, each important question is made the signal for lighting up a fierce and interested warfare. The mischief is greatly exasperated, when a journal of high authority has embarked its credit on some noted project or panacea for the evils of our social condition; and whether it be home-colonization, or a scheme of modified pauperism, or an organized system of emigration to distant lands, which its conductors have set their hearts upon—they will not submit, without a struggle, to be told of the futility of all these expedients; and even truth itself will have the aspect of a Gorgon in their eyes, if, under its withering glare, their fond visions of philanthropy, and the devices of their profoundest wisdom, are laid prostrate in the dust.

But what the precise cause may be of the misrepresentations which we have suffered from the hands of certain journalists, it is needless to inquire. It is enough for our immediate purpose, that we state, in one or two sentences, what a few of these misrepresentations are.

The first is, that under the exclusive power of one dominant and monopolizing conception, we have overlooked those great and prosperous enlargements, which may take place in the economic state of a country, apart from that moral influence of education, which they would have us represent, as being, not only of paramount, but of sole efficacy, in determining the condition of a people. Now, not only do we admit the successive and continuous additions which are being made every year to the riches and resources of our nation, but we rejoice in contemplating how much, in this way, is still in reserve for us; and, more especially, do we venture to recommend certain practicable steps, as the commutation of Tithes and Taxes, the gradual abolition of the Corn Laws, and even, with certain modifications, a plan of national and organized Emigration; whereby to obtain a further postponement, or breathing-time, from that extreme

pressure, which we fear to be the ultimate destination of every people, abandoned to the recklessness of their own habits, and unprovided with a good and adequate educational system, for pervading the whole mass of the community, both with the culture of knowledge and the culture of principle.

The second misconception under which our interpreters seem to have laboured is, that all our reasonings proceed on the assumption of this ultimate pressure being now at hand, in the shape of a felt and palpable evil. Whereas, they would regard it, for the present at least, as but a shadowy bugbear, which, if ever to be realized, stands from us at the distance of many centuries; to which remote futurity we may safely adjourn all our anxieties, for a right adjustment between the population and the food of the world. But here they have forgotten what we certainly have been at pains, however unsuccessfully, to inculcate upon our readers, that, for the effect of general and severe pressure, it is not necessary to wait till the food of the world shall have reached its extreme limit, and till its still advancing population shall be continuing to urge itself onward against a then stationary barrier. That there may be a felt straitening throughout the families of a land, it is enough if the rate of increase in the population shall exceed the rate of increase in the means of their subsistence; so as to effect a pressure against a barrier that is receding too slowly for the purposes of a free movement. It is thus that the philosophy of Malthus might find an exemplification, not in the last stages of the world's history alone, but throughout all its stages; and, most certainly, it is thus that, at every period, whether late or early, in the annals of our species, the people, if better morally, would have been better economically. There is no country on the face of the earth, that, even in its brightest season of rapid prosperity and progress, would not have enjoyed a larger sufficiency and comfort at the time, as well as a more permanent continuance of these to more distant ages, had the chief care of its government been the establishment of such an education, as might have secured for the land that richest of all blessings,—the formation of a humanized and well-taught peasantry.

But, thirdly, the most subtle, and perhaps, therefore, the most inveterate of all the delusions, on the part both of our readers and expounders, is—that, to school the people for that specific Malthusian result, which we hold to be so desirable, they would need to be specifically instructed in the Malthusian lesson, on

the subject of population. We know not whether it be for the purpose of ridicule, or from sheer misconception, that this unintelligent view has sometimes been given of our argument. The design of education is to elevate man, intellectually, and morally, and religiously, to a higher state than before; and, for the accomplishment of this general object, it is not necessary to go beyond the ordinary topics, whether of common or Christian scholarship. It is not at the bidding of the economist, that the people will be led to abstain from improvident marriages; or, indeed, to make any change whatever on their practical habits. But, what the people will not do at the bidding of the economists, they will, if once raised and transformed by the power of education, do, in obedience to their own higher tastes, and in conformity to the wider range which they can now take of their interests, whether in the present or in the future world. A general and wished-for result may be the fruit of a general concurrence on the part of men, not one of whom shall have made that result the object of his distinct aim, or even of his distinct contemplation. It is enough, that each shall act wisely and virtuously for himself. The aggregate effect of a population, somewhat lightened in their numbers, and greatly raised in their economical condition, would be the sure result of an efficient system of education; although neither teachers nor taught ever looked to aggregates, and both were alike unconscious and innocent of Political Economy.

For the settlement of all other misunderstandings between us and our critics, we must refer to the Pamphlet at large; in which we have attempted a close examination of the strictures that have appeared against us in the "Edinburgh Review,"—the journal which, of all the others, we find, in the present instance, the easiest to deal with—and precisely because itself deals in the best and strongest arguments. We do not feel disposed to make any return, and, least of all, a return in kind, for the contemptuous or the wrathful effusions of the London Periodicals, whereas the definite statements and reasonings of our compatriot can be met by counter-statements and counter-reasonings of our own.

We had hoped, at the commencement of our present effort, to have comprised within the pages of a moderate pamphlet, a full answer to the article in the Edinburgh Review. But we have felt it necessary to confine ourselves to the discussion of such questions as are more of a practical character; and have re-

served, for a brief Postscript, the succinct treatment of certain matters, which more properly belong to Political Economy, considered as a science.

In the Preface to our work, we stated, that we were not sanguine either of a general, or of an instant reception for its doctrines, and laid our account with its novelties being long disregarded or derided as paradoxes. The vigour and vehemence of the opposition that we have raised, does not therefore surprise us; while there is nothing, at the same time, in the character of that opposition to make us despair. Had we been discouraged by the incredulity of others, we should long ere now have given up our peculiar views on the question of Pauperism. But neither their resistance, nor their ridicule, could prevail against our own experimental verification of them. And there is one evidence, experimental too, which so grows and multiplies with the lapse of time, as may at length become palpable to themselves—not the evidence of our practical success, but of their own practical discomfiture. They have been attempting long, and are attempting still, their endless modifications on the Pauperism of England; but the radical and inherent mischief of the system is more and more every day making head against them, and preparing the way for a lesson which they should have learned long ago—that it is a system not to be regulated, but destroyed. They resolutely support, and we fear will be powerful enough to carry their own favourite scheme of Pauperism for Ireland; and the signal aggravation of all its miseries, which they will thereby bring on that unhappy land, must throw additional light upon the question. They are even tampering with the pure and virtuous economy of Scotland; and, one after one, have they immolated many of its parishes to a system, which is nowhere introduced without inflicting the sorest deterioration both on the comfort and character of families. Let us hope that this un-failing and oft-repeated experience will at length open their eyes. And as to experience we confide the verification of our very obnoxious doctrine on the subject of Pauperism—to the same do we confide the verification of our equally obnoxious doctrines on the subject of Political Economy at large. They are precisely such as admit of being tested, of being either ratified or refuted by the history of future years—whether we affirm of a Poor Law, that, viewed as an expedient for the relief of distress, it is a positive and unmixed evil; or of all the other merely economic expedients for the same object, not that they

are evils, but that at best they afford only a fleeting and temporary good, soon to be neutralized by a cause, whose deadly mischief nothing else can countervail, save a thorough education of the people. Let all these expedients be tried, successively, or together, and what we have ventured to predict is, that none of them will avail for a permanent lightening of our pressure. It is not Home-colonization that will do it. It is not the largest practicable conversion of Revenue into Capital. It is not the greatest possible enlargement of Foreign Trade. It is not the Repeal of the Corn Laws. It is not the more equal division of Property. It is not the abolition of Tithes or Taxes. And, finally, it is not Emigration. We think that, beforehand, and by the lights of science, one and all of these measures are traceable to their results; and we have endeavoured so to trace them. In our conclusions, we have run counter to many of the fond imaginations of projectors. Experience will decide the question betwixt us; and whether, if without an extensive moral and educational reform, the future history of Britain—marked, on the one hand, by the outbreakings of a straitened and distempered population—on the other, by the manifold but abortive attempts of the Legislature to rectify their condition—will not lend a melancholy confirmation to all our views.

THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF A RIGHT MORAL

TO A

RIGHT ECONOMICAL STATE OF THE COMMUNITY.

SHOULD an influential journal pronounce an adverse judgment on the views of an author, it is possible that the cause of truth may suffer for a time—more especially in an age when reviews are much, and books are little read. This will all the more surely happen, if the subject in question be a science of wide and multiplied combinations; presenting, even on the first sight and partial regards that we may chance to bestow upon it, many glances, or imposing likelihoods of truth, which can only be dissipated by a careful and comprehensive survey of the matter in all its bearings; and therefore requiring, for the adjustment of its controversies, a far more lengthened and laborious argumentation than is at all suited to the patience or the taste of ordinary readers. The peculiar danger in these circumstances is, either that they will take up with the first plausibility which offers—or that, receiving their opinions upon trust, they will, at all hazards, prefer the brief sketch of the reviewer to the elaborate treatise of the author; and the more, that the proper vocation of the former is to be the guide of public sentiment, whereas the latter may either be comparatively unknown, or may have been guilty of a rash incursion on a science which does not belong to him.

The article in the *Edinburgh Review*, on a work entitled, “*Political Economy in connexion with the Moral State and Moral Prospects of Society*,” is written in an obvious spirit of

kindness and good-will to its author. It is free of all asperity ; and, in the absence of this distasteful ingredient, one can attend to its reasonings, without any of the moral discomfort that is incurred by the perusal of a coarse and boisterous invective. Our only discomfort is, that, in return for so much courteousness, we should, in justice to our subject, have to state any instance in which the writer of it has either erroneously misconceived or inadequately represented us. He has been pleased to say of the work, that it is calculated to do extensive good, by the attention to its various and important topics which it must necessarily awaken. But it were too much to expect of any readers, that they should listen for a moment to an author, convicted either of ignorance or oversight in the first and fundamental principles of his reasoning ; and far more, that they should accompany him on a toilsome pathway, to those ulterior conclusions, in which he has either deviated from his predecessors, or gone beyond them—after they have been made to believe, on the authority of a journal high in talent and general reputation, that he is incompetent, and uninformed even in those simpler elements which may be said to form the very alphabet of the science.

It is rightly stated in the review, that the great object of the work is but the establishment of *one lesson*, or “one leading idea,”* even the superior importance of a Christian education, over every other expedient which the most enlightened Political Economy can devise, for a secure and permanent amelioration, in the condition of the labouring classes. But it is quite obvious, that this lesson cannot be fully or conclusively made out, without the satisfactory treatment of many other distinct lessons, which must, of necessity, go before it. A comparison is instituted between one thing and many things. But, to execute this aright, there must not only be a just estimate of the power and quality of the one thing whose superiority is affirmed, there must also be a just estimate of the power and quality of the many other things wherewith it is compared. And so there come to be as many distinct lessons, as there are acts of comparison. And; accordingly, for the execution of our task, the chief expedients which politicians or economists have proposed, for bringing about a larger sufficiency in the state and circumstances of the general population, come successively under review ; or in other words, a wide survey must be taken of the leading doctrines in Political Economy. Doubtless the concluding proposition is one ; but it

* Page 53 of the Review.

can only be arrived at by a series of anterior propositions. Or, to express it otherwise, there is in the work but one generic proposition ; but it includes many special propositions, each of which requires to be discussed separately ; and, in doing this, we have to pass from topic to topic, as distinct, the one from the other, as are the chapters which they respectively occupy. Of these topics, the reviewer has selected but a small number for special animadversion. We reserve for another place the adjustment of our differences on such matters as are strictly scientific ;* restricting ourselves here to the notice of any such misunderstandings, or errors, as may have arisen betwixt us, regarding the degree of *economic* importance which should be ascribed to the general and Christian education of the people.

But, before we begin our closer reckoning upon the subject, it may be right to notice one peculiarity, which serves to mark and to characterize the whole of the critic's performance. We mean the manner in which he keeps up the style and show of controversy, even on questions where we are substantially at one ; so as often to hold forth the semblance of opposition, at the very time that there is no real or essential difference betwixt us. Perhaps the very nature of our leading proposition lays it peculiarly open to such a virtual misrepresentation ; while the hurried way in which the reviewer hath obviously collected his brief and scattered notices of the work, makes it quite consistent with our firm belief, that no misrepresentation was intended. Our proposition is, the superiority of one expedient over all others, for the economic well-being of a community. We rejoice that, in a work of so much authority as the *Edinburgh Review*, this superiority is distinctly admitted ; it being the frequently expressed sentiment of that journal, that "good education is at once the *best* security for the public tranquillity, and for the *permanent* improvement of the mass of the people." † After this we are at a loss to perceive how, on our main position, to which all the others are subservient, there can be the remnant of a controversy, save on the very indefinite charge, which, in every question of degrees, it is so easy to make, and so difficult, if not impossible, to settle—that we lay *too* much stress on education, or have formed *too* high a conception of its powers. But the superiority of one expedient, implies the inferiority of all others ; and here the reviewer hath afforded us the advantage of a charge quite definite and precise in the terms of it ; for, in-

* See Postscript, p. 399.

† Page 53 of the Review.

stead of ascribing to us too limited an opinion of the efficacy of these inferior expedients, he would have us to affirm that they possess no efficacy at all. "Neither the repeal nor abolition of the most burdensome taxes or regulations, nor the discovery of new machines or processes for reducing the cost of production, can, in his estimation, be of any real service."* Now it so happens, that not only have we zealously advocated these and many other measures of economical improvement and reform, but, in the estimate that we offer of the many important benefits which they render to society, we have had the good fortune to instance, and that repeatedly, as the most signal of them all, that which the reviewer also insists upon, and for the ostensible purpose too of supplementing our deficiency. After pleading for the removal of all taxes from the commodities which are in general use, we state the effect of such a reform to be, that "it lets forth the agriculture, instead of contracting it. The people are translated into better circumstances; and they may be taught in the season of intermediate abundance, to have a permanently higher demand for the enjoyments of life than before. They may be raised to a higher status; and of that status they may be enabled to keep the permanent occupation, in virtue of their higher standard of enjoyment. Were the economical only followed by a moral enlargement, then, instead of a brief evanescent holiday for the people of our land, the whole platform of humble life may be elevated, and made to sustain an erect, and independent, and prosperous commonalty, to the most distant ages." Those successive enlargements, on which the reviewer expatiates at great length, and as if we had wholly overlooked them, are distinctly, and on different occasions throughout the volume, pressed on the attention of the reader. "And this is a precious use of the enlargements which are still before us, and by which the families of the land are translated for a time from extreme misery into a state of comparative ease. They then become fitter subjects for education, than when sunk in the distress and desperation of abject poverty. When viewed in the light of absolute or ultimate resources, we have no great value either for the removal of prohibitions from the corn trade, or for the removal of tithes and taxes from agriculture, or, finally, for emigration. But when these expedients are viewed in the relation of subserviency to the education of the people, (because they afford a temporary lightening of the pressure that is now upon

* Page 54 of the Review.

their families, and, along with this, a spirit, and a leisure, and a means, for their moral and literary culture) in this light, they may prove of incalculable service to the good of humanity." It were not easy to discover where the difference lies upon this part of the subject, between the writer who could pen these sentences, and the writer who tells us of the beneficial effect of these enlargements in "the time that is afforded for the formation of those improved habits that are of such essential importance;"* and who, after describing the improvements which he supposes to have taken place in our land during the last half century, expresses his firm conviction, that their "beneficial influence would have been materially increased, had they been accompanied by an increase of moral culture;"† and, finally, who admits as at least highly desirable, if not indispensable, "a good system of public instruction, operating simultaneously with a fall in the price of necessaries or a rise of wages."‡ With such common elements of thought, one might have looked for a better understanding between the parties. But, perhaps, it belongs to what may be termed the mannerism of the profession, that the reviewer should still be appearing to refute the sentiments of his author, at the very time that he only reiterates or re-echoes them; and it may be really as difficult for the former, to depart from the habitual attitude proper to his vocation of a censor and a judge, even when there is nothing to find fault with, as it is unfortunate for the latter, that, with a correction as indiscriminate as it is unsparing, he should be alike the object of hostility for the opinions which he does, and for those which he does not entertain.

This characteristic tendency of the reviewer, this continued maintenance on his part of the air and general style of an adversary, even when there is no substantial ground for it, pervades, and, we doubt not, unconsciously to himself, the whole of his criticism; but is nowhere more remarkably exemplified, than in his treatment of the difference betwixt us, partly apparent, as we hope to show, and partly real, respecting the standard of enjoyment. It is strenuously affirmed in the review, and as if in opposition to the work, that the people of Scotland are better fed, clothed, and lodged, than they were in the days of their forefathers. With certain modifications, which we shall endeavour to supply, there is no mistake whatever in this assertion. The mistake lies in bringing it forward as corrective of any

* Page 55.

† Page 64.

‡ Page 71.

error into which we had fallen ; an error, it is affirmed, which "has arisen from our laying too much stress on the principle of population, as explained by Mr. Malthus."* Now it so happens that, instead of contrariety between the author and his reviewer upon this subject, there is the most precise and remarkable coincidence ; for, at the outset of his work, he combats this very error, and as the error too of those who did lay too much stress on the principle of population ; or who, by reasoning on the element of population alone, had "given in to certain conceptions which required to be modified ;" and who in consequence described the process that took place in the history of the world to be such, as if, at each successive step, "the comfort and circumstances of the human race underwent deterioration." We expressly affirmed of this process, that it "is not accordant with historical truth ;" and are at some pains to explain, in opposition to the ultra-Malthusians, why it was that we did "not witness throughout the various countries of the world the successive degradation of their peasantry,"—but rather, "a general march and elevation in the style of their enjoyments,"—"an undoubted rise in their circumstances, or in the average standard of their comfort." We afterwards speak of the gratifications which were placed by an opening and augmenting commerce, "within reach of the peasantry, and were everywhere raising the standard of enjoyment." This is but one of those instances in which the reviewer hath fallen into the remarkable mistake of reiterating the sentiments of the work, at the very time that he conceives himself employed in refuting them—only to be accounted for on the theory of a hasty composition, after a very hasty and imperfect perusal.

But a mistake in regard to the meaning of an author, is of less consequence than a mistake in regard to the subject of which he treats. The standard of a people's enjoyment is made up of several elements ; and one of the most essential of these, the reviewer has altogether neglected. He has taken account only of the larger maintenance of the people ; he has taken no account of their now larger and greatly more aggravated labour. Had he given himself time for a fuller view of their common subject, it would have brought him and his author more thoroughly at one. We agree with him in thinking that our workmen, on the whole, "live better ;" and if he will agree with us in thinking that they "labour more" than their ancestors, then this part of

the controversy might be altogether cancelled ; and, respecting the "change of habit which has actually taken place in modern Europe," there might be a perfect community of sentiment betwixt us.

As this pamphlet may fall into the hands of some who may not have read the larger work, or are unwilling to encounter the labour of its perusal, we shall, in the following brief extract, put them in possession of our sentiments upon this subject :—

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

"Now, this may be either a deterioration or an improvement in their circumstances. One can imagine a day of slavish fatigue, followed by an evening of gross and loathsome sensuality—as is often exemplified in the life of a London coal-heaver, whose enormous wage is absorbed in the enormous consumption, by which he repairs the waste and the weariness of an excessive labour. This surely is not a desirable habitude for the commonalty of any land—nor do we read the characteristics of a high or a well-conditioned peasantry in a state of existence, made up, first of drudgery to the uttermost of their strength, and then of grovelling dissipation to the uttermost of their means. They spend one part of their revolving day in the exercise of powers which are merely animal ; and the other part in the indulgence of enjoyments which also are merely animal—like beasts of burden who are more worked than before, and, in return for this, are better fed and lodged and littered than before. They are now in better keep than their forefathers ; and this puts them into heart for the greater work that is extracted out of them.

Still it is conceivable of the work that it may be so very extreme, as, on the whole, to degrade and to depress these overdone children of modern industry—and that, in spite of the greater abundance wherewith their senses and their spirits are coarsely regaled during the intervals of their sore bondage.”*

Had our reviewer, instead of the few slight touches which he has bestowed upon the subject, entered into its depths and its details, with a labour of examination somewhat more commensurate to its importance, it would have greatly qualified the flattering representation which he has given of what is going on at the basement of society. He would there have found a progressive accumulation of wretchedness; and that, too, from the constant increase of numbers which is taking place, year after year, in the *lowest class of labourers*—men who, if of more varied physical tastes than their forefathers, are, in that very proportion, at a more hopeless distance from a state of tranquil and satisfied enjoyment—more ravenously bent on animal gratifications than before; but forced, by overwhelming competition, so to labour for their attainment, as, on the whole, to have fallen greatly beneath the standard both of comfort and character that was realized by the peasantry of Scotland amid the simpler and purer enjoyments, but withal the longer intervals of repose, with the more frequent opportunities for reflection and reading as well as social happiness, of a generation that has now gone by. Even though in respect to the amount of *materiel* which entered into the use and consumption of their families, the computation was (what in many thousand instances it is not) entirely in their favour—when the extreme and oppressive drudgery of their over-worked callings is admitted into the reckoning, it will be found of a rapidly augmenting multitude in our land, that they are becoming every year lower economically, as well as lower morally and intellectually, than before. In other words, instead of British society resting on the goodly foundation of a more thriving and substantial peasantry than at any former period, there lies concealed from the observation of the reviewer, and underneath that platform which he has spread out before the view of his readers, a strength of profligacy and pauperism together; to reach and neutralize which political economy can do no more than recall the blunders of its own erring disciples; and against which nothing will fully or conclusively avail, but the power of Christian education.

* See “Political Economy,” chap. i § 10, 11.

Such is our general representation in opposition to that of the reviewer—substantiated by facts which he has not stated, and to be accounted for by reasons which he has entirely overlooked.

Of these facts, which could be multiplied without end, we deem it better to select one or two of the most decisive, instead of fatiguing the patience of our readers by repeating the similar communications which might be had from all parts of the empire. The following is the statement of a gentleman most minutely and statistically acquainted with the subject of his narrative; and we hold it all the more valuable that it is the testimony, not only of one who had the best opportunities of observation, but whose representation, being a plain record of circumstances that might be verified by the experience of thousands, is unvitiated by any economic theory. We therefore offer no apology for presenting it in full.

“Paisley is perhaps the most plebeian town of its size in Europe—its population being composed chiefly of weavers, with such accompanying trades and occupations as are dependent upon, or necessary for, the supply of weavers and weaving apparatus. From its proximity to Glasgow, Paisley can boast of few extensive manufacturers, many of its operatives being employed by Glasgow houses, through the medium of resident agents; and, having few home or foreign merchants of any note, it presents the extraordinary feature of an almost entire working population. As some important practical results, both of a moral and political nature, may be drawn from a review of its past and present history, it is our intention in the present article to take a cursory view of the *weaving*—in other words, the general population of that town, from about the year 1775 or '80, to the present day; contrasting its moral and intellectual character at two or three distinct periods, and endeavouring to account for the sad declension in public manners, which of late has been so obvious to the country at large.

“To state the simple fact, that the once quiet, sober, moral, and intelligent inhabitants of Paisley, are now generally a turbulent, immoral, and half-educated population, is to state what almost every one knows, what many mourn over, but for which few seem able to propose any remedy.

“It is indeed a melancholy subject for contemplation that what was at first eagerly embraced by many as an addition to their family receipts, has ultimately proved not only a chief cause

of individual poverty, but of family feuds, insubordination on the part of the children, and, as a natural consequence, a general moral degradation over the whole community. We allude to the practice introduced about the year 1800 (when the manufacture of imitation Indian shawls was first commenced), of employing children as draw-boys, from the early age of five or six to ten or eleven years—a period of life, till then, uniformly spent in school or in youthful amusements, but subsequently, from a rapid increase in this branch, all the available children are employed in the weaving-shop.

“From about 1770 to 1800 the manufactures of silk gauzes and fine lawns flourished in Paisley; as also, during a portion of this period alluded to, that of figured-loom and hand-tamboured muslin. These branches afforded to all classes excellent wages; and being articles of fancy, room was afforded for a display of taste as well as enterprise and intelligence, for which the Paisley weavers were justly conspicuous. Sobriety and frugality being their general character, good wages enabled almost every weaver to possess himself of a small capital; which, joined with their general intelligence and industry, enabled and induced many to spend days, and even weeks together, in plodding over a new design; assisted frequently by his obliging neighbours, knowing that the first half-dozen weavers who succeeded in some new style of work were sure to be recompensed tenfold.

“Nearly one-half of Paisley at that period was built by weavers, from savings off their ordinary wages. Every house had its garden; and every weaver being his own master could work it when he pleased. Many were excellent florists; many possessed a tolerable library, and *all* were politicians; so that, about the period of the French Revolution, Mr. Pitt expressed more fear of the unrestricted political discussions of the Paisley weavers, than of 10,000 armed men. Had Paisley been then what Paisley is now, crowded with half-informed Radicals and Infidels, his fears would have been justified; but truth and honest dealing could fear nothing from a community constituted as Paisley then was; and never, perhaps, in the history of the world, was there a more convincing proof of the folly of being afraid of a universal and thorough education, especially when impregnated with the religion of the Bible, than in the state of Paisley at that period.

“At the period alluded to, every man, woman, and child above eight or nine years of age, could read the Bible; many could

write and cast accounts; and not a few of the weavers' sons went through a regular course at the Grammar School. To have had a distant relative unable to read, or one sent to prison for stealing, would have been felt as equally disgraceful.

“The inhabitants were so universally regular in their attendance upon church, and strict afterwards in keeping in-doors, that it is recollected, at the end of the last century or commencement of the present, that not a living creature, save two or three *privileged blackguards*, were ever seen walking the streets after Divine service; or if any chanced to appear, an errand for the doctor was supposed to be the probable cause. Family duties were generally attended to; and prayer and praise were not confined to the Sabbath evening; for on week-days as well as on Sabbath-days, the ears of the by-standers were regaled with songs of praise issuing forth from almost every dwelling; and, in those days it was no uncommon thing to find the highly respectable weaver a most consistent and truly useful elder of the church.

“At that period the honest quiet *Whig* or *Tory* weaver might be seen with his wife, at four or five o'clock, sallying forth on an evening walk, in full Sabbath attire; the husband, in advance of his wife, carrying the youngest child in his arms, and his wife following with two, three, or four older children; and perchance, ere their return, a brother and sister-in-law were honoured with a visit to a cup of tea, to which they experienced a hearty welcome. Nor were little luxuries on such occasions altogether unknown—a weaver then being able to afford them.

“Although early marriages were very common, yet the frequent attendant evils were not immediately felt—a lad of eighteen or twenty being quite as able to support a family as his father at forty; and he did not anticipate those days of darkness and privation which have since come on Paisley.

“We come now to the mournful cause of the present degraded state of that once moral and happy town; not that we imagine that the fluctuations of trade, arising from the change from a war to a peace system, have not affected that town in common with others; but these fluctuations would have passed over it with comparatively little injury, but for the operative cause we are about to mention, which wrought its sure though silent influence upon the manners, habits, and morals, of the general population.

“The introduction of the manufactory of imitation Indian

shawls about the year 1800, required that each weaver should employ one, two, or three boys called draw-boys. Eleven to twelve was the usual age previous to this period for sending boys to the loom ; but as boys of any age above five were equal to this work of drawing, those of ten were first employed, then, as the demand increased, those of nine, eight, seven, six, and even five. Girls, too, were by and by introduced into the same employment, and at equally tender years. Many a struggle the honest and intelligent weaver must have had, between his duty to his children and his immediate interests. The idea of his children growing up without *schooling* must have cost him many a pang ; but the idea of losing 2s. 6d. or 3s. per week, and paying school wages beside, proved too great a bribe even for parental affection, and, as might have been expected, *mammon* in the end prevailed, and the practice gradually became too common and familiar to excite more than a passing regret. Children grew up without either the education or the training which the youth of the country derive from the schoolmaster ; and every year since 1805 has sent forth its hundreds of unschooled and untamed boys and girls, now become the parents of a still ruder, more undisciplined, and ignorant offspring. Nor was this all. So great was the demand for draw-boys, that ever and anon the town-crier went through the streets, offering not simply 2s. 6d., 3s., or 3s. 6d. a week for the labour of boys and girls, but bed, board, and washing, and a penny to themselves on Saturday night. This was a reward on disobedience to parents—family insubordination, with all its train of evils, followed. The son, instead of standing in awe of his father, began to think himself a man when he was only a brawling impudent boy. On the first or second quarrel with his father he felt he might abandon the parental roof for the less irksome employment of the stranger. The first principle of all subordination was thus early broken up ; and the boy who refused to hearken to the voice of his father or his mother, and to honour them, could not be expected, when he became a man, to fear God or to honour the king. If ignorance be the mother of superstitious devotion, it is also the mother of stupid and vulgar contempt. An intelligent and moral people will ever be most ready to give honour where it is due ; and, respecting themselves, will yield a willing respect to intelligence, virtue, rank, and lawful authority wherever it is placed.

“ The increase of the family receipts, arising from the em-

ployment of one or more children as draw-boys, ceased on the first slackness in the demand; for it is evident that the additional sum, we shall suppose of 5s. a week, drawn by the labour of the weaver's children, enabled him to work just at so much lower prices to any manufacturer who might choose to speculate in making goods at the reduced price, in the hope of a future demand. A short period of idleness on the part of the weavers would have given time for the overstock of goods to clear off, whereas this practice of working even extra hours during the period of a glut, tended to perpetuate the glut, or to render fluctuations arising from this source more frequent, and, along with other causes, to perpetuate low wages. Thus was the employment of their children from five to ten, by the weavers of Paisley, at first an apparent advantage, but in the end a curse; demonstrating, that whatever may appear to be the interest of parents this year or next year, it is permanently the interest of them and their offspring to refuse every advantage in their temporal concerns, which tends to defraud youth of the first of parental blessings, EDUCATION, and that Providence has bound in indissoluble alliance, the intelligence, the virtue, and the temporal well-being of society. In 1818-19, during the Radical period, there were found full three thousand, Paisley-born and Paisley-bred, who could not read; and the decline of intelligence has been followed by the decline of that temperance, prudence, and economy, which are the cardinal virtues of the working classes; by which alone they can elevate their condition, or preserve themselves from sinking into the most abject poverty.

“The Paisley weaver of forty years ago married early, because he foresaw that he could, in decency, support a family, and even save something for sickness, or age, or the fluctuations of his trade. The Paisley weaver lad, in 1832, marries equally early, on a pittance that scarcely supports himself; because he has neither judgment to reflect on the misery which he is entailing on himself and others, nor moral principle to feel the solemn obligations of the state into which he is entering. Had the population of this town continued a well-educated, religious population, and, as wages diminished, intelligence and virtue had increased, the fall of wages would have been arrested by the natural operation of that prudence, which leads mankind to consult their duty as well as their inclinations; and, without any knowledge of the principles of Malthus, the operative classes would, like the middle and upper classes, have acted on his prin-

ciples. It was the practice of the old Paisley weaver, after an attachment was formed, and an engagement entered into, to interpose sometimes a delay of years in the labour of collecting their *providing* or *plenishing*; that is, a most enormous mass of bed and table linen, an eight-day clock, &c. &c.; and it was a point of distinction on the day previous to marriage, by one or other of the parties, to exhibit to all the neighbours this accumulation of industry and economy. Will the clergy of Paisley inform us, how many marriages they now celebrate annually, where the parties have such *plenishing* to exhibit, with honest satisfaction, to their neighbours? Or rather, how many enter into the state of wedlock, without one thought of the future, and who know not, nor care not, what they do?

“Those who have no consideration concerning the things of this life, are not likely to have any forethought regarding the life to come; and just in proportion as the modern Paisley weaver is without religion, does he despise it. All clergy are necessarily hypocrites, as all kings and magistrates are, in their estimation, tyrants. Unitarianism, infidelity, or reckless profanity, too generally abound; and the popular cry is against all church establishments, however much demanded by the poverty and irreligion of their own town; and against all distinction of ranks. Thus, measuring themselves by themselves, they would reduce society to their own level. Paisley thus furnishes an affecting illustration of the declaration of Holy Writ, ‘That righteousness exalteth a city; but sin is the ruin of any people.’”

We should have but injured the graphic power and fidelity of this precious document, by attempting to abridge it. We have therefore given it entire.* Although rich in principle, a vast deal more of instruction may be gathered from the study of it, than we have immediate occasion for. The following are the only remarks which it is necessary for our purpose to offer:—

First, it will be seen, that the standard of enjoyment does not lie exclusively in the more plentiful use of those merely tangible articles of consumption which compose the maintenance of a household. The parent who treats himself every week with

* That is, the writer's description of the present, as contrasted with the former state of Paisley. But he has subjoined to it a scheme of restoratives or remedies—all of which, as being moral remedies, are in perfect keeping with our main argument. It is right to add, that the narrative here given first appeared in a Glasgow newspaper, entitled “The Scottish Guardian,” distinguished by its sound principles, and the able enforcement of them both on ecclesiastical and economical subjects.

some holiday enjoyment—who appears regularly at church in his respectable Sabbath-day attire—who pays for seat-rents and schooling to his family—who, instead of consigning them almost from infancy to a life of slavish and severe labour, can afford them a free, happy, and well-educated boyhood,—such a man, even though his children may run bare-footed, and he himself lives on coarser fare, or in a more homely dwelling than would satisfy an English peasant—beside being greatly higher in the moral, should also have a higher place assigned to him in the economic scale. Still the reviewer is right in the virtue which he ascribes to circumstances, though he has made his usual mistake, in supposing that we had not adverted to it. “The law, the commerce, the industry, the Protestantism, (even in a population destitute of schooling,) the advanced civilisation, have elevated the habits and state of the general community in England.” Apart from the education of letters, there is an education of habits—not, we mean, the habits of religion or morality, but those of mere civilisation, such as comfort, and cleanliness, and certain points of decorum, in which perhaps our southern neighbours have still the precedency. The Scottish peasantry had the tastes and preferences of a higher sort—though rapidly falling, and more especially in towns, from this distinctive superiority. Even taking the standard of enjoyment in its grosser and more ordinary sense, we have just witnessed in one of these towns a most remarkable depression; and we shall presently see how far England, as well as Scotland, shares in it.

It is altogether a fair comparison which the reviewer hath instituted, between the education of circumstances, and the education of letters; but, had he taken a still more comprehensive survey of the question, he might have greatly strengthened the demonstration which he has given, of the impotency of the latter, when standing alone and unassociated with other influences. There is a third and a higher education than either of the other two—and that is, the education of principle. It is obvious, from the narrative which we have just presented, that the descent which took place in the condition of the operatives in Paisley first began with a surrender of principle—the unworthy sacrifice of their children, for the sake of an immediate and tempting gratification. It is not reading, but reading as subservient to religion and morality, that elevates the economic state of a people. We fear that this principle has not only been omitted by the reviewer, but overlooked, nay contravened, by

our rulers in high places—when enacting, with the most perfect honesty of intention, we trust, for the relief and amelioration of unhappy Ireland. There may be a superficial and apparent, but really there is no substantial analogy, between the system of education proposed for Ireland—and that which is still in vigorous operation throughout the country parishes of our own land. We look for no sensible or general improvement in character, and of course no secure or permanent improvement in their economic condition—“if that is merely to be the education of letters, and not the education of principle. It is not scholarship alone, but scholarship impregnated with religion, that tells on the great mass of society. We have no faith in the efficacy of mechanic institutes, or even of primary and elementary schools, for building up a virtuous and well-conditioned peasantry, so long as they stand dissevered from the lessons of Christian piety. There is a charm ascribed to the scholastic system of Scotland; and the sanguine imagination is, that by importing its machinery into England and Ireland, it will work the same marvellous transformation there, on the character of their people, that was experienced amongst ourselves. But it is forgotten, that a warm and earnest Christianity was the animating spirit of all our peculiar institutions, for generations after they were framed; and that, wanting this, they can no more perform the function of moralizing the people, than skeletons can perform the functions, or put forth the faculties, of living men. The scholastic is incorporated with the ecclesiastical system of Scotland; and that, not for the purpose of intolerance and exclusion, but for the purposes of sanctifying education, and plying the boyhood of our land with the lessons of the Bible. The scholarship of mere letters might, to a certain extent, have diffused intelligence amongst the people; but it is mainly to the power and presence of the religious ingredient, that the moral greatness of our peasantry is owing.”

But recurring once more to the fond exaggerations of the reviewer, respecting the improvement which has taken place in the condition of the people, “and especially during the present century,”*—we cannot imagine a more striking contrast between a high-coloured representation and a sober reality, than that which obtains in the present instance, between the speculation of the economist, and the plain practical statement of the eye-witness. It makes no good evasion to say, that this is but an

* Page 57 of the Review.

isolated example, taken from the history of one town, or one community. The reviewer is too well versant in the first elements of economic science not to know—that if, in virtue of an over-proportion of people to their employment, its wages have fallen in any one place, a depression will be felt in all other places which have the like misfortune ; so that if, notwithstanding this tendency to equalization of wages, the depression still continues, it can only arise from a similar over-population and distress, in all parts of the empire that are similarly situated. Neither is it a good evasion to ascribe this phenomenon to the influx of Irish into the West of Scotland. It is not in flowering or fancy-work, or any of the finer manufactures, but in the departments of simple and unskilled labour, that the people of our own land are most exposed to the weight of their competition. The truth is, that the great mischief under which Paisley now suffers, has been chiefly, if not altogether, of home-growth ; or rather, the decay which has fallen upon its working classes, is chiefly, if not altogether, by a home-process of degeneracy. Even in those cases where the competition of the Irish has been of most direct and manifest operation, as in simple weaving, or in the ruder kinds of hand and field labour, they have but aggravated those evils, which had their beginning in the recklessness of our own population ; and, if not arrested, will have their fearful increase, and at length their crisis of destruction and anarchy. It is the distinct exhibition of this in the history of Paisley and its manufactures, which makes the narrative that we have now quoted so peculiarly instructive—at once proving that the distress is wholly resolvable into moral causes, and wholly irrecoverable but by moral remedies. Altogether it affords a striking verification, though only in miniature, of our doctrine of limits ; and shows how little could be done, or rather how much the suffering would have been enhanced, either by the investiture of more capital, or the engagement of more labour, in a trade that had already exceeded the possibility of an adequate return for its outlays. A resolute moral principle on the part of workmen could alone have prevented the catastrophe. A like moral principle, and nothing else, can fully and permanently recover it.

In the labour of mere handiwork, or where the requisite skill could be easily attained, and at the expense of a very brief apprenticeship, the depreciation of wages has been still more general. The days were when the muslin-weavers of Glasgow

earned, and for lengthened periods too, from 20s. to 24s. and even 30s. a week. But these days have not occurred for about twenty years; nor are they ever expected to return. The invention of the fly-shuttle, by which the work has become incomparably lighter, so far from brightening this prospect, has made it greatly more hopeless. It has now become a female employment; and the competition is frequently so overdone, as to bring down the whole remuneration of an individual weaver to the wretched pittance of 4s. or 5s. a week. When so high as 8s. or 10s., being about one-third of what had sometimes been earned twenty years before, the weavers rejoice as in a season of comparative prosperity; though often alternated by long and dreary intervals of depression, during which, to keep a family in existence, the strength of all its members is sometimes put to the severest requisition. Instances often occur where the same loom is kept all the twenty-four hours in unremitting activity, the man and wife taking their turns at these labours of the midnight oil to relieve each other; and thus to make out, between them, one of those halcyon days, which, we are taught to believe, have shone with such peculiar brightness on our population since "the commencement of the present century," so as to be without a parallel in the previous history of Scotland.

We greatly wish that our reviewer had made himself acquainted with the details presented to public notice, by Dr. Kay's able pamphlet, on "The Moral and Physical condition of the Working Classes employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester;" not the excogitations of any fanciful theory on either side of a question, but the sober realities of a minute and statistical survey. He would there have learned a juster estimate than he has himself given of the variations which have taken place in the standard of enjoyment; and may have become convinced, perhaps, of the inseparable dependence which a soundly economical has on a soundly moral state of the community at large. More especially, it may have led him to admit another element into his computation of the standard of enjoyment, that would have most essentially affected, and, perhaps, entirely reversed, the conclusion which he has himself arrived at, even the magnitude of that labour by which all the higher feelings and faculties of the mind are overborne; and man is degraded into an animal, or rather into a mere piece of living machinery, where the vital principle may be regarded as but the moving force, the bones and muscles, as the levers and traces of a peculiar

mechanism. No wage, however liberal, for repairing the expenditure of human strength, can reconcile us to the forfeiture of all human comfort and dignity that must be incurred by those wretched victims of modern industry, of whom we have an account in the sickening representation that follows :—

“ The population employed in the cotton factories rises at five o'clock in the morning, works in the mills from six to eight o'clock, and returns home for half-an-hour or forty minutes to breakfast. This meal generally consists of tea or coffee with a little bread. Oatmeal porridge is sometimes but of late rarely used, and chiefly by the men ; but the stimulus of tea is preferred, and especially by the women. The tea is almost always of a bad and sometimes of a deleterious quality ; the infusion is weak, and little or no milk is added. The operatives return to the mills and workshops until twelve o'clock, when an hour is allowed for dinner. Amongst those who obtain the lower rate of wages, this meal generally consists of boiled potatoes. The mess of potatoes is put into a large dish, melted lard and butter are poured upon them, and a few pieces of fried fat bacon are sometimes mingled with them, and but seldom a little meat. Those who obtain better wages, or families whose aggregate income is larger, add a greater portion of animal food to this meal, at least three times in the week ; but the quantity consumed by the labouring population is not great. The family sits round a table, and each rapidly appropriates his portion on a plate, or they all plunge their spoons into the dish, and with an animal eagerness satisfy the cravings of their appetite. At the expiration of the hour, they are all again employed in the workshops or mills, where they continue until seven o'clock, or a later hour, when they generally again indulge in the use of tea, often mingled with spirits, accompanied by a little bread. Oatmeal or potatoes are however taken by some a second time in the evening.”

—“ The population nourished on this aliment is crowded into one dense mass, in cottages separated by narrow, unpaved, and almost pestilential streets, in an atmosphere loaded with the smoke and exhalations of a large manufacturing city. The operatives are congregated in rooms and workshops during twelve hours in the day, in an enervating, heated atmosphere, which is frequently loaded with dust or filaments of cotton, or impure from constant respiration, or from other causes. They are engaged in an employment which absorbs their attention, and

unremittingly employs their physical energies.* They are drudges who watch the movements, and assist the operations of a mighty material force, which toils with an energy ever unconscious of fatigue. The persevering labour of the operative must rival the mathematical precision, the incessant motion, and the exhaustless power, of the machine.

“Hence, besides the negative results—the total abstraction of every moral and intellectual stimulus—the absence of variety—banishment from the grateful air, and the cheering influences of light, the physical energies are exhausted by incessant toil, and imperfect nutrition. Having been subjected to the prolonged labour of an animal—his physical energy wasted—his mind in supine inaction—the artisan has neither moral dignity, nor intellectual nor organic strength to resist the seductions of appetite. His wife and children, too frequently subjected to the same process, are unable to cheer his remaining moments of leisure. Domestic economy is neglected; domestic comforts are unknown. A meal of the coarsest food is prepared with heedless haste, and devoured with equal precipitation. Home has no other relation to him than that of shelter, few pleasures are there; it chiefly presents to him a scene of physical exhaustion, from which he is glad to escape. Himself impotent of all the distinguishing aims of his species, he sinks into sensual sloth, or revels in more degrading licentiousness. His house is ill furnished, unhealthy, often ill ventilated, perhaps damp; his food, from want of forethought and domestic economy, is meagre and innutritious; he is debilitated and hypochondriacal, and falls the victim of dissipation.” †

But there is a discrimination to be made here between one set of these wretched beings and another, which, had it occurred to the reviewer, might have helped him to a sounder conclusion respecting the actual standard of enjoyment among labourers. We shall explain it to the reader, as it will both extricate him from the delusion into which our critic hath been betrayed, and enable him, as we shall afterwards see, to account for the existence of it.

There is a distinction commonly made by economists between the remunerations due to unskilled and to skilled labour—the one

* “A gentleman, whose opinions on these subjects command universal respect, suggests to me that the intensity of this application is exceedingly increased by the system of paying not for time, but according to the result of labour.”

† Dr. Kay's Pamphlet, pp. 8-11.

often greatly inferior, as being simply a recompense for the exertion of muscular strength; whereas, over and above this, the other is a recompense for acquired dexterity, beside including in it a return for the time spent in making the acquirement. This partly explains the difference of wage between a handloom weaver and a cotton-spinner, but it is far from being an adequate explanation of the whole difference.

The difference lies greatly, and we think principally, in this:—In the weaving department, the outlay of the master manufacturers consists entirely of wages; or if, to be extremely accurate, we include in the sum given to the operatives, the replacement and profit of the capital vested in the looms, they are the operatives themselves, generally speaking, who advance this capital, and who would bear all the loss of its becoming unproductive, during the cessation of work. Now the reverse of this obtains in cotton-spinning. The humble machinery of a handloom belongs generally to the workman, or at least, which is the same in effect, not to his employer. The ponderous and expensive machinery of a cotton-mill does belong to the employer. He makes a partial outlay in wages, but a prodigious outlay in capital. Let us suppose him to be the proprietor of an establishment, on which he has embarked a capital of twenty thousand pounds; and has, further, to make a yearly advance of wages to a hundred individuals. According to a common estimate on the subject of manufacturing capital, he would need to have ten per cent. or two thousand a year, to repay him for the first outlay; so that, should there be a strike among his workmen, he not only foregoes all the profits that might still remain to him, even though he submitted to their terms, but he incurs a loss at the rate of two thousand a year into the bargain. His capital, while it remains dead and useless, is, for the time at least, as good as taken away from him; and it is in the power of workmen, at all times, to inflict this calamity upon their employer. When they stand out for a rise of wages, it must with him be a serious question, Whether he should not submit to their terms, and give, for example, an additional thousand in wages, rather than lose double that sum upon his machinery, and quit, besides, all hope or possibility of gain from that profession, on which perhaps he has embarked his all, and from which he draws his livelihood. Whether matters proceed to a combination, and a manifesto, and a strike, on the part of workmen or not—these are considerations which are at all times of influential

effect, in determining the rate of wages; and in every manufacture where a large fixed capital is required, they do give to workmen a strong virtual control over the masters who employ them. In weaving, the loss incurred by the cessation of work, and therefore the stagnation of capital is small, and falls upon the workmen; in cotton-spinning it is large, and falls upon the employer.

This gives rise to a very wide and distant variety in the circumstances and condition of different classes of operatives. In Glasgow, when the weavers earn only 5s. a week, the cotton-spinners may earn between 20s. and 30s. In the present year, it appears from the valuable Statistical Enumerations of Dr. Cleland of Glasgow, that the cotton-spinners have, in some instances, been earning 28s. a week. The principle is perhaps most distinctly and strikingly exemplified of all—when the wage of an operative, working at his own handloom, is brought into juxtaposition with that of an operative working among the power-loom of his master: when the earnings of the former amount to 5s. or 6s. a week, the earnings of the latter may be from 20s. to 25s.

Although Dr. Kay is inclined perhaps to ascribe too much to a temporary, without adverting to the permanent cause, for this difference in the wages—yet, for the sake of further confirming the fact, that such a difference exists, we take the liberty of presenting one extract more from his instructive little work.

“The wages obtained by operatives in the various branches of the cotton manufacture are in general such as, with the exercise of that economy without which wealth itself is wasted, would be sufficient to provide them with all the decent comforts of life—the average wages of all persons employed in the mills (young and old) being from nine to twelve shillings per week. Their means are too often consumed by vice and improvidence. But the wages of certain classes are exceedingly meagre. The introduction of the power-loom, though ultimately destined to be productive of the greatest general benefit, has, in the present restricted state of commerce, occasioned some temporary embarrassment, by diminishing the demand for certain kinds of labour, and, consequently, their price. The handloom weavers, existing in this state of transition, still continue a very extensive class; and though they labour fourteen hours, and upwards, daily, earn only from five to seven or eight shillings per week.”*

* Dr. Kay's Pamphlet, pp. 26, 27. See Evidence of Joseph Foster before the Emigration Committee, 1827.

We might collect innumerable testimonies from England, on the distempered state of its operative population. But we shall only instance the almost universal cry from its manufacturing districts, in behalf of the Factory Bill—a cry extorted from a suffering population, by the monstrous evils which that measure promises, but we fear vainly promises, to remedy. It is a wretched principle on which to compute the standard of enjoyment—merely to make arithmetical computation of the whole gains of a family; and that without any discount or deduction for the enormity, unheard of till these modern times, of children from nine years old, and upwards, doomed to fourteen hours every day of confinement and hard labour, amid the dust, and the steam, and the dizzying sounds, of a crowded manufactory. It is a melancholy outlook for the next generation, that, with so large a portion of England's boyhood, the first openings of moral and intellectual nature should thus be subjected to the killing influences of a base and brutalizing servitude. Mr. Sadler has done good, by the appalling disclosures to which his investigations have given birth; as every man does who adds to our store of facts on any question that is interesting to humanity. But, with all his benevolence and rectitude of purpose, we dare hardly hope for any further services from his hands. That is truly a bungling legislation, which seeks to obtain its object by what mathematicians would term a compensation of errors; which, on the one hand, would, by the artificial influence of a poor-law, foster population—and, on the other, by the artificial restraint of a penal statute, would lay an oppressive interdiction on the unavoidable consequences of its excess. And so its proposal now is to violate the parental rights of the people of England; and this to neutralize its own unhappy blunder—of having lured them, in supernumerary thousands, into the parental relationship, by the hope which it can never realize—or rather, by the engagement which it never can make good—of indefinite harbourage and support for all actual and all possible families.

On this question, too, our doctrine of limits receives a signal illustration. Mr. Hoole, in his letter to Lord Althorp, tells him, that

“ If Mr. Sadler's bill becomes a law, the masters will have the choice of two evils. Either they must reduce the hours of labour to the limit proposed to be fixed for children, (fifty-eight hours per week,) or they must place their establishments without the pale of this enactment, by discharging all persons under eigh-

teen years from their factories.”—“In the former case, a reduction of the *wages* of all persons employed, whether children or adults, corresponding with the reduction of the time of labour, must inevitably take place.”—“Not a few of the master cotton-spinners have determined to adopt the other course above mentioned, namely, to *discharge* from their employment all the hands under eighteen years of age, as soon as the proposed law comes into operation.”

It is thus that England, with her ever-teeming philanthropy, has placed herself in a dilemma that seems inextricable—in what is familiarly termed *a cleft stick*. After that capital has done its uttermost for the population, we find the latter borne down by the oppressive weight of their own numbers, and in the midst of intolerable grievances. When, for the redress of these, law would put forth its coercions, capital is then forced to look to itself, and threatens to cast off into utter idleness and destitution, those in whose behalf the state is now called on to interpose, for their protection from a system of grinding and oppressive labour. We are aware of the economic reforms, by which both capital and population may, for a brief season, be relieved of their difficulties; but to be again brought, if there be no moral regeneration in the country, into the very state of distress and extremity in which we now behold them. Meanwhile, we fear that law can do nothing, unless by going to the root of the mischief; or instituting a right system of education, and putting into a train of abolition the whole system of pauperism. It cannot force labourers to live without wages; it cannot force capitalists to trade without profit. But law, overlooking these truisms, attempts to make bricks without straw; and, in its vain endeavours to effect an adjustment between the two classes, would lay this Egyptian bondage upon both.

But let us return once more to Scotland; and lest the argument, either of special manufactures, or of midway transitions from one state to another, should be alleged, in opposition to all our former instances—we shall now offer a brief view of the circumstances of our agricultural population, at the beginning of this century, and in the present day—assuming that the variation which has taken place in one of its counties, (Peebles-shire,) is a fair average specimen of the change, if any, which the condition of our peasantry has undergone, over the whole length and breadth of the land. We, on purpose, keep clear of 1800 and 1801, as having been two years of severe scarcity, amount-

ing to famine; so that the comparison, strictly speaking, is between the rate of wages now, and the mean rate of wages from 1802 to 1812 or 1814.

The wages of married farm-servants—in as far as they are paid in kind, consisting of meal, potatoes, the keep of a cow, and driving of their fuel—have suffered no variation. The money wages at the former period were £16 a year; they are now £10. We are aware that the price of the first necessities of life has fallen in a greater proportion than this; but the money part of this wage goes to the purchase of second necessities; and their price has not fallen in so great a proportion. So that the labourers of this description are somewhat worse off at the latter than the former period.

The wages of unmarried farm-servants were then £18, with their victuals, and are now £12, with victuals; they having suffered a descent too, though less by 13s. 4d. than that of the former class of labourers.

But there is still another class, of inferior condition to the two former, and who also, as appears from the comparison of their wages at the two distinct periods, have sustained a greater descent than either of them—we mean the day-labourers, the job-men of England, or the *orry* men of our own country parishes, employed in the construction and repair of roads, and all the other varieties of ground labour. About twenty or twenty-four years ago, their allowance was from 10s. to 12s. a week, with victuals, or from 16s. even to 18s. and 20s. a week, without victuals. Their allowance at present is 6s. a week with, and 10s. without victuals. But these numbers exhibit in both cases the full summer allowance; and, to estimate their yearly income, we must take into account the reduction of 1s. and 2s. a week, when the days become shorter, as also the average of about two winter months, when they are totally without employment. A good practical test of the felt straitness in their circumstances, is the extreme fatigue they will undergo at piece-work, when, to eke out a sufficiency for their families, they are known to labour from four in the morning to eight at night; and it is the distinct testimony of the masters who employ them, that this is what those daysmen will do now, and would not have done twenty-five years ago. We might further state, that the services of a man, with two horses and single horse carts, could only be had at that time for 10s. or 12s. a day—but now for 5s. or 6s. 6d. Wrights and masons, in short, all country artisans, with the exception of

blacksmiths, have experienced a similar decline of wages; and a decline not countervailed by the greater cheapness of the second, and still greater cheapness of the first necessities of life. By the general consent of practical and intelligent men, the peasantry of Scotland have not, at this moment, the same command over the various articles which enter substantially into the maintenance of families, that they had during the ten first years of the present century.

Two causes may be assigned for the glowing exaggerations of the reviewer, respecting the progress which he affirms to have taken place in the economic state of our people. It may be right that we advert, though briefly, to both of them—as they not only seem to have misled him, but are fitted to mislead many others, who are satisfied to make up their minds on a rapid and cursory view of the subject. The sketch which he has drawn of the internal state and history of Scotland, is one of great plausibility—yet it will not be difficult, we are persuaded, to evolve the actual state of the case, the sober reality of the question, from underneath that mantle of speciousness wherewith he hath garnished and overlaid it.

The first great error of the reviewer, then, lies in this—that he has generalized workmen of all sorts and varieties into but one object of contemplation. He has viewed them only *en masse*, without having adverted to the momentous distinction which obtains between one class of them and another—between the men, for example, of high wages, in virtue of the control which they have over their employer, because they can at any time bring his large and expensive machinery to a stand; and the men who often have not a third part of the wages of the others, because they possess no such power—as weavers, all whose capital is a hand-loom, which is their own; or ground labourers, all whose capital is a spade, which is their own also. He reasons, as if the foundation on which society rested, was throughout of homogeneous materials: and then tells us, what a substantial foundation it is, and how it is consolidating every year into greater strength and firmness than before. We reason, as if that foundation was made up of successive strata, and express our apprehension that the lowest stratum of all might become every year more putrid and unsound, and so endanger the stability of the whole fabric. The work recognises a gradation in the branches of regular industry; and takes account of a large and ever-increasing body of supernumeraries at the bottom

of the scale. The dashing generality of the reviewer does not admit of such discrimination. It confounds the cotton-spinner of 28s. with the poor weaver of 5s. a week. It takes so distant a view of the object, that it comes not within sight of details and distinctions—though, in the instance on hand, of vital importance to all correct reasoning on the present state and future prospects of society. Like an unobservant by-passer through some plebeian district of a city, who never once dreams of the mighty gradation from the highest to the lowest of its householders—though intermingled with or even contiguous to each other, the artisan or manufacturing operative, of from 20s. to as much as 50s. a week, may be found in close juxtaposition with the weaver or the labourer, who but realizes an humble fraction of his gains. He overlooks this, and lumps or amalgamates them all, under the one denomination of the common people. And so whatever comes from that quarter to the savings bank; or who-soever, out of the mighty hosts who congregate there, shall attend a mechanic's institute—he puts it all down to the general or rather the universal elevation, that has taken place in the habits and comforts of those who overspread the ground-floor or basement of society. It is thus, that, in very proportion to the rapidity, the reckless, but withal confident, rapidity of those slight and transient regards which our reviewer has cast upon the subject—does he overrate, and that prodigiously, not the improvement of the lower, but the improvement of the lowest orders. He exults in the fifteen millions of deposits to the provident banks of the country; but reflects not on that multitude of mere labourers—the hundreds of thousands, who compose a distinct and inferior class, that are every year multiplying upon our hands, and who contribute not so much as one farthing to them. He has not entered at all into the depths or statistics of his subject; he has but looked on the upper surface of it—or, if reasoning on a sort of general average between the most comfortable and the most degraded of the industrious classes, reflects not, that beneath that average there is a gathering mischief, the inevitable tendency of which is to undermine the stablest community on earth, and to bring down the prosperity of all its orders.*

* It is of importance to keep in mind, that the worst paid of our manufacturing labourers in Glasgow are the most numerous. The number of workers, of all ages and both sexes, in the cotton and weaving mills of that city and neighbourhood, was 10,897, in April 1832. We wish that we could state the number of hand-loom weavers at the same period. But as far back as 1820, the number of hand-loom weavers was upwards of eighteen thousand.

There is nothing that we have been more anxious to set forth throughout the whole course of our reasonings, than the effect even of a small excess in the labour-market, to insure a great and general reduction in the circumstances and sufficiency of the whole body of labourers. The very existence of an order of men in the country, willing to live and to propagate on the most wretched fare and miserable wages, is first felt in the grade immediately above them, and at length extends through all the departments of industry. Whether the degradation of their tastes and habits arises from a stupid or a profligate recklessness, so long as it subsists, they will hang as a dead weight on the rear of society, and with a depressing power on the comfort and status of those who are above them. The operation is palpable, when brought about by the immigration of Irish labourers, though only amounting to a small fractional part of the working population in Britain; but it is not considered, that, by a home process, and through the neglected education of our own peasantry, the same effect is sure to follow on the undue multiplication of families among ourselves. Apart from foreign influences altogether, there are causes at work within the island, which, if not met and counteracted, will issue in a grievous and general descent of wages, though not an Irishman should land upon our shores. There is a growing host of supernumeraries throughout the parishes of England, and in Scotland too, who overhang with a perpetual influence the labour market, and give a constant advantage to the employers of labour in all their negotiations with workmen; though it may only become manifest on those occasions, when, by means of the extra hands which can be so easily procured, they break the force, whether of righteous or unrighteous combinations. Now, the question is, whether shall we transform these modern Helots, which can only be done by a universal and Christian education, or shall we trust to the expedients of political economy alone; some of which, as the poor-law of England, and its home-colonizations, have only the effect of strengthening their habits, and perpetuating, nay, multiplying their numbers? It is because of our distrust in all the resources of political economy, and our faith in the omnipotence of moral causes, both of which we have attempted, throughout the work in question, to vindicate, that we felt the conclusion to be inevitable, (a conclusion not at all shaken we think by the arguments of the reviewer,) that nothing will save the commonalty of a land from further degradation, or sustain them

in prosperity and comfort, but a resurrection of better habits. And this can only be achieved and made effectual, by an operation on mind and manners, reaching even to the meanest of the people.

The delusion into which the reviewer has fallen, by blending all the grades and varieties of common people into one general object of contemplation, has misled or bewildered the public mind on two great questions. In the question of pauperism, the apprehension is, that if the supplies of the existing system were done away, there would be nothing to replace them; and, in particular, that destitute families in the deep recesses of a city population, surrounded on all hands by others about as destitute as themselves, and placed beyond the observation and effective sympathy of those who had the power to relieve them, would inevitably perish. This is a very natural fear; but it proceeds on the imagination, that every plebeian district of a town is a dead level of equal, unmixed, unalleviated want and wretchedness. It is not recollected, how much *can* be done in every little neighbourhood by an internal operation of charity; and how much *would* be done, were it not that, by the attempt of law to supplement and supersede humanity, this operation has been paralyzed. We have to record it as our experience, after the close and personal observation of years, that never did a case of distress occur in the midst of a large and congregated mass of operatives, which was not followed up by the timely outbreakings of sympathy from the contiguous families; and, therefore, as our persuasion, that were human want confided to human benevolence alone, it would experience a far more copious, as well as kindly, circulation of relief, than is poured upon it from without, by the ministrations of a legalized charity.

But if this habit of looking at things in the gross is fitted to mislead in regard to the economical, it is equally fitted to mislead in regard to the ecclesiastical, state of the people. If, from those quarters of the town which are occupied by the working classes, we behold a goodly attendance on mechanic schools, we augur well as to their general intelligence; and if, from the same quarter, we behold a goodly number issuing forth to their places of worship at the sound of the Sabbath-bell, we augur well as to their general Christianity. It is only by a laborious and statistical investigation, that those pleasing illusions are dissipated; and we come to the mortifying discovery of a vast and rapidly increasing multitude beyond the reach of both the

literary and the religious institute—more fixed and irreclaimable every year in hopeless ignorance and hopeless heathenism. We speak in round numbers, but so as to understate the magnitude of this sore degeneracy. Of the ten thousand people in Glasgow, whom we did take account of, there might at least have been six thousand church-goers. The actual number in attendance, on all places of worship, did not amount to three thousand.* Or, in other words, more than one-half of the people lived in habitual alienation from the decencies and observances of a Christian land. Let us now see how this bears on the question of a religious establishment. If, without the peculiar resources of such an economy, the whole country may be supplied with Christian education on the system of voluntary churches—how is it that the immense suburb wastes of our commercial and manufacturing towns have not been overtaken? The field is open to the enterprise of all; yet beyond the limit at which the people are willing to erect a church and maintain a minister for themselves, it has not been entered on. It is on the needs and the exigencies of this outfield population, that the great argument both for a scholastic and a religious establishment rests. We would help on, both to common and to Christian scholarship, those of whom it is experimentally found that they will not help themselves. For their sake we desire an establishment; and would move in a direction the opposite of those who now meditate and would exult in its overthrow. Instead of consenting to its extermination, or even its abridgment, we would multiply its churches, and greatly subdivide its parishes.

But to return from this digression. The second great error of the reviewer respects the enlargement which he affirms to have taken place in the economic state of the people of Scotland. He tells us of a rapid and remarkable advancement, without the influence of a better education too—and “especially during the present century.”† Now, in this latter period, which he has selected as one of extraordinary progress and prosperity, if the circumstances of our peasantry have experienced a change at all, they have suffered a decline; or at least, if stationary, this is the best which can possibly be said of them. All the testimonies which he has quoted in support of his own reasonings on this

* Our survey included a population of 10,304. The number of Sabbath hearers ought to have been 6240. The number of seats actually taken in all the churches and meeting-houses put together, was 2930.

† Page 57 of the Review.

point refer to the latter half of the last century, when Scotland did experience one of the most sudden transitions that ever took place in the internal economy of a nation—but such a transition as, instead of being unfavourable or adverse to any theory of ours, is most strongly and strikingly corroborative of all our views. The truth is, that Scotland, during that brief period, and within her own narrow limits, exhibited, in epitome, the great movement which took place in Europe between the middle and the modern ages. In a single generation, she may be said to have run the history of two centuries. The sudden start taken by her population, when the capabilities of her soil began to be unlocked after the rebellion of 1745; the almost impetuous career of her agriculture,* and, commensurate with this, the improvement which took place in the habits and condition of her peasantry; the awakening of the people from sloth to labour; the gradual augmentation of this labour to the present times, when the husbandry of our land begins to feel the impediments of its so much nearer approach to the extreme limit, and, along with this, our labourers begin to feel the impediments of a stationary and straitened condition; the obvious difference to the worse between the last and the present generation, in that, what then was prosperous without being oppressive industry, is now becoming the slavish and severe drudgery of men sinking under the competition of their own numbers, and who, therefore, have to put forth all their strength, in order to preserve the comfort which they have now acquired a taste for, and to maintain their wonted status in society:—all these hold out, in forcible repre-

* There is a number of random assumptions on the part of the reviewer, which, for the sake of brevity, we omit to dwell upon. One example of this is his conclusion, from a sixfold produce, and only a double population for Scotland, that its labourers must therefore be in three times easier circumstances. He further misconceives wherein it is that the essence of good government mainly consists—not in the soundness of its political economy, but in its protection of the rights of property as constituted by law. Though Turkey had no commercial code whatever, still it would have a bad government—and the government of England is essentially good, in spite of all the economical blunders by which its code may be disfigured. The difference between a good and bad government is, that up to the existing limit of their produce and resources, the people are or are not in a state of secure enjoyment. The difference between a good and bad political economy is, that the limit is widened under the former, and contracted under the latter. We may further observe, that the increase which he affirms to have taken place in the average length of human life, causes all the moral and prudential checks to be more imperiously called for; and lastly, that even though the people should have a larger amount of physical gratifications than in the days of their forefathers, yet if, along with this, habit have made their physical wants and appetites relatively greater than before, they may feel any addition of poverty or pressure more intolerable now than in any former period of their history.

sentation, first, the indispensable dependence which the progress of wealth has on the progress of agriculture ; and at length the difficulties which lie in the way of further augmentation—difficulties which are sure to increase, in proportion as any country advances towards that impassable barrier, which nature and necessity have laid in all countries, both on the food and population of the world.

The mistake of the reviewer, in his reasonings on the economical history of Scotland, is in perfect analogy with the mistake of those writers who reason in precisely the same way, on the process of transition from the middle to the modern ages of Europe, as if it were to be a continuous and universal process for all ages. They forget the wide difference between the state of things at the commencement, and after the full establishment and continuance of this new era. At the former period, the passion for wealth and luxury, then newly awoke, found a soil of boundless and yet unentered capabilities on which to expatiate ; and the spirit of mercantile adventure, on the one hand, and the unsated appetite of the landlords, on the other, met, in the before untouched resources of the land, with the means of extended gratification. But it follows not, because of the progress that was actually described at the time when large additional products could still be extorted from a soil whose capabilities had scarcely been entered on, that this progress may still be looked for, when agriculture, with its stationary, or slowly receding limit, has either reached, or is so much nearer, the uttermost limit to which it can be carried. The propelling force is in contact now, with an obstacle which stood then at a distance so remote, as to have permitted an advancing movement, and that a tolerably free one, for several centuries. But what happened in the incipient, cannot happen over again in Scotland, or any other country on the face of the earth, in the extreme state of agriculture ; and accordingly, in the oldest and richest countries of Europe, the sanguine, the splendid anticipations which the earlier experience had awakened, checked and chastised as they have been by the later experience, are now beginning to be abandoned.

The economical progress described by Europe at large, in two or three centuries, has been described by Scotland almost *per saltum*, or at least in one or two generations. The progressive state, so well represented by Smith as the hearty and prosperous state for all classes of society, and more especially for labourers,

which in some countries began so early, as now to have lasted for nearly half a millennium, has been described in Scotland with such large and rapid strides, that she has overtaken all her neighbours in half a century. Those blessings and benefits of *progress*, which have been dealt out so gradually to the rest of the civilized world, have here followed so speedily and closely on each other, as to have been condensed into a sort of quintessence for the people of Scotland. But, notwithstanding, we are now palpably beginning to participate in the difficulties of other lands; and it were as absurd to found our anticipations of the future on our recollections of the past, as to predict, for any of the old countries of Europe, the same mighty enlargement that we so confidently look for in the countries of the new world.

There are two distinct standards of enjoyment, both of them equally base and equally undesirable—the one, that which obtains ere the race of improvement commences; the other that in which, after the acquisition of many new tastes and appetences, the race of improvement too often terminates. We have already offered a description of the latter;* and the former we now present in the following extract:—

“ If this be the extreme to which the workmen of our present day are now tending, there is an extreme opposite to this, from which men only began to emerge at the outset of civilisation, and which is still realized among barbarous and demi-barbarous nations. We advert to the sordid condition of those, whom nought but the agonies of hunger can impel to shake off an indolence that is else unconquerable; and who, as soon as they have satisfied its cravings, lapse again into the rooted and habitual lethargy of their nature. If they have but enough of sleep, and enough of surfeiting, they care for no higher gratification—nor will they make one effort, above that level to which they subside, by the weight of their own constitutional sluggishness. Food of some description or other they must have—but having it, they are pleased to live in filth and nakedness, and nearly in utter want of all the secondary accommodations. It is obvious of such a people, that so long as they abide in this habit, the inferior soils of the earth will never be reached by them. It is even possible that they may stop short at the very first and most fertile of the land, and never taste of that abundance which is within their reach, just because of their insuperable aversion

* See *ante*, p. 361.

to the labour of extracting it. It is thus that they might doze away their existence on the surface of an earth, whose dormant capabilities they never enter upon—and in vast territories, capable of sustaining millions over and above the few stragglers by whom they are occupied, both cultivation and population may, just because of this moral barrier, have been fixed and limited for many centuries.”

Never was the interval, from the one of these extremes to the other, more rapidly described by the people of any country than by those of Scotland. Traces of the earlier habit are still discernible in the more remote and outlandish parts of our territory. But, in all the more populous and modernized districts, the people are descending in multitudes to the latter habit—now established in our cotton-mills, and extensively prevalent both among the weavers in our towns, and the day-labourers in our country parishes. The testimonies of the reviewer apply to a period when our workmen, by an increasing, but not yet excessive labour, earned their new and rapidly increasing enjoyments. The competition of their growing number has now somewhat stunted their enjoyments, and, at all events, is aggravating their labour into a cruel and oppressive bondage. Never will they reach the proper dignity of man till they have reached the condition, not of higher wages only, but of higher wages and less work,—an eminence fully accessible, we think, but only by dint of prudence and principle among themselves—lessons which never will be diffused and obtain a practical establishment throughout the land, save on the vehicle of the people’s Christianity, and in conjunction with the lessons of the Gospel.

When a writer maintains an untenable position, we generally meet, in the style of exaggeration which he employs, with specially emphatic clauses. The reviewer tells us, “that, instead of being stationary or retrograde, the condition of all classes, but *particularly of the labourers*, has been vastly improved since the American war, and *especially during the present century*.”* Now it so happens, that in both the clauses where he has laid the stress of particularity on the one, and of especiality on the other, the emphasis is misplaced. If by labourers be meant those to whom the designation purely and properly belongs, who receive wages simply in return for the exertion of their strength, and not because of the power they have of bringing to a dead stand, or state of unproductiveness, the enormous capital of their

* P. 57 of the Review.

employers, it will be found, under our exposure of the reviewer's first great error, that their wages lie at the bottom of the scale. And, again, under our exposure of his second great error, it will be found that a general reaction in the condition of the working classes took place about twenty years ago; and that, precisely during the present century, their progress was first arrested, and then turned backwards. He has been unfortunate both in regard to the class of men, and to the period of years, on which he meant to lay the pith of his argument. He made a twofold selection, for the obvious purpose of enhancing his statement, or the proof by which he was supporting it; and in both he is wrong. We have sometimes to correct a reader for laying the emphasis on wrong words. The reviewer has laid his emphasis on wrong things.

But the mistake into which the reviewer has fallen is a common one in all philosophy. It is the mistake of those who would collect the permanent and immutable laws of nature from the study, not of her wonted courses, but of her transition or temporary processes, which come speedily to a termination. When justice, and order, and law, were for the first time securely established throughout Scotland, at the middle of the last century—in the then imperfect state of its cultivation, and with such a vast amount of unimproved, and yet highly improvable territory before it, it was sure to make rapid, but not on that account, indefinite and interminable progress. While the process of enlargement was going on, the opening and augmenting resources of the country kept so far ahead of the population as to admit both a free increase of their numbers, and a general elevation in the style of their enjoyments. And so the reviewer, looking back to this sudden and mighty acceleration, can see nothing in the fixed necessities of the constitution under which we are placed, in the very limits of the territory upon which we stand, and still more in the eternal barriers of its last possible agriculture, to prevent the same history from being acted over and over again, or from lasting for ever. Yet he does seem to labour under the sensation of certain impediments, actually felt at this moment, and which stand in the way of that elastic and illimitable progress that a right political economy is infallibly to secure for us. A cause for these impediments must be assigned, and he finds it in the abuses of the poor-laws. Let these only be modified, and, in despite of all the tendencies of population, in despite of the undoubted and demonstrable excess which the

power of the species to increase has over the power of the soil to multiply its products, in despite of the irreversible laws of Nature—the reviewer, unmindful of these, but seeks for an amendment and a new administration of the laws of England, after which there will be nothing, positively “nothing to counteract the onward progress of the country.”*

In the investigations of physical science, a theory on any given subject is not dismissed, but still held to be valuable, even though it should not perfectly account for all the facts which are connected with it. It is the practice of all the soundest and most successful disciples in this branch of inquiry, still to keep their hold upon the theory; and, viewing the anomalous, or yet unexplained facts in the light of what they term “residual phenomena,”† they seek after the modifying circumstances which might account for the existence of them; and often have the satisfaction of discovering, not only that they are perfectly consistent with the theory against which they seemed to rebel, but afforded a decisive corroboration to it. It is even so with the theory of population, which recognises an impassable limit to the numbers of the human race, and a degradation of comfort, if that limit be too hardly pressed upon. But this prevents not, in particular cases, both rapid enlargements in the population of a country, and along with this as rapid an elevation in the style of their enjoyments. Yet, on investigating the special or the modifying causes, we are sure to find that, so far from confounding the theory of population, they but serve to confirm it. To admit, as we have done throughout, the successive enlargements which one improvement after another, whether in the agriculture and the arts of a nation, or in the political economy of its government, will surely give rise to; and yet, to retain the Malthusian doctrine of population, is to proceed, we apprehend, as sound philosophers do, with a general theory and its residual, but in this instance, its now incorporated and harmonized phenomena. But our reviewer has abjured the theory of population—reposing though it does on the palpable inductions of history, and the plainest results of calculation, or on the real and essential phenomena of the question; and he has given us in place a universal theory, founded on the residual phenomena alone.

But the most decisive way of bringing this whole controversy to the test, would be to institute an actual computation respect-

* Page 62 of the Review.

† See Sir John Herschel's admirable Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy.

ing one of these hoped-for enlargements ; and, for the sake of full justice to the reviewer, we will give up to him his own numbers, or those used by himself, in estimating the effect of that one enlargement which, by the common consent of economists, is the most important of them all. We mean the abolition of the corn laws—a measure which, the reviewer would lead us to believe, will keep us all right for at least about half a century to come ; or rather, will be the mean of letting in upon us a stream of prosperity, enough for the peace and plenty of our nation to the most distant ages. We think his imagination a sanguine one, when he counts, as the effect of this repeal, on the importation of as much food as shall be equivalent to the sustenance of four millions of people.* But let even this be conceded ; and, judging of the future from the past, let us endeavour, on the data which the reviewer himself hath prescribed to us, to guess at the result of it. The population of Britain in 1801, was 10,942,646 ; the population in 1831, was 16,537,398—making an increase in thirty years of more than five millions and a half. But it were fairer to compare the last census with that of 1811, when the population was 12,609,864 ; for though it exhibits the increase for the last twenty years to be somewhat less than four millions—yet, if the proportional increase for the next twenty years be the same with what has actually taken place since 1811, we should, by 1851, have the addition of considerably more than four millions. In other words, with a rate of increase in our population the same as from 1811, we shall, in less than twenty years, overtake the whole quantity of imported food which the most ardent of our speculators have yet counted on. But we presume that they do not calculate on an instant enlargement to all this extent of supplies from abroad ; or that food for four millions will be landed on our shores, the very first year after the repeal of our corn laws. If we ever reach so large a maximum of importation as this, we shall reach it gradually ; and, supposing this to be the case, the yearly increase of our population may just keep pace with the yearly increase of our food, through the twenty years to come, as through the twenty years that are already past. It matters not to the comfort of our population, if the additional corn do come to our markets, from what quarter it comes—whether, as hitherto, from the enlargement of our own agriculture ; or, as henceforth, from the agriculture of other lands now thrown open to us. For

* See page 70 of the Review.

the next twenty years, then, even admitting the largest anticipations that have yet been conceived from the repeal of our corn laws, we have no reason to expect a better economic state for the people, than they enjoyed during the twenty years that have just gone by—a period of various and chequered fortune, but certainly marked by any other character than that of secure and progressive prosperity—a period not of great popular discontent only, but often of great and general distress; and when, notwithstanding the actual enlargement which has taken place in the means of subsistence, the urgently felt need of a further enlargement formed the most powerful of all those moving forces, that led to the greatest movement which ever took place, without a revolution, in the history of public affairs. The addition made to our food during the last twenty years, is equal to the addition which the most sanguine of our calculators do anticipate for the next twenty years, from the repeal of the corn laws. And yet certainly the prevalent sensation, throughout the whole of the bygone period, among the manufacturing classes, has been that of straitness and insufficiency. We cannot therefore sympathize in the exultation of the reviewer, as he looks forward to the next half century of unshackled commerce, and to the food of four millions of human beings, as the fruit of our unrestrained access to all the granaries in the world. We would regulate our hopes of the experiment, by our recollections of the experience; and these utterly forbid a brighter prospect of the future, than is our recollection of the past. And it does shake our confidence in the various resources and expedients of political economy—when thus taught, by the plainest arithmetic, that this most promising of all its measures, this most effective of all its strokes, the repeal of the corn laws, is to do so little for us. Without some higher and more effective operation still, we have too vivid a remembrance of the complaints, and the outcries, and the actual sufferings of our rapidly increasing population, during the rapidly increasing subsistence of the years that have elapsed—to calculate with any degree of assurance, either on the blessings of internal peace, or the comforts of increased abundance for the coming generation.

There is another of the reviewer's estimates which leads to the same conclusion. He tells us that the produce of Scotland, during the brilliant period of its advancement for the last sixty years, has increased six-fold.* But all that he expects from the

* See Review, page 60.

repeal of the corn laws, and a very large expectation it is, is food for four millions, or food for less than a fourth part of our existing population; less, therefore, than a fourth part of the food actually consumed at present within the limits of the British territory. It follows not, though a six-fold augmentation of the means of subsistence should permit that free movement of advance which Scotland has doubtless undergone, that Britain will experience anything like it; or that the comforts and circumstances of its people will be sensibly raised by an augmentation, which, taken relatively, is less than a twenty-fourth part of that which has been assigned for our own portion of the empire. In the one case the population may have passed into a state of wider and larger sufficiency than before—a process exemplified in Scotland, not after, however, but rather till the commencement of the present century; and which certainly terminated more than twenty years ago. In the other case, the advancing population may hang on the rear of the advancing food; nay, press upon it, as they have actually done during the last twenty years; and that notwithstanding an increase in the means of subsistence, equal to all which is promised us from a repeal of the corn laws. In other words, we have no warrant, either from calculation or experience, to anticipate a brighter era than that which has just passed over us; with this only difference, that all its dissatisfactions and discomforts will be aggravated by the disappointment of those fallacious hopes into which the people have been betrayed.

Yet, as the reviewer knows, we advocate the repeal of the corn laws; though not so much for the sake of its material benefits, as of its moral effect, in the removal of those heart-burnings and hostile jealousies which threaten to tear asunder the component parts of British society. Respecting the economic measure, we are practically at one; and what the remaining quarrel or controversy is, on this part of the subject, we are at a loss to comprehend. Is it that we would commence too early our proposed operation on the hearts and habits of the people? Is it yet soon enough, or over-soon, to adopt a vigorous educational system, whose influence might thoroughly pervade the whole of that plebeian mass which is now congregated in cities; and, even through the country at large, has outgrown all the instituted means, whether of common or Christian instruction? Are we too precipitate in recommending the instant multiplication of schools and parishes in towns; or too earnest in imploring

the dispensers of patronage, to act forthwith on the sacred responsibility of their trusts, and recollect that, in their hands are placed the dearest and the highest interests of families? Must all attempts to moralize, and truly to enlighten the commonalty of our nation, be kept in abeyance till Political Economy has run the whole course of its expedients; or, what were infinitely worse, till the politics and the mock patriotism of our day, have practised, even to exhaustion, the cajolery of their lying promises on a cruelly deceived population?

It is an observation of the sagacious Talleyrand, that a mob is never formidable, if we speak to their reason, and treat them with frankness and honesty. More hateful and a thousand times more pernicious to the commonwealth, than even the sycophants of the court, are the sycophants of the people—those blind leaders of the blind, who, by turning the attention and desire of the working classes to the wrong quarter, for that enlargement which awaits them, do but perpetuate their bondage, and sink them deeper into want and helplessness than before. They only are their true friends, who tell them, with undaunted fidelity, wherein it is that their great strength, and also wherein it is, that their great weakness lies. Let them be reckless and dissolute; and, uncaring of all consequences, bent only, and that to the last farthing of their present means, on the revelry of their present enjoyments—then there is no one expedient, within the whole compass of politics or political economy, which can save them from degradation. On the other hand, let each be wise and wary for himself. Let those who can afford to squander, now begin to accumulate. On the question of marriage, we bid them take their lesson, not at the school of Malthus, but at the school of common sense, and of their own individual discretion. We are quite willing, that they shall be eternally kept without reach of his economic theory on population, if they can also be kept without reach of the senseless cry which has been raised in opposition to it. It is enough for any object of ours, if the step of their entrance upon a family, shall be practically regarded as one wherewith prudence and principle have to do—instead of being regarded as the only occasion of life in which recklessness is a virtue, and a defiance to all consequences, is faith in the providence of God. We do not care for their being tutored by the economists, could they only be rescued from the wretched misguidance of the sentimentalists and bigots upon this question. We do not want

either the one party of these speculators, or the other, to decide this question for the people—but we want the people to have such a knowledge, and such a taste, and such a morality given to them, as that they should be enabled to decide the matter wisely and respectably for themselves. When once this is done, they will stand upon sure vantage-ground. In virtue of their accumulated funds, and no longer in the prostrate condition of men who are from hand to mouth, they will be raised above the necessity of working for their immediate subsistence. In virtue of their restrained and regulated families, the means of subsistence will be more liberally shared amongst them. It is only when the market ceases to be overstocked with human labour, that labourers have the dictation of their own terms—or can at least treat independently with their employers. This is the very place of eminence and security, in which we should rejoice to behold them; and rejoice the more, because of that pathway of intelligence and virtue by which they must have won their way to it. The arts and inventions of machinery have enlarged, and will continue to enlarge, indefinitely, the production of wealth; but it is by a mental and moral regimen alone, that we shall secure the right distribution of it. We know of no other practical solution for this great problem; and therefore it is, that we have ventured to assert the impotency of every expedient besides. This, in truth, seems to have been the main substance and amount of our offending. What all economists admit to be of some importance, we pronounce to be of supreme importance: that moral worth, which they regard as but helpful, we regard as indispensable, to the economic well-being of the people.

While we would leave the elevated parts of our social fabric untouched, all our fondest wishes are on the side of the common people. It is our belief, that through the medium, not of a political change in the state, but of a moral and personal change upon themselves, there is not one desirable amelioration which they might not mount their way to. The combination laws, those engines of a systematic injustice against the rights of far the most important order in the community, are now done away; and it only remains, that by the tacit, yet effectual combination of their own virtue, and economy, and prudence, they shall take that path of onward and indefinite advancement which now lies before them. The condition to which they might hopefully aspire—and it is the part of every honest and enlightened philanthropist to help them forward to it—is that of less work and

higher wages; and this, not only that they might participate more largely in the physical enjoyments of life, but that, in exemption from oppressive toil, and with the command of dignified leisure, there might be full opportunity and scope for the development of their nobler faculties, in the prosecution of all the higher objects of a rational and immortal existence. There is but one practicable opening, we hold, to such an enlargement for the working classes, and which can only be made good by the strength of their own moral determination—when, after the spectacle of cheerful and well-paid industry has been fully realized, we shall at length behold them emancipated from their sore bondage, and these brethren of our common nature transformed into lettered, and humanized, and companionable men.

The days were when the “Edinburgh Review” would have participated more cordially in all these sentiments—not only in regard to the omnipotence of moral causes for the elevation of the working classes, but, separately from these, in regard to the utter hopelessness of permanent good to them from any other quarter.*

We are abundantly sensible to the charge of Utopianism, which has been preferred against our anticipations. It is impossible to be otherwise; for we have heard it a thousand times over; and with all the greater emphasis now—that we have endeavoured to demonstrate the Utopianism of every other anticipation or expedient for the permanent amelioration of our species. There would be Utopianism in the expectation, that, by the utterance of a word, as if by the lifting of a magical wand, the population of our empire were to be suddenly moralized. But there is no such Utopianism in looking for a similar result, on the families of a manageable section, whether in town or country, from the protracted assiduities of a Christian philanthropist, appointed to live and to labour in the midst of them. The achievement wears a visionary and impracticable aspect—only because contemplated in its totality; and without regard either to its component parts, or to the distinct and separate steps which lead to this grand consummation. But any national or universal result which we look for, will be made out by a summation of particulars; and if those particulars do severally lie within the compass of human instrumentality, this should be enough to redeem our hopes from the charge of ex-

* In proof of this, we refer to the articles which the Editor was pleased to admit from ourselves, and which are republished in this volume.

travagance or unlikelihood. For when we speak of the power of education, it is of education multiplied into ten thousand distinct and particular efforts, pervading every city mass, made to overspread the whole extent, and to penetrate into every corner, of the land. The effect is gigantic; but without one giant having to do in the execution of it—for it will be brought about, not by the transcendent powers of one or a few individuals, but by the numbers of ordinary men. The work to be done is great, and will need a proportional machinery for the 'doing of it—a thick-set establishment of schools and parishes, the indispensable condition of whose efficiency is, that they shall be righteously patronized. The result will at length be arrived at, not by the working of one mighty organization for the achievement of great things, but by the accumulation of small things,—not by men whose taste it is to contemplate what is splendid in philanthropy, but by men whose practical talent it is to do what is substantial in philanthropy,—not by men who eye with imaginative transport the broad and boundless expanse of humanity, but by men who can work in drudgery and in detail at the separate portions of it. The glory of establishing in our world that universal reign of truth and of righteousness which is coming, will not be the glory of any one man; but it will be the glory of Him who sitteth above, and plieth his many millions of instruments for bringing about this magnificent result. It is enough for each of us to be one of these instruments, to contribute his little item to the cause, and look for the sum-total as the product of innumerable contributions, each of them as meritorious, and many of them, perhaps, far more splendid and important than his own.

To change the habit of a nation, must ever seem a Utopian enterprise, so long as we measure the achievement by our own individual strength. But this is not the work of one man, but of many thousand men; and it is not Utopianism, but experience, to affirm the possibility that each of those men shall, in his own territorial vineyard, and among the people of his peculiar charge, realize the union which obtains between the Christianity of a state, and those blessings of a civil or temporal nature which follow in its train. Their first concern is with the religion, the righteousness of the people; but we are not to overlook the declaration, that when he who seeketh this first also findeth it, all other things shall be added unto him. There is a most important connexion between the Christianity and the

sound economic condition of our families ; and while the lessons of political science, as they fall from the lips of philosophers, however just in principle, are wholly impotent in practice—we have long thought, that they are the clergymen of a land who hold those master-springs, by a right impulse on which they might speed forward, and at length achieve, all those objects which are dearest to the heart, either of the philanthropist or of the patriot. More especially do we regard them as in occupation of the best vantage-ground, for combating all the difficulties which are felt or imagined in the problem of pauperism ; and that it lies with them, without departing by a single hairbreadth from the sacredness of their profession, to avert from our borders this sore, this withering blight on the virtues of the Scottish population. Believing, as we do, of that moral pestilence, that, in the deadly virus wherewith it is charged, there exist all the elements of misery and corruption—we cannot deem the question of parish economics unworthy of a place among the other cares and studies of a clergyman. Political economy is not theology ; but political economy, as associated with the moral state and moral prospects of society, is that upon which even theology might deign to cast an eye. This science, celestial though it be, possesses a mighty ascendant over all terrestrial interests and affairs. Heaven is the ultimate landing-place of its contemplations—yet the history of earth has either been directed by its power, or deeply leavened by its presence. With its corruption stood palpably associated the darkness and despotism of the Middle Ages ; and it is no less palpable, whether we look to the wider theatre of Europe, or to the struggles of piety and patriotism in our own land, that its Reformation was the harbinger of all the light and the liberty of our modern day. Now, let us hope there is reserved for it a more pacific, yet more glorious triumph—not on the arena of a stormy politics, but by its silent operation on the growth of popular intelligence and virtue throughout our parishes ; thus providing the surest remedy for all the moral and political disorders to which a country is exposed ; and, while its main object is the preparation of human beings for eternity, scattering a thousand beatitudes along the way that leads to it ; and, in the formation of a well-principled and well-constituted peasantry, rendering the best of services to the commonwealth.

POSTSCRIPT.

IN our Pamphlet, entitled, "On the Supreme Importance of a Right Moral to a Right Economical State of the Community," we have endeavoured to rectify the misconceptions in a recent article of the Edinburgh Review, relative both to the standard of enjoyment, and to the great actual improvement which is there affirmed to have taken place in the habits and condition of the people. We shall therefore not recur to these topics now, but proceed immediately to the consideration of certain other objections, which the reviewer has brought forward against a few of the special doctrines of our work. We flatter ourselves, that a very brief rejoinder on our part, more especially if accompanied by a careful re-perusal of the denounced passages on the part of the reader, will prove enough to satisfy him of the futility of these objections.

I. The first of the reviewer's impeachments which we feel ourselves called upon to notice, is that which he prefers against our views on the restorative power of capital—in virtue of which, if impaired by extravagance or certain other causes, it, by an instant operation on prices, recovers, almost *per saltum*, the whole of the loss or diminution which it had sustained. Had he noticed our admission, as the effect of a universal mania on the side of expenditure,* it might have prevented his attempt to destroy our principle by a *reductio ad absurdum*. The truth is, that the case which he supposes, of an extreme and unlimited expenditure, and of its undoubted effect in sweeping off all capital from the land, so far from subverting the analogy between the two elements of capital and population, tends to complete and to confirm it. A universal celibacy, or exterminating epidemic, would depopulate the land; and yet it remains an undoubted principle, that, notwithstanding the actual ravages of disease and war, the deficiency of numbers is speedily repaired, and the population is upheld from year to year, in a state commensurate to the means of their subsistence. A universal consumption and refusal to accumulate, would effect the utter extinction of capital within our borders, yet capital possesses all the elastic force which we have ascribed to it—in virtue of which, not by a process of economy on the part of remaining

* See Chap. IV. Sect. 6 and 7 of the Work.

capitalists, but at the expense of purchasers, and by the operation of high prices, the capital, if it sustain diminution one year, is rebuilt the next, up to its original magnitude; and so is upheld in a state commensurate to the means of its profitable investiture.

But the reviewer attempts a positive, as well as a negative or indirect refutation. He first conceives the price of the article to have been made so much higher, by the limitation of the capital employed in the preparation of it—that we are led to seek it from other lands, and thus enrich foreigners at the expense of our own country. Let us shortly trace the effect of this operation. In so far as we have to pay for this new import, by the exportation of agricultural produce, in as far do we alienate a certain portion of the people's maintenance from our shores. In so far, which would be the case in Britain, as we would pay for it in export manufactures—in as far do we extend one department of British industry, and in the degree precisely equal to the contraction that has been suffered by another. The capital which disappeared from one branch of our national industry, re-appears in other branches. The same ability of purchasers which would have replaced the capital of the one, had it stood, adds an equal capital to the others which are extended. The addition made to our imports first tells, as is indicated by its effect on the rate of exchange, in raising the profits of our export trade, and then terminates in a corresponding addition to our exports.

But what the reviewer deems his most conclusive argument against our doctrine is, not that the article may become so dear through the diminished capital, as that customers shall be led to seek it from abroad; but that the article may become so dear as that customers shall be led not to seek after it at all. Now we do not need to be told, that the price of an article may be so far increased, as to diminish the consumption in a greater ratio—so that, on the whole, less money shall be spent on that article than before. It is true that we advanced the supposition of the same pecuniary expenditure having been made upon glass after it had become dearer—not however because the truth of our principle depended on the supposition, but because the supposition might be of use in illustrating the principle. The re-appearance of the same capital at the end of the year, does not depend upon an equal sum being spent on the identical article now made dearer. It depends on an equal sum being

spent. Though customers had reduced to any extent their purchase of glass, or had abandoned it altogether—that annual portion of their wealth which went to be spent on glass, would either be spent on other articles, or would remain with themselves. If the former, then, by this shift in the expenditure, there might be as much of additional capital upheld in other branches of industry as has been lost to glass-making. If the latter, and the wealth thus remaining with customers be not hoarded, but deposited in banks, it will thence be advanced in loans, either to men who spend it, and in the act of spending will create or augment capitals in other employments, to the extent of the whole sum that went to be vested in glass-making; or to men who employ it in business themselves, and so will cause it to assume the form of an operative capital in their own hands.

We may here notice an objection against our principle, which the reviewer has not specified,—even that our reasonings, although they should be held conclusive in regard to circulating, do not apply to fixed capital. Our illustrations certainly are taken more from the case of circulating than of fixed capital, but the reasoning is equally solid or equally fallacious with both. Neither the fixed nor the circulating capital can be extended beyond the limits of that returning power, by which they are replaced with a profit; and either, though largely encroached upon, so as to be reduced beneath that limit, will, by the action on prices and their consequent increase, speedily recover itself—the circulating in one, the fixed in several revolutions of the economic cycle. They are the consequent higher prices which repair the loss that the capital of the country sustains from the extravagance of individual merchants; they were the enormous war prices which sustained the capital under the vast yearly absorptions of the government loans.

There is nothing in our principle to affect the maxim brought forward by the reviewer, that “the hand of the diligent maketh rich;” neither is there aught in this maxim to affect the truth of our principle. The spendthrift ruins himself irrecoverably; and though the capital which he has wasted almost instantly re-appears, it does not spring up again in his hands, but in the hands of those brother capitalists, who have acted with greater wisdom than himself. And this new capital, which appears in place of the old that has been dissipated, is not a magical creation out of nothing, but is built up out of the privations for the year, of those who have to encounter the higher prices of an

under-supplied market. These higher prices do of themselves explain the resuscitation of the capital; and to superadd the painstaking economy of the remaining capitalists, is to call in the operation of a doubly greater energy than the effect to be accounted for requires.

There are laws of political economy as stable and irreversible as are the laws of nature; and, notwithstanding the pleasantries of one reviewer, it still holds true, that if the capital of a country be a hundred millions, and its profit ten per cent., so as to yield the return of a hundred and ten millions to the holders of it—then, let this capital be reduced, by the extravagance of some of its possessors, to ninety-nine millions; and, should no other change have taken place in the circumstances of the people, the next return will still be a hundred and ten millions as before, or the profit for the year will be elevated to upwards of eleven per cent. The capitalists would, in the aggregate, earn a larger revenue one year, and that precisely because of their larger expenditure on the year which preceded it; and yet, in perfect consistency with this, those capitalists who spend most beyond the eleven per cent. would decline the most in individual wealth; and those capitalists who saved most within the eleven per cent. would advance the most in individual wealth. The reviewer hath neglected this distinction, and managed, in consequence, to conjure up one of those specious plausibilities which strike the senses of the multitude, and serve the purpose of casting a temporary obscuration on sound principle. He hath forgotten that political economy deals in aggregates, and, whether the oversight be unintelligent or wilful, it is alike unworthy of science.

The Author of our nature hath so wisely adapted the constitution of man to the interests of human society, that the moral forces on the side of expenditure and accumulation balance each other. If the tendency be to spend too much, the effect on prices and profits is such as to hold forth a sufficient lure to the lovers of gain; and, if the tendency be to accumulate too much, the effect in lowering prices and profits is such, that further accumulation may cease to be an object, and the general cheapness becomes in its turn a lure to the lovers of enjoyment. The opposite tendencies meet and counteract each other. Individual capital may often shift hands, but, in the midst of all these oscillations, the general capital of the nation is ever tending, and is never far from it, to the state that is best suited to the actual circumstances of the period. Capital, in short, is a self-

regulating interest, and as little requires the helping hand of statesmen as does the element of population.

The Edinburgh reviewer mistakes the relation in which machinery and capital stand to each other, or the precise effect which the improvement of the former has on the magnitude of the latter. Should the time ever arrive when agriculture shall have reached its last possible limit, and art shall have arisen to its greatest possible perfection, capital would still recover itself up to that certain mean state from which it had fallen by some depressing fluctuation, and that in virtue alone of a quick and sudden reaction on prices, and the consequently higher profits. The proper office of machinery is not to restore capital, but to extend it. When the work of human hands is made more effective than before, by the intervention of tools or instruments of any sort, this operates to the extension of agriculture, and so to the extension of population, or the amount of immediate labour which the country, with its increased produce, can now subsist; and so also to the extension of capital, or the amount of accumulated labour which the country, with its increased business, can now remunerate. This is the real process which takes place spontaneously, and at will, with every onward step by which art is improved and agriculture extended, so as to make it an equally needless and misplaced anxiety, whether the apprehension be, lest the country should not be adequately supplied with the living, or not be adequately supplied with the dead instruments of labour.

II. The next of the reviewer's charges which we shall notice, is, that we do not annex a sufficient value either to manufactures or to foreign trade. We value both up to the full extent of all which they do for us; and the principle on which we found our estimate seems a very obvious one, and to carry its own evidence along with it, having, in fact, the very character and instant force upon our convictions, which belongs to any axiom or truism. The principle is this—that the importance or worth of any manufacture is to be regarded as neither more nor less than the worth or importance of its products; the worth or importance of any branch of foreign trade is neither more nor less than the worth or importance of the articles which it brings to our shores. All, for example, which a hatter contributes to society, is hats—this is his service; it is not greater than this, it is not less than this. Whatever benefit can be demonstrated of hats, that benefit, in full, is rendered to the public by hat-makers.

In like manner, all we owe to the stocking manufacture, is stockings; to the wine trade, is wine; and so to other manufactures or other trades, we owe cloth, or cutlery, or glass, or porcelain, or tea, or sugar, or oranges, or nitre, and a thousand other commodities exceedingly various both in kind and in the degrees of their importance; but such an importance as represents, or rather constitutes, the whole importance of the respective processes of industry, by which they, one and all of them, are prepared for human use and human enjoyment.

It is strange, that the utterance of so mere a truism should ever have been called for, or that any errors and illusions should have arisen in the science of political economy, in the face of a principle having such extreme obviousness and simplicity as this. But so it is; and the idea of something more than its own products being originated by a trade or manufacture, pervades the whole business of charity, and law, and politics. In devising for the relief of poverty, the conception both of parish vestries and parliaments seems undoubtedly to have been, that the providing of indefinite employment was tantamount to the providing of indefinite maintenance for the people—as if the making of highways, or the preparation of straw-bonnets, provided something more than the road or the bonnet—but, over and above this, had some sort of effect in the production of bread. The same conception enters into the alarm, or rather gives birth to it, which is felt on the prospect or the risk of any manufacture being destroyed, or branch of foreign trade being put an end to. The effect would be, that we might lose shawls, or tea, or spiceries, or other articles of more and less utility, and be obliged to reserve the wealth which went formerly to be expended on these, for the purchase of something else. But the apprehension is, that, over and above the loss of these products, we should lose the very subsistence of the thousands who are engaged in the preparation of them; beside so much of all the other interests comprised in, or suggested by, the very names of wealth, and power, and national revenue—as if these lay in the things that were consumed, and not in the ability of the consumers—in the products of the various manufactures and trades, and not in the price which was paid by them.

Never was a reviewer more wide of the mark, than our antagonist is at present, in attempting to displace or to nullify this principle. He undertakes the refutation of one doctrine, by the affirmation of another doctrine, wherewith it has no earthly

connexion. We affirm, that the only benefit which a manufacture renders to society is its own products. And to meet this, for the purpose too of overturning it, he tells of the mighty benefit which has been rendered to society by the division of labour. Verily there is nothing in the one affirmation which cometh into contact, far less into conflict with the other. It is greatly better that, instead of the same man making both hats and stockings, one man should be employed in making hats only, and another man in making stockings only. In this way a double, or treble, or perhaps larger multiple than either of these, both of hats and stockings, is served up for the benefit of the community. Still the hat-maker gives hats only, though more hats—the stocking-maker gives stockings only, though more stockings. We shall willingly, however, estimate the thing at as much as it is worth. Two hats are better than one, two pairs of stockings are better than one; and this is the strict and proper benefit which society receives from the division of labour. Human enjoyments are greatly multiplied by this arrangement; and we have furthermore endeavoured to show, how it speeds onward the extension of the agriculture to inferior soils—so that human subsistence is greatly increased by it. Nevertheless, it holds true of each special manufacture, that it emanates nothing but its own appropriate and special products; and no mere multiplying process can transmute the products of one manufacture into those of another, or into anything else. The multiplication of chairs will never produce tables, nor the multiplication of tables produce chairs. And the same reasoning holds true of foreign trade, by which our enjoyments have been greatly varied; and, through the wider scope given by it to the division of employment, our enjoyments have been greatly multiplied. We have endeavoured to estimate, and do estimate very highly the importance of foreign trade. Still, the principle for which we contend survives all these admissions—that the wine trade yields nothing else to the nation than wine; and the orange trade than oranges, and the sugar trade than sugar, and lastly, the corn trade than corn. These various articles are all useful in their respective ways; and the last of them the most useful of any. For their sake we have advocated a free general trade; but, for reasons peculiar to itself, have we advocated most strenuously of all a free corn trade.

But, lastly, a qualification on this principle has been made by ourselves, but is insisted on by others greatly beyond all legiti-

mate boundaries—that trade and manufactures do contribute something more than their own peculiar commodities; for it is the presentation of these commodities which arouses the sleeping energies of the husbandman, and so stimulates the agriculture as to have enriched the nation with an incalculably greater quantity of food. This is an intelligible assertion, and altogether free of mysticism. Nevertheless, we should be grievously misled by it, if we gave in to the delusion, that what trade and manufactures did for us in an incipient, it can still do in an advanced or extreme state of the agriculture. The truth is, now that the change is fully established of taste and habit on the part of the landlords, which began at the termination of the middle, and commencement of the modern ages—no possible fluctuations or failures, either in trade or manufactures, can recall the agriculture from that limit, at which the land last entered on yields a produce, that will feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries, beside some further excess over and above this, for a profit to the farmer. Neither does it follow from this, that we plead for the abolition of trade and manufactures—or that, if ever the sentence of annihilation were passed and executed upon them, the agriculture of the country would proceed notwithstanding. It is enough, both for the integrity and the importance of our principle, that no possible change in trade and manufactures, whether induced by an adverse politics abroad, or by a fluctuation in the taste of customers, and the direction of the expenditure at home—can leave the landlords without a sufficiency of objects on which to spend their income, or can practically extinguish within them the ambition and desire of making these incomes as large as possible. This will ever secure for us such an agriculture, as shall be competent to the maintenance of the greatest desirable population; while the only permanent effect of any actual revolution in trade or manufactures, will be the loss or rather the change of enjoyment to the landlords; and to the people a change in the direction of their industry. Had this principle been acted on, it might have saved us many a disastrous war; and, worst of all disasters, that of a neglected and uneducated population. Our government would never go to war for the sake of India shawls; but when the images of security, and subsistence, and power, and national grandeur, come to be delusively blended with the operations of merchandise—it will, and has gone to war for the sake of the India trade. Government would never have spared the ade-

quate taxation for a thorough scholarship, whether in the moral or literary sense of the term, of all the people in the land—had it seen the real state of the alternative to be, a thorough education for all the orders of the community, and a somewhat abridged luxury for the higher orders. But it does shrink from the adequate taxation—when it looks on the terms of the alternative, as a thorough education of the people and an abridged commerce, or an abridgment, therefore, of all those interests, wherewith commerce has been so fancifully associated. It is thus that the highest objects of patriotism are involved in the truth of a principle, which, if admitted and acted upon, might have saved us all the wars of commercial jealousy, and all the distempers both moral and political of an uninstructed population.

III. The last objection of the reviewer which we shall notice is the one taken by him to our view of the incidence of taxes—although he has only confined himself to a mere statement of the objection, without noticing any of the calculations, or the reasons by which our doctrine is supported.

In the first place, it is not enough to dispose of it by saying that it is but a revival of the old doctrine of the French economists. The doctrine is the same; but we arrive at it by altogether different steps. The reasonings are not the same. We expressly disclaim the most essential principles which enter into the composition of their argument; and rest the doctrine in question on considerations which did not occur, and which, in the state of science at the time, could not have occurred to any of the economists of that period.

Neither is it enough to tell us, that the rental of Britain is short of the public revenue of Britain—a statement advanced by the Edinburgh reviewer, for the purpose of fastening an axiomatic absurdity on our argument; and advanced too by his more ironical brother, the Quarterly, as forming a small difficulty in our way. The acre of carrot seed, mentioned in our work, which bore a produce worth £80, after paying the tithe of £8 to the clergyman, could only afford a rent of £1 to the proprietor. And yet nothing can be more true, than that the tithe is a deduction from the rent, and therefore paid by the landlord—not a deduction from the £1 actually received by him, after the tithe was paid; but a deduction from the £9 that would have been paid to him had there been no tithe. We have not affirmed that the part is greater than the whole; but that the part may be greater than the remainder, after that part has been deducted from the

whole. Our reviewers have confounded one element with another. They have treated the remainder, as if it had been the whole ; or, in the language of our older arithmetical books, they have charged us with making the subtrahend greater than the minuend, when we have only made it greater than the difference between them.

The remission of the existing taxes would enrich the landlords in two ways. In the first place, by the removal of a burden from farmers and their servants, and cheapening all the other expenses of farm husbandry, it would to that extent raise their rents. In the second place, by removing the burden from all other capitalists and labourers, and also by detaching from all taxed commodities an ingredient which now enters directly into their price, it would to that extent cheapen the various articles of family expenditure, which is tantamount to an increase of revenue. After this, although the whole of our present national revenue were drawn by a personal levy from the landlords and their mortgagees jointly, including among the last the holders of that great national mortgage the public debt—we think it could be arithmetically shown, that this would be laying no greater burden on the proprietors of the soil, than now lies upon them, in the shape both of higher prices and of lower rents, than would obtain under the new system of taxation.

This is quite enough, as an answer to both of these reviews—for, in truth, neither of them has entered argumentatively into the subject. But, since we went to press, we have seen the *British Critic* for October, whose perfect concurrence with us in the main lessons of our work, could not fail, amid the general lack of English sympathy, to be exceedingly agreeable. We have now some prospect of being understood, more especially on the subject of capital ; with the help in particular of the very important remark made by this reviewer on our doctrine—which, though it has at times been present to our thoughts, we have not brought out in the volume. It is the general interest of labourers, that there should be a moderate population—in virtue of the connexion between a moderate population and higher wages. And in this matter there is the fullest harmony between the general and the individual interest, for it is to the obvious and direct advantage of each labourer, that he should not marry till in sufficient circumstances for the maintenance of a family. In like manner, it is for the general interest of capitalists, that capital should be moderate rather than excessive—in virtue of the connexion which obtains between a moderate

capital and higher profits. But in this matter, there is not the same harmony between the individual and the general interest—it being the obvious and direct interest of each individual capitalist, to save rather than to spend; while, on the other hand, the general interest of the body is promoted by the extravagance of so many of its members, though it may be an extravagance altogether ruinous to themselves. There is not only great truth, but great practical importance in this observation. It greatly confirms and augments the evidence for our doctrine—evincing, as it does, the even greater certainty wherewith capital will press on the limit of its profitable investiture, than population will on the limit of its possible subsistence. There is the check of each man's own individual interest to restrain the excess of population. There is no such check to restrain the excess and overflow of capital.

Having proceeded this length, the British Critic is not far from the conclusion that all taxes do fall on the landed proprietors. He has helped himself forward to it. We confine ourselves at present to the case of those taxes which fall either directly on capitalists, or on the commodities that are used by them. Let their amount be five millions; and to this extent let us imagine that capitalists are relieved—or, in other words, that power is given them to live as before, and to vest an additional five millions in trade. The whole controversy resolves itself into the question, whether this investiture will or will not be made by them. It were readily admitted, we believe, on all hands, that they would make the investiture, had the taxes thus remitted to them been laid on the articles in which they deal; nor is there any other conception of the effect, than, that to relieve a trade of any imposts under which it labours, is just in that proportion to enlarge it. And is there any difference, we would ask, with Mr. Perronet Thomson—whether these taxes have been laid on the articles in which they trade, or on the articles which themselves consume? With the remission of either sort of taxes, it is evident, they obtain the same power of extending their business; and we see no such difference in the moral forces, brought into operation by the one way or the other of it, as at all to comprehend how it is, that they will not have the same disposition to extend it. With the phenomenon before our eyes, of the capital of the country constantly pressing on the limit of its profitable investiture—let this limit be any how enlarged to the extent of five millions; and we may rest

assured that the increasing capital will soon reach forward to it, and exhibit the same phenomenon of a general pressure and overflow as before. Each individual capitalist will strain, as before, for his own immediate and individual advantage; and the general result will be, an extension of capital to the amount of five millions—met, at the same time, by no greater returning power than before the extension was made. In other words, there would take place a general cheapening of all the articles in which capitalists deal, to the extent of the whole five millions that had been remitted. It is in vain to say, that the capitalists themselves, in as far as these articles are consumed by their own families, will have the share of this advantage. Our reply is, that, whatever advantage they gain from the change, whether immediate or posterior, it enables them in that proportion to extend their business; and that, generally speaking, their willingness to extend it keeps pace with their ability. In other words, the whole benefit of the remission is shifted from them to the landlords, who are enabled, in consequence, without being worse off than before, to bear the whole burden of that tax from which the capitalists had been relieved. In the greater consequent cheapness of all the commodities which they used, they would have full compensation for the tax; and, in the present greater dearness of those commodities, they, at this moment, are the effective payers of it. The same holds good in the case of labourers; and by a process of reasoning, the principles of which, at that early period of the science, were altogether unknown to the school of Quesnai and Turgot, we arrive at the same conclusion with them, that all taxes fall upon the proprietors of the soil.

We shall not repeat the various modifications on our doctrine to which we have adverted in the work; and more especially to the distinction which we have pointed out between the temporary and the final effect of taxes. It is only in the latter sense that all taxes fall upon the landlords. Taxes, on their first establishment, may be paid virtually as well as ostensibly *for a time* by all classes—for a year, at least, both by labourers and the holders of circulating capital; for several, and in particular instances, for a considerable number of years, by the holders of fixed capital. These are the very cases which supply the British Critic, and all others who stand opposed to us on this particular question, with the adverse phenomena which they might allege against the truth of our principle. And they are

the cases too, which make it just as well, that the commutation should proceed gradually. It should begin with the taxes on the second necessities of life ; for it is of greatly more importance, that a right adjustment should be made between the labourers and upper class of the community, than between the capitalists and landlords. A commutation, therefore, of all the taxes on those commodities which form any part of the maintenance of the common people ; and an income or property tax, which should be so graduated, as to fall with greatest weight upon the wealthy, is, in the first instance, most desirable. A further commutation of the taxes on capitalists into a territorial impost, may, or may not, be the work of some future period. It were the consummation, we think, of a sound political economy on this question ; and its more precious fruit would be to sweeten and harmonize the politics of England.



CONNEXION

BETWEEN

THE EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH

AND

THE EXTINCTION OF PAUPERISM:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR THE
EDINBURGH REVIEW OF MARCH 1817.

CONNEXION
BETWEEN
THE EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH
AND THE
EXTINCTION OF PAUPERISM.

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

On the other hand, an opponent, not of charity, but of some of its particular forms, has often much in the shape of initiatory dislike and prejudice to struggle with. However much he may prevail in the argument, and, at the conclusion of it, may vindicate his character as an enlightened friend of the species; he has not unfrequently to brave the hazard and the resistance of a most unpopular outset. The public are apt to be revolted by that array of hardihood which a mere reasoning philanthropist is so likely to throw around his speculations; and, should he at length succeed in carrying their acquiescence along with him, this is an object for which he must fight his way at one time through the gentler remonstrances of an alarmed delicacy; and,

at another, through the clamours of a boisterous and reproachful indignation.

This, in no one instance, has been so strikingly exemplified, as in those speculations about the nature of charity, which were in a great measure originated by Mr. Malthus; and from which many have been led to infer, that every public and proclaimed provision for the relief of general indigence is not only utterly incompetent to the attainment of its object, but has the effect of perpetuating and extending the very distress which it proposes to alleviate; and that, therefore, it had been better, could the sufferings of poverty have been left to the hands of private charity altogether. In opposition to this, the actual cases of want are brought out in full enumeration; and all the circumstances of pathos by which they are accompanied are impressively dwelt upon; and the direct and visible relief they obtain from our existing institutions, is too apparent to escape the commonest observation; and the fact, the unquestionable fact, is at all times appealed to, and set up in resistance to the fearful uncertainty of committing such cases to such accidental impulses of compassion as they may awaken in the neighbourhood where they occur. And thus it is, that the antagonists of this new doctrine are, in the estimation of a very large part of the community, placed on the vantage ground, both of feeling and of historical example; while its friends are looked upon as having nothing else to urge in their behalf, than the plausibilities of a barbarous and untried theory.

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

charity, she has, in truth, left benevolent individuals more to do than ever, and aggrayated all the duties and all the difficulties which originally lay upon them.

Now, without offering to decide this controversy at present, we are led, by the publication before us, to attach ourselves to an object, on the practical importance of which all the parties in it are most cordially agreed. The object is, to reduce the heavy expenses of pauperism ; and, at the same time, to relieve the miseries of the poor. We observe in the present, and in many of the other English publications upon this subject, frequent appeals to the case of Scotland, and a kind of mysterious charm ascribed to that peculiar mode of treatment, which still obtains in the greater number of our parishes. We hold ourselves to be discharging one of the most appropriate of our functions, when we are attempting to furnish our Southern neighbours with such information as our opportunities can supply ; and we do think that much important principle may be educed from the present aspect of Scotland, in so far as it respects the question of Poor's-Rates.

Whatever differences may obtain on the philosophy of the subject, we believe that there are two points on which there is now a very wide and general agreement. The first is, that the ills of Poverty will never be banished from the world by the mere positive administrations of Beneficence. The days have gone by, when the relief of Poverty could be looked upon as nothing more than the simple process of filling up a vacancy, or of directing towards that quarter of society where there was want, a stream of supply from that other quarter where there was fulness. This indeed was the first and most obvious expedient ; and it was natural to think, that in this way a sufficiency could be obtained for all the needs and sufferings of our species—and a more equal rate of enjoyment be diffused over the neighbourhood ; while the rich by the act of giving, and the poor by the act of receiving, would come nearer to each other in the degree at which they participated of the bounties and the provisions of nature. This experiment, however, has been repeated in a thousand forms ; and even when conducted on the largest and most conspicuous scale, the result has been a glaring mockery of these anticipations. Liberality has put forth her abundant stores in many a town, and in many a neighbourhood ; and no such scene of fine or delightful promise has ever been realized. And even when, with the feeling that her present

sacrifices were not yet enough, she has put forth a greater stretch of exertion than before—she has always found that her powerless aim fell short of that accomplishment to which she directed all the earnestness of her wishes, and the strenuousness of her most honest and diligent endeavours—and has at length arrived at the sure mortification of knowing, that the object of her pursuit is ever receding from her advances—and that, let her multiply her offerings as she may, there will still lie before her the unquelled aspect of a clamorous, dissatisfied, and actually suffering population.

This is a point, then, upon which we are not called to provoke the antipathies of any set of men, by linking it with the doctrines of Malthus, or any other system of economical speculation. People have found their way to it with nothing else to guide them than a kind of gross and general experience. Put the case of a wealthy citizen, leaving the fortune he has amassed in some second-rate town of the empire, to the object of alleviating the general indigence of its people, and let its interest form a clear addition to all the anterior charities of the place. There are many who, with no system and no generalization in their heads about it, could, on the strength of something like an instinctive sagacity, pronounce on the utter futility of such a destination. They could tell us, that this additional sum, if it amounted to ten thousand a year, would just go to augment the numbers of the poor, without reducing the miseries of poverty; and that if, by way of making a still more decisive stroke at the mischief, the ten thousand were made twenty, the mischief would still rise upon us, and hold out as obstinate and inextirpable a character as ever. In short, there are hundreds of practical men, who, though totally unfurnished with science or anything like it, have got a thorough hold of the truth of the matter; who see, and see with a most discerning justness, that the right management of poverty is truly the darkest and most unresolvable of all problems; and that, in the face of all which the combined charity and wisdom of man can devise to banish them from the world, there appears to exist some mysterious necessity for the accomplishment of the saying, “that we shall have the poor with us always.”

And indeed, without entering into the theory of population at all, it seems pretty evident, that should I retrench my own enjoyments, and give the produce of all this economy to the poor, I should only give to one set of human beings what I am with-

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

Without making any further attempts at present to unravel the intricacy of this mechanism, we now hasten to another position, in the truth of which, also, there is a pretty general agreement between the disciples of philosophy and practice. It is, that no power of inquisition can protect a public charity from unfair demands upon it, and demands, too, of such weight and plausibility, as must, in fact, be acceded to, and have the effect of wasting a large and ever increasing proportion of the fund, on those who are not the rightful or the legitimate objects of it. We speak not merely of the arts by which every claimant can disguise his actual circumstances. We shall suppose that this point can be most rigidly ascertained—that a precise inventory can be taken of all his means and possessions—that every latent source of maintenance can be fully detected, and brought before the view of the guardians and distributors of charity—and that a correct judgment can at all times be formed on the question, whether the present situation of the applicant be such as might entitle the public to leave him to himself. This is the only question which the dispensers of a legal charity ever do take up, and, what is more, it is the only question which they are able to resolve. The question of the previous habits of the applicant for relief, they do not entertain; and, if they did entertain it,

they would find that its satisfactory solution was far beyond the reach of all their expedients of vigilance and inquiry. The most galling police that ever was devised, or put into action, by the fiercest despotism on earth, could not accomplish this object.

There is not a labourer in the country, however well paid he may be, who might not become a pauper at the first moment of his decaying strength or of his declining wages; and that just by such a relaxation of his previous economy as could not be detected by the most watchful guardianship of men appointed to preside over this department of the public interest. They could not go over the whole previous expenditure of his family. They could not limit or modify the multifarious details of his personal and domestic economy. They could not enter his house, and prune away all the superfluities of indulgence that go on in it. They might as well think of employing agents to sweeten the tea of every breakfast table throughout all the lanes and intricacies of a great city, as think of keeping up the tone of the people's economy, and that too in the face of open and widely known provisions for the relief of indigence. The truth is, that it is this provision which has relaxed their economy; and we may now see how speedily, and, at the same time, how imperceptibly, a double provision would be followed up by a double relaxation. The dispensers of charity are in a state of utter powerlessness over that very element which it is of most essential importance to control. And let them be as multitudinous as they may, and completely provided with all the forms of strict inquiry, and prying inspection, and skilfully constructed schedules, and bodies of men arranged into a curious assortment of committees and sub-committees; in short, let them get up an apparatus of defence and of distribution, as ingenious as they may, they will, in every one of their objects, be counterwrought and prevailed over, by a still more ingenious population.

There can be no difficulty now in perceiving, how every extension of the poor's fund is in general sure to be followed up by a more than proportional increase of actual poverty. We greatly underrate the alertness and the sharp-sightedness of the lower orders of society, if we think that their attention is not all awake on the proclaimed existence of a revenue for their eventual wants, or that they do not admit this fact as an element of computation that tells, and with great practical certainty, upon all their habits of indulgence and expense. It were well, indeed, if they kept within the bounds of accuracy in these com-

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

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

And here it may be proper to mention, as one of the worst effects of such a system, that mutual acerbity of feeling which

is thereby engendered between the higher and the lower orders of society. On the one hand, there is the harassing suspicion that with every surrender they make they are doing no good—that they are feeding a mischief they can never quell—that they are throwing oil upon a flame which no art and no management can extinguish; and that at every new concession of liberality they are to be mortified by some new exhibition of insatiableness or of ingratitude on the part of its objects. On the other hand, there is the obstinate and determined sentiment that no gratitude is due—there is a feeling of right to buoy up the nurselings of Pauperism, under all the degradations it is conceived to bring along with it—there is the provocation of scanty allowance to feed their discontents, and to soothe or even to elevate their minds by something like the movements of a generous indignancy; and in all these ways is there established a strong feeling of repulsion between the rich and the poor,—most injurious, we are sure, to the individual character of both, and most menacing to the peace and good order of the commonwealth.

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

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

ous habits, and voluntarily to crowd that avenue which leads to a degrading and wide-wasting Pauperism.

If this belief be well founded, then does every disciple of Malthus stand upon lofty vantage-ground, for retorting back on sentimentalism all her own execrations. He has nothing to do but to proclaim that his partialities are on the side of individual and unknown Benevolence; that it is there only that he meets with this virtue in all its tenderness on the one side, and in all its gratitude on the other; and that, in the ministration of a public and proclaimed charity, there is not one feature of kindness which can draw his regards to it. And when he looks at the scowling jealousy and discontent which ever accompany its operations—at the manifest hostility of feeling which rankles in the bosoms both of the receivers and dispensers—at the sums extorted by clamour, and given with reproach—at the scene of angry contention, on which suspicion and resentment, and selfishness, and all the worst passions of our nature make up one most odious and revolting exhibition:—When he couples this with the fact that there are countries in Europe where there is no legalized charity at all, and where want and wretchedness are yet as little known as in ours,—how can he feel that he incurs the guilt of barbarity, in befriending a system which offers to restore to Benevolence all its lovely and endearing attributes, without robbing it of one particle of its efficacy—which is for guiding the footsteps of the wealthy to those haunts where poverty is to be found in meek and modest retirement—which is for dispensing the treasures of charity, through the secrecies of personal and confidential intercourse; and would have her to expatiate on that unseen theatre where there is no eye but the eye of Omniscience to witness her doings, and no book but the book of Heaven to record them.

But we have already dwelt too long on general and introductory matters, and must proceed without further delay to our statement of the causes to which the comparative exemption of Scotland from the burdens and the miseries of Pauperism is mainly to be attributed. The fact is, that in most of our large towns, and in pretty large districts, too, of some country parishes, our peculiar system has been broken in upon. However much this is to be lamented on its own account, it serves to throw additional light upon our subject, by supplying us with a richer variety of cases and of illustrations. Like the act of subjecting an experiment to repeated variations, it may teach us how to

distinguish what is efficient in the business from what is only circumstantial, and thus guide us the more surely to the detection of those principles which are of essential operation. At the same time, the consideration of those peculiarities which belong to the crowded population of cities will not be altogether inapplicable to that case of our overgrown metropolis, which forms the subject of the Report that is now before us ; while the suggestions we propose to throw out on the practicability of restoring to Scotland all the benefits of her original parochial system, and of repelling within its ancient limits that mischief which threatens to bring a most corrupting assimilation upon our people, may serve to furnish some hints for the treatment of this great moral disease throughout the bulk of that country, where it has obtained so deep and violent an inveteracy.

In those Scottish parishes, then, which are still untarnished by the habit of compulsory assessments for the annual maintenance of the poor, the whole public relief which they obtain passes to them through the organ of the Kirk-session, an ecclesiastical court, composed of Elders, who, in general, are men of respectable character, though not always taken from the higher or even from the middle classes of society. The minister presides over the meetings of this body, with the title of Moderator ; and he, and all such members of his court as have a practical share in the management and distribution of the charitable fund, do almost universally reside within the parish, and have at least such an acquaintance with the objects of their care, as secures all those civilities and customary recognitions which take place among men who live in the same neighbourhood, and are frequently, if not daily, in the personal view and observation of each other.

The fund itself is mainly derived from weekly collections made every Sunday, of the voluntary offerings of those who attend Divine service. In addition to this source of revenue many of the Kirk-sessions have a small capital, either in money or in land, bequeathed to them by charitable individuals, or gradually formed out of the accumulated savings of past years. But we are safe in saying generally, that the chief part of a Session's income arises from the free-will contributions at church of the inhabitants themselves, aided by certain fees which are exacted at burials and proclamations for marriages, and sometimes by fines for such irregularities of conduct as subject to ecclesiastical censure and discipline. From the amount of all

these items there must be deducted the expense of certain salaries to clerks and other office-bearers, in order to obtain the free income of each session for charitable purposes. And the writer of this article can assert, on a pretty general induction of cases in the county of Fife, that the whole annual sum which goes to the support of the poor in its country parishes, falls considerably short of forty pounds sterling, and, in some cases, is as low as twenty pounds for each thousand of its population.

But there do occur cases of emergency which require to be met by a larger measure of relief than can be awarded to the poor, at the ordinary rate of parochial administration;—such as a year of scarcity, or some uncommon depression of manufacturing wages, which, even in our most remote and agricultural districts, has a sensible influence on the price of country labour, and more particularly on the means and the comforts of female householders.* To provide for such cases, there is sometimes an encroachment made by the Kirk-session on its capital, if it has any; or a special collection is held at the church door; or an extraordinary subscription set on foot throughout the parish; or, lastly, a parish meeting of heritors, or landed proprietors, who, in general, agree to raise a specified sum, and retire in the understanding that each of them will contribute to it proportionally to his interest in the parish. Even in this last form, however, the sum raised sustains the character of a free-will offering in the eye of the population. The law may make the maintenance of the poor compulsory on the owners of land; but the experimental state of every parish in this respect, is decided by such habits and opinions as are found to prevail among its inhabitants. And, in point of fact, though, by the injudicious measures of many of our landholders, there is, upon the whole, a gradual obliteration of the wholesome sentiment going on, it may be asserted of almost every parish, where a habitual assessment for the poor is not yet established, that when an extraordinary measure of relief is resorted to, beyond the regular and ascertained method of supply by the Kirk-session, the money so raised goes in the shape of a gratuitous offering from the dispensers, and is taken by the receivers as a present.

But it is not enough to expose to view the mere material mechanism of our parishes, to bid our Southern neighbours look at the pieces which compose it, or barely to wonder at the result of its operation. This mechanism must have its springs; nor do they lie so undiscoverably deep in the constitution of our na-

ture, that they cannot be brought out to the inspection of the curious, so as to disclose to them the mystery of its movements. Some of them, indeed, are so obvious that they will not require to be laboriously insisted on. And, among the foremost of these, who does not fail to recognise the almost total withdrawal of that prospective security as to a maintenance from external sources, which must have the effect of tempting many an English labourer to such thriftlessness and improvidence, as are sure to hasten him on to the condition of pauperism? In many a Scottish parish, the whole sum expended on the poor would not suffice for the complete subsistence of one family. In such a case, every family *must* look to itself: and if they who are at the head of it do not always amass a competency to meet the wants of old age, they do, in fact, look to their children.

And if it be true that interest and necessity are the powerful agents for giving a practical establishment to many of the virtues; if this be the charm which, in the commercial world, upholds the members of it in the exercise of faith and honour and punctuality—then, in this more unobserved world of a country parish, we may rest assured that the very same charm will bind the great bulk of its inhabitants to such practices and habits as are most obviously indispensable for the safety or the maintenance of its members. If it hold true of human nature, that every quality is valued and held in reverence in proportion to the need for it; how powerfully, in such a state of things, will this principle invest the support and the shelter of parents with all the claims of an indispensable obligation! What a monstrous deformity will it impart to the act of abandoning them!—And hence it is, that we are so often called upon to observe, under an economy like this, the honourable workings of what may be termed the epidemic virtue of every neighbourhood where such an economy is instituted—the aged reposing with comfort and respect in the houses of their children—sitting at their allotted place of distinction by the evening fire—returning this filial piety by such little acts of helpfulness as their feebleness can still administer;—in a word, instead of being surrounded by the dreariness and the coldness and the alienations of a Poor's-house, spending the winter of their days amongst homebred feelings and homebred enjoyments—and at length carried to their graves by the arms of descendants who, out of their own hard and honest earnings, shielded the parents who gave them birth from a degradation they would have blushed to endure; and, keeping them off from

the parish to the very last, so bore up the termination of their career, as to sustain the dignity of its character throughout, and nobly to close its description, as a career of unbroken and unsullied independence.

These are the grand moral struggles which resolve this mystery—and by which, while the temptation to give them up is only kept at a distance from us, there would be a secure and everlasting barrier against the progress of pauperism in our Scottish parishes. But in many of these parishes, particularly to the south of the Forth and Clyde, this temptation has been obtruded upon the people; and the result of it is pregnant with instruction. It appears, from written documents before us, that there are parishes in Roxburghshire, where, within less than half a century, and since the principle of legal assessments has come to be habitually acted upon, the expense of the poor has increased tenfold;—and we have one particularly in our eye, where the whole money expended comes considerably above the rate of two hundred pounds a year for each thousand of its population. There is another parish in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where, upon the recollection of a verbal statement made some time ago to the writer of this article, there has been an increase of the annual charge from fifty to four hundred pounds in the space of twenty years,—and that too, contemporaneous with the introduction of the method of assessments.

We now proceed to other principles more latent perhaps, but certainly not less powerful in their operation. When once this regular system of levying the supplies of pauperism is introduced, it robs the whole sum which is given, of the expression that it once had of a free-will offering. A little reflection will serve to convince the reader how much this one circumstance tends to undermine that delicate reluctance on the part of the receiver, which, in truth, forms one great moral barrier against the extension of pauperism. A man may feel ashamed to accept as a favour that which he has no objection whatever to pocket as his due; and he may even feel elevated on obtaining, as the fruit of a legal victory, what would have hurt and degraded him in the shape of a donation. Under the new system of things, there is something like the buoyancy of a generous sentiment, to displace that conscious humiliation which, under the old system, is strongly associated with the act of becoming a dependant on the charity of the public. That salutary recoil which, in the unadulterated parishes of the North, is operating with so much

vigour at this very hour, is completely overborne by that other set of inward movements which swell out, and which even elevate the heart, when the possessor of it is employed in what he thinks the work of a spirited and a rightful vindication. This was strikingly exemplified a few months ago in Glasgow and its neighbourhood, where the contest for a legal maintenance was maintained with all the zeal and dignity of that more generous contest, which has for its object the establishment of the political rights and liberties of the commonwealth, and where one of the most munificent subscriptions in the empire for the relief of the industrious operatives, was eyed by the principal champions in this controversy, with evident feelings of dissatisfaction and disdain. This may serve to prove how surely and how tremendously this mischief carries in it the principles of its own acceleration—how those very feelings of self-respect which, under the system of voluntary relief, act as such powerful guardians to defend the access of pauperism, this system of legal and compulsory relief enlists to a certain degree upon its own side, and turns them into harbingers for speeding and preparing the way to its own practical extension—how it inverts before the eyes of the people all the images of glory—and leads them to vaunt in a condition of society, from which every man, who has the true soul and sense of dignity within him, will do his uttermost to rescue himself and all who belong to him.

And here we should not be afraid to make our appeal to the best sensibilities of the people themselves, and are confident of an echoing testimony from many a bosom. Which, we could safely ask, at least in our own country, which is nobler—to struggle unseen with the difficulties of your situation, or to lay open your house and your circumstances to the scowl of an official inquisitor? Or if these difficulties are like to overmatch you—whether it would not come home to your feelings in the form of a kindlier application, that the helping hand of a secret and invisible friend was stretched forth to relieve you, than that your degradation should be obtruded upon the face of day, or be indelibly engraven in the registers of a public institution? Which of the two would be more cheering to your family—the visit of an affectionate neighbour, who knows your misfortunes and your worth, and is ready to shower upon you the tenderness of his silent ministrations—or that you should swell the number of applicants who troop around Public Benevolence as she sits on her elevated chair, and deals out her weekly allowances with all

the point and rigour of an attorney? These, however, are the mortifications which every instituted provision for the poor is sure to bring along with it—and that too without any abatement of the ills of poverty, but with a sore and increasing aggravation of them. How infinitely desirable would it then be, if these safe and simple practices could be restored to their full operation, by the universal adoption of which, all subscriptions would henceforward be uncalled for, and all the hateful degradation of legalized charity be conclusively and for ever done away!

But we must go back again to the case of a country parish, and see in what possible way its wholesome economy can be transferred to the crowded population of a great city.

We will venture to say, that one of the most powerful checks to pauperism, in a small parish, is the personal acquaintance which the members of every distinct vicinity in that parish have with each other. The circumstance operates in a variety of ways, and all of them on the side of augmenting and fortifying the repugnancy of our peasantry against the condition of pauperism. The exposure of one's degradation in the eyes of his fellow-men is at all times painful; but the pain is inconceivably heightened, when this takes place in the sight of those with whom for years we have been in terms of familiar converse, among whom we have maintained, down to the present period of our history, the standing of an equal estimation, with whom we are every day in the habit of exchanging the notices and the civilities of good neighbourhood, and before whom, therefore, it may be quite unsufferable to make a visible descent amongst the wretched dependants upon the charity of the parish. We know not a single antipathy of more powerful and practical operation than this; and to prove how much it is sustained by a long-established acquaintance with the surrounding observers, it is only necessary to mention, that nothing is more common amongst the families of our poor than the utter extinction of this delicacy, so soon as they are removed from those external circumstances by which it is excited. When a family moves from one parish to another, they get beyond the sphere of that moral control which we have now been insisting on. A degrading exhibition in the eye of those new neighbours among whom they have come, is far less insupportable than the same exhibition in the eye of those old neighbours whom they have left, and with whom they have left all those restraints and delicacies, which grew stronger every year, by all the habits and all the recollections of a pro-

longed association. There is not a more frequent complaint among the administrators of parochial charity, than the trouble and encroachments to which they are exposed from the rapacity of new-comers. There is not a more frequent topic of exultation, than the superior delicacy and tone of character which obtain among the original inhabitants. There is not a more frequent reflection, than that if they had only these to deal with, they could, even after the mischievous principle of assessment has been introduced, and against the force of this opposing element, prevail in their honourable combat for the independency of their native population.

There is one other delicacy, to the operation of which the constitution of a small parish is peculiarly favourable—that delicacy which is set agoing by the acquaintance that obtains between the labouring classes and the administrators of the parochial charity. There is nothing that serves more to dignify the character of any person, than the daily and habitual notice that is taken of him by his superiors. The simple exchange of those salutations which are given and received on the wayside, has a more substantial effect on the general tone of a neighbourhood, than a gross or superficial observer of human nature is able to conceive. And the effect comes to be far more conspicuous, when these slighter expressions of acknowledgment are heightened into closer and kindlier applications; when, by a series of descending interchanges, the golden line of life is kept continuous and unbroken, from the owner of the lordliest domain, down to the humblest of the cottagers; when, in the operations of agricultural service, a small and unshifting population are ever presenting the same set of faces, and bringing the men of influence and property into frequent contact with the same individuals; when, out of his mansion-house there is always emanating, towards the contiguous hamlet, a stream of obliging and beneficent attention upon its families—Why, under such a system of things, there is already established in the minds of the people a very strong principle of recoil from such an exhibition as will degrade them in the sight of those superiors, with whom they have so often reciprocated on the honourable footing of independence and mutual respect. And this principle is felt with tenfold intensity, should these superiors be both the administrators and the supporters of the charity that is offered.

There is still another circumstance, which well deserves to be adverted to. Under the peculiarly Scottish system, the great

mass of the people are contributors to the parish charity. It is felt and acted upon as a creditable thing on the part of men in the labouring classes, to give their mite to the weekly collection. It is needless to expatiate on the effect of this, in widening the distance of all their habits, and of all their inclinations from a state of pauperism. A man who has been, throughout the great bulk of his life, a giver, stands separated, in virtue of that very practice, by a more impassable interval, from the humble condition of a receiver. The higher the station is which he now occupies, the greater will be his reluctance to descend from it. And when, in addition to this, we consider that these humble contributors are scattered throughout the great mass of the population; that, removed by a narrow space from pauperism, they are in daily and familiar contact with those who are standing upon the verge of it, and struggling against the necessity of an entrance; when the fear and the disgrace of being burdensome, are aggravated by the consideration, that the burden, instead of being confined to the great and the lofty, is extended, through the medium of pulpit-addresses and announcements of special collection, to the very men who live beside them, and with whom they have associated for years on terms of perfect equality; we may, without any great reach of penetration, comprehend how, under such a constitution of matters, there will, among a tolerably enlightened people, be an effectual barrier in the working of their own hearts, and in the spontaneous movement of their own native and untaught delicacies, against the extension of a degrading pauperism.

The introduction of legal assessments, however, has paralyzed the whole of this machinery. There has been a very natural decline in the amount of the weekly collections, in all those parishes where this method has been instituted. The money given to the poor has lost its original character of a free-will offering, and is now given and received in the shape of an extorted right from the wealthier to the humbler classes of the community. It is true, that, in country parishes, some of the circumstances now specified do still continue to operate in a certain degree, and to restrain the celerity of those advances, by which the border counties of Scotland are fast hastening to a state of assimilation with the sister kingdom. But, with the exception of a few cases, which may be afterwards adverted to, there has in truth been a very rapid acceleration of a mischief which is entailing a heavy burden upon the country, and deteriorating

the character of its people, without adding one particle to their enjoyments.

Now, we cannot fail to perceive how, in cities, where all the restraints that have now been enumerated are of so much feebler operation, this acceleration must be still more alarming. The control of the immediate neighbourhood over a man's sense of dignity is scarcely felt at all in those places where families may live together for years in a state of juxtaposition, and never exchange one note of acquaintanceship with each other. In the density of such a compact and crowded mass, individuals and families are scarcely within sight of each other; and the power which lies in that nearer and more intimate observation which is exercised by those few who are familiar with him who is just standing on the brink of pauperism, is in a great measure diluted by the generalities of that more distant intercourse which every inhabitant of a city may carry on with people who take no concern in his affairs, and exercise no inspection over them.

And again, as to the personal knowledge that subsists between the recipients and the administrators of charity—as to that tie of acquaintanceship which carries so many hidden but effective influences along with it—as to those frequent recognitions of civility which go in a manner to equalize the two parties, and of course to stir up in one of them a sense of shame that will both restrain the approaches of those who have not yet entered into pauperism, and temper the applications of those who have already got within its limits—as to all this, we say, there is one important peculiarity of management in most of our large towns in Scotland, which has nearly the effect of annihilating this salutary counteraction altogether. The management we allude to, is that in virtue of which all the distinct parochial supplies are combined into one fund, and the whole business of the city poor brought under one ultimate superintendence. This widens still more the distance between the receivers and the dispensers; and we know of nothing which tends more effectually to extinguish all the powerful, though latent delicacies, to which we have just been adverting—nothing that serves so surely to exclude the operation of honest and ingenuous feelings from this administration—nothing that so substitutes the hardness and repulsiveness of mere officiality in this administration, and turns the whole business of it into a warfare of opposing interests between men who know as little, and care as little, for each other, as if they had met upon an arena of combat from

different quarters of the globe—nothing, in short, that so sweeps away every moral barrier against the extension of this sore and hitherto unmanageable evil; that so engenders hostility and prejudice between the givers and the receivers; that so fortifies the one in the determination to give as little, and the other to obtain as much as they possibly can; that so transforms the whole interchange into one of the most unkindly, litigious, and disdainful character. And, after it has come to this, after such an attitude has been once taken, after the gauntlet of defiance has thus been thrown down, and the field of public charity has been turned into a scene of angry contention between the givers and the receivers, let the former be as firm and as vigilant and as sagacious as they may, they will never be able to stem the torrent of mischief that has set in upon their city. Under all its fluctuations of prosperity and adversity, they will be astonished at the steady progress of a disease which gathers and makes head against them with every new grant that is awarded to the poor, and every new contribution that is laid upon the wealthy; and, so long as this unwieldy system of a general and extended management is persevered in, a system which encumbers its agents with a list of distant and unknown cases, it will be the infallible experience of each successive year, that the pauperism of a city population is of all concerns the most helpless and the most inextricable.

If these premises be admitted, the obvious conclusion is, that this general management should resolve itself into a number of independent and elementary portions. The mass of every city population should be broken up into sections. There should be an instantaneous recurrence to the system of separate parochial managements; and it would go in part to restore the operation of the extinguished delicacies, were the agents of each separate management residents in the respective parishes, and did each parish defray the whole expense of its own poor.

There is one obvious benefit that would result from this arrangement. It would take off from that seducing air of magnificence which marks the charitable operations of a city, when the distress or difficulty of the times calls it out to some great undertaking. The separate and independent movements of each small parish in behalf of its own poor, would be altogether free from this treacherous ostentation; or, in other words, there would neither be so general an importation of poor adventurers from the country, nor would there be such a ruinous confidence in the

power of our public and overgrown charities on the part of our misled and miscalculating population.

We are well aware that it must occur as a difficulty in the way of this arrangement, that the distribution of wealth is very unequal over the face of every city; that it is greatly accumulated beyond the average in some districts, and that it is as greatly below it in others; and that if such a resolution of the management were to take place as that which is now recommended, the support of the opulent citizens, who cluster together in genteel and fashionable streets, would be utterly withdrawn from those portions of the town which are occupied by its artisans and its labourers.

But were we to give place to this objection, we should be surrendering the very principle on which we have hinged the whole of our argument. We assert that the positive administrations of relief, which are now discharged from the richer to the more destitute portions of a populous city, do nothing but aggravate and inflame the mischief it is their direct object to do away; that, if an expedient could be devised for intercepting this stream of communication from the upper to the lower ranks of society, it would contribute not merely to the dignity of the latter, but to the abundance of their physical enjoyments; that it is quite in vain to talk to us, in the way either of argument or objection, of a more equal apportionment of the burden of charity over a town, when it is our firm opinion that the burden might be lifted off altogether, and that every such apportionment, as the one which is contended for, is only thickening and augmenting this sore evil; and it may be conceived how lightly we stand affected by any such consideration, when we state it as our most firm and intimate belief, that there is not a single section of any city in Scotland of suitable dimensions for a distinct parish, which contains not within itself all the capabilities of comfort and of maintenance for all its families; that, were this section, and let it be the very poorest and most degraded, both in condition and in character, which can be fixed upon, morally cultivated as it might be, and that, even in the present state of our people, without any great difficulty, it would be found, though not a single farthing of charity ever crossed its limit from the exterior opulence that was around it, that there did exist in its own bosom all the elements of independence; and that, by a process which is quite accessible, and which depends, for its operation, upon direct and simple and easily understood prin-

ciples, the whole system of a country parish, in its originally Scottish form, might still be established amongst our city population, and be made to send a healthful circulation through the interior of its most crowded and depraved assemblages.

We must again, for this purpose, resort to the case of a country parish, and have to observe, that the mere want of legal assessment is not enough to explain the comparative state of comfort in which we behold the great mass of our Scottish peasantry. We understand that, in Ireland, there is no general legal provision for the poor; but how affecting are the many descriptions that are given to us of the mendicity and wretchedness of its people! There must, therefore, be the operation of some other latent element in the case of Scotland; and, feeling now that we must get rapidly forward, we once for all assert, that this striking difference between the two countries is altogether due to that superior tone of character which never fails to accompany a system of diffused education, and to the influence of religious principle, kept constantly alive by a set of men, the style and the habit of whose ministrations bring them into close and frequent contact with all ranks of the people.

It would be a curious, and certainly a most important inquiry, though we have not leisure to prosecute it at length, to ascertain the precise influence of Christianity upon a people, in as far as it affects their disposition to pauperism. It is clear that the direct, or what may be called the preceptive influence of this religion, is all on the side of a most strenuous habit and principle of independence; that the man who has submitted his whole heart to its lessons, will recoil from the act of receiving, because he knows that "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" that he will catch the spirit of the Apostle, who "laboured with his own hands rather than be burdensome;" that he will proceed upon the dictate of the Apostle, who declared, that "if a man would not work, neither should he eat;" and that thus, even a literal adherence to the formal and direct prescriptions of the Bible will, with every genuine disciple of that book, insure a habit of most determined resistance, not merely to the degradation, but to what he must account the positive criminality of this condition, if he can at all save himself from it, by the exertions of his own industry and the frugality of his own management. It is obvious, however, that such a close and unexcepted application of Scripture to all the points and varieties of human conduct, is but rarely exemplified. There do occur most affecting

and honourable examples of it, even among the very humblest parishioners whom a clergyman has to do with. But we will not say that the effect of Christianity in restraining pauperism, will, upon this principle *alone*, extend itself beyond a small proportion of the individuals in a country.

But a vast deal more in the way of influence is to be attributed to the indirect operation of Christianity on the general tone of feeling and of character. A man in cultivated life would recoil from an act of falsehood, not because he has been rebuked out of this vice by the lessons of an authoritative code, but because his whole habit, formed as it insensibly is by the circumstances which surround him, carries along with it an utter contempt and disinclination for so odious a transgression upon all right and honourable principle. And thus it is with Christianity in reference to pauperism. Out of its code there may be gathered materials for rearing a direct barrier against the progress of this malady among the people. But the main agency of this system of instruction lies in the general refinement and elevation which it imparts to the character of those who are the subjects of it. An educated peasant, familiarized to his Bible, and observing a close and interested attendance on the weekly instructions of his minister, and soothed by the tenderness of his counsel and ministrations, and raised to self-esteem by the civility of his occasional visits, and the object of courteous attentions from the person he loves and holds in reverence—why, there is positively upon such a man an exaltation of soul and of sentiment which has gathered itself insensibly out of those daily and ever-recurring influences by which he is surrounded; and there is formed upon him a fineness of moral complexion which would be revolted by the humiliations of pauperism; and he would shrink from this condition of life, not because he has been directly and categorically so taught, but because the whole of his moral education has furnished him with a set of delicate and dignified antipathies, which lead him to pause at the descent, and feel it to be ignoble. And when we think how widely and how generally this charm may spread itself, even where there is not that universality given to the preceptive influence of Scripture which leads to a close and a scrupulous application of all its lessons, we may see how, by the institution of an acceptable and an efficient Christian ministry in the land, there is raised a powerful safeguard against that degradation of character among the people which sustains the whole fabric of pauperism, and forms the real

secret on which we can explain the might and the mystery of all its accelerations.

This second cause will, in our apprehension, tell on a greater number of people than the former. But what perhaps is of more consequence than both of these put together, is the reflective power of dignified and honourable example emanating from the few who receive an impression from Christianity, on the many who do not, and who, we fear, constitute the great mass of our population. It is a fine remark of a living writer, that Christianity may elevate the general standard of morals among a people, even though a very small proportion of them shall, in the whole sense and significancy of the term, become Christians. The secondary influence of that admiration which is sure to be excited by the display of Christian accomplishments, will lead to the imitation of them under the influence of other and subordinate principles than those which are suggested by Christianity itself. And this holds most conspicuously true in the present question. Let but one-tenth of the labouring population be distinguished, through the operation of the two former causes, by their honourable exemption from the degradations of pauperism—and let them only come into daily exhibition and comparison with the people of the neighbourhood around them—and their example will spread: An homage will be paid to the superiority of condition and of character, even by those who have not been at all touched, either by the direct or the indirect influence of Christianity: The standard of feeling and of conception will be elevated throughout the great mass of the population: And while this third cause operates, we believe, more extensively than the two former in conjunction; yet, as it is subordinate to them, we cannot but essentially attach it to the exertions of a Christian clergy and a pure system of Christian instruction.

This supplies us with another important contrast between a city and a country population. The latter, as we have attempted to explain, are surrounded by a set of circumstances more favourable for calling forth all those wholesome and opposing delicacies which go to counteract the progress of pauperism. But circumstances will not of themselves produce this effect. They must have a character on which to operate; and this most important element is far more readily supplied in the country, inasmuch as the people there are greatly more under the influence of moral and religious tuition. The truth is, that in cities, furnished as they are at present with an apparatus of Christian

instruction so scanty, that the minister and his people stand at a most impracticable distance from each other, it is positively not in his power to expatiate amongst them, with any degree of effect, in the way of family ministrations. That church in which he holds forth his weekly exhibition, will not accommodate beyond a very small proportion of his parishioners; and, as if to dilute the beneficial influence still more, and to scatter it away into imperceptible fragments, it is the practice of our largest towns to open up a competition for seats to the whole population, without any preference given whatever to the parish over which the minister has the charge. This not only over-burdens him with a distinct and additional concern, but it loosens the connexion between his personal influence, and that geographical district over which he has the nominal superintendence. And thus it is, that the great mass of our city families are as effectually separated from all intercourse with their clergyman, as if they lived in a state of heathenism. That intercourse, which carries so much of the soothing effect of tenderness along with it—upon which the minister of a country parish may go forth with all his affections flying before him—where, at every step of this interesting progress, he is accompanied by a gladdening and refreshing influence with which he enters into every cottage, and cheers and elevates the very humblest of its inhabitants—an influence which may be so oft repeated as to make the clergyman the personal acquaintance of each of his parishioners—an influence which every sickness, and every death, brings home with a new accession of principle and of power to each group and each vicinity in his district—an influence, under the fostering efficacy of which the character of a neighbourhood is sustained, and the whole virulence of that disease which we are now combating, is far more surely counterworked than by all that human skilfulness can devise, apart from the great moral element we want to put into operation:—Why, this influence is as good as banished from the city multitude altogether; and let him who wields it, ply his unwearied task, and walk his daily rounds to the uttermost limit of his capabilities, he will not be able to establish either an affection or a confidence, or any one of the elements of moral ascendancy, over the mighty host that has been committed to him.

The following seems to us the most practicable plan for setting up a complete moral apparatus in the larger towns of Scotland. The heavy expense of such a measure is at all times alleged as

the great objection against it. Had this expense been gradually incurred with the progress of the population, so as to keep towns under as powerful a control of parochial influence and jurisdiction as still exists in country districts, then nothing more would have been necessary to ward off the mischief that has now accumulated upon them, than a simple rejection of every method of relieving the poor which pointed at legal assessments. But the poor have been suffered to increase, so as to outstrip the ecclesiastical provision that had been made for them; and the injury that they have thus sustained has been repaid by them with an ample measure of vengeance. For the expense that has been saved upon them in one way, they have wrung from their superiors in another way; and we now behold, as the suitable result of all this wretched economy, that the sum which might have supported a system that would have alimted the virtues of the poor, and established in their own hearts an invincible barrier against the evil which now threatens to overwhelm us, is in fact all drawn out to the support of another system, which alimts the vices of the poor—which has thrown down the barrier of every moral restraint against the inroads of pauperism—which contains within itself the principles of its own sure and interminable progress, and bids defiance to all that human sagacity can devise, and human jealousy muster up, in resistance to its baleful encroachments.

Now, we conceive that such is the remainder of feeling and of character even amongst the population of our Scottish towns, as to render the following substitution in the expenditure of this money as practicable a measure as we are sure it would be most wholesome and efficacious.

Let the sum raised by legal assessments be separated from that which is raised by voluntary collections at the church door. Let the former go exclusively to the support of all the already existing cases of pauperism, and let the latter be employed to meet the new cases. The instantaneous effect of this measure, when explained to an enlightened public, and met by their cordial approbation, would be to give an impulse to the weekly collections, and to do away the ruinous maxim, that it is quite in vain to come forward with any such voluntary contribution, when, in fact, the poor are otherwise provided for. We have no doubt that, under such an impulse, the produce of our collections would abundantly provide for the new cases of several years. And, in the meantime, old cases would die out, and leave a surplus of

unexpended revenue, should the sum now raised by legal assessments be kept up to its present amount.

But how then shall this unexpended revenue be disposed of? Let it not revert to the citizens who have contributed it. Let it not lead, in the meantime, to any reduction of rates. But let the destination now be impressed upon it which it ought to have gotten from the first. Withdrawn as it has been from a pernicious channel, let it now be made to flow into the wholesome channel of maintaining an extended system of moral and religious instruction. In other words, with the revenue which has been left free, let parishes be multiplied; let provision be made for the cultivation of them by schools and churches; let efficient men be gotten to fill them, and we have not the least doubt of such a system being met by the willing attendance of a now wandering and fast deteriorating population; let more elderships be formed, and give them the advantage of narrower fields of superintendence; let a preference be given for seats in each church to the inhabitants of the parish to which it belongs, and in this way a closer acquaintanceship be established between the contiguous members of our population; let the lay office-bearers be also resident within the bounds of each parish, and in this way a closer acquaintanceship be formed between the administrators and the recipients of charity;—above all, let the clergyman, with his manageable extent of field, be felt in the full weight of his personal and professional influence throughout the families which are assigned to him. And out of the ruins of the present system, we should see another system emerge, under which pauperism would be stifled in the infancy of its elements; and a reaching application be brought into effectual contact with the very root and principle of the disease; and another generation should not elapse, ere, by the vigorous effect of Christian education on the young, we should have to do with a race of men, who would spurn all its worthlessness and all its degradation away from them.

There is nothing violent or desultory, it will be observed, in the process that is now recommended. Nothing that would create an unprovided gap, or alarm practical men with the feeling of some romantic and inapplicable project. The collections at the present churches would meet the new cases for several years. New churches would gradually be formed out of the legal revenue that is left unappropriated. Before the new cases multiplied to such an extent as to absorb the whole of our

present collection, additional collections would be held; and, with these, more new cases would be met, and that too by money which retained the peculiarly Scottish character of a free-will offering. But it is not so much on account of these positive supplies, that we feel a confidence in the efficiency of our project. The money raised by these additional collections would, it is true, not replace the money withdrawn from the poor by this change of destination in the produce of the legal assessment. But, to balance this, and to do it in a way which every lover of humanity must rejoice in, there would be fewer poor; the applicants would diminish every year; the seductive imagination of a legal right to a maintenance would be gradually obliterated from the hearts of the people; and the multiplication of parishes would bring the rich and the poor of each into kindlier intercourse with each other; and the interchange of private benevolence would go on more frequently, in proportion as contiguous families felt themselves more nearly connected by the tie of a congregational relationship; and there would be a sure resurrection of all those delicacies which are now well nigh extinguished; and last, but greatest, the character of the people would be raised by the direct and indirect operation of Christianity amongst them; and, with the abolition of the mischief that we are now combating, there would be made to circulate throughout these recesses of human depravity, at which the heart sickens almost to despair, the goodly elements of peace and righteousness and loyalty.

Let Parliament legalize such an application of the money that is now raised for the maintenance of the poor, and it will do with this very destructive element what Sir Humphrey Davy has done with the inflammable air of coal mines. He has turned this enemy into a friend, and made that which before scattered destruction among the workmen, minister to their accommodation. That money which now ministers to the worst passions of our nature, might be thus turned to the object of disseminating its best principles amongst our population; and, with this change in its direction, instead of viewing in a mass of human beings a brooding mass of mischievous fermentation, we should look upon each distinct section of our people as a distinct addition to the amount of our national worth, and our national security.

Such a plan as this would fasten the eyes of the country upon a great moral experiment; and sure we are, that agents may be found in abundance for conducting it in triumph to its wished-

for termination. We have not before us the actual expenditure of all our larger towns, or of the legal revenue that is raised for the maintenance of their poor. But we know that, in some of them, the mischief has attained such a magnitude, as, if converted in the way we propose, would rear an apparatus of instruction, large enough, and ramified enough to reach to every street and every family of a crowded population. In Glasgow, for example, not less than thirty parishes might be formed out of the overthrow of its present system. And though it may be thought, on the first blush of such a proposal, that no pecuniary benefit is gained by the exchange, should the new parochial arrangement be so extended as to absorb all the expenses of the now existing pauperism;—let it never be forgotten, that under the one arrangement, we have all the fostering elements of discontent and jealousy and corruption, with the certainty of indefinite additions to the burden of maintaining it—while, under the latter, we shall enjoy an everlasting security against any such addition, and purchase a cheap exemption from the turbulence of human depravity, and animate the body politic with such a new and a living pulse as shall sustain the vigour and the prosperity of all its movements, and be refreshed by the symptoms of moral healthfulness, gathering every year upon the aspects of a regenerated people.

We would say more, and are sensible that more is necessary to be said, in order to complete the development of this speculation, and to quell the wrong objections that may be raised against it. But we have already so trespassed on our limits, that we must now hurry on to a conclusion, else we should have adverted to other subordinate topics, which are connected with our present argument. In particular, we should have attempted to expose the mischief that lurks in that very prevailing system of administration, whereby the clergy in some of our Scottish towns are officially linked with the operations of pauperism,—whereby the moral influence of those men is completely neutralized amongst the lower orders, by the vitiating effects of such an association,—whereby, in virtue of a conjunction so unnatural, they are, in fact, helping on the progress of the evil at a rate that is incalculable,—whereby, with every movement that a minister makes amongst the necessitous of his people, he spreads this corruption amongst them, and, by each distinct act of approximation, leaves a debasing taint upon their character and habits, and thus so changes the character of his whole intercourse,

that, instead of carrying nothing but a pure and exalting influence along with him, he scatters on every side the elements of moral deterioration. We should also have adverted to the important fact, a fact only to be gathered from frequent association with the lower orders, that the people in that condition of life give a great deal more to each other than they receive from all the public charities put together; or, in other words, that a system which would abolish these charities, and substitute in their place an improved character amongst the people, and a closer feeling of mutual dependence, would, in fact, make the poor much richer in resources, and surer of relief, than they are at this moment. Lastly, we might have adverted to the distinction between an act of private and one of public benevolence to the needy—how the former often stirs up a delicate recoil in their bosoms, and leaves their wishes, and their endeavours after independence unimpaired, while the latter stirs up, in general, an insatiable cupidity; and that the one, therefore, is not only more productive in its amount than the other, but would reach its termination more readily in the barrier of a moral resistance to its operations on the part of recipients. We might then have proposed certain details, by which the transition from the present to the proposed system might be greatly facilitated. But all this we leave to the judgment and the reflection of our readers.

Should there be any who look upon this speculation as visionary and impracticable, let them remember that, in giving up as hopeless the abolition of Pauperism, by some such process as we have now stated, they at the same time give up as hopeless the character and the best expectations of our species. Let them attempt any other way of abolishing Pauperism—let them try to attain this object without reforming the principles and dispositions of the poor themselves, and they will soon find that they have been puzzling themselves with a problem without taking along with them the most essential of all the data which must enter into the solution of it. But at all events, should any such experiment as the one now proposed, which has for its object the moral amelioration of mankind, fail, then must we prepare our minds for a conclusion far more tremendous than the continuance of Pauperism, with all its corruptions and miseries. This evil, deplorable as it is, will hardly deserve any sensible regret, when put by the side of the great radical disease from which it has emanated; and when we look at it in this light of

comparative insignificance, we confess that we are scarcely in possession of any spare feelings that can lead us to dwell on the mischiefs of Pauperism with sorrowful contemplation—should it be found that it owes all its inveteracy to a great moral impotency on the part of mankind, from which no expedient, within the whole compass of natural or revealed knowledge, is able to deliver them.

COMPARISON

OF

SCOTCH AND ENGLISH PAUPERISM:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ARTICLE IN THE EDINBURGH REVIEW
OF FEBRUARY 1818.



COMPARISON

OF

SCOTCH AND ENGLISH PAUPERISM.

It appears from this important document* that the principle of compulsory provision for the poor took its rise with the enactment of very harsh and barbarous laws for the suppression of vagrancy; that by these laws, which were directed against 'strong beggars, persons whole and mighty in body,' such an offence was visited with slavery, mutilations, and death—that permission to beg, however, was extended to the impotent poor within certain districts—and that at length, with a view to prevent the burden of their support from falling exclusively on the charitable, an Act was passed in the 5th of Elizabeth, whereby the Justices in each parish were empowered, along with the churchwardens, to assess for a weekly sum those who were unwilling to contribute. By a statute of the 43d of the same reign, those persons were further vested with 'the power, *first*, to provide for the gratuitous relief of those who were unable to work; and *secondly*, to find work for those who were able by giving them employment, or supplying them with the necessary tools and materials.

This statute continues to be the fundamental and operative law of the realm on this important subject. And the object of the very interesting Report now before us, is to expose the effect which, after the lapse of about two centuries, has resulted from the administration of this law on the comfort and character of the people of England.

* Report from the Select Committee on the Poor-Laws, with the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Committee.—Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, July 4, 1817.

We have often imagined that, previous to these enactments, the whole of the matter to which they relate had come under the discussion of two political reasoners; and that one of them had merely expressed his doubts as to the efficacy of this compulsory provision, while the other felt quite assured of its final success in diminishing the amount of human suffering, if not in banishing all the miseries of extreme indigence from the land. Even in such a situation, we conceive, and anterior to all experience, there are many considerations which might have occurred to the former, and disposed him to be slow of confidence as to the anticipated good that was to flow from its operation. The very circumstance of its being untried, might lead him to suspect and to hesitate. And, independently of this general consideration, which always weighs so powerfully with men of a practical understanding, he would probably see, in the proposed measure, an attempt to wrest from the hands of Nature the management of a case, for which, by certain principles implanted in the constitution of man, she had already provided. He might see in it a tendency to enfeeble, if not altogether to suppress, the operation of these principles. He might fear lest this interference on the part of the State should relax the natural excitements to industry and foresight, and thus multiply the instances of wretchedness beyond its power of relieving them;—or that it might relax the obligations of relationship; and thus, for the substitution of certain regulated services, withdraw from the helpless the far kindlier and more effective services of their own kindred or their own offspring;—or that it might relax the sympathy and mutual dependence of immediate neighbours, and thus intercept those numerous though unobserved supplies of beneficence, which, in parishes where assessments are unknown, still make up a sum of charity most honourable to the character of the lower orders;—or that it might reduce the private ministrations of the wealthy, who, by the one act of a yearly contribution, might feel themselves acquitted of all those secret attentions and liberalities which the setting up of this legal machinery evidently tends to supersede;—or finally, that by the publicity thus given to the relief of want, every dispensation of it would be made greatly more painful to the more delicate and deserving class of sufferers, who, rather than brave an exposure so humiliating, might choose to endure in silence; and that with nothing to depend on but such compassion as the system in question has diverted away from them—with no chance of being discovered

by the charitable, but through such inquiries as this system has superseded—with no source from which to look for any alleviation but such funds as this system is impairing by its perpetual and constantly augmenting encroachments. And thus it might be doubted whether it might not only shift the misery without alleviating it; and add another proof to the many that already exist of the impotency of legislation, when it offers to interfere with the wiser provisions and the more efficient principles of Nature.

We are not now supposing that the man who musters up these various probabilities, could come to a decided conclusion against the scheme which has been suggested. But he might go so far, as most legitimately, upon the strength of them, to decline his positive approbation of it. He might look on it as a scheme which was at best uncertain and hazardous; and if his sturdier antagonist saw nothing but timidity in all these apprehensions—if he remained inflexibly assured of the wisdom of the regulations suggested—if he resolutely persisted in asserting, that augmented happiness to the lower orders, and augmented tranquillity to the State, would ensue from the enactments and the execution of them—if he looked, in short, to the experiment with undoubting confidence, while the other looked to it with feelings of suspicion and reserve—we leave it to the reader to judge, which of the two should have been designated by the name of theorist.

The experiment, however, has been actually made: And it has had the long development of two centuries,—out of which we may gather its actual effect on the circumstances of the people; and, as it were, to afford us every advantage for helping us on to our conclusion, the whole island presents us with parishes in every variety of condition, and under every variety of treatment as to the management of their poor. We can point to some parishes, where a compulsory provision has obtained ever since the passing of the original statute; and to others where it has been only introduced at various periods within the last half century:—to others where the elements of the method have been so recently put together, that the method itself is still in embryo; and, finally, to others where it is yet utterly unknown, and the whole relief of poverty is left to the unfettered operation of Christian precepts, or of the kindlier feelings of nature on the heart and conduct of individuals. So that if our two political reasoners were to rise from their graves,

they would have the whole matter of their debate before them in real and living exemplification. The man of doubt would have experience instead of experiment, and proof instead of probability. And surely, whether, on looking to the parishes of England, he there perceived that, in the matter of supporting the helpless, every domestic tie had gone into dissolution, and that, in the coldness of a public administration, every kindlier charity was departing from the land—or, looking to the Border parishes, he saw them fast hastening to the lavish expenditure of England, and with as little too of sensible influence on the comforts of their suffering population—or, finally, looking to the parishes of the North, he beheld that, under their cheap economy, all the relative duties of kindred and of neighbourhood were still in unextinguished operation, and that a high-minded but uncomplaining peasantry, did, out of their own unborrowed resources, rear every family, and foster the declining years of every parent who belonged to them—would not he be entitled to look on these various parishes as so many archives on which, since he had left the world, the finger of time had graven in characters of certainty all his anticipations—would not he stand proudly vindicated in his claims to practical wisdom, and his antagonist be more strikingly convicted than ever, of being a most unsound and precipitate theorist?

But how comes it, then, that the reverse of all this takes place in very general estimation? How comes it that he who questions the expediency of poor-rates is usually regarded as a man of visionary, or at least of adventurous speculation; and that he who resists every change of habit, or of existing institution, is deemed to be a man of sound and practical wisdom, who, unseduced by any ingenious or splendid sophistry, sits immovably intrenched within the safeguards of experience? He who would have been counted a theorist at the commencement of this great national scheme, is now conceived to have upon his side the whole authority of practice and observation;—and he who simply inherits the spirit and the impressions of his more judicious antagonist, is now branded as an audacious theorist. How comes it that the two characters have so strangely and so unwarrantably shifted places? What has happened during this intervening period of two hundred years, to justify such an exchange of reputation between them? The man who was then so proudly confident in his anticipations of good from the plan, has had every one of his anticipations most wofully blasted; and

for this, the successor to his opinions and partialities obtains the homage that is due to a sound experimental philosopher. The man who humbly expressed his suspicions of the plan, has had every one of them confirmed; and for this, he who now proceeds upon his conjectures as so many facts, because they have turned out to be so, is denounced as a rash and chimerical projector! So long as the theory was untried, it was practically wise to doubt it, and theoretical to befriend it. But now that the theory has been tried and found wanting, it would appear that he is the sound experimentalist who defends, and he is the theorist who disowns it!

All this, however, may be referred to that great law of the human constitution, by which we are led to associate with similar circumstances the expectation of similar results; and which acts, in general, with all the force and certainty of an instinct. It is true, also, that it acts, for the most part, with the same salutary effects. It is very certain that Nature will never deceive us, and that she will always bring out the same result from the same circumstances. But circumstances may be similar, without being in every respect the same; and on this similarity may the strong propensity in question urge us to found an expectation in which we may frequently be disappointed. It is thus that children and the lower animals can be so easily imposed upon. Offer to their notice some general assemblage of objects which impresses them with a similitude to some former assemblage, and they will look for the same general results. They are not able to assign such particulars in the assemblage as have a causal influence on the production of the consequence which they anticipate. They cannot distinguish the essentials from the accessaries. It were well if the progress to manhood insured a total deliverance from the errors of this propensity. But, in point of fact, there are many questions on which the heedless exercise of this propensity grows with the growth of men, and strengthens with their strength. If they have been accustomed to provide for some object in one particular way, they never think that it can possibly be provided for, unless in that very way, with all its insignificant specialities, to which they have been habituated. It is thus that they dread the very semblance of innovation, as carrying in it the ruin and overthrow of the whole concern that is at issue. It is utterly in vain to tell them that the thing may be done as well without this or the other circumstance. They are such circumstances as

were always present in their remembrance of the matter; and this is reason enough why they cannot conceive that there should be any comfort or security without them. Every appeal to the experience of other times, or to the practice of other places, would make no impression whatever over their own lively and personal recollection of all the details of their own time and their own parish. These practical men will take up indiscriminately with this or with that system, just as it happens to be the established one. If it only have the right of occupancy in their town, this is enough to vest it, in their eye, with all the honours of infallibility. Not one lesson is ever drawn from the great principle of the identity of human nature; out of which it may be inferred that such management as has been found to succeed with men in one part of the country, may be imported into another. Not one ray of light is ever admitted to shine upon them from the experience of other times or other places. All is blind and headlong imitation of that which is immediately before them. To talk of anything beyond this, will sound visionary to men whose minds are occupied to the full with that which they handle with their own hands, and see with their own eyes. Of this much they will have a vivid recollection; and, by their constantly appealing to it, they will appear to stand on the vantage-ground of actual observation. Their persons are so surrounded with the materials and the manipulations of practice, that they will both claim and receive the same authority as if their minds were constantly exercised with the lessons and the observations of practice. They, in consequence of this, will be listened to as men of observation. But it is just the observation of men who follow the mere instinct of experience without thought and without discrimination. They cannot tell what it is in the apparatus of their management that has a good, and what it is which has a hurtful influence—but, because familiarized to the sight of the apparatus itself, think that all would go to wreck should one sacrilegious hand offer to inflict upon it the slightest alteration.

It were very convenient to distinguish this class of persons by some short and expressive designation. It would not be fair, however, to call them *practical men*—for there are many of this description to whose services the community lie under a weight of the deepest obligation, and who, at the same time, by their just discernment of principle, and by their enlightened application of it to the operations of their own department, have earned

a well-merited title to true practical wisdom. Neither would it be fair to call them *merely practical men*—for there are many such who, most conscientious in transacting all the details of the actual system, and most patient in the performance of all its drudgeries, are nevertheless without pretension to any understanding, and are never heard to utter any dogmatic asseveration on the absolute merits of the system itself—and who are therefore entitled to the character of a most useful and deserving class of citizens. But there are others who, on the mere strength of a prolonged and manifold officiality, take a far loftier flight—who adventure, and that on the foundation of a hackneyed experience, which goes not beyond the precincts of their own municipality, to affirm of every innovation, that it is wholly visionary and inapplicable—on whom the collected experience of all the parishes in the empire would be utterly thrown away—who could read, for example, such a Report as that now before us, and, without borrowing from it a single hint for the amendment or the subversion of their existing practice, would still stand up for it as manfully and as determinedly as ever in all its parts, and in all its modifications—who are both most entirely ignorant of the principles of their business, and most entirely wedded to all its circumstantials—who not only cannot move themselves but just in the way in which they were first set agoing, but who pronounce, of every movement which diverges from theirs, that it is a divergence from the wise and cautious line of experience. Such persons stand in precisely the same relation to a man of truly correct and enlightened views on the subject of poor-laws, that a mere lawyer does to an enlightened statesman, or a mere merchant to a sound political economist. It is very true, that a lawyer may be an able legislator, and a merchant may be an able economist; and that there are many of both professions who, without aspiring to the character either of the one or of the other, do fill, and that most usefully and honourably, their respectable vocations. But just as some lawyers, with no accomplishment beyond the art of special pleading, will confound one talent with another, in such a way as to think that, because they can skilfully point out the application of the existing laws, they can also profoundly and philosophically defend the wisdom of them; and just as some merchants, with no range of contemplation beyond the transactions of their own counting-house, can fancy in themselves a competency to vindicate all the bounties in which they have shared, and all the

monopolies by which they have profited:—So are there many persons who, because they are expert and practised in the business of public charities, and versant in all the points and penmanship of the chamber which they occupy, think that, on this single ground, they may take their bold and comprehensive sweep through the difficulties of the general question—who call out most strenuously for matters as they are, and that just because they have shut out the light of all that wider experience which indicates the way to matters as they should be—who, without looking back upon other times, or abroad upon other parishes, have only looked, with the most intense confinement of all their faculties, on the little infield of their own operations, and have gathered therefrom a fancied sufficiency of wisdom to overbear all the reasonings of all the theorists. Such a character, compounded of confident pretence on the one hand, and the merest practicionery on the other, it is certainly not easy to express by one brief and memorable designation. But we shall venture, for the present, to call him the disciple of mere localities.

We may now be enabled to perceive where it is that the distinction lies between such a person, and the man of true practical wisdom. The latter, though often branded with the name of a theorist, never in fact rests a single position on any other basis than that of observation. But he has the art of observation; and knows how to turn it to its legitimate purposes. He can look to one case, and has the faculty of drawing a lesson from it, by which he can enlighten and determine other cases of the same kind; and avails himself of the constancy of Nature in such a way, as to rear upon it a general anticipation. From his daily observation of human nature, he has learned, for example, to infer, that dependence upon aid from others will impair the diligence of a man's exertions for himself; and that it both lies within the power, and is in general the disposition of the labouring poor, by the economy of a very slight and practicable retrenchment, to secure for themselves a provision against the wants of futurity, and that the strong instincts of relationship will, if not counteracted, draw a more secure and kindly protection around all its members, than ever can be offered by the cold hand of public charity; and that the sympathies of neighbourhood, if not relaxed by some ill-judged and artificial process, will afford a more substantial relief to the indigence which resides within its bounds, than ever can be poured upon it out of the treasury of an almshouse and that the wealthy, if left to

give on the impulse of compassion, will at length find their way to a more useful and discriminating method of benevolence than ever can be practised by the official agents of a legal institution; and that while, in the one way, the rich and the poor often meet and exchange with each other such cordialities of affection and goodwill as go to sweeten every offering, and to turn the whole of their intercourse into a scene of enjoyment; in the other way, every ministration of relief only tends to multiply their antipathies, and to widen the unfortunate distance which lies between them—And surely if these be so many *facts*, authenticated by the habitual observation of his whole life, he is well warranted to conclude that it would have been greatly better had the institutions in question been dispensed with altogether; and if, as to stamp upon this doctrine its most striking verification, he can point to parishes where they are established, and compare them with parishes where they are not established, and then crown the whole of his reasoning with the triumphant allegation, that the actual result coincides in all its particulars with the conclusions of his own individual sagacity:—Surely, after this, there must be some delusion in pronouncing of such a man that he is a theorist.

But the disciple of mere localities can be made to see nothing of all this. He is wholly taken up with the individualities of his own particular remembrance. Any change in the system of management would break up the entireness of that assemblage of means which he has been in the habit of contemplating in association with the object of relieving the poor; and he cannot conceive that, with a different assemblage, the same object can possibly be accomplished. Still less can he conceive that the utmost dexterity in managing the details of an existing scheme may meet, in the same individual, with the utmost incapacity of pronouncing aright on the wisdom of the scheme itself—that he in fact may be a clever accountant in the poor-house, and an active superintendent of some one of its departments, and the wisest of all his colleagues in the business of framing regulations, and yet be as little prepared, by all this official expertness, for the general question, as if his only business had been to preside over the cookery of the establishment,—to taste of its charitable soup, or to deal it out with pointed regularity to the repairing multitude. A kind of talent, no doubt, is requisite for all these operations. Nor are we to wonder how they who possess this talent carry a certain degree of influence along with them, when

they denounce all who question present modes as theoretical, or how it is that this epithet, in the progress of time, has changed its application from one side to another, and how so many good people have been misled into the idea, that a whole host of practical authority and good sense stand opposed to the business of innovation—when they see such an array of resistance, and hear the contemptuous cry that is lifted up by clerks and vestrymen and city assessors, and the various subalterns or dignitaries of office, and the whole collected voice of council and committee.

Meanwhile it is our earnest advice to Government to prosecute, and still further to extend these inquiries, of which the Report before us gives so instructive a specimen—not to shrink from the resistance which has now been adverted to, for in truth it is far more noisy than formidable—steadily to keep in their eye the deliverance of the country from a system, of which every new exhibition proves that it augments the wretchedness of the lower orders, and cruelly deceives them by a semblance of beneficence which it never can realize. And, to encourage them in this career of true and enlightened patriotism, we may venture to assure them, that the very men who are now so sensitively alive to the alarm of innovation, will, in a few months after the establishment of some practical reform, yield a most acquiescing compliance with it in all its particulars. The great maxim of “whatever is, is right,” on the strength of which they are ever sure to raise an outcry against the enemies of an old establishment, will in a short time convert them to the steadiest and most determined friends of a new one. In fact, they will approve themselves to be good serviceable men under any system; and the terms “theoretical” and “practical” will, under another order of things, once more change their place and their acceptance.

Before taking up the Report, we beg leave to be indulged with one remark more in the way of general and introductory observation.

From every page, both of the Report itself, and of the evidence which accompanies it, we may gather testimonies to the deadly mischief that lies in the system which prevails in England, of providing for the necessities of the poor; and we carry our conclusions no further than has been already done by a Committee of one of the Houses of Parliament, when we aver that this system ought to be entirely abolished. Now, there is nothing more natural for some people than to ask, after hearing such a

statement as this, What system do you propose to substitute in its place? You are for destroying one set of positive regulations; but, ere you do this, is it not a fair demand upon you that you furnish us with another set?

Now, it should be recollected, that it has all along been our main object to show that the poor-laws of England are the result of a very bungling attempt, on the part of the Legislature, to do that which would have been better done had Nature been left to her own free processes, and man to the unconstrained influence of such principles as Nature and Christianity have bestowed upon him. We affirm, that the great and urgent law of self-preservation ought not to have been so tampered with; that the instincts of relationship ought not to have been so impeded in their operation; that the sympathies and the attentions of neighbourhood ought not to have been so superseded; that the powerful workings of generous and compassionate feeling ought not to have been so damped and discouraged, as they have in fact been, by this artificial and uncalled-for process of interference. We deem that, in this instance, the Legislature have given way to their usual passion for regulation, and that, too, on a matter which they ought no more to have meddled with than any matter of trade or agriculture, or even of family arrangement. They should have kept within their own province, and left this great interest of the community to be provided for by the play of such feelings and of such principles as lie scattered in every direction throughout the great mass of the community. They have done as much mischief in this department, by stepping beyond the boundaries of a wise and legitimate superintendence, as they would most infallibly do in the department of agriculture, should they offer to legislate on the rotation of crops, and take into their own hands a concern which ought to be left to the judgment and the care of individual cultivators. We stop short at the simple demonstration, that there would have been vastly less of suffering in our land, and vastly less of jealousy and discontent among the people, and vastly more of friendly understanding between the higher and the lower orders of the State; and, in truth, a greatly more vigorous operation of those various elements which conduce to the peace and prosperity of a nation, and to the enjoyment of all its families, had the parishes of England, in respect of their poor, been left to the influence of such an economy as still obtains in the majority of Scottish parishes. We simply aver, that it would have been

better for them had they never been visited upon this subject by the unwise and intermeddling spirit of legislation, and had the natural order of human feelings and human arrangements not been encroached upon. And we do think it a little preposterous to demand of him who deprecates the inroads of any artificial process, upon a concern which he holds to be better provided for by being left to itself, that he should substitute another process in place of that which he thinks ought to be simply abandoned—to ask of him, as the consistent way of following up his argument, that he should turn round on the very principle which lies at the basis of his whole demonstration, and come forth, in his turn, with his specific regulation, on a matter in which he holds all regulation to be impertinent and prejudicial.

Dr. Smith, in his treatise on the Wealth of Nations, reasons, and, in the estimation of the soundest politicians, reasons incontrovertibly, against the doctrine of monopolies. He contends for the abolition of this particular regulation in matters of trade altogether, but we have not yet heard of his ever being asked to substitute another regulation in its place. He has triumphantly exposed the impolicy of many a legislative enactment in the affairs of commerce, but he does not carry his demonstration to any other practical result than that these enactments should simply be rescinded. It has never been exacted either from him or from his followers, that they should propose some specific enactments in place of those they would destroy. He throws the matter altogether open to the free and unshackled operation of the great principles of Nature—to the desire of gain on the part of merchants—to the desire of enjoyment on the part of customers—and, in a demonstration, every page of which is pregnant with true experimental wisdom, does he expose the impolicy of certain theories of trade which surely do not the less merit the opprobrium annexed to such theories, that, instead of lying dormant in speculation, they have actually been put in execution by government, and accumulated into a system of practical administration. This is his terminating object. He stops short with the assertion, that it were better for trade, and for the interest of the country, that every positive interference on the part of government were done away; and he escapes all the hazards of the theorist by leaving the whole concern to the free operation of Nature, and presuming no aggression whatever on any of her provisions, or on any of her tendencies.

Now, it is in this very way that we humbly propose to stand

clear of all participation in any of those theories which are now passing in such rapid succession before the eye and the imagination of the public. We certainly do not mean to advocate either the potato system, or the cow system, or the cottage system, or the village system of Mr. Owen, or any one system of miraculous achievement, by which, through some ingeniously constructed method of positive administration, it is proposed to combat that menacing hydra who now swells so gigantically, and stalks so largely over the face of our land. We would, in short, raise no positive apparatus whatever for the direct object of meeting and alleviating the ills of poverty. This we leave to the theorists; and we satisfy ourselves with simply asserting, that unfettered Nature, working in individuals, can do the thing better than regulation can; and, on the obvious principles of human nature, verified by the actual result, in a way most striking and triumphant, throughout all the parishes of the kingdom, do we aver, that it would have been the wiser part in our Legislature to have let the matter alone.

But how, it may be asked, can we consistently disclaim the adventurous proposition of a positive apparatus? In a former number of this work, did not we attempt to regale the fancy of the public by a speculation about churches? Did not we propose a mighty transformation in the existing condition of our larger cities, and in the existing habits of their population? Was not this the proposition of a positive apparatus; and instead of altogether abolishing the methods of positive administration, did not we just propose to substitute one such method for another, recommending the dealing out of relief from the produce of collections, instead of that mode of dispensation now actually adopted out of the fund as now actually raised?

In answer to this, we must borrow another illustration from the reasonings of Dr. Smith. There was none more hostile than he to any positive interference of the Legislature in matters of trade; and yet none more strenuous than he in contending that, for the interest of trade, there was nothing more indispensable than the pure and ready administration of justice. And yet the object of a Court of Justice is not to lay any artificial regulation upon trade: It looks to a distinct and higher object altogether—even the protection of society from such moral injuries as it might otherwise sustain from the passions or the selfishness of its members. But in the fulfilment of this object, it confers a most important benefit upon commerce—not by fettering its active

and essential principles, but by spreading the mantle of security over their operation—not by thwarting Nature, but by removing the impediments and disturbances which lie in the way of her salutary processes—by securing to every labourer the fruit of his own industry, and to every merchant the fruit of his own speculations, and to every customer the fruit of his own purchases, and thus encouraging the full play of all those individual activities by which the great interests of commerce are sustained.

For the attainment of this object, courts of justice should be multiplied so as to meet the wants of the country, and be readily accessible to all its population. And churches and religion appear to us to occupy a similar place in relation to pauperism. Their great and primary design is, not that they should be linked in the way of direct subserviency with any of its ministrations: It is to moralize the people, and make them meet for eternity—an object which would remain as indispensable as ever, though there was no such thing as poverty in the land. But in the fulfilment of this object, the teachers of righteousness necessarily shed a most abundant blessing over this department in the concerns of human society. They liberalize the wealthy, and they dignify the poor; and they call forth the slumbering sympathies of the former, and the slumbering delicacies of the latter; and they, each in his own district of moral superintendence, draw into a closer acquaintanceship the people who live in it; and they give strength to the maxims of prudence, and the habits of economy, and the ties of neighbourhood, and the duties of relationship; and thus, on the one hand, diminish the number of the receivers of charity, and, on the other hand, augment the zeal and inclination of its dispensers. And it is by such an operation as this, and not by any direct or artificial agency, which has for its formal and assigned object the relief of human want, that they in fact mitigate or prevent the sufferings of want, greatly beyond what any such agency can possibly accomplish. It is not by the adaptation of a piece of skilful mechanism to the relief of poverty, as its immediate object, that this great problem in political economy is ever to be resolved. It is by leaving the whole matter to the operation of the mechanism of nature, and by keeping in their right tone and action the principles which reside, or which may be implanted in the constitution of individual men:—And the use of churches is to foster these principles, and to supersede that system by which they have been checked and overborne.

It so happens, at the same time, that to each church in Scotland there is attached an organ of parochial distribution for the relief of the necessities of the poor; and in many parishes there will be discharged from it a yearly sum of from ten to fifty pounds upon a population consisting of a thousand members.* Whereas, in such of the English parishes as we have had access to, the distribution amounts to from five hundred to fifteen hundred pounds *per annum*, on an equal population.†

Now, to what shall we ascribe the fact that, in the former parishes, with all this parsimony of formal aid, there is greatly less of the complaint of indigence, and fully as little of the actual suffering of indigence as in the latter parishes? Wherein lies the mystery of these striking phenomena? Can any man be so absurd as to believe that it lies in the superior skill or wisdom of administration, practised in the one country, and utterly incommunicable to the understanding or the habits of the other country? The English are always looking to the way in which we deal out our supplies—to the operation of the visible and positive mechanism of our public charities, for the solution of the difficulty. But this is not the quarter in which they will ever

* The following are some examples of the population and expenditure in Scottish parishes—where there is no assessment:—

Parish.	County.	Population.	Total Yearly Fund.
Fraserburgh	Aberdeen	2271	£100 0 0
New Deer	do.	3100	86 10 0
Lonmay	do.	1627	25 0 0
Dunoon	Argyle	2130	46 0 0
Jura	do.	1157	6 0 0
Redgorton	Perth	2216	99 0 0
Bathgate	Linlithgow	2919	124 0 0
Reay	Sutherland	2317	13 0 0
Farr	do.	2408	18 17 0
Assint	do.	2479	5 0 0

Of some of these parishes it is reported, that the inhabitants are so connected as to provide for each other, or are assisted by private families: and that there are none absolutely poor in them.

† Population and expenditure on the poor of some English parishes in Leicestershire:—

	Population.	Expenditure.
Barrow-upon-Soar	1143	£1868 17 0
Belgrave	645	803 7 4½
Countesthorpe	623	901 7 0
Lileby	1200	1764 0 0
Hathorn	1160	1615 0 0
Blaby	794	1391 5 0

These sums are expended on the poor only, being separated from the general sum, which includes church-rate, county-rate, and highways.

find it. If one of their own parishes shall ever be so assimilated to one of ours, as to reduce its expenditure on the poor from fifteen hundred to twenty pounds a year, and yet to uphold the population in as great comfort and sufficiency as before—it will not be by any notable sagacity in the disposal of this paltry sum, that a result so wonderful will have been accomplished. The truth is, that if a parish could stand the great reduction from £1500 to £20, it could dispense with the £20 altogether. And yet, superficial inquirers will always be looking to the way in which we conduct the ministration of our funds, and expect to find, in that way, the secret principle they are so anxious to obtain. We even think that we perceive the traces of such a misconception in the Report before us, enlightened as it is in its general spirit, and nearly as it has approximated to the truth in many of its valuable suggestions.* Let it be understood, once for all, that we look upon this as a wrong track of observation. It is not by changing the character or the method of administration that this great reform is to be brought about. It is by changing the character of the fund that is administered; it is by detaching from this fund its present attributes of certainty and legality, and apparent capability of indefinite augmentation; it is by stripping it altogether of its pernicious influence in the way of undermining or of deadening the activity of those principles, to which the case of pauperism must ultimately in its main strength and magnitude be abandoned. And the apparatus of churches which we propose, is not so much for the sake of the organ that is attached to each of them, as for the purpose of recommitting this case to its proper and original securities:—Not so much for the advantage of an ingenious management on the part of the new kirk-sessions, as for the purpose of restoring to its unshackled efficacy the management of Nature:—Not so much for the sake of setting up a cunningly devised system, with the power and the emanating influence of which we are to go

* "The efficacy however of this, as well as of any other experiment which can be suggested, must depend upon some of those who are most interested in the welfare of a parish, taking an active share in the administration of its concerns. Without this, the Committee are convinced no benefit will be derived from any amendment that can be made in the details of the system; and with it, even under the existing law, much may be effected, as it has been both in single and incorporated parishes, where such superintendence prevails; and they think no means are so likely to tend to this desirable practice as giving to such a part of the vestry as may bear some analogy to the heritors and kirk-session of Scotland, &c. The heritors and kirk-session continue to perform the duty of adjusting the list of the poor," &c.—*Report*, pp. 42, 43.

forth among the people, as for the purpose of leaving the people to themselves; and warding off from them that soporific which, in the shape of a legal provision, has been so unwisely and so cruelly dealt out to them; and awakening from their state of dormancy all those sympathies of neighbourhood, and all those sobrieties of individual conduct, which are the only unfailing guarantees of a happy and prosperous population.

And here we cannot but advert to the way in which this plan of church-building has been most happily characterized, by one of its sagacious objectors, as being *no plan at all*. That very feature in it which recommends it to us, is the thing which makes it look so simple and silly and inefficient to the whole host of committeeship. The slow dissemination of a moral influence among the people, and their gradual return to the habits and arrangements of their forefathers, form a prospect of which they cannot at all see the effect or the reality, because they do not see the parade or the penmanship of a great civic institution going along with it. To satisfy them, there must be placed before their eyes a piece of curious organic structure, with many turns and many complications;—and unless there be a goodly provision of schedules and clerkships and accomptantships, with such various agencies and manipulations of office as in the routine of their own chamber experience they have ever been accustomed to behold, any plan stript of such dear and such loved accompaniments, will ever appear to them to be no plan at all.

But one word more about the plan in question. It is worthy of remark, that if a compulsory provision for the poor had never been resorted to, the people of an increasing town would have gone on in greater comfort without one, even though the number of its people had been suffered greatly to outstrip the ecclesiastical accommodations of the place. The Gorbals of Glasgow, for the population and for the parochial expenditure of which parish we refer our readers to a subsequent page, furnishes a most splendid example of this observation. The mere absence, it would appear, of a system which turns away the eyes of the people from the true sources of their independence and their comfort, will suffice to keep that people in the noble and respectable attitude in which every lover of the species must rejoice to behold them, and that, though the number of the clergy and of the churches be most wofully inadequate to the extent of the population. But the case is totally altered after such a system

has obtained a footing—and after a mighty annual contribution has gradually arisen out of it—and after a population has been turned into the habit of leaning on this deceitful foundation—and after the object has become not the continuance of a present system, but the retracement of our path up to the state of matters which took place at its commencement. The simple abolition of the method, in these circumstances, would carry along with it the grossest cruelty and injustice to the present generation of paupers. They must be seen out—and in as great sufficiency too as they were led to expect under the present arrangement. Every expectation countenanced by the present state of things to the present race of people, ought in all equity and humanity to be realized. And the great practical difficulty is, how to combine this object with that of conducting the management of this city concern back again to its old footing, and the population of the city to their old habits and their old expectations. Had matters from the first been left to themselves, there might have been no necessity for a more extended ecclesiastical provision in as far as pauperism is concerned; however imperiously such an extension might be called for on higher grounds, both political and moral. But as the matter now stands in the larger towns of Scotland, and with the remainder that still exists of Scottish habit and of Scottish feeling amongst their population, we know not a single expedient so practicable and so efficacious, and into which all who are concerned will pass so easily as that, for the details of which we refer to a former Number of this Journal.* Let the new cases be met exclusively by the method of collections. As old cases die out, let this method be extended by the building of churches. Let the fields of superintendence, ever narrowing, and ever becoming more and more manageable, be left to the pure operation of gratuitous benevolence, flowing in one great and public channel through the Kirk-session, but flowing, we will venture to say, in a degree of tenfold abundance, through the numerous and unperceived channels of private humanity. Let the present ponderous system melt away with the dying out of the old cases, and the parishes in town be as unentangled with each other as parishes in the country. It is not, we repeat it, to any power or productiveness in the organ of parochial distribution that we look for the main success of this operation—though we have no doubt that, under such an arrangement, a mighty impulse would be

* The article immediately preceding this in the present volume.

given to all the collections of the city. But the substantial though secret principle of the reformation would consist in the resurrection, partly of a more efficient kindness on the part of givers, but principally of a more sturdy and determined habit of independence on the part of those who, but for this habit, would be receivers. We are quite sure that when compared with what the poor can do for themselves, and what, if not cheated away from their true interest by the promises of a system which has done nothing but deceive them, they are most thoroughly inclined to do, all that a Kirk-session will do is but a humble and fractionary part of the operation; and it is for the sake of the former benefit and not of the latter, that we have ventured to recommend a plan which, in respect of positive and productive administration, has been most truly characterized as no plan at all.*

Had the province of common sense never been invaded by the subtleties of scholastic argument, there might have been no use for the science of metaphysics. But when an acute metaphysician appears to darken the suggestions of this universal and infallible guide, he must be fought with his own weapon, and another metaphysician must arise to meet and to overmatch him; and a positive apparatus of defence and of controversy must be raised, even though its simple and terminating object is just to restore to common sense all its prerogatives, and to reinstate this monitor in the original supremacy which belongs to it.

In our last article upon this subject, we confined our remarks very much to the pauperism of Scotland; and the main object of them was to recommend the adoption of an expedient, by which it was conceived that the whole of our own country might be defended from the inroads of this great moral pestilence; and even that part of it which had already sustained an infection

* In the parish of Dunblane, in Perthshire, there was from 1775 to 1800 an assessment for the poor. The heritors at length, on finding that the number of the poor had increased from the inducement of a regular provision being made for them, agreed for three years to contribute voluntarily a small sum. The experiment was made—the collections improved; and hitherto the funds have proved adequate, and no assessment has been levied for fifteen years. The number of poor in 1775, when the assessment began, exceeded fifty; but of these, nineteen only could be prevailed upon to accept of alimony from the heritors. Shame soon wore off; and the number, before assessments ceased, was often above forty. At present the number of regular poor is ten—though there are fifty who occasionally share in the quarterly distributions.

The collections very naturally decline in those parishes where the method of assessment is introduced.

from the contagious neighbourhood of England, might be restored to that pure and dignified system which has been bequeathed to us by our forefathers. We shall still reserve ourselves on the question, as applicable to the sister kingdom, to some future opportunity. In doing so, we imitate the caution that seems to have been observed by the Committees of both Houses of Parliament. We have no doubt, at the same time, that the mischief there is only to be exterminated by some such instrumentality as we recommend here for the purpose of reaching an application to the character and habits of the people. But we honestly confess, that we choose rather to wait for more documents, and to have leisure for more consideration ere we venture beyond the general and elementary principles of the subject in reference to England, or confidently come forward with the proposal of a remedy for which, in its various details and modifications, we are not yet prepared. Meanwhile, we shall proceed to make such use of the information already collected, as may keep alive the vigilance of our own countrymen, confirm those whom the evil has not yet reached in their resistance to its very first approaches, and convince those who have suffered it to obtain an incipient footing amongst them, that if they do not speedily retrace the unwise movement into which they have fallen, they will soon find themselves entangled in a path, where at every footstep they must entail a new burden on the wealth of their parish, and a new aggravation on the distress and poverty which abound in it.

And first, it appears from this Report, that after the principle of a legal assessment has begun to be acted upon, there is no one expedient within the reach of human skill by which the progress and increase of pauperism can be arrested. We often hear, in the course of argumentation upon this subject, that the evil does not lie in the system, but in the abuses of it. It would be most obliging to let us know what these abuses are, and what is the practical remedy against them. For this is a great deal more than has yet transpired during the experience of upwards of two centuries. The people most interested in keeping down the mischief have not yet made the discovery. The history of all the parishes in England evinces that, if the principle be admitted to exist, it sends forth a malignant influence, which cannot be stayed by any of the varieties of practical management that have yet been resorted to, or by any of the devices of practical wisdom which have yet been suggested. And thus it is

that there has been a steady progression of the evil, and that greatly beyond the progress of the wealth or population of the country. The chief and almost solitary example of a retrograde movement in the parochial expenditure which offers itself in the Appendix to this Report, is just such an example as, more than any other, will hold out a warning voice to our Scottish landholders. It is the example of a parish, where, by the wise and vigorous management of its clergyman, the maintenance of its poor has been reduced, in course of time, from £900 to £500 a year; leaving this latter sum to be expended on the pauperism of a parish containing a population of about one thousand.* This is all the fruit of a very rare and miraculous achievement; and it goes most strikingly to prove that no modification which can be practised under the principle of a compulsory provision will ever make head against the bare existence and operation of the principle itself. And even in Scotland, where some mysterious charm has been supposed to reside in the mere construction of our courts of supply, let this principle once make its appearance amongst them, and, as if by the rod of Aaron, all the divinations of all the wise men will be swallowed up and brought to nothing by it. The Kirk-session, with the minister at its head, which seems to many so goodly an apparatus, and to which, by our Southern neighbours, something like a fancied

* Examination of the Rev. Richard Vivian.—How long have you been in the parish?—Nearly twenty years. What was the amount of the poor-rate at the time that you first came into the parish?—£900 a year: during the last twenty years of the last century, it got from £100 by degrees to £900. What has been its progress from the time you first came into the parish to the present time?—It has retrograded since—it has got from £900 to £500. Has it ever been lower?—Very little: perhaps £450. Is £500 the amount now?—It amounts this year to about £600 from various circumstances—from the dearness of provisions, and the trouble of removing persons.—*Appendix to the Report*, p. 115.

A very great reduction also was effected by means of a vigilant superintendance on the part of Joseph Sabine, Esq., in the parish of North Mimms, Hertfordshire; and yet, after all, the yearly expense is £600 to a population of 1001. The two following questions, among many others, were put to him:—From your extensive knowledge of the labouring classes, what do you suppose has been the cause of the general increase of poor-rates, and the decrease of happiness among them?—Losing the feeling of independence they had, and their indifference about taking relief. Do you believe there is anything can effectually apply a remedy but renovating those feelings?—By not paying those who are not entitled to relief, you will re-establish it.

Who can doubt the desirableness of the former expedient, and who can but suspect the efficacy of the latter, when he contemplates the actual expenditure which still remains in each of these parishes? And, besides, it is a reduction effected by *extraordinary* vigilance and activity; and that surely is not a good legislative arrangement which requires for its safe administration such an agency as is only to be met with in very rare and uncommon instances.

omnipotence has been ascribed, will oppose a barrier feeble and flimsy as cobweb, to the wide-wasting operation of a principle so pregnant with all moral and with all physical disorder. It is true that in none, even of our contaminated parishes, have we yet attained to the strength and the virulence of disease which exist in England. But this, we are persuaded, is entirely owing to the want of time for the development of the mischief, and not to any superior wisdom of management. We know that many of our countrymen are like to be lulled into a very fatal security upon this subject, because the burden *yet* in the Scottish parishes is so small, when compared with the burden on the parishes of England. They look only to the present amount of the expenditure, when they ought to look to the rate of acceleration. It is saying but little, and marvellously little in an English ear, that the assessment for the poor of Barony Parish, containing a population of forty-three thousand, should be only three thousand four hundred pounds for the present year. But it really appears to us equivalent to pronouncing a sentence of extinction on the whole landed wealth of that parish, when we add that the principle of a legal assessment was only introduced into that parish in 1810, at which time the heritors contributed just six hundred pounds to the poor; and that, in the short space of seven years, their burden has thus increased nearly six times.* We have not yet, indeed, in any of our parishes where the compulsory method has been introduced, nearly come up to the average expenditure of England.† But in the great mass of such parishes, we are in full and rapid career towards it.‡ It

* Till 1810 the heritors made up from themselves any deficiency in the ordinary funds of the Session, without having recourse to any assessment upon the landholders; and the whole expense of maintaining the poor seldom exceeded £600 per annum. Since that period it has considerably increased, till this year (1817) it will be considerably above £3000. And all this is independent of the extraordinary relief granted to meet the pressure of last winter.

† The following are some examples of the expenditure in Scottish parishes where assessments have been introduced, which the reader will do well to compare with the expenditure already quoted, of parishes which are yet free from assessments.

Parish.	County.	Population.	Total Funds.
St. Boswell's,	Roxburgh,	508	£63 4 0
Galashiels,	Selkirk,	986	225 10 0
Innerleithen,	Peebles,	672	95 0 0
Selkirk,	Selkirk,	2466	224 16 0

‡ The following are some examples of this increase in parishes where assessments have been introduced into Scotland. Wilton in Roxburghshire, in 1790, had an assessment of £92, 18s. The average from 1812 to 1815 was £288, 17s. 11d. The corresponding numbers for Hawick are £311, 1s. 8d., and £886, 19s. 6d.; and for Robertson £61, 5s., and £142, 10s.

is this which ought to convince us that, after the principle is once admitted, it is mockery to think of counteracting it by anything that can be done in the way of modification or detail. It is this which ought to alarm us into the conclusion that if the disease is to be exterminated at all, it must be combated in its principle; and that we must stop at nothing short of rooting out the principle where it exists—of repelling it where it is unknown.

And, that this is very nearly the opinion of the Committee of the House of Commons, appears evident, from their utter hopelessness of any substantial reformation being effected by anything short of a radical change of the whole system.*

It is true, that the Committee of the House of Lords have pronounced a different opinion upon this subject; and that is, that the general system of the English poor-laws ought to be essentially maintained, because so interwoven with the habits of the people.† Still, however, the lesson held out to Scotland, instead of being weakened, is made more impressive by this testimony than before. For, granting this to be a sufficient reason why a people should retain poor-laws who have got into the habit of them, there surely cannot be a stronger reason alleged why a people who have not poor-laws should keep out of the habit of them; or against the introduction of a system oppressive to one order of society, and productive, not of comfort, but of corruption to another, than to be told, that after it is introduced and persisted in, all recovery from it is hopeless or impossible.

On this subject we cannot offer a more distinct or judicious

6d. Parishes of equal population in Fife, where there are no assessments, occur with expenditures below £20, and £50, and £120. In East Kilbride, the supply to the poor in 1790 was £34, 6s. 8d.; and in 1810 was £213, 2s. 5d. In Coldstream, it was at the rate of £208 yearly in 1790; and £628 in 1815. At Linton, £20 in 1790, without assessments; and £90 in 1815 with them. In Jedburgh the assessment in 1790 was £141, 8s. 5d.; and the average from 1811 to 1815 was £350, 6s. 4d.

* "Your Committee forbear to expatiate on these considerations which have pressed themselves on their attention. They have said enough to show the grounds which induce them to think that the labouring classes can only be plunged deeper and more hopelessly into the evils of pauperism, by the constant application of additional sums of money to be raised by the poor-rate. True benevolence and real charity point to other means which your Committee cannot so well express as in the emphatic language of Mr. Burke:—'Patience, labour, sobriety, frugality, and religion, should be recommended to them; all the rest is downright fraud.'"—*Report*, p. 2.

† "The Committee are decidedly of opinion, that the general system of these laws, interwoven as it is with the habits of the people, ought, in the consideration of any measures to be adopted for their amelioration and improvement, to be essentially maintained."—*Lords' Committee Report*.

testimony, than that given by a Committee of the last General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who are now accumulating, in communications from the various parishes of the country, a very rich and valuable mass of materials.*

As the progress of the evil, then, cannot be arrested when once introduced, it is of importance to know what is the kind of consummation in which it terminates. And here we are unfortunately not left to the mere exercise of anticipation; for the consummation has already taken place in several parishes in England, and a number more are upon the very verge of it; and the great majority of them are tending to it, and that most rapidly and resistlessly. From the clear and comprehensive Report before us, it appears that the poor's-rates, in some parishes, form so large a deduction from the rents of the land, that it has at length ceased to be an object to keep it in cultivation! It has been actually vacated by its proprietors; and as their place of superintendence cannot be occupied by others who have no right of superintendence, the result is, that even whole estates have been as effectually lost to the wealth and resources of the country, as if buried by an earthquake under water, or as if some blight of Nature had gone over them, and bereft them of their powers of vegetation.†

We know not if the whole history of the world furnishes a more striking demonstration than this, of the mischief that may

* The Committee of the General Assembly state—"That it is clear to them, that in almost all the country parishes which have hitherto come under their notice, where a regular assessment has been established, the wants of the poor, and the extent of the assessment, have gradually and progressively increased from their commencement; and that it does appear to be a matter of very serious interest to the community at large, to prevent, as far as possible, this practice from being generally adopted—to limit the assessments as much as they can be limited, where the circumstances of particular parishes render them inevitable, and, wherever it is practicable, to abandon them."

† "The consequences which are likely to result from this state of things, are clearly set forth in the petition from the parish of Wombridge in Salop, which is fast approaching to this state." The petitioners state, "that the annual value of lands, mines, and houses, in this parish, is not sufficient to maintain the numerous and increasing poor, even if the same were set free of rent; and that these circumstances will inevitably compel the occupiers of lands and mines to relinquish them; and the poor will be without relief, or any known mode of obtaining it, unless some assistance be speedily afforded them." "And your Committee apprehend, from the petition before them, that this is only one of many parishes that are fast approaching to a state of dereliction."—*Report*, p. 20.

It appears, by the petition sent up from the parish, that it has a population of 1900, of whom 620 are chargeable to the parish as paupers—that the whole annual sum rateable to the support of the poor is £1605, 3s. 7d.—that the expenditure for three months was £602, 7s. 4d.—and that of course, at this rate, the expenditure for a whole year would greatly exceed the yearly value of the property liable to this assessment.

be done by attempting to carry into practice a theoretical speculation, which, under the guise, and even with the real purpose of benevolence, has for its plausible object to equalize, among the children of one common humanity, the blessings and the fruits of one common inheritance. The truth is, that we have not been conducted to the present state of our rights, and our arrangements respecting property, by any artificial process of legislation at all. The state of property in which we find ourselves actually landed, is the result of a natural process, under which all that a man earns by his industry is acknowledged to be his own; or, when the original mode of acquisition is lost sight of, all that a man has retained by long and undisturbed possession, is felt and acknowledged to be his own also. Legislation ought to do no more than barely recognise these principles, and defend its subjects against the violation of them. And when she attempts more than this—when she offers to tamper with the great arrangements of nature, by placing the rights and the securities of property on a footing different from that of nature—when, as in the case of the English poor-laws, she does so under the pretence, and doubtless, too, with the honest design, of establishing between the rich and the poor a nearer equality of enjoyment;—we know not in what way violated nature could have inflicted on the enterprise a more signal and instructive chastisement, than when the whole territory of this plausible but presumptuous experiment is made to droop and to wither under it, as if struck by a judgment from Heaven, till at length that earth, out of which the rich draw all their wealth, and the poor all their subsistence, refuses to nourish the children who have abandoned her, and both parties are involved in the wreck of one common and overwhelming visitation.

Let us not lose sight, however, of the main object to which we have restricted ourselves, that of keeping our own part of the country untainted by this sore evil; and for this purpose, let us go back and offer a few remarks upon it, in its incipient and least repulsive form. And first, we are in great danger of being betrayed into an imitation of the English system, in many of our parishes, by a desire to rid our respective neighbourhoods of the annoyance of begging. Now, it should always be kept in mind, that the great and original purpose for which this vicious system was instituted, was the suppression of vagrancy.* For our own

* "It may be sufficient to state, that the statutes antecedent to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, were generally directed to the relief of the impotent poor, by the contributions of

part, we will confess we have long thought, that in the zeal of regulation against the nuisance of public begging, some of the clearest principles, both of nature and of Christianity, have been violated. As disciples of the New Testament, we cannot but think that, if told by our Saviour to give to him that *asketh*, there must be something radically wrong in an attempt, on our part, to extinguish that very condition on which He hath made the duty of giving to depend. It appears to us, that to commit an act of direct and formal disobedience against the precept itself, is not more rebellious than to point an act of prohibition against the offering, or the existing of those circumstances under which the performance of the precept is required of us. At all events, we see no alternative between an entire and authoritative suppression of mendicity, and an obligation on the part of the authors of this suppression, to ascertain the circumstances of those whom they have thus interdicted, and to make provision for all the actual want that is made known to them in the course of their investigations. Those who are destitute, must be relieved somehow, and must have some way of making their wants known: and therefore we see no alternative between the allowance of mendicity under some modification or other, and the establishment of the very system which is now bearing so oppressively down upon the country. And we do confess, that, rather than have such a system, we would sit down under mendicity in its very worst form; we would let it roam unrestricted and at large, as it does in France; we would suffer it to rise, without any control, to the height of unlicensed vagrancy; and are most thoroughly persuaded, that, even under such an economy, the whole poverty of the land would be disposed of at less expense to the higher orders, and with vastly less both of suffering and depravity to the lower orders of society.*

But at present, we are only speaking in terms of comparison between a very bad thing, and a thing that we conceive to be

the church, and the alms of the charitable, and to the suppression of vagrancy and idleness."—*Report*, p. 1.

* We cannot withhold from our readers the following extract of a communication from the parish of Maybole, in Ayrshire. "It is also to be observed, as to the parish of Maybole, that, while some pains were taken to discourage itinerant beggars from remote places, the aged and infirm belonging to the parish were not prevented from begging within the parish. It is believed, that an interference to prevent the seeking of alms by the aged and infirm within their own parish is unwise, and necessarily attended with many bad consequences. The system, therefore, of suppressing all begging in the country parishes, is, it is apprehended, the first step to the evils of a poor's-rate; and although proposed, was not adopted in the parish of Maybole."

much worse. Considering the matter absolutely, we hold this last state of things to be very far indeed from right or desirable, and should wish to see the distinction well established in the public mind between the two states of Mendicity and Vagrancy. The latter brings to my door a host of unknown cases from all parts of the empire. The former may be so restricted as to bring to my door only such cases of a small and manageable parish as could be ascertained by an easy act of inquiry, and as, in fact, might become the familiar objects of my habitual kindness and regard. In all the aspects, indeed, of this interesting question, are we constantly met by the mighty advantage of a more extended parochial subdivision. Let a large town be thrown into manageable and independent districts, within each of which the moral influence of Christian education, and all the delicacies of acquaintanceship may be so concentrated as to tell with effect on the general habits of the population—and, though permission to beg were granted within the limits of every such district, the practice of begging, we are persuaded, would never obtrude itself on the community as a glaring and insufferable nuisance. There is, we are aware, a prevailing, but we conceive a most erroneous opinion, that the poorer districts of the town could never be upheld at this rate—and that, unless a stream of relief comes to them from the wealthier quarters, they must sink under the burden of a poverty, for the alleviation of which they possess no means within themselves. Now we can venture to affirm, and to the infinite honour of the lower orders of society, that *all which the rich give to the poor in private beneficence, is but a mite and a trifle when compared with what the poor give to one another*: And, on the strength of this remark, which may be verified in many different ways, we do confidently maintain, that under a system of parochial mendicity, established in a town which had carried to its right extent the method of parochial subdivision, there would not be one case beyond the reach of the gratuitous benevolence which issued through the organ of the kirk-session, which would not be met and provided for by the gratuitous benevolence of those who gave to them that asked;—and more, that, were this economy instituted, and in full operation, even the last resource of mendicity would, in by far the greater number of instances, be anticipated by the desirable and salutary influence of other principles. For the poor, at least in our country, have honourable feelings; and, ere they made so degrading a transition in the eyes of their immediate

acquaintances, they would, generally speaking, put forth all the industry and all the economy of which they are capable. And neighbours have compassionate feelings; and, ere they suffered one of their own familiars to make such an exposure, they would ward off his evil day by a thousand little acts of liberality. And such rich persons as may be connected with the district, have compassionate feelings too; and many of them would rejoice in the object of keeping an honest family from the street, as one of the noblest and most gratifying achievements of benevolence. And thus the consequent mendicity of such an arrangement, that looks at present so appalling, would never, in fact, go beyond the limits of a very small and manageable concern. At our present distance from this arrangement, we do not say that it could be summoned up by an instantaneous act of creation. But surely, it were well in our cities to take a commencing movement towards it; and we are assured that, by throwing the entire mass into such sections, as should afford to individual charity a certain and well-known range for its operations, they would do what never can be done with the unwieldy whole, by all the strength and sagacity of committeeship.*

There is another cause through which a parish might be betrayed into the adoption of poor-rates; and that is, a desire to

* There is an attempt now making to restrict mendicity within parochial limits in Fifeshire; and the plan has already taken effect in some of the parishes. Dysart is, mainly speaking, a manufacturing parish, and contains upwards of 6000 inhabitants. Its average annual expenditure on the poor, for the last six years, has been £277, 13s. This is exclusive of subscriptions raised to meet one or two extraordinary pressures on the operative population. In this parish, badges have lately been issued by the kirk-session, to the number of twenty-two, authorizing those who wear them to beg within the limits of the parish. They are restricted to one day in the week, on which they make their round, and leave the inhabitants an entire exemption from this annoyance for the remaining six days. It is to be remarked, however, that this number of beggars is very greatly beyond the average of the other parishes in that neighbourhood. Among nine adjoining parishes, from which there are definite statements as to this point, it appears that the whole number of beggars is twenty-one.

We cannot but remark that, under every possible arrangement, our main dependence must still be laid on the spirit and principle of the population; that if the *morale* of a parish be neglected, even this well-looking arrangement may come in time to be oppressive; and we must therefore beg leave to state it as our apprehension, that, if the means of Christian instruction are greatly short of the number, this very mendicity may come at length to be so counted on, and so overdone, as altogether to transform that parish out of the Scotch character which originally belonged to it. And we should feel it as a reproach to any parish, if the previous expedients of secret relief from neighbours, and of discreet and timely ministrations on the part of the kirk-session, were not effectual in saving from this humiliating resort every one individual who had sustained a decent reputation in his better days.

equalize the burden of the expenditure among all who are liable. We have occasion to know that this has acted as a powerful temptation to resident heritors in many of our parishes. And it may, on the other hand, act as a salutary remembrance to them, that this seems to have been one of the great and impelling causes which gave rise to the pauperism of England.* Let them rest assured, that it were greatly better for themselves to sustain, at all times, the burden of the poor, so long as they are provided for by gratuitous benevolence, than to sustain, at all times, their legal fraction of that burden, after the method of a compulsory provision is introduced—that it were better for them to be singly at the expense of warding off this mischievous system from their parishes, than, with the view of compelling those who are unwilling to take a share, to be jointly at the expense of an assessment with the other heritors: And we trust that this consideration will have its seasonable influence upon them, at those times when they are most likely to be led astray by the very just and natural desire for an equality of parochial burdens among all the proprietors.

But by far the most prominent, and by far the most useful lesson which this Report holds out to us, is the mighty influence of habit and of character among the people over the whole of this speculation. In the course of the examination, this is always obtruding itself as the main and indispensable element of the whole business. When we read of such a difference of expenditure between a Scottish and English parish of equal population and apparent means, as that of £50 and of £1500, we are apt to wonder by what power or process of arithmetic such a phenomenon can be explained. Now, the single element of character explains it.† The arithmetic of the question finds its entire solution in the actual savings of economy, on the one hand, and in the actual squanderings of inconsideration and profligacy on the other: And when, to this, we add the dissolution of the ties of relationship which obtains in the latter country, we

* “ This new and important principle of compulsory provision for the impotent and for setting to work the able, originated, without doubt, in motives of the purest humanity, and was directed to the equitable purpose of preventing this burden falling exclusively upon the charitable.”—*Report*, p. 7.

† We of course deduct from this observation all that part of the expenditure which goes, in the shape of poor's money, to the payment of wages—a consideration into which we have not yet entered, but which must be admitted to an important place in the argument, whenever we count ourselves prepared, in all its bearings, and all its details, for the question of English pauperism.

have, in fact, the whole materials of the computation before us. Now, this is the precise point upon which the present helplessness of England turns. There, they have to recover a character for their population, which, here, we have only to perpetuate: There, they have to implant a new habit, while here we have only to ward off contamination from an old one: There, they have to emerge from an abyss in which they have been fastening and deepening for two hundred years, while here there is not yet a city of our land where, by a measure of promptitude, the population may not still be recalled from that descending way upon which they have entered. It is upon this consideration, not less powerful than it is important, that we ground our appeal to the whole influence and patronage of the country—that we would turn their eye to that which, after every species of mechanism has been tried and found ineffectual, must at length be recurred to as the essential and elementary principle of the health and well-being of our nation. And we call upon them to have a care lest, by a corrupt exercise of patronage, or by the power of an example which blasts the virtues of every neighbourhood that lies within the sphere of its contagion, or by any one act which bespeaks a contempt for Christianity, or an indifference to the great cause of spreading its lessons among the towns and families of our land, they do not become the guilty authors of a system, under which all that has hitherto shed a moral glory over Scotland, and all the dignities and delicacies of character which have adorned its interesting population, must ultimately disappear.*

* “Are you of opinion, that where men have acquired habits of economy, it is probable that many of these men, at the latter end of their life, would be like to have recourse to the poor-rates?—No: I seldom meet with an instance of a person applying for parochial relief, where they belong to a benefit society, even when what they get is reduced from 14s. to 2s.; for they have a scale to go by. Such has been their moral conduct, and their good character, that, from the hands of the neighbours, or some society, they are taken care of.”—*App.* p. 76.

“I have others, who pride themselves in saying they never take weekly money; and those individuals who never take weekly money are much more regular in their work; they earn more; they are more economical and more industrious; and, generally speaking, they do their work better. I have never known an instance scarcely of families of that description coming to want, or having recourse to parochial relief. But those who are in the constant habit of drawing money every week, let them earn what they will, if they are out of work a week or two, are destitute.”—P. 73. “A man who would come for parochial relief, and a man who would spend all he got, is the same thing.”—P. 75. “Do you think they would be likely to resort to the parish for relief, men who were of an economical character? I think it would be impossible for them, according to the feelings which they would then acquire, to apply for parish relief.”—P. 101. “Do you not conceive that the habit of

And here we cannot omit another class of interesting testimonies about Savings Banks and Benefit Societies. We cannot but think that some of the witnesses ascribe too much power to them, in the way of forming a character among the people. We

providence and the feeling of necessity, on their own part, to provide for themselves, has decreased? Certainly it has;—that feeling of independence has certainly decreased—the desire of maintaining their families by their labour has decreased, I fear.”—P. 85. “Have you known instances of their receiving that (from 18s. to 25s.) for weeks together, and, on the occasion of temporary want of work, come to the parish? Not among the persons we employ; they are of a different description; but among the coal-heavers, and those whose business requires them to drink a good deal, they spend the whole, and are not provident; therefore, if they are a week out of work, many of them are upon the poor-rates; and that is the reason why I consider, if they had not the dernier resort of the poor-rates, they must reserve something.”—P. 86. “Do the poor do their utmost to maintain themselves before they come to the workhouse? I fear there are exceptions to that. There are some we cannot keep out of the workhouse, do what we will, and others are unwilling to come in; some, if they are put out to-day, will get in in a few days’ time.”—P. 94. “In those parishes in which you are so much interested, and in which such pains are taken to avoid new settlements, in what way have the present persons who have settlements acquired them? By perjury, some of them. Are early marriages frequent in your parishes? Certainly. Do you think the morals of the lower classes have been much deteriorated of late years? Very much.”—P. 134.

“Do children often apply, and say their parents will not support them? Not very often; the parents generally come with them. Have you many cases of individuals abandoning their families, and leaving them to the parish? Not many.”—P. 91. “Do the young poor show, in many instances, a disposition to help their parents? We do not know much of that.”—P. 95. “Do you see any disposition in the young poor to help their parents, by giving them any of their earnings? No; the poor-rate prevents that; they must go to the parish. Have you many public-houses in your parish? Yes; we have five; we had another; and I did all I could to make them scarcer. Does much of the parish money find its way there? A great deal; the publicans are so poor, from being numerous, they are supposed to do anything to get men into their houses. Do you think limiting the number of public-houses in parishes, generally, would be a measure that would tend to diminish the poor-rates? I think very much; I think the difference between three houses and six would turn many drunken men into sober.”—P. 124.

From the above it appears, as was to be expected, that the abandonment of parents by their children is far more frequent than the abandonment of the children by their parents; and yet the writer of this has at present before him a printed advertisement of last July, containing a list of fifty-four parents who had absconded from their families, and left them chargeable to the township of Manchester, of whom forty-one had disappeared during the course of the preceding twelvemonth. This cruel and unnatural practice, the legitimate offspring of the system against which we are contending, is now beginning to be exemplified in some of the Border parishes of Scotland.

It is worthy of remark, that the last quotation, from page 124, relates to the parish of the very able and intelligent Mr. Vivian, who appears to have done all that can be done, under the method of a compulsory provision, for reducing the expenditure on the poor. He has effected a reduction of from £900 to £600 in a parish, while there are many parishes in Scotland, of the same population, that require an expenditure only of £20 sterling. We consider his last statements, then, as containing in them the chief elements of that arithmetic by which the difference of charge between a Scottish and an English parish is to be explained. For let it be observed, that Mr. Vivian has most wisely, and with great success,

rather think that they presuppose such a character; and that, in order to their taking effect, the process of extending such establishments must be seconded, or, rather, must be synchronized by the great process of moralizing and christianizing the country. They still leave this element as indispensable as ever; and it is such an element as they never can supply by their own unaided operation. And we hold nothing to be more certain, than that, after these wise and salutary institutions have drawn around them all who are willing and industrious, there will still, in every country where education is neglected, be such a remainder of unreclaimed profligacy, as to afford a sufficient basis for the whole superstructure of our present pauperism.*

discouraged the practice of allowing, out of the poor-money, any regular supply to the wages of labour, as appears from the following extract of his examination:—"Is it not, then, the practice of your parish, to advance regularly, weekly, a sum in addition to the wages earned by your labourers? Never; and to that I ascribe, as much almost as anything, the diminution of the rates. If a man has six young children, no one of which can maintain itself, you do not give any permanent relief beyond his earnings? Never; occasional presents, and that very seldom. How did you prevail on the parish to put an end to that practice? By strong persuasion, and by desiring them to try the experiment; and it answered. They immediately got into task-work, and got five-and-twenty shillings a week."—P. 116.

We cannot close this long extract of testimonies to the connexion that obtains between the pauperism of England and the dissolution of moral and domestic ties among its people, without offering, from the work under review, one touching specimen of the agency by which all the duties, both of society and of relationship, are again to be restored to the land. "Have you any parochial schools for the infant poor in your parish? A great number. I have stated that the morals of the lower classes have greatly deteriorated in consequence of the drinking of spirits; but there is a circumstance which has operated to improve the morals—and that is, the number of schools to educate the poor; but for the increase of drinking spirits, their morals would have been considerably better, and, but for these schools, they would have been much worse. When did they begin? From the period the Lancasterian and Bell scheme came before the public; I suppose about seven or eight years ago. Can you say you see any visible effect on the morals of those children at this time? Yes; and for this reason:—the individuals who send their children to these schools go with them to the respective places of worship that these children attend on the Lord's day; the children of all the schools are expected to attend at a place of worship. Many of their parents, who, before, were not in the habit of going to any place of worship at all, have been induced to go, because their children attend there. Thus, they have been prevented from immoralities in conduct, in keeping the Sabbath, and felt interested in letting their children appear decent and clean; and this also has tended to increase habits of economy and cleanliness in the individual parents themselves."—P. 79, 80.

* "Do you think that the misery of the lower classes has increased in proportion to the increase of the sum for their maintenance?—I speak of that class of the poor who have been in the habit of taking regular parochial relief; for there are many who can still say, 'Thank God, I have never been a pauper;' many of them belong to benefit clubs. It is rarely we have an application from any one who belongs to a benefit club, and very rarely that I observe any individuals apply for relief who have been in the habit of saving any money; but it is the individuals who have never saved anything, let their earnings be what they will. They know they can take parochial relief, and with them their present

But there is still another consideration which might serve to reconcile many to poor-rates, and which has had its influence in leading to the adoption of this provision in several places of Scotland, and that is, the imagined necessity for it which lies in the peculiar state and circumstances of a manufacturing population. Now, it appears from this Report, that there is just as ready a principle of coalescence with this system on the part of the people in the agricultural districts; and that, if we estimate the need for the fund by the extent of the drafts which are actually made upon it, there is little or no difference observable in England between the one and the other description of parishes. It further appears, that in seasons of depression, there has uniformly been as great a call for something extraordinary and additional to the common method of supply in parishes burdened with poor-rates, as in those parts of the country where no compulsory provision had been established. And it still further appears, on comparing England and Scotland, that in manufacturing towns, of various business and population, the extent of their pauperism is not at all in proportion to these circumstances, but in proportion to the time which the compulsory method has had for the development of its own mischievous

enjoyment is better than future comfort. Have you many instances of the lower description of people making savings? A great many. What are the wages out of which they can have saved? Perhaps not so much as those who take relief. In proportion as individuals save a little money, their morals are much better; they husband that little; and there is a superior tone given to their morals; and they behave better, from knowing that they have a little stake in society. There are men who can earn 35s. or 40s. a week, with the help of their family and children; and if they are out of work a week they become paupers."—*Mr. Hale's examination.*

"Do you conceive that this establishment has had a material influence upon the character of the working classes of your parish? Very great indeed. What do you suppose would be the effect, if friendly societies were general? That there would be no occasion for this Committee."—*Mr. Vivian's examination.*

"Do you believe that such establishments would have the effect of reducing the poor's rate in proportion as they should succeed? I think that such establishments, if general throughout the country, would have the effect of abolishing the poor's rates: it would entirely alter the character of the poor. I think, with general education, savings' banks, and such an equalization as I have stated, in a few years the rates would vanish of themselves. Do you believe that such establishments would have a tendency to improve the morals of the lower class of people? In an incalculable degree."—P. 100.

It is the belief of the writer of this article, that the mere setting up of a saving bank in a neighbourhood, would render a very small and subordinate contribution towards the improvement of the general mass of character; that, at best, it is but an auxiliary towards the production of this effect; and that nothing great or serviceable can be effected in this way by anything short of the direct instrumentality of education, and more particularly of Christian education.

principle of acceleration. We may gather also from this comparison, that in times of great fluctuation or scarcity, the distress has always been much greater in towns where this method had long been established, and less in those where it had been recently instituted, and least of all in those where it was utterly unknown; all serving to prove, that under every variety of human condition and employment, this mischievous contrivance goes to supplant far more effectual securities against the sufferings of indigence, than it ever can replace; and that, wherever it obtains a footing, it aggravates the distress which it proposes to do away; and that, let the mode of life, or the mode of industry be what it will, individual man can far more easily find his own way to his own preservation from all the ills and vicissitudes of fortune, without such a regulation than with it; and that the only effect of this regulation has been, not to provide for such peculiar necessities as are found to prevail in one district, and to have no place in another; but to assimilate all the districts of the land into one common condition of clamorous and unrelieved poverty, fostered by the hand that was lifted up to destroy it, and embittered by the misery of a system that has done nothing but delude the people by its deceitful smiles and its unsubstantial promises.*

* As a proof that the augmentation of poor-rates grows as rapidly in agricultural as in manufacturing districts, we have presented to us, in the Report, the increase of expenditure in the two most agricultural counties of England. In the county of Hereford, the expenditure, in 1776, was £10,593, 7s. 2d.; and in 1815, it was £59,255, 19s. In Bedfordshire the expenditure for each of these years respectively, was £16,662, 17s. 1d., and £50,870, 10s. 11d.

In the parish of Christ-Church, Spitalfields, the poor-rate seems to have come to its limit last year, and subscription for the poor was their last resort. "Provided there had been no subscription, would it not most considerably have increased the rate? The rates could not have been increased; for I believe, now, if we were to attempt (and it is the opinion of more persons in the parish) to raise the rate to eight shillings instead of six, many would not be able to pay the eight who now pay the six. What would have been the consequence to the parish if they had not had the subscription?—I have always contemplated, with the greatest horror, the consequences, if this association had not been established."—P. 68. "Is there any limit to the relief given by the poor's-rate? In some cases we give as high as five shillings a week. In the case of a large family, of four, or five, or six children, five shillings a week would not sustain them; then, what would be done? There are several humane societies in the neighbourhood, and they get something there. There is a great deal of money comes from the benevolence of the public, the Benevolent Society, and others."—P. 74. "You have a subscription in aid of your poor-rate? Yes, to the amount of £1600, for selling necessaries at a reduced price to the poor."—P. 75. In the same manner, it appears that private subscriptions were raised in many other places, to meet the difficulties of last winter. That for St. Mary, Islington, was £1600 to a population of 15,000. That for St. George's, Hanover Square, with a population of 42,000, was from

We have not time at present to dilate on this interesting part of the subject; but if facts are of more value than arguments, we have them to offer in abundance; and we will venture to say, on the strength of these facts, that the cry of distress from our manufacturing population is uniformly louder in proportion to the extent of the compulsory provision. There are many manufacturing towns in Scotland where there is no such expedient at all. In Kirkaldy and its neighbourhood, there is a contiguous population of 13,000, of a decidedly manufacturing character; and there the yearly expense comes to little more than fifty pounds for each thousand of the population. In the small parish of Carmunnock, about four miles from Glasgow, there are eighty looms at least among a population of 839, and the whole expenditure of last year was £22, 10s. 9d.; and there was not one application for extraordinary relief produced by the deficiency of wages under which they laboured, in common with the whole country. The Barony, one of the suburb parishes of Glasgow, with a population now of 43,000, might have been quoted as an example of the same kind so lately as 1807, when its expenditure was only £687, 3s. 9d.; but, though at present dead in respect of its peculiarly Scottish character, yet, by the record of its former and latter years, it still speaketh. But all these minor cases of illustration are lost and forgotten, in the princely example of Scottish independence held out by the Gorbals of Glasgow;—a parish, of which we are substantially correct as to the argument, when we say, that it extends not by a single inch beyond the masonry of its work and its dwelling-houses—a parish of which we believe that it claims not a single acre of ground beyond the site that it is built upon—a parish, at all events, which has not one fraction of territorial revenue or importance attached to it, but which includes, within the little sweep of its boundary, a busy and industrious population of nearly 20,000 individuals.* Had it stood by itself, we confess we

£5000 to £6000 additional to the poor-rates. That for the Gorbals of Glasgow, where there are no poor-rates, but a population towards 20,000, was just £835. So it appears, that the legal charity does not supersede the gratuitous charity, but renders it more indispensable; and this resource is open to the people of those parishes where there is no legal charity, and that too in a state of less exhaustion, and with more readiness, of course, on the part of the benevolent.

* It may here be right to state, that in assigning a population of nearly 20,000 to the Gorbals, we do it on a most respectable private authority. The census of 1811 makes it considerably less. But we have access to know, that in other parts of that neighbourhood, this census falls short by a fifth part of the present population. It is also right to mention, that a great part of the present parish of Gorbals was added to it lately by an annexation

should not have looked on the history as in any way miraculous. But, standing as it does within the walk of one minute from a great pestiferous vomitory, that sends a withering influence on every side of it, upon all that is delicate or noble in the character of our Scottish population—it would be a most violent suppression of the gratitude and estimation which are felt by us, did we refuse to acknowledge, that though we had travelled for evidence over the whole length and breadth of our land, we could not have met a more wondrous or substantial testimony than the one which this parish affords. And when it is told, that the average of its regular annual expenditure is a gratuitous sum of three hundred and fifty pounds, and that the whole sum required for the extraordinary wants of last year was £835, which was also raised by voluntary subscription, and that among the administrators for the poor, who does not feel a desire that this stately monument of the truth may ever remain unimpaired; that, standing on the brink of a great moral contagion, it may serve as a protecting van-guard of resistance to the country in its rear, and be our proudest bulwark of defence against such an invasion as England has long been threatening, and in which, if she succeed, she will do more to destroy and to desolate our land, than she ever has done, or ever could do, by the invasion of her arms?

The ground upon which it is conceived that a compulsory provision for the poor is more necessary to a manufacturing than to an agricultural population, is not, that the average of wages among the former is beneath those of the latter, (for the reverse of this is the truth,) but that they are more subject to unlooked for vicissitude. It is not to supply a constant deficiency that the system is contended for in the trading towns of our nation, but to equalize an occasional deficiency. Now, we humbly conceive that, for this object, the plan of a regular and compulsory provision is the very worst that could possibly be devised. For, once establish this system, and there is not one attribute belonging to it that is more certainly and more universally exemplified than its peculiar aptitude of growing;—so that, even in the very best of times, if you only take periods of sufficient length, as of ten years, you are sure to find that, in point of magnitude and

from the parish of Govan—and that there still remains a debateable subject of parochial expenditure between those parishes, in virtue of which a certain part of the expense of the former may at times be shifted away to the latter parish. At all events, this expense is considerably less, and certainly not more than seventy-four pounds sterling.

oppressiveness, its increase just keeps pace with the length of its duration. And, corresponding to this, there is a peculiar inaptitude in the system to retrograde; so that if in the worst of times the poor-rates are resorted to for the purpose of meeting some urgent and occasional visitation, they are sure to obtain from this circumstance not an occasional but a permanent augmentation;—and therefore, in this way, there is not a more effectual method of converting a temporary into a lasting burden on the community. The public know this, and they are up in alarm about the evil consequences of it;—and a pressing calamity, instead of being met, as it ought, by the willing liberalities of the rich, who, if they knew how they could safely provide for the whole emergency, would have a pleasure in doing so, is looked at with an eye of jealousy and dread from the brooding pregnancy of the mischief with which it is known to be associated.

It is indeed a striking demonstration of the utter unsuitableness of a settled and compulsory method to the needs of a manufacturing population, that it is in those very towns where this method has been longest in operation, that you are sure to meet with the largest surplus of distress, and that, after all, voluntary exertions are most called for. So that the legal charity, it would appear, does not supersede the gratuitous charity, though it certainly serves very much to limit and to discourage it. For, a delusive confidence in poor-rates keeps back many from concurring in a benevolent subscription; and an exhaustion of funds, produced by this system, keeps back many more; add the apprehension that, by accustoming people to receive, you are just raising and nourishing recruits for ordinary pauperism, has a mighty effect in damping the charity of any humane enterprise that may be set afloat for the purpose of alleviating the pressure of any existing fluctuation:—so that, in all these ways, a legal establishment of charity has just failed as egregiously in this particular object, as in any other that can possibly be assigned for it. It is, in truth, peculiarly adverse to all such temporary devices as may be employed for the purpose of weathering a temporary emergency. In other words, it has aggravated those peculiar distresses which are incidental to the trading districts of the land: And, so long as it is suffered to exist, it will lie as a dead weight on the promptitude and the vigour of the only expedients by which it is in the power of one part of the community to lift, with effect, a helping hand for relieving the miseries of the other.

And, after all, let it not be forgotten, that every case of distress among our manufacturing population arises from there being too little work for the operatives, or, which is the same thing, too many operatives for the work;—that to reach the cause of such a distress, even a subscription is powerless, unless it detach so many of them to some other employment;—and that if expended on the mere object of ekeing out a subsistence to men who have insufficient wages, it has no other effect but that of keeping them together at an employment which does not pay, and of keeping down the wages of that employment, and of perpetuating a glut in the market, which can only be dissipated by withdrawing a certain number of the workmen to some other objects. And it is truly mortifying to observe, that even the well-looking scheme of an ample and munificent subscription, is just another cruel and deceitful mockery of the lower orders;—that the money, thus raised, in fact passes by them into the pockets of their employers;—and that, in the whole range of possibility, there does not appear to be one other solid expedient for the relief of such an emergency as this, beside the possession of such a fund among the operatives themselves, as could afford them the means of a livelihood for a certain time, without the necessity of working. This would clear away the whole mischief at once. This would give our workmen such a fair and reciprocal control over our manufacturers, as every genuine philanthropist would rejoice to see them invested with. This would elevate them at once to that command over the comforts and the condition of their own body, which they have a right to maintain. This would indeed raise them to the state of a great, independent, and co-ordinate interest in our commonwealth. But this they never will obtain, till they have purchased it by their own exertion and their own economy. It is nothing but the produce of their savings in good years, that will enable them to treat with their employers in bad years, and to hold out to them the dignified and the respectable language—that, rather than work for unfair and inadequate wages, we will repair to the fund of our former retrenchments, and, out of that fund, we will keep for a season ourselves and our families. Such a noble attitude as this, on the part even of a small portion of our weavers, would bring the manufacturers to reason, and invest them with that power of prompt and equal adjustment which, we are sure, it would be for the interest of both parties, and for the general interest of the country, that they possessed. Now, they can only

come to this power through the avenue of their own frugal and industrious habits. It is a power that never will, and never can, be *given* to them; and which they can only acquire, by working their own way to it—by accumulating in good years, and laying by the fruits of them in store for the evil day of some dark and adverse fluctuation.

This, and this alone, will smooth all the asperities, and equalize all the vicissitudes of fortune to which a manufacturing population is liable;—but this is what the false show of relief, held out by an established pauperism, most effectually prevents, by cheating away the attention of the people from the only true sources of their independence and comfort. We know that, upon this subject, there are some who call evil good, and good evil—who malign as hard-hearted, a doctrine which would restore to the methods of benevolence all that is kind and compassionate and friendly—and who brand with hostility to the lower orders of the State, a proposal, by which alone they can be upheld either in respect or sufficiency. Such writers have leave to go on with their plausibilities and their hard sentences. But we confess that our patriotism and philanthropy incline us to different counsels. We want no such ignominy to come near our Scottish population as that of *farming our poor*. We want no other asylum for our aged parents, than that of their pious and affectionate families. We can neither suffer them, nor do we like the prospect for ourselves, of pining out the cheerless evening of our days away from the endearments of a home. We wish to do, as long as we can, without the apparatus of English laws and English workhouses; and should like to ward for ever from our doors, the system that would bring an everlasting interdict on the worth and independence and genuine enjoyments of our peasantry. We wish to see their venerable sires surrounded, as heretofore, by the company and the playfulness of their own grandchildren; nor can we bear to think that our high-minded people should sink down and be satisfied with the dreary imprisonment of an almshouse, as the closing object in the vista of their earthly anticipations. Yet such is the goodly upshot of a system which has its friends and advocates in our own country—men who could witness, without a sigh, the departure of all those peculiarities which have both alimeted and adorned the character of our beloved Scotland—men who can gild over, with the semblance of humanity, a poisoned opiate of deepest injury both to its happiness and to its morals—and who, in the very act of flattering

the poor, are only forging for them such chains as, soft in feeling as silk, but strong in proof as adamant, will bind them down to a state of permanent degradation.

And we submit it to the attention of our Legislature, if, in the moment of rescinding a statute which, however friendly in aspect, has been most injurious in effect to the best interests of the labouring classes, it were not the true and the right accompaniment of such a measure, that they rescinded every other statute of interference which bears against them an expression of direct hostility. We should like, in fact, if the Government of our country never interfered with the concerns of trade, but for the objects of revenue; and, on this general principle alone, we would venture to recommend an immediate abolition of the Corn Bill, which proved so obnoxious to the whole of our manufacturing population. But, when coupled with any act tending to the extinction of poor-rates, we consider this measure as imperiously called for. We know nothing, in fact, that more demonstrates the impolicy of all State interferences with such matters as should be left to the natural operation of individual feeling and principle, than the way in which these interferences go to counteract and to neutralize each other. By way of serving the interests of the poor, there was established, in the first instance, a method of compulsory provision which, without serving their interest at all, has brought a most intolerable burden on the agriculture of the country; and then, by way of relieving the agriculture, there comes out a Corn Bill, which has surrounded Government with the cries of an indignant population. Would it not be better that all this bungling and mismanagement were cleared away at once?—that every interference, either in the way of help or of hostility, were conclusively put an end to—and, more particularly, that our labourers were made to feel that there was a free range of industry before them, from which Government had removed every unnatural obstacle, and on which they were invited to make their own unfettered way to their own independence? We are quite sure, that such a frank and liberal accommodation as this, would enthrone the Government of the country in the hearts even of the lowest of the people. And in the same spirit we would recommend the abolition of every direct tax upon those who were in the condition of operatives; and would either rescind, or administer more impartially, those laws against combination, which have ever been a dead letter against the more oppressive combination of the masters, and very fre-

quently an unjust restraint on the defensive associations of the workmen.

In concluding, we must add one word of explanation. We have spoken in terms of very strong regret of the establishment of a legal charity in some of our Scottish towns. We did not intend, however, to use them as terms of censure, either against the administrators or the receivers of this charity. The truth is, that this corrupt system has only had a fractional influence, as yet, on the general habits of our population. The body of the community is still sound ; and we know not a town in Scotland which is not still in circumstances for that great retracing movement, by which it might be conducted back again to the happier arrangement of former days.

DISTINCTION,
BOTH IN PRINCIPLE AND EFFECT,
BETWEEN
A LEGAL CHARITY FOR THE RELIEF OF INDIGENCE,
AND
A LEGAL CHARITY FOR THE RELIEF OF DISEASE.

[READ BEFORE THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.]

DISTINCTION, &c.

1. It had been good for the well-being of states, if legislation had at all times kept within its own proper boundaries—whereas, by stepping beyond these, it has often marred the interest which it meant to provide for, and inflicted a sore distemper on human society. This has nowhere been more strikingly exemplified, and in a way more instructive to the governments of other countries, than by the Poor-law of England.

2. We often hear of the wisdom of nature, as evinced in the laws and adaptations of the material world; but the same wisdom may be as visibly discerned in the frame and principles of our mental constitution—the spontaneous working of which often leads to a far better result, than all the skill and vigilance of statesmen can possibly effectuate. A commerce which results from the free enterprise of individuals, each devising and labouring for his own special advantage, is greatly more flourishing and more conducive to the real prosperity of a kingdom, than a commerce which is nourished by the bounties, and at the same time guided by the regulations of the Statute-book. The whole of political economy bears evidence to the perfection of what may be termed the natural system of human industry and human exchanges—in opposition to the artificial system that, whether in the form of encouragements or restraints, acts with all the mischievous influence of a disturbing force on the operations of a previous and better mechanism.

3. One of the most interesting verifications of this remark may be seen in the history of pauperism. It is quite palpable that nature has at least made some provision in the very make and constitution of humanity, for the alleviation, often prevention, of

the ills of extreme want. It, in the first place, has endowed man with a strong and urgent principle of self-preservation, and has superadded the goading agonies of hunger to the fear of perishing—so as to afford the most powerful stimulus that can well be imagined, for the utmost possible exertion to secure an adequate and regular supply of food. In the second place, it has implanted a strong relative affection, as that of parents to children, of children back again to parents, even of more distant kindred for each other—so as to enlist the energies of all the effective members in a household, for the maintenance, not of themselves only, but of the most weak and helpless under their own roof; and, over and above this, so as often to prompt them to the large assistance of those who, though beyond the limits of the home in which they live, are yet of the same blood and family. But there is a third principle, and from which it is obvious that nature meant the kindness of man for man to extend over a wider field of operation than within the circle of the same relationship—the principle of compassion, that powerful impellent to deeds of generosity; and in virtue of which, it is nearly as intolerable for one man to see another in the agonies of hunger, as to be the victim of these agonies himself. This opens up two resources for the relief of poverty—First, the kindness of poor to poor, or rather of immediate neighbours for each other, living in the same vicinity and occupying nearly the same level on the ground-floor of society—Secondly, the kindness of rich to poor, which we place last in the enumeration; because truly we regard it as the least powerful and the least prolific of the whole—believing as we do that, in the principle of self-preservation whereby each man is led to care for himself, and the principle of relative affection whereby each man is led to care for those of his own kindred, and the principle of compassion whereby each man is led to care for those of his own acquaintance or neighbourhood who have fallen into distress, we behold the most important of nature's ordinations—first for the prevention, and then for the relief, of extreme want and wretchedness in the world.

4. But, to make our reasoning still more distinct and conclusive, we shall attempt to demonstrate of each of these principles, separately and in order, that in respect of beneficial operation, each is so injured and enfeebled by the hurtful influence of a public charity for the relief of indigence—as altogether to have greatly deteriorated the condition of the poor and working

classes in every neighbourhood where such a provision has been established.

5. And first, then, it is obvious that a law by the state, of public and proclaimed charity for the relief of indigence, must slacken the operation of what has been termed the strongest law of nature—even the law of self-preservation. It tends to supersede the care and industry which, but for its own mischievous and seducing influence, a man might have otherwise put forth—in labouring to realize a sufficiency for himself and for his children. It is a law of exemption from toil, from prudence, from foresight and economy, from every restraint on the gratifications of present and powerful appetite; and from all those busy expedients wherewith a man, who is left to depend on himself, devises for the security or the advancement of his own condition in the world. A man feels discharged from all strenuousness or self-denial, when the care of his own subsistence is thus taken out of his hands; and the state undertakes to do for him that which, but for its interference, he would infallibly and in obedience to the calls of hunger and necessity have otherwise done for himself. A universal guarantee against starvation, operates towards a universal relaxation of industry and providential habits among the families of a land. A man will not accumulate of his savings against the evil day, if that day have already been provided for by the institutions of his country. He is thus tempted to idleness, nay tempted either to profligacy or premature marriage, by the expenses of which he is no longer deterred—when these expenses are shifted from himself to a public and compulsory fund, raised for all sorts of destitution, in whatever way that destitution may have been formed. It is thus that many a single parish in England holds forth in miniature the example of an over-peopled world. It labours and is in distress from the redundancy of its own numbers; and whether this excess proceeds from the number of illegitimate births, or from the regular family births of too early and too frequent marriages—certain it is, that there are thousands of parochial communities in England, where the overplus of labourers has effected an unnatural reduction of price in the labour market—so as to have inflicted a sore and general degradation on the circumstances of the working classes. It is thus that the Poor-law of England has created far more of want and wretchedness than it can by any possibility relieve; or, in other words, a law in the constitution of the country, by superseding a wiser and better

law in the constitution of human nature, has depressed the condition of the lower orders in society, and aggravated tenfold the poverty which it had vainly proposed to do away.

6. But, secondly, there is another law inserted by the hand of Nature in the mechanism of our constitution; and which, when left undisturbed to its own proper direction and force, goes far to alleviate the ills of poverty—we mean the law of relative or family affection—as of parents to children, of children back again to parents, of brothers and sisters to each other—and even of more distant members in the same circle of relationship. And, beside this, there is a certain sentiment of pride which comes in aid of the more intense kindness that operates within the limits of a common household, or, more extended still, of a common kindred, though parted into separate domestic establishments, and in virtue of which many a sacrifice is made to support and to save each other from the degradations of charity, so long as charity is not legalized. But both affection and honour give way before the temptations of a public and authorized provision for the relief of indigence; and accordingly, in England, under its late, and still under its present parochial economy, there do occur the most scandalous desertions of very near relatives, and which, by the force of habit and under the countenance of general example, have ceased to be scandalous there. Aged parents, instead of being taken into the houses of their children, now advanced to manhood, and in a state of sufficiency for supporting those to whom they owe their birth, are abandoned for life to the cheerless imprisonment of a poor-house; and, on the other hand, parents, in the full vigour of manhood, and the natural protectors of their own families, have been tempted in hundreds, perhaps in thousands every year, to abscond from their dwellings, and leave all the inmates to the charity of the parish bound by law to provide for them. We have counted in one newspaper no less than forty advertisements of runaway husbands from the town of Manchester, who had left their families on the parish fund, and for the discovery and apprehension of whom a reward was offered by the managers. This unnatural desertion of their own kinsfolk is the epidemic vice of England—only, however, because a legal guarantee against the starvation of those who are thus deserted is its epidemic temptation. It is in striking contrast with the general habit of Scotland, in the great majority of whose parishes such a guarantee is practically unknown; and where, almost universally, such an abandonment,

either of parents by their own children, or of children by their own parents, would, as a thing of exceeding rare occurrence, be deemed a monstrous exception to the most binding duties, the most sacred proprieties of Christian and humanized life. We have already considered the effect of a law of pauperism in releasing man from the duties which he owes to himself. Its effect in releasing him from the duties which he owes to those of his own relationship, is no less obvious. In both instances it directly tends to multiply the number of paupers; and, great as this economic evil is, it is surpassed by the moral evil of a system, under which the sustenance of man is made independent of his own virtue and prudence; and the sustenance even of his nearest relatives is alike independent of those parental and filial affections, which are nature's strongest securities for the maintenance and uprearing of successive families in the world. Surely better than to have thus counteracted such urgent and universal principles as these, would it have been that the hand of power had not interfered with them; but leaving them to their own native and spontaneous operation, that legislation had kept within her own rightful province, and let the business of charity alone.

7. But, thirdly, beside the strong feeling of relative affection between men and men of the same kindred, Nature hath established another guarantee against the ills of extreme want, and another feeling, strong too, and of wider operation than the former—we mean the feeling of compassion, of which all might be the objects—but which acts with peculiar force and great practical effect between men and men of the same neighbourhood. And so it is not to be told how much is given and received throughout the families, even of the poorest localities, by the internal operation of charity amongst themselves. It is true that the contributions of each might be individually small, but this is made up for by their number and constancy. It is quite palpable, even on the most cursory observation, how mutually helpful, by personal service and attendance, they are to each other in seasons of sickness; but it requires much intercourse, and a very intimate acquaintance with the habitudes of the poor who are congregated together in the same community, to be made sure of their great mutual generosity in imparting, from their own scanty share of the necessaries of life, to the naked and the hungry, and the members, whether young or old, of those bereaved households whom the hand of death has de-

prived of their parents or natural protectors. Such, nevertheless, is the actual finding of all who have given themselves to the business of observation on this most interesting walk. The Rev. Mr. Carlyle of Dublin informs me, that he can depone, from his minute and statistical acquaintance with one of the poorest sections in the city of Dublin, that the amount given and received by the operation of a charity purely internal, or which reciprocates between the families of the district, exceeds all computation. This fully accords with my own experience when minister in Glasgow, where I had a parish of ten thousand people, the poorest of the poor; and where, from instances too numerous to be mentioned, I learned the delightful lesson that the spontaneous charity of neighbours for each other was a more certain, as well as more abundant source of relief, in cases of extreme indigence, than that legal charity, by which, when in full operation, the other is wellnigh superseded. Never did a case occur without the most timely forthgoings of aid and sympathy from the immediate neighbours, insomuch that I have often expressed it as my confidence, that, if surrounded by human eyes and human ears, I had no fear of human feelings being also awakened, so as to make it a moral impossibility that any man should starve in the sight of his fellows. Perhaps the most vivid illustration of this cheering truth in the history of our nature is to be gathered from Buxton's Tour through the Prisons of Great Britain. The legal allowance of bread to the prisoners varies at different places. In Bristol, it was below the par of human subsistence. The allowance was too small for the criminals, and for the debtors there was no allowance at all. The prisoners of the latter class, therefore, are left either to the assistance of their friends or to the charity of the public. But it occasionally happened that both these resources failed them, when they would have inevitably perished of hunger but for the generosity of the criminals, who, rather than brook the spectacle of a fellow-creature suffering under one of the sorest agonies of nature, shared their own scanty pittance along with them. This I hold to be one of the finest examples which can be quoted of the strength of human compassion, proving that it survives the depraving process which conducts a criminal to his cell. We have only to carry back this experience from prisons to parishes, in order to be convinced of the safety wherewith the evils of extreme want might generally be left to the workings of individual sympathy in every neighbourhood where they occur. If a

man in the agonies of hunger, and giving authentic tokens of this sore distress, be within sight and hearing of his fellows, then, by an urgent and irrepressible law of nature, do they feel the promptings of a desire to relieve him which they are unable to resist; but not if a law of the State have ordained its own prescribed and authoritative method of relieving. Such a law has practically the effect of absolving every man from the obligation of caring for his neighbours; and by laying its arrest on a thousand rills of beneficence, which would else have flowed in refreshing and kindly circulation throughout the mass of society, it has shut far more copious and effective sources of relief for human wretchedness than itself can open.

8. The arrest thus laid on the popular habit of mutual service and sympathy between poor and poor, will prove a far greater loss to the destitute than can be possibly made up to them by all the dispensations of legal charity. The spontaneous offerings of private benevolence will be sadly abridged—because men naturally feel themselves released from the care of all the want and suffering around them, when made to understand that the State has taken that care upon themselves. Those of the same rank with the dependent and the needy keep back from the work of relief, because of an imagined sufficiency in the law, which meanwhile is never realized. Those of a higher rank, the wealthy on whom the burden of the compulsory provision is laid, have an additional reason for their insensibility to the calls of distress. It is not merely that their forced contributions to the Poor-rate supersede, in their own minds, the obligation of any further or free-will offering; but the truth is, that the whole effect of such an artificial system of charity is to banish from its ministrations all the better and kindlier feelings of our nature. What is given by the ordination of law is given without goodwill; and what is received by the same ordination is received without gratitude. That, which ought at all times to have been a thing of love, is transformed into a thing of fierce and fiery litigation. The clear and right proceeding in the management of our nature—were to leave to justice the things of justice, and to humanity the things of humanity. But the first has been made to usurp the province of the second; and in the confusion of these two moral elements, which should have ever been kept distinct from each other, the one party have been led to demand what they ought to have supplicated; and the other party, in the attitude of defensive jealousy, stoutly to withhold.

what in the exercise of an unforced compassion they would freely and willingly have given. This will account for the state of mutual exasperation which obtained, and which recent changes have for a time at least only inflamed the more, between the paupers and the proprietors of England; and the loss to a great extent of their spontaneous liberality must be added to the other and still larger privations, which, under the guise of kindness, the law of a compulsory provision for the poor has entailed on the victims of its folly.

9. Shortly, then, to recapitulate the four causes of deterioration in the comforts of the poor, which the allowances of no public charity can by any possibility countervail—we refer once more, First, to the augmenting improvidence and idleness which are generated by the system; Secondly, to the reduction which it effects on that mutual kindness, which, in a natural state of things, obtains between those of the same kindred; Thirdly, to a similar reduction made by it on those interchanges of sympathy and aid, which take place among the poor themselves of the same neighbourhood, when the laws of their country do not contravene the laws and tendencies of their own moral nature; and, Lastly, the alienation which it begets of the rich from the poor, whom it arrays into two hostile parties against each other—the one fiercely clamouring for those imagined rights, of which they never would have dreamed, had not this perverse and mischievous law of pauperism inspired the notion of them; and the other party as fiercely resisting the encroachments on their property of that popular demand, which they fear will be ever increasing and never satisfied. We are not to wonder that, with such powerful counteractions, the number of poor is found greatly to outstrip the provision which is made for them; and that a law which carries in it an aspect of munificence to the lower orders of society has in truth depressed their condition, and aggravated the evils which it meant to remedy or alleviate.

10. It would detain us too long from the main subject of this essay did we say all that is important to be noticed or known respecting the utter powerlessness of law—if it proceed in the way of a public and positive administration of relief, even to abridge, and far less to do away with the indigence of the land. But we cannot omit to assign a great master reason why the consequence of such a law is the very opposite of this—so that, instead of abridging, it is sure not only to multiply the wants of the poor, but to effect a great and general deterioration in the

circumstances of the working classes at large. We advert to the undoubted stimulus which a poor-law gives to population—both adding to the frequency and the precipitation of marriages; and thereby causing not only a greater number of families, but of larger families than before. It is thus that the market for labour comes to be overstocked, and the sure effect of this overproportion of labourers is the under price of labour. The greater the number of workmen the smaller must be the wages; and it gives a fearful aggravation to this mischief, that a very small addition to the number of labourers creates a very great reduction in the wages which are paid to them. Let there be but the excess of one-twentieth in the quantity of labour; and we mistake the consequence, if we think that there will be only the fall of one-twentieth in the remuneration which is made to it. Even so few as a twentieth part of the whole number unemployed, and soliciting admission in the places already occupied and full by those who have gone before them, would create so intense a competition throughout the general body of workmen as might bring down wages one-fourth, one-third, or even one-half of what they might be, were the number of human beings in no more than equal proportion to the demand for their industry. It is thus that the whole body of the common people suffer a general and severe depression even from a slight redundancy in their numbers; and legislation is sure to find itself embarked in a vain enterprise, when it attempts to overtake this constantly increasing destitution by a larger dispensation of charity than before. In an economy of legalized pauperism, the necessities and the demands ever multiply beyond the supplies—as in England, where the gigantic expenditure of eight millions was lavished on the relief of that poverty which its own system may be said to have created; and where, in many of its parishes, the sum necessary for the maintenance of the poor had nearly overtaken the rent of the land. It was high time to review an administration so replete with evils; and which every year was rendering more burdensome and oppressive than before. It remains to be seen whether the great abridgments which have been effected, in consequence of the last reforms on the pauperism of England, are but temporary; and the effect of that more rigorous administration, which, however natural at the outset of a new process, may afterwards relax—when the native principle of the whole system may again develop its powers of mischievous expansion, and prove of the legal and compulsory provision

for indigence, that no ingenuity of man can repress its overgrowth. It may require the experience of some years to determine this question.

11. The most important change which has taken place in their management of the poor is the substitution of what is termed in-door relief, for those allowances which the paupers wont to receive at their own houses; and which are now in a great measure superseded by the admission of those who apply for legal charity to a general alms-house erected for the district—often comprising a good many parishes. In this way the relief is made greatly more unpalatable to the applicants. It is held out to them in the most repulsive form. If they consent to accept of it, it is at the expense of liberty and home, and all those old associations of place and neighbourhood which they are forced to renounce for the discipline and confinement of the great public asylum which has been provided for them. It is thus that the treatment of poverty is assimilated to the treatment of crime. The inmates of the institution receive a maintenance—but a perpetual imprisonment, though somewhat mitigated by certain relaxations, is the penalty which they have to pay for it.

12. The experiment is yet far from being completed, but the progress of it is highly instructive as far as it has gone. In some parishes every pauper who, under the former regime, was in the habit of receiving out-door relief, but who, in exchange for this, was required under the present system to become the inmate of an asylum—has refused the alternative and withdrawn his name from the lists and the allowances of pauperism altogether. It is thus that many thousands of these parochial pensioners all over England have been driven by the severities or terrors of the new system from the domain of pauperism; and, after betaking themselves to their own resources, do in fact find a sufficiency in these for an independence and a comfort which they never formerly enjoyed. This history, repeated and exemplified in thousands of the parishes in England, is rich in principle, and fraught with the discovery of an important truth. It proves that there was no call—no natural necessity for that part at least of the enormous expenditure of the former system from which they are now relieved—and that not by any skilfulness in the management of their new system; but by the mere repulsion of its discouragements, and of the dread which is inspired by it. Instead then of boasting of the wisdom of their

new economy, they have far greater reason to acknowledge the egregious folly of their old one; and when in so many of their parishes they witness the palpable fact, that the great majority of their former paupers, after being deprived of their old allowances, can contrive to live and in all appearance as comfortably as before—this might lead them to apprehend that, to a great extent at least, the artificial charity of law is uncalled for, and even prepare them for the conclusion that it perhaps were better if the law could be dispensed with altogether.

13. But perhaps it is too much to expect that a country shall so speedily retrace its way, and so as to make even in one generation, a total recovery of itself from the error of centuries. But other countries, at least, may learn a lesson from the experience of England. They should know how to make a right interpretation of the abridgment which is now being made on the expenses of English pauperism. It demonstrates that there is no necessity, either in nature or in the state of human society, for such a system at all; and it is therefore to be hoped, that other nations will avoid that great blunder in the domestic policy of England, which has been fraught with so many evils to all the classes of society, and to none more than to the poor themselves. Foreigners are far more likely to profit from the history of this great and memorable delusion than the country itself which has been the victim of it, and which at this moment makes striking display of the tenacity of inveterate and long-established error, in extending the same hurtful policy to Ireland—thereby to aggravate the distempers of that unhappy land.

14. And it is further instructive to observe the expedient by which it is attempted to correct this wrong legislation—not by abolishing the legislation, but by counteracting it with other legislation, wrong too, though in an opposite direction to the former. Thus, a compulsory provision for the poor wears an expression of kindness to the humbler classes of society. But when pauperism, fostered into being by this unwise ordination, made alarming progress, and threatened to annihilate the property of the higher classes—then to arrest and neutralize this mischief, they have devised another ordination, by which to make the pauperism as repulsive as possible to the feelings of those who claim a part in its ministrations. They still keep up the notion of their right to a maintenance in the hearts of the destitute; but, by the new law, it is a maintenance on terms the most hateful and humiliating, and that for the purpose of

scaring away as many as possible of those applicants, who, under the old system, did beset the parish vestries of England—the wretched victims of their own indolence and dissipation. We cannot imagine a state of the law more fitted to engender the utmost acerbity of feeling among the poor, and indeed to alienate the general body of the common people from the government under which they live. Surely it were better that charity had been left to its own spontaneous operation, and so as to insure the kindly play of good-will on the part of its dispensers and gratitude on the part of its recipients; surely this must give rise to a better and a blander community, than when the one party are led to challenge a sustenance as their privilege and their due; and the other party, to defend themselves against the encroachment, labour to make the privilege as worthless as they may, by assimilating to the uttermost the treatment of paupers to the treatment of criminals. In such a condition of things, we behold the materials of a fierce and fiery fermentation in the hearts of the lower orders—most hurtful to their own spirits, and most hazardous to the peace of society. The first great blunder in this legislation, was to ordain a law of compulsory relief at all; and when, to save the ruinous consequences of this law, the relief was made as degrading as possible, this was attempting to correct one evil by another, or to bring about a right result by what mathematicians would call a compensation of errors. The first may be regarded as a disturbing force in one direction, and the second as a disturbing force in the opposite direction. Let both be removed, and the business of charity, when restored to its own proper character, would proceed in the right and natural course, without error and without deviation.

15. In every way, then, it is better for a nation to keep itself clear of any legal enactment for the relief of indigence; and more especially for a government, not to take out of the hands of its people, the duties which they owe either to themselves or to their relatives or to their neighbours. The great lesson to be learned from the example of England is, that the economic condition of the lower classes is not improved but deteriorated by the establishment of a compulsory provision for the destitute—which provision, too, besides aggravating the miseries of their state, has, by introducing the heterogeneous element of an imagined right into the business of charity, turned what ought to have been altogether a matter of love into a matter of angry

litigation, and greatly distempered the social condition of England, by the heart-burnings of a perpetual contest between the higher and humbler orders of the commonwealth.

16. But it must be admitted, that, though this be the wise and even benevolent part of a government, devising for the welfare of its subjects, it may not be the policy by which best to conciliate the affections of the multitude. There is in it a certain unmoved and cold-blooded aspect of insensibility to distress—the appearance of a heartless indifference to the sufferings and the sympathies of our common nature. It has been matter of boastful complacency to the writers of England, when expatiating on the perfection of their own government—that they could speak, not merely of the wisdom and the justice, but also of the humanity of their laws: and the law to which they make their most confident appeal in support of this assertion, is their own law of pauperism. It no doubt conduces mightily to the strength and popularity of any government, when it can stand forth in the guise of kindness to the most helpless of its people; but kindness in the expression, or even in the real and honest purpose, may often be cruelty in effect. And never was this more strikingly exemplified than by England's famous law—prompted, we have no doubt, by feelings of the sincerest benevolence; but which, notwithstanding, has enhanced and multiplied tenfold the sufferings that were meant to be relieved by it. It has become therefore all the more desirable, that the occasions should be pointed out, on which a government might have the opportunity of coming forth *ostensibly* as the friend, and so at the same time as to relieve and *substantially* to be the benefactor of the afflicted—with the same aspect of munificence and mercy to the destitute upon its forehead, which made the government of England so popular at the first enactment of its Poor-law; but without those tremendous consequences on the character and comfort of the lower orders, which the experience of centuries has demonstrated to follow inevitably in its train.

17. It is the part of every well-principled government to discriminate between a seeming and a real good to the population; and never for the sake of popularity to provide the former, even if it only practise thereby a harmless deceit on the public imagination—and still more, if, under the guise of an apparent blessing to the poor, there lurks an influence at once ruinous both to the moral and economic prosperity of the lower orders. But, on the other hand, should the good to be provided be free of any

such alloy, and at the same time be as apparent as it is real, then, it is not only a well-principled but an eminently politic and wise proceeding in a government, to determine on the adoption of it—thereby earning the grateful affections of the people; and, at the same time, scattering amongst them those solid and unquestionable benefits, which may abide the test of experience, and prove to be of great and actual service to the interests of humanity. Now, a law of relief for general indigence does not realize both these conditions. It may carry upon its front an aspect of benignity to the poor; but, fraught with innumerable evils, will at length turn out to be the mockery of an unreal blessing, or rather a deadly act of hostility to their best interests; and all the more grievous, that it is in the semblance and with the promises of truest friendship. In defect of such a law then, can any other law of relief be specified in which both the conditions will hold?—full of promise even at the outset, and not behind in performance afterward—a law which not only expresses some great purpose of obvious benevolence, but which executes that purpose to the full; and without inflicting, as the law of pauperism unquestionably does, deterioration or discomfort on the objects of its care.

18. A law of relief for general indigence does not fulfil these conditions; but a law of relief for disease may. There is no fund that can possibly be raised, which will overtake the former. But with a small fraction of the country's wealth, the latter can be overtaken. The distinction between these two objects—that is, between a public charity for the relief of indigence, and a public charity for the relief of disease—must not have occurred to the civilized governments of Europe, else it would have been more frequently acted on; and yet, on the moment of its being stated, it is a distinction abundantly obvious in itself, and alike obvious in the reasons of it. An ostensible provision for the relief of poverty creates more poverty. An ostensible provision for the relief of disease does not create more disease. The human will is enlisted on the side of poverty by the provision which is made for it. No such provision will ever enlist the human will on the side of disease. Let proclamation be made of a law which guarantees every man against starvation—and this were tantamount to the proclaiming a jubilee of exemption from the toils of industry, from the cares of providence, from the duties of family and the sympathies of social life; and by the check thus given to all the natural incentives, whether of

private exertion for one's own interest or of private charity for the good of others, there might ensue a constantly increasing poverty that will ever keep ahead of the increasing fund, by which it is vainly hoped to quell the mischief that rises into greater dimensions with every new and larger attempt to overtake it. To think of providing for the wants of poverty by the ordination of an adequate supply, is every way as irrational, as to aim at the extinction of a fire by pouring oil upon it. It is not so with the attempt to provide, and that even in the most legal and certain and open manner, for the wants of disease. And this is the reason of the difference. Though poverty in itself be not pleasant, yet the path of indolence and dissipation which leads to it, is abundantly pleasant and alluring; and so thousands are prepared to rush upon this descending path, on the moment that the consequent poverty is disarmed of its terrors, by the protection and the promises of law. It is thus that under such a system men are tempted, and that in constantly increasing numbers, to become voluntarily poor; but no system, no multiplication of funds or of hospitals, will (with a few rare exceptions, far too rare to be practically of any weight in a general argument) tempt men to become voluntarily diseased. No man will break a limb for the sake of its skilful amputation in an infirmary; or put out his eyes for the benefit of admittance to a blind asylum; or become wilfully dumb or deranged or leprous, that he might lay claim to any treatment or guardianship, which may have been provided at the expense of the nation for these respective maladies. In the very constitution of our sentient nature, in its repugnance to pain and physical suffering, we have the strongest possible guarantee against men wilfully becoming patients, in order to their admission into an asylum for disease. We have no such guarantee, but the opposite, against men becoming paupers, in order to their admission into an asylum for indigence. An indefinite provision for want is ever sure to multiply its objects; and the evil recedes and enlarges, with every advance that is made upon it. A certain definite provision on the other hand for disease will be as sure to overtake its objects. By every new contribution we approach the nearer to a distinct and satisfactory fulfilment; nor does the benevolence whether of the government or of associated philanthropists, need to stay its hand, under the apprehension that one sufferer more will be added to the melancholy catalogue of disease, because of all the care and tenderness which can possibly

be bestowed upon it. This forms the great distinction between the two cases. The open proclamation of a free entry into asylums of disease would make a clear abridgment of human misery, and bring no new or additional disease into existence. The like proclamation of a free entry into the asylums of indigence, would bring a world of new poverty into existence, and swell more every year the amount of pauperism. The final outgoing of such a system were at length to absorb all the resources of the country, and beggar its whole population.

19. The antipathy of all our most enlightened political economists to a public charity for the relief of indigence, has been ascribed to a cold and unfeeling hardihood of soul. And the imputation may be true sometimes; but is calumny in all those instances, numerous it is to be hoped, when the moving principle of their hostility is a real concern for the substantial interests of the lower orders—the desire to ward off a system which they honestly believe to have a withering influence both on the character and comfort of the general population. At all events, if it can be demonstrated of any public charity, that it is altogether free of this deleterious tendency, and works an unquestionable good to its objects, without any alloy to discourage or repel the attempts of the benevolent to support it—this holds out a noble opportunity for the enemies of a poor-law, to redeem their character, and manifest the real spirit and design by which they are actuated. Now, a public charity for disease just presents this very opportunity. The halt, and the blind, and the maimed, and the impotent, and the dumb, and the lunatic, stand before us, with a special mark impressed upon them by the hand of Providence, and which at once announces both their necessity and their claim for the unqualified sympathy of all their fellows. It would give rise to no ulterior demand on the benevolence of the country, though receptacles were opened wide enough and frequent enough to harbour them all. A certain definite amount of suffering and distress would be cleared away from the territory of human wretchedness, without any baleful operation on the territory beyond it. That mischief, which, like the spreading leprosy, is ever sure to follow a public and certain provision for indigence, is, on an obvious principle, never to be apprehended from a provision, however public and however certain, for the cure or alleviation of disease. If it was under the burden of such an apprehension, that these philanthropists stood aloof, and refused their countenance and their aid to the one species of charity

—let them now, when relieved from the burden, come forth both with their testimony and their wealth in support of the other species of charity. If in the first place they keep feeling at abeyance, because philosophy forbade the indulgence of it—let them in the second place, when there is no cold obstruction in the way, demonstrate the power and promptitude of their humanity, by a ready forthgoing of their sympathies, now emancipated from all restraint, on those involuntary distresses which nature and necessity have imposed. By their opposition to the institutes of pauperism, they have proved themselves to be before others in the soundness of their understandings—let them, by their large and willing support for the institutes of disease, prove that they are not behind others in the sensibilities of the heart. If at the dictate of reason they withheld their liberalities from the one cause—when the other presents itself, and reason not only withdraws its disallowance but urges its unexceptionable claims, then let them show that they have an eye for pity and a hand open as day for melting charity.

20. That this lesson has yet to be learnt by the great majority of our philanthropists, is obvious from the review of those public charities, which have been founded by the munificence of individuals—whether in the form of bequests or of benevolent associations. It is not many years ago since a Royal Commission was appointed in Britain, to inquire into the public charities of England and Wales; and it is striking to observe the large number of those which have the relief of indigence for their object, and the very small number which are instituted for the treatment of disease. In the account now before us of these charities abridged from the Commissioners' Reports, we reckoned from the commencement of their enumeration no less than a hundred and thirty-six various charities of London and Bristol, of which the great majority were for indigence alone—and a few for education—before we arrived at one for disease, being a charity for blind persons. The erection of alms-houses, the distribution of bread, the supply of coals, loans or gifts of money to the indigent; and a countless variety of other distinctions, but all pointing to the general object of the relief of poverty—these outnumber the institutions for education, at least in the proportion of six to one, and the institutions for disease in the proportion of fifty to one. We feel quite assured, whether we take a general survey of the whole country, or limit our attention to one of its large towns, that, in the testamentary dispositions of the benevo-

lent, there is a very great and general misdirection of wealth to the wrong object. A known and certain provision held out to indigence, will create the indigence—a provision, however certain or however ample, made for disease, will never create or multiply the disease. And yet, in spite of this obvious consideration, far the greatest proportion of the legacies which are left for benevolent purposes, are left for the relief of poverty which can never be overtaken; and so small a proportion left for disease which may be overtaken, as to come greatly short of the necessity. Within these few years there have been two magnificent sums bequeathed in charity to the city of Edinburgh; and this will add two asylums to a number formerly in excess—because asylums not for any specific maladies but for general want. Meanwhile, the Infirmary is inadequately supported. The Deaf and Dumb Asylum is limited, with a very few exceptions, to those whose relatives can afford to pay for their maintenance. The Blind Asylum is on a very limited scale, and in great difficulties; and there is no institution at all in the capital of Scotland for the gratuitous admission of lunatics. By a more judicious destination of their wealth on the part of those two individuals, a real and unquestionable blessing would have been conferred on society—families relieved of their blind, or fatuous, or other diseased members; and without any substitution of families alike helpless and unfortunate in their places. But the reverse of this takes place with the asylums for indigence. Hundreds of poor may be admitted within their thresholds; but these are sure to be replaced by an equal, we think by a greater number, and the general community labours under as great a burden of want and wretchedness as before.

21. It is instructive to observe the relative estimation in which these two objects are held by the charitable—we mean the relief of poverty, and the relief of disease. We thought it a good way of settling this question, to take the volume which presented an account of all the public charities that had been found in a certain number of the towns and parishes in England, abridged from the Reports of the Royal Commissioners on Charitable Foundations. These charities, in the great bulk of them, originated in the spontaneous benevolence of individuals, who very generally conveyed, not by gifts while they were living, but by bequests which took effect after their death, the whole or part of their wealth to certain philanthropic purposes. It is marvellous to contemplate the preference which these testators

had for the relief of poverty, rather than for the relief of disease. The distinction which we have so much insisted on must not have been present to their minds. They must not have adverted to the utter failure of every attempt by public charity to overtake the indigence of the land, or even to diminish the amount of it, seeing that the relieving process, in virtue of which a certain number were fed and clothed, was followed up and accompanied by a creative process, in virtue of which at least an equal, we think a greater amount of poverty, or of hunger and nakedness, was created in general society. And neither along with this must they have adverted to the obvious impossibility of a similar effect in the treatment of disease, seeing that the relieving process in this department of charity never could be so followed up by a creative process, in virtue of which any more disease could be called into existence. We have reckoned the number of such destinations of which an account is given in the work now referred to—comprehending the charities of London, along with those of ten other great towns, beside a number of parishes in England—and we find that, while there are only eleven distinct allotments of land or money for the relief of disease in all these places, there are among the same places no less than 712 for the relief of indigence. It must also be mentioned, that the number of educational charities amounts to 202; but perhaps it will exhibit a fairer proportion of the two, if we look separately to each of the distinct localities, and, accordingly, the following are a few examples out of the many:—In the borough of Stafford, we have an account of 19 charitable bequests for the indigent, 7 for education, and none for disease. For the town of Northampton, we have an account of 31 charitable funds for indigence, and 9 for education, and none for disease. In the city of Gloucester, we have an account of 21 instituted funds for charity, 6 for education, and none for disease. In the town of Leeds, we have an account of 13 public benefactions for the poor, and 8 for education. In the city of York, we recognise 48 benefactions for poverty, and 23 for education. In the large and populous town of Manchester, we mark 31 distinct heads of charity for the poor, and 19 for education. It should be observed, however, that we count every object to be education which goes any way to the instruction of the people, whether it be in religious doctrine or in ordinary scholarship—including, therefore, the sums allocated for the repairs of churches and the preaching of sermons, as well as for the expenses of

week-day seminaries. In the laborious enumeration that we drew out, we generally rated all the individual bequests as one, which were made over to one and the same institution. Of the eleven cases of provision for disease, we state as specimens the conveyance by Robert Hudson of eight acres on trust, to apply the rents in providing medicine and medical aid for the poor of the parish of Selby; and the munificent bequest of Mr. Thomas Henslow of £20,000 for a blind asylum at Manchester. It was altogether in keeping with this, that the same individual should bequeath £1000 for the Manchester Infirmary, and £1000 for a Lunatic Hospital.

22. We are aware that we have taken account of but a very small proportion of the charities in England, and have not even completed the list of the charities in all the places which we have now specified. We were necessarily limited to the examination of such charities as the royal commissioners were empowered to inquire into; but they were not excluded from taking cognizance of the institutions for disease, any more than of the institutions either for want or for learning; and the proportions we have now been enabled to exhibit, do, it is certain, evince most strikingly a preference on the part of the benevolent founders for those charitable institutions, which have for their object the relief of that indigence into which men might voluntarily descend, and to which descent these bequests hold out a resistless temptation. It is melancholy to think, that, by a small fraction of the wealth thus thrown away, institutions for disease might have been provided all over the land, and so as to leave no involuntary sufferer under the inflictions of nature and necessity in want of any likely appliance by which to cure or to alleviate his distress.

23. It is not for us to enter into a full detail on the public charities of France. We rejoice to observe in the city of Paris so many institutions for disease, while the sums spent on the public relief of indigence, derived chiefly from the produce of public shows and public amusements, form but an insignificant fraction of what is expended on the same object in London. We, at the same time, were astonished at the immense proportion which the number who received charity at their own houses bore to the population of the city, having, in 1835, amounted to one in 12·32 of the whole community. It is our confident opinion, yet we desire to express it with all humility and respect, that the sure effect of such distributions is to augment the discomfort

and moral deterioration of the lower classes. The sum given to each individual is small, but it should ever be recollected that the mischief is not proportionally small. That relaxation of industrious and providential habits, and that relaxation also of the family and relative obligations, which are the sure consequences of pauperism, are not to be measured by the sum received, but by the sum expected; and each, in virtue of the natural confidence which every man has in his own good fortune, may look for a larger share of the public beneficence than he shall ever succeed in realizing. It is thus, we apprehend, that every known charity for the relief of indigence multiplies its objects; and it is woful to think that, while the amount of suffering is increased thereby, it is in virtue of a process which carries along with it the tenfold greater evil of an increase of depravity. The decay of character and the decay of comfort keep pace with each other, for who does not acknowledge that, if the pride of honest independence, an affection for one's own kindred, and a sympathy for those of one's own neighbourhood, are all enfeebled under a system of pauperism, that system must have a withering influence both on the worth and the well-being of society? The evil we imagine to be greatly aggravated by those places of reception, (*hospices*,) where applicants, with no other qualification than poverty, find a harbour and a maintenance provided for them. If the out-door relief be of small account—beyond this there is the ulterior prospect of an in-door admittance, to all the necessaries at least, if not the comforts of existence. The magical influence of hope will extend to a far greater multitude than to those actual receivers of charity who are so far fortunate as to have their hopes at least in part realized. The indolence, the improvidence, the dissipation, the disregard to every claim of family or neighbour—these are the fertile causes of want, or of want unrelieved—and these are stimulated throughout the mass of the community by the promises of pauperism, to a far greater extent than the promises are ever realized. We think it may with all safety be affirmed, that neither Paris nor any town in Europe has at this moment a less—we think it has a much greater—amount of unrelieved poverty, because of the public charities for general indigence which have been established in the midst of them—beguiling the people from a dependence on themselves, and from the duties of family and social life, which they owe to the helpless who are around them.

24. Yet however mischievous in their operation these public

institutions for the relief of indigence may be, we do not plead for the *immediate* abolition of them. We think that even justice requires the continuance of their wonted allowances, to all whom the very existence of these proclaimed charities has allured from the habits of industry and self-dependence. Let them be seen, therefore, to their graves in the sufficiency of their present allowances, unless it be found, on a scrutiny of their cases, that they may be committed back again to their own resources. It is only by a gradual process that we desire the extinction of any of those institutions against which we have contended. We would steadily refuse the admission of any new applicants, while we would spare the old recipients; and would rather wait to be delivered from the burden of aiding them by the operation of death, than incur the violence of a movement *per saltum*, by the instant dismissal, either of the actual inmates from their asylums, or of the actual out-door pensioners from the periodical grants which they have been in the habit of receiving. We would not thus violate the law of continuity, but suffer every institute for the relief of poverty gradually to die a natural death, by the successive deaths of the individuals who now depend upon them. Only we would take on no new individuals; and feel assured that, if these either were taught to draw upon their own resources, or were left to the sympathies whether of neighbourhood or of relationship, we should find, as the result of this change of system, that the community would become economically more comfortable, and morally more virtuous than before.

25. It were well that the governments, both of states and of cities, were more alive to the distinction which we have endeavoured to unfold, between the one species of charity and the other. The argument against a public charity for indigence, applies so little to the public charities for disease—that practically, while the former ought to be abolished, the latter, with a proper degree of regulation and watchfulness, might be encouraged to the uttermost. If a government endangered somewhat its popularity, by suffering the one class of institutions to fall into desuetude—this, it is to be hoped, would be greatly more than compensated, by the patent character of beneficence and mercy, which stood on their ordinance of an instant provision for all those maladies that come under the best and most effectual treatment in a public asylum. A door might be opened, not only with safety, but with an unalloyed blessing to society—wide enough for the reception of all the maimed, and all the

impotent, and all the bereft of their faculties whether of sight, or reason, or speech, or hearing. Infirmaries and fever-hospitals and even dispensaries, though these last seem the most difficult to be guarded from abuse, might be multiplied to the extent of the necessity, if not of the demand for them. We are aware of the complaints which have been made, and nowhere more than in Paris, of the undue advantage that even patients as well as paupers might take of the provision that is made for them. But surely disease admits of being more distinctly and decisively tested than poverty. Neither is the one so multiplied by institutions raised in its behalf, as the other is. No man can counterfeit the loss of a limb, or even the loss of his sight and reason and hearing, so as long to impose on the guardians of an asylum into which he may have found his way. But any man can counterfeit poverty; or, what is still more decisive, he not only can but he will create poverty—when the temptation of a public and a promised relief are held out to a little more indolence, or a little more dissipation. If there have been mutilations practised, or if there have been a voluntary contraction of real diseases, in order to qualify for the sustenance and the shelter held forth in a place of cure—these, it is demonstrable, compose but an insignificant fraction, compared with that host of unworthy applicants, who crowd the avenue which leads to a place of supply for the wants of indigence. The few and incidental evils which might at times be realized even in an infirmary (*hôpital*,) do not obscure the line of demarcation between such an institution and a poor's house (*hospice*)—the evils of which are sure to be multiplied tenfold, with every increase of its funds and its allowances. The fictitious disease which knocks at the door of an asylum, bears a very small proportion to the fictitious poverty. But the great distinction between the two charities lies in this—that the real disease (excepting that which is contracted by vicious indulgence) brought into existence by the provision made for it, bears the proportion of an infinitesimal to the real poverty, which comes into being under the malignant influence of a public charity—by the relaxation of industrious and economical habits, as well as of all those ties that bind the members whether of a household or of a neighbourhood into a common sympathy with each other.

26. And there is one class of sufferers about whom there can be no mistake, and who possess an indisputable and pre-eminent claim upon human sympathy. We mean those—on whom all

the resources of the medical art have been expended in vain; and who, after a season of full probation in an hospital of disease, are at length pronounced to be beyond hope and beyond recovery. The great desideratum is an asylum, or place of refuge for these poor incurables—who, instead of being devolved a heavy and hopeless burden on the families to which they belong, should at least have it in their power to enter some such house of mercy open to receive them—where they might meet with every possible alleviation which human skill can devise, or human kindness can administer. For their sakes it were well, if even the title of the institution were softened from a House for Incurables to a House for Convalescents—through which all who leave the infirmary may pass on their transition to perfect health and strength, after the medical treatment is over; and only those be detained whom the hand of nature has stricken with irrecoverable disease, and whom the God of nature has thus signalized and marked out for the unqualified sympathy of all their fellows.

27. The whole of this argument receives a beautiful illustration, or I would even say is strengthened and confirmed, by the example of our Saviour. He could have brought, nay, He actually on two occasions did bring down, food by miracle, to appease the hunger of a starving multitude; but refused to do so a third time, when, in the sordid expectation of a meal, they ran after Him for the purpose of being again regaled by His bounty. “Verily you have come not to see the miracle, but to eat of the loaves and be filled.” What a contrast between this reserve in the supply of food, and the unexcepted freeness of His ministrations in the supply of health, which He brought down by miracle on every patient who applied to Him for a cure. There is no recorded example of His ever having bid away from Him the maimed, or the impotent, or the palsied, or the lunatic, or the vexed with sundry and sore diseases; but, in every case of which we read, “He looked to them and had compassion on them, and healed them all.” I have often thought of this history as a guide and an example to us, in our public charities. For in the notoriety which He attained, any charity of His was in fact a public charity; and it is obvious, that, had He brought down food indefinitely by miracle, it would have discharged the people from all their habits of industry and foresight, and disorganized the whole of Judea by trooping multitudes running after this great Prophet for the purpose of being fed by Him.

But no such consequence was to be apprehended when, instead of a miraculous almoner to all His countrymen, He became a miraculous Physician to those limited and comparatively few who sought the relief of their malady at His hand; and, accordingly, when, in the march of His wise and effective beneficence through the land of Judea, the dumb, and the blind, and the afflicted with various infirmities, came forth of the surrounding villages—He laid no prohibition on these children of blameless and helpless disease. We have much to learn from this proceeding of our Saviour's; but, whatever discouragements we may draw from His example in the erection of an asylum for indigence, we can draw none against the erection of an asylum for disease. And while the boding apprehension both of moral and physical disaster hangs over the one institution—do we infer of the other that its door may be thrown open, and all its accommodations be widened and multiplied, till every imploring patient be taken in, and a harbour of sufficient amplitude be provided for all those sufferings which an uncontrollable necessity has laid upon the species.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON

THE SYSTEM OF PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS IN SCOTLAND,

AND ON THE ADVANTAGE OF ESTABLISHING THEM

IN LARGE TOWNS.

CONSIDERATIONS ON PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.

THERE are three school systems for the education of a country, each of which is fitted to have its own peculiar influence on the general habit and improvement of the people among whom it operates.

There is first the wholly unendowed system. Education, instead of being in any shape patronized or instituted, may be left merely as an article of native and spontaneous demand, among the people of a country. Each who has a desire for it, might, in this case, purchase it, just as he would do any other object of desire. He would, of course, have to pay the full and natural price for the article; or, in other words, the fees of education, must, under such a system, be adequate to the entire maintenance of the teachers.

This way of it has never been found effectual to the object of originating, in any country, a habit of general education. It does not call out the people. It in fact abandons them to the chance of their making a proper and original motion of their own, and this motion is never generally made. And, had we time for looking so far back as to first causes, the reason of this might be rendered abundantly obvious. The truth is, that there is a very wide distinction between the moral or intellectual wants of our nature, on the one hand, and the merely physical wants of our nature, on the other. In the latter case, the want is always accompanied with a strong and urgent desire for relief; and, just in proportion to the greatness of the want, is the intensity of the desire. The want of food is accompanied with hunger, and the want of liquids with thirst, and the want of raiment with cold; and these form so many powerful appetites of demand, which, among a people, though left to themselves, will be fully

commensurate to the whole extent of their physical necessities. And hence it is, that whatever call may exist for a national establishment of teachers, a national establishment of bakers, or butchers, or tailors, or shoemakers, is altogether superfluous.

But the reverse of all this holds true, of the moral or intellectual wants of our nature. The want of virtue, so far from sharpening, has the effect of extinguishing the desire for virtue. The same is true of the want of knowledge. The more destitute we are of these articles, the more dead we are as to any inclination for them. Under the mere operation of demand and supply, there are sufficient guarantees in the constitution of nature, that the people will themselves make a primary movement after food. But there is no such guarantee for their ever making a primary movement after instruction. It is not from the quarter of ignorance that we can at all look for the first advance towards knowledge; nor can we ever expect that, for this object, a people as yet untaught will surrender, either for their own behalf or that of their children, any sensible proportion of that money which went to the purchase of their physical gratifications.

The night of ignorance is sure to be perpetuated in every land where no extraneous attempts are made, on the part of the wealthy and enlightened, for the object of its dissipation. And if the wholly unendowed system be incompetent to the effect of planting a habit of education among a people, in the first instance, it cannot be the best system for upholding that habit, where it is already established; and far less can it be the best for arresting the declension of this habit in a country where, if education be upon the decline, the desire for education will be sure to decline along with it.

The next system of education is that of free schools. It is in every point diametrically the reverse of the former, and may therefore at first view be regarded as the best for shunning all the evils, and all the inefficiency of the former. It is a wholly endowed, instead of a wholly unendowed system. It both spares the population the necessity of making the first movement after scholarship for their children, and it spares them the necessity of surrendering for this object any portion of their subsistence. For the completion of such a system, it were enough that schools and schoolhouses should be built in every little district of the land, and such a salary provided for the teachers, as, without the exaction of any fee, would enable them to render a full supply of scholarship to the families, at the public expense. In this way,

the people would be fully met with an apparatus, broadly and visibly obtruded upon their notice; and yet we are far from thinking, that it would either create a native and universal habit of education in a country,—or arrest the process of its degradation in learning,—or sustain the practice of parents sending their children to school, and so stimulating and watching over the progress of their scholarship, as would lead to the formation of a well-taught and well-informed peasantry.

What is gotten for no value, is rated at no value. What may be obtained without cost in money, is often counted unworthy of any cost in pains. What parents do not pay for the acquirement of, children will not be so urged to toil for the acquirement of. To be away from school, or to be idle at school, when not a matter of pecuniary loss, will far more readily be a matter of connivance. There is no doubt a loss of other advantages; but these, under a loose and gratuitous system of education, will be but held in capricious demand, and in slender estimation. The only way of thoroughly incorporating the education of the young with the habit of families, is to make it form part of the family expenditure, and thus to make the interest, and the watchfulness, and the jealousy of parents, so many guarantees for the diligence of their children. And, for these reasons, do we hold the establishment of free schools in a country, to be a frail and impolitic expedient, for the object of either upholding a high tone of scholarship among our labouring classes, or of rendering the habit at all general, or of perpetuating that habit from generation to generation.

And such a system has not a more adverse influence on the scholars, than it has upon the teachers. Let a man deal in any article whatever, and there is not a more effective security for the good quality of what he deals in, than the control and the guardianship of his own customers. The teacher of a free school is under no such dependence. It is true, that he may be paid according to the proficiency of the learners; but the parent who can instantly withdraw his children, is a far more jealous inquisitor into this matter, than the official examiner, on whose personal interest at least there is no such powerful or effectual a hold. And we repeat it, therefore, that carelessness on the part of the teacher, as well as a remiss and partial attendance on the part of the taught, is the likely fruit of that gratuitous system of education, the aspect and the tendency of which we are now employed in contemplating.

It reflects infinite credit on the founders of our Scottish reformation, that by the tact of a wise and well-discerning skilfulness they have devised a system, which dexterously shuns and puts at an equal distance from our peasantry, the evils and inconveniences of the two former. It may, for the sake of distinction, be called the medium system of education. It is about two centuries and a half ago since it had its origin in Scotland. The first advance was made, not by the people at large, but by the founders of this system; and in this way, they escaped the inefficiency of what may be called the unendowed method of education. They built schools and school-houses, and held them conspicuously forth to the view of the population, and they furnished such a salary to the teacher, as enabled him, not to deal out a free education among the surrounding families, but to deal it out to them upon certain regular and moderate allowances. In this way, they escaped the evils which we have just now ascribed to the gratuitous system of education. The people were not fully met. But they were met half-way. It was not a movement of demand upon their side, in the first instance, which it had been vain to look for. Neither was it a full and altogether gratuitous invitation on the other side. But it was the movement of a proposal from the latter, upon certain terms; and this was at length followed up, on the side of the people, by the movement of a wide, and general, and almost unexcepted compliance.

This result has nobly accredited the wisdom of our parochial institutions. The common people of England and Ireland, left to demand education for themselves, never demanded it; nor would they, if left to the impulse of their own desire, ever have emerged from the deep, and stationary, and unalleviated ignorance of the middle ages. A great, and, in part, a successful effort, is making now, in behalf of both these countries, by a set of active philanthropic societies. By the stir and the strenuousness of these institutions, the people have certainly, in some measure, awakened from the stillness of their unlettered repose; and many young have been called out to scholarship, who else would have persisted in the dormancy of their forefathers. Still we hold, that there is no security for a system, either of universal or perpetual operation, until it shall cease to be entirely gratuitous—until the people themselves be associated in the support of it by their own payments—until they are led to look on scholarship as worthy of its price, and that price is actually

rendered—until learning be so prized by them as to be purchased by them—and this bond be established for its regular prosecution among all their families, that its cost is estimated among the regular outgoings of a family.

This is the way in the country parishes of Scotland. The surrender which they have to make for the education of their young, is much smaller than it would have been, had there been no school, or school-house, or salary, provided by the Legislature. Still, however, it is well that they have to make some surrender. It is well that the care of parents over the progress of their children's education, should be stimulated by the price which they have to render for it. It is well, that by their inspection being thus sharpened, there should be a far closer and more effective security for the diligence of the young, than ever could obtain, were the education of the country turned into one great and universal charity. We read much of the abuses of chartered and endowed schools for the poor; and it is well that while our schools are so far endowed as to reduce the country price of learning to at least one-half of what it would be, under a totally unprovided system; it is still well, that a fraction should be left to be paid by the parents, and that the teacher should be thus far responsible to them, for the performance of his duty and the faithfulness of his public services.

The universality of the habit of education in our Lowland parishes, is certainly a very striking fact; nor do we think that the mere lowness of the price forms the whole explanation of it. There is more than may appear at first sight, in the very circumstance of a marked and separate edifice, standing visibly out to the eye of the people, with its familiar and oft-repeated designation. There is also much in the constant residence of a teacher, moving through the people of his locality, and of recognised office and distinction among them. And perhaps there is most of all in the tie which binds the locality itself to the parochial seminary, that has long stood as the place of repair for the successive young belonging to the parish; for it is thus that one family borrows its practice from another—and the example spreads from house to house, till it embrace the whole of the assigned neighbourhood—and the act of sending their children to the school, passes at length into one of the tacit, but well-understood proprieties of the vicinage—and new families just fall, as if by the infection, into the habit of the old ones—so as, in fact, to give a kind of firm, mechanical certainty to the opera-

tion of a habit, from which it were violence and singularity to depart—and in virtue of which, education has acquired a universality in Scotland, which is unknown in the other countries of the world.

There has many a distinct attempt been made to supplement the defective education of our cities. But if it have either been in the way of gratuitous education, or in the way of a vast Lancasterian establishment, for the general behoof of a wide and scattered community, or in any way which did not bind, by the tie of a local relationship, the close and contiguous families of a given district, to a seminary raised within its limits, and to a fixed and stationary teacher at the head of that seminary—then let it be remembered, that some of the most essential elements of success have been wanting to the operation. Nor let us be discouraged by the failure of former expedients, which are not at all analogous to the one that we shall venture to recommend, and by which it is proposed to circulate throughout the mass of a crowded population, as powerful and pervading an influence in behalf of scholarship, as that which has been diffused over the face of our Lowland provinces, and diffused so thoroughly, as scarcely to leave in our country parishes the exception of a single individual or a single family behind it.

But there is still another school-system which falls to be considered—not a medium, but what may rather be called a compound system—because made up of the unendowed and the free systems together, though not put together into the constitution of any one single seminary. This compound system is realized in all those places where so many of the schools are wholly free, and all the rest of them are wholly unendowed. We have already stated our objections against such an establishment of free schools as would meet the whole population. It is a different arrangement from this, where there is such an establishment of free schools as might provide part of the population with gratuitous learning, and where the remaining part have to pay that full price which obtains in schools that are totally unendowed. This amounts nearly to the actual system which obtains in Glasgow.

Our objections to this way of ordering the matter are, that as far as free education prevails, a careless estimate of its value, and a loose and negligent attendance, are apt to prevail along with it; and that many parents who, under the medium system, could have upheld the habit of purchasing the scholarship of

their children, are thereby degraded into an inferior habit; and that there is not a more public way of exposing our people as the subjects of charity, than by drawing out their families to a charity school; and that the difference to the comfort of the family is so great, between having to pay the full price which an unendowed teacher must exact, and having to pay no price at all, as to make a place in one of the charity schools an object to men, who else would be greatly above cherishing any expectation of charity, or preferring any demand for it; and that, as the result of all this, the competition for places is so great, as often to elbow out those neediest and most destitute, for whom the institution was originally framed—besides the incalculable mischief of bringing down men who, but for this temptation, would have stood erect and independent, to the attitude of petitioners; or, in other words, the mischief of carrying the spirit and the desires of pauperism upward, by several steps, along the scale of society.

We affirm one consequence of charity schools with us, to have been a diminution in the quantity of education. It is familiar to us all, that the applications for admittance are greatly more numerous than the vacancies. In this way there are many parents who are constantly standing out in the capacity of expectants, and who, under the operation of a hope which turns out to be delusive, are keeping off their children from other schools. Their children are thus suffered to outgrow their opportunities; and many are the instances in which they have stood for years at that gate to which they have been allured by false or mistaken signals of invitation, till the urgent concerns of their trade or their profession at length hurried them away—and that too, to a condition of life, where it was as impossible for them to retrieve any portion of their time for the purposes of education, as it was to recall those years which they had so idly spent in ill-directed endeavours to obtain it.

In all these circumstances, we hold the medium system, which obtains in the country parishes of Scotland, to be also, in every way, the best for its city parishes. Not leaving education without any endowment, to the random operation of demand and supply—not so endowing it, as to hold out a gratuitous education to all who should require it—not even endowing a restricted number of schools to this extent, and leaving the rest to the necessity of exacting an unendowed price from the scholars who repair to them—but endowing schools so far as will enable the teachers to furnish education to our town families upon country

prices—erecting the schools and the school-houses—and multiplying these erections till they met the demand, and were thoroughly familiarized to the habit of our whole population.

It is little known amongst us, how much the people of our city parishes have fallen behind the full influence and benefit of such a system. With the exception of schools for Latin, there are almost no vestiges of any such endowment. Instead of any public and parochial edifice for scholarship, held forth to the view of the people, and constantly reminding them, as it were, of their duty, through the avenue of the senses—the only education for their children, which is accessible to them, is dealt out from the privacy of obscure garrets, or at most from the single hired apartment of a house, in no way signalized by its official destination, and deeply retired from observation amid the closeness and frequency of the poorest dwelling-places. These stations, too, whither children repair for their education, are constantly shifting; and the teachers, being oft unconnected by any ties of residence or local vicinity with the parents, there is positively, in spite of the sacredness of their mutual trust, as little of the feeling of any moral relationship between them, as there is between an ordinary shopkeeper and his customers. The very circumstance, too, of drawing his scholars from the widely scattered families of a town, instead of drawing them from the contiguous families of one of its parishes, slackens, among these parishes; the operation of that principle, which operates so powerfully among the immediate neighbours of a small country village; and where, in virtue of each doing as he sees others do, we behold so sure and so unailing a currency towards the established schoolmaster, on the part of all the population. It forms a mighty addition to all these obstacles in the way of education, when such a price must be paid for it, as might enable the teacher to live on his fees alone. And thus it is, that the demand for schooling, which is kept up without abatement in our country parishes, has been most wofully abridged amongst the labouring classes in our towns. Not a few feel tempted, by the greatness of its expense, to evade the schooling of their families altogether, insomuch that with them the cause of education is altogether extinct; and very many are the parents who feel tempted to reduce the quantity of schooling, insomuch that with them the cause of education is rapidly and alarmingly on the decline.

It is a very low estimate of the average expense of good education for reading alone, to state it at five shillings a quarter,

or twenty shillings a year. This expense is, in many instances, shunned altogether: and there are hundreds of adults, who are utterly incapable of reading; and the number of these is increasing rapidly. The expense is, in many more instances, not shunned; but the period of it is lamentably shortened, so as fully to account for the slovenly and imperfect reading of so many of our artisans, and labourers, and household servants. The case of these last is, that of ignorance under the disguise of education. Theirs is a mere semblance or apology for learning. The individual who, in reading to another, stops, and spells, and blunders at every short interval, can never read a passage to himself, so as readily to understand the subject. To read intelligently he must read fluently. And therefore it is, that there may be a partial scholarship which, for every purpose of moral or literary improvement, is just as worthless as no scholarship at all. The shadow of the good old Scottish habit may be still perpetuated amongst us for one or two generations; and, perhaps, may be preserved, by the annual importations of this habit from the country, from ever passing into utter dissipation. But, though the shadow of it should remain, the substance of it will soon be dissipated. Insomuch that, if vice and ignorance stand together in nearly perpetual association—if an uneducated people be more formidable in their discontent, and more loathsome in their profligacy, and more improvident in their economical habits, and more hardened in all the ways of wickedness and impious profanation, than a people possessed of the Bible, and capable of using it—then, we cannot look on the progress of that undoubted decay in scholarship, which is every day becoming more conspicuous in our towns, without inferring a commensurate progress in those various elements of mischief, which go to feed and to augment all our moral and all our political disorders.

To extend a right system of parochial education over the whole city, is an enterprise greatly too gigantic for any one body of management. The truth is, that, did we compute the expense of its full accomplishment, the magnitude of the sum would paralyze any number of philanthropists who could willingly and readily act together, for the purpose of bringing round such a consummation. From the vastness of the necessary resources, on the one hand, and the unwieldiness which ever attaches to the movements of any very extended society, on the other, we are quite sure that nothing very effectual could be done under a combined plan of operations, and that the agents

of such an undertaking would either give it up in despair, or retire from it, satisfied that they had done much, when they had scarcely done anything—pointing, it may be, to some showy but superficial achievement, as the trophy of their success—to the establishment, it is likely, of one school in each parish, which would only suffice for a very small fraction of the whole, and leave untouched and unprovided by any salutary influence whatever, the great mass of the community.

But what one body of management cannot do in the gross, several distinct and independent bodies of management might be able to do in the detail. One thing is certain, that any such smaller body will act with an impetus and a vigour, of which a vast general society is utterly incapable. This would be the first effect of a subdivision in the field of agency. Let it only be broken down into manageable sections, and the influence will be the same with that which comes upon a man's whole energy and spirit, when any concern with which he is associated, is so reduced, from the hopelessly and impracticably vast, as to be brought within the compass of his probable attainment; and when the limit of his enterprise, instead of lying at a distance from him, in the remote and fathomless unknown, is brought so near as to be distinctly visible, and likely to be overtaken; and when, by every step in his progress, he feels himself to be approximating to a given termination. In such a state of things, he is cheered and stimulated onwards by every new accession to his means, and every new movement in the execution of his measures; and just because the conclusion of the whole does not stand at an obscure and indefinite interval away from him. And such would be the difference, in point both of present alacrity and ultimate success, between the operations of one society for parochial schools, to the whole of Glasgow, and of distinct societies for the same object, in each of the parishes of Glasgow. Each would have its own manageable task; and each would be freed from the distractions of too manifold and cumbersome an operation; and each would not only have less to do, but have more in proportion to do with; for it is of importance to remark, that, by thus dividing the mighty field, and assigning its own separate locality to each separate agency, the interest is greatly heightened, and the activity is greatly promoted; and even the feeling of rivalry gives a laudable impulse to each of the distinct undertakings; and the solicitations for aid are carried through each parish and congregation, far

more closely and productively, when the attention and desire are thus devoted to one small portion of the territory, instead of being weakened by dispersion over the face of the extended whole.

It is on these grounds that the Committee of Education for the parish of St. John have conceived the hope that, by intent perseverance, and the use of all those legitimate means which are within their reach, they may at length succeed in the establishment of a right parochial apparatus; or, in other words, may arrive at the result of as many schools and school-houses, with permanent salaries to each of the teachers, as shall be commensurate to the object of a good elementary education, at reduced prices, to all the families in the parish.

This will be gradually arrived at by the erection of successive fabrics, and the accumulation of as much capital as shall afford, by its interest, the salaries of the different teachers.

Each fabric, it is conceived, may have two school-rooms in its lower story, and, in its upper stories, the two school-houses. When the schools ceased to be filled to an overflow, this will serve as an indication that the parochial equipment for schooling is completed.

We should feel it a public injustice to monopolize for our parish, more in the way of aid than legitimately belongs to it; and we hold it necessary, on this account, to explain how far we mean to extend our solicitations, and what are the resources which we leave untouched for other parishes.

All who are connected with the parish, either by residence or by property, we count ourselves free to apply to for such contributions as they may be prevailed upon to render in behalf of this strictly parochial object; nor do we deem this in any way capable of being construed into an interference with the claims and the fair expectations of other parishes.

But, further, it must be evident, that did each parish of Glasgow confine its attempts to obtain money within the limits which we have just now assigned, the most needful of these parishes would also be the most restricted in their means of raising a right parochial system. And, on the other hand, the great majority of our wealthiest individuals, residing either in the best provided districts of the town, or without the limits of the royalty altogether, would escape the pressure, or rather what most of them would hold to be the privilege, of sharing in this dispensation of liberality. There are many such whom the

poorer of our parishes may look to as a kind of common patrons, and whose wealth may be regarded as a common fund, out of which it is fair to draw, in the way of candid statement, and respectful entreaty, as much as can be gained from their good-will, for this best of objects. And while we abstain from encroaching, by more than our fair share upon this wide and flourishing domain of our community, do we leave it to other parishes to enter upon it as they please, and to cultivate it in any way they will, and to call forth its produce and its capabilities to the uttermost.

What we fear not to announce as our equitable share of this fund, is just as much as we can possibly raise, by means of a congregational subscription, as additional to, and distinct from, our parochial ones; or, in other words, it is our intention to solicit aid from those who, without residence or property in the parish, have nevertheless seats in the church of St. John.

Our firm and confident answer to every charge of unfair usurpation, on the means of general Glasgow, for the furtherance of an object connected with the peculiar good of only one of its parishes, is, that ours is amongst the poorest of the city parishes, and ours is not the wealthiest of the city congregations.

Should there be another parish poorer than ours, and with a congregation not so wealthy, we do not ask it to restrict its operations for aid, within the limits which we have prescribed for ourselves. After it has made the most of its parish and congregation, it will have a still untrodden field, among those most affluent of our citizens, who have no peculiar connexion with either, but who, in extending their patronage to the schooling of an unprovided district of the town, will find an ample scope for one of the most promising and productive of all charities.

On this field the Committee for Education in the parish of St. John do not propose to enter. Insomuch that, if a wealthy individual, not a parishioner, not a proprietor, and not a sitter in the church of St. John, should offer ten guineas for the furtherance of our undertaking, we honestly affirm, that it were in far more delightful harmony with all our wishes, did he reserve this money, and augment it to the gift of a hundred guineas, in behalf of another district still more needy and unprovided than our own. Nor would we feel such interest and alacrity in this our parochial undertaking, did we not believe that the plan was equally competent, and equally effective, for all the other parishes of Glasgow; and that it thus admitted of being so multiplied and transferred to the other districts both of our city and suburb

population, as to offer by far the likeliest method of rearing a permanent security for the good and Christian education of all our families.

It is in the power of any munificent individual to bring this matter to the test, so as to ascertain, in a few months, whether the charm which we have ascribed to locality, be of an ideal, or of a soundly experimental character. We do not suppose him to be either a sinner in the church of St. John, or at all connected, either by residence or property, with the parish. Let him dwell without the limits of the royalty, and have no congregational bond of alliance with any part of the city, excepting perhaps the very wealthiest of its districts. Should he, in these circumstances, select the most destitute of its parishes, as his own chosen field, on which he might lavish all his influence, and all his liberality—should he, for this purpose, head an enterprise for schools, by his own princely donation; and interest his personal friends; and encourage, by his example and his exertions, any parochial committee that may be formed; and spirit on the undertaking to the erection of one fabric, and to a fresh exertion for another, and to the anticipation for a third, he will soon feel how much more effective a hold of him such a plan of operations for ten thousand people has, than a similar plan for one hundred thousand. He will thus try the comparison of strength between a local and a universal interest, and find how greatly the former, by the constitution of our nature, predominates; and how, by concentrating his attentions upon one district, his whole heart and endeavour are far more riveted to the cause of its moral cultivation, than if he had merged himself among the generalities of a wider but more hopeless undertaking. He will, after having planted the cause in this his adopted, and on that very account, his favoured and beloved vineyard, continue to water it, just because he had planted it; nor will he feel it possible to cease from fostering his own parochial establishment, till he had brought it on to its full-grown maturity. All the members of that body of subscription with which he is associated, will just feel as he does; and the very same local interest, which does so much to stimulate the activity of the doer, will also stimulate, beyond all calculation, the liberality of the giver. The cause will be nobly seconded in the parish itself, which is the field of this operation; and its contribution for its own schools will exceed, by many times, any contribution to which it could possibly be called out for the more extended, but to it greatly less excit-

ing cause of schools in Glasgow. This is not philanthropy bounding herself round with narrow and unsocial limitations. It is philanthropy devising the way in which the greatest amount of good may be rendered to our species; and, for this purpose, availing herself of a principle, which, however neglected and lying in unobserved concealment heretofore, will, we trust, be mightily instrumental in calling forth a great resurrection of all that is wise, and moral, and salutary in our land. Let one set of men foster the attentions and reiterate the labours of benevolence upon one assigned and overtakeable district. Let our great towns be localized into separate portions, and men be called out for thoroughly pervading each of them, and laboriously doing in detail what has long been so vainly and ambitiously attempted *en masse*. Let each separate agency link itself with a subject, that there is some hope of completely finishing, and thus suit the dimensions of the enterprise to the real mediocrity of human power; then, in this humbler, but sounder way of it, a universal result will be far more surely and speedily obtained, than it ever can be by the airy, unproductive magnificence, as impotent as it is imposing, of widely comprehending plans, and great national undertakings.

We have one remark to offer, for the purpose of acquitting ourselves in full of the imputation of monopoly. There are many sitters in the church of St. John's who have also seats elsewhere. We shall apply to them for aid in our parochial undertaking. But we beg to assure them that, instead of their entire offering to the cause, it would be far more consonant both to our views of justice, and to our desire of extending this benefit beyond the limit of our own parish, if we were only admitted to a proportional share of their liberality.

The extra-parochial sitters in the church of St. John's will forgive the following observation. They are not parishioners; but they occupy the place of parishioners. They get the Sabbath accommodation, which, but for them, parishioners would have gotten; and we assure them, that, by helping on the cause of week-day instruction in the parish, they will make the kindest and most suitable atonement for such a deprivation.

To have a sufficient conception of the style in which the cause that we are now pleading for deserves to be supported, it should be considered how much there is to be done, and how great the benefit is, that will accrue from the doing of it. Ever since the first institution of schools in Scotland, towns have grown, and

the provision for education has not grown along with them. The population greatly outstrips the endowed schools, and the object now is, to establish as many schools as shall overtake the population. Thus, to recover the distance we have lost—thus, to repair the negligence of upwards of two centuries—thus, to do, in a few years, the work which should have been gradually advancing along the lapse of several generations—may well appear an enterprise so vast as to border on the romantic; and it is not to be disguised, that it is only on the strength of large sums and large sacrifices, that we can at all look for its entire and speedy accomplishment. And yet we will not despair of this cause, when we think of its many recommendations; and that, with all its cost, it would still form the best and the cheapest defence of our nation against the misrule of the fiercer and more untoward passions of our nature; and that the true secret for managing a people, is not so much to curb as to enlighten them; and that a moral is a far mightier operation than a physical force in controlling the elements of political disorder; and that to give a certainty to the habit of education in towns, is to do for them that which has visibly raised the whole peasantry of Scotland, both in intelligence and virtue, above the level of any other population.

There is one encouraging circumstance in this charity. It is not, like many others, interminable. An assignable sum of money will suffice for it, and suffice for it conclusively. Every mite of contribution brings it nearer to its fulfilment. When schools and school-houses are built, and salaries are provided, and a sum is raised for the calculable object of repairing our edifices, or of so extending them as to meet the growing exigencies of a growing population, the undertaking is done, and the parish, permanently translated into the condition of a country parish, as it regards schools, is upheld in a high tone of scholarship throughout all its succeeding generations.

Under such a system as has now been proposed, the efforts of respectable and well-taught men may, in the capacity of teachers, be brought to bear on the very humblest classes of society. Linked with the parish by the ties both of residence and of office, they might bring a mighty contribution of good to its moral agency. They would occupy what at present is an unfilled gap between the higher and the lower orders—fitted for intercourse with the former, and familiarized to the latter, both by local and official relationship. Let them have an honest zeal on the side of

Christianity, and the effect of their frequent and extensive minglings with the people would be beyond the reach of our present calculation. Those apparently outcast and outlandish features, which have had such time to grow, and to gather, and to settle into obstinacy, on the aspect of a neglected race, would soften and give way under the influences of this blander and better arrangement. It would do more than reclaim a parish—it would go far to domesticate it. Nor do we know how a readier method could be devised for consolidating the parochial system of our great cities, or for supplementing, till better and more liberal days, those woful deficiencies which obtain in our ecclesiastical establishment.

There are many gentlemen of our city familiar with the spectacle of a public examination at our grammar-school, and who have frequently enjoyed the gratifying assemblage of parents, and children, and spectators, all occupied with their respective interests in this busy scene of emulation and display; and who have witnessed, with benevolent pleasure, the honest pride of fathers, and the keen rivalry which obtains among the most eminent of the young, and the expression of holiday delight which sits on the countenances of them all; and who must be sensible that, during the mixture of public with domestic feeling in this little republic, where no other supremacy is owned but that of proficiency and talent, the differences of rank, and the asperities of the great world, are for a season forgotten. How far this may contribute to soften and humanize the system of human life out of doors, it were difficult to say. But certainly there is nothing that we should desire more to see than a parent, among the very humblest of our workmen, sharing, at periodic intervals, in this very exhibition—coming, in his Sabbath attire, to witness the proficiency of his children on the day and in the hall of their annual examination—meeting there with all that is respectable and virtuous in the parish, assembled to do homage to the cherished cause of education among its families—mingling with parents of the higher orders, even as their children mingle, and sharing along with them in the same delightful interests; and in the same pure and pacific triumphs—soothed and elevated even by this transient intercourse with the people of another rank, and another place in the scale of society—and at length retiring from the spectacle with a heart more linked to the general system of the country; and that, because this country has attached him by those very ties which bind him to his own off-

spring, and to the sacred cause of their moral and religious cultivation.

There cannot be a fitter occasion than the present for vindicating the wealthier, and for soothing and reconciling the poorer classes of society. The latter very generally think of the former that they bear a haughty indifference to all their concerns. In this they are mistaken. The rich are not only willing, but many of them are earnestly and enthusiastically so, to forward the interests of the poor, if they but knew how to do it; and we trust that, in a cause so undeniable as the present, they will nobly redeem, by the generosity of their contributions, all the discredit which has been so plentifully cast upon them. On the other hand, the rich often think of the poor, that kindness corrupts them into a habit of art and ingratitude. But in this they, too, are mistaken. Such a kindness as we are now pleading for, carries not one single element of corruption along with it. It helps the poor without degrading them. The charity which humbles a man never makes him grateful. But this is not such a charity. The erection of schools, where education is so cheap that the poor will count it no hardship to pay, and where education is so good that the rich will find it of no hurt to their children to send, does not bear upon it any of the signals of charity. The benefit of such an institution is felt for ages after its origin is forgotten; and it will be the feeling of the people, not that they are brought nearer by it to a condition of pauperism, but simply that, by being translated into the same facilities, in respect of education, with our country parishes, they have been admitted to the share which belongs to them, in the common privileges of our nation.

CONSISTENCY

OF THE

LEGAL AND VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES,
AND THE JOINT SUPPORT WHICH THEY MIGHT RENDER TO
THE CAUSE BOTH OF CHRISTIAN AND COMMON
EDUCATION.

CONSISTENCY

OF THE

LEGAL AND VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES.

THERE is nothing more palpable on the face of Jewish history than the connexion which obtains between the personal character of the monarch and the general prosperity of the kingdom. And it is alike obvious, that the one stood related to the other in the way of cause and consequence, from the interest which the religion that sways the heart of the king led him to take in the religion of his people. It was at the direct charge or bidding of Jehoshaphat, and in his direct employment, that the Levites taught in Judea, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judea and taught the people. And so also Hezekiah, as is said, "spake comfortably to all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord." And so also Nehemiah, who, if not the king, was at least the supreme magistrate, the representative and depositary of the civil power, gave the direct sanction of his authority to the Levites, when they taught the people, and read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.—All marking that, in these days, it was held a duty and a propriety in the rulers of the State to concern themselves with the religious knowledge of the people—to provide for which they maintained and employed teachers, whose business it was to go over the land, and to serve and supply every city with instruction in the law of God—thus fulfilling the object of an ordination given by Moses at the outset of the Jewish polity, when he bade "gather the people together, men and women and *children*, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the

words of this law, and that their children which had not known anything may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God."

But while such was esteemed the befitting duty of government in these days, there were other parties who shared the duty and the obligation along with them. In particular, there seems to have been felt by all right-minded parents a peculiar and solemn responsibility for the religious knowledge of their children. This, if we may judge from various passages, both in their books of history and books of devotion, must have been a great characteristic and national virtue among the children of Israel. We meet with it so early as in the person of Abraham, the great progenitor of the Hebrew people, of whom we read this illustrious testimony from the mouth of God himself—"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." We read of it in the covenant which Joshua made with the people, when he bade them choose the part they would take—telling them that "for me and for my house we will serve the Lord;" and the people with one consent made promise that this should be the habit and the observance of all their families. We would even infer it from the awful tragedy which befel the house of Eli, in whose signal punishment for the neglect of family discipline, the people of the land would behold an impressive manifestation of the Divine will, on the side of the religion of families. But, without resting on individual examples, we know that the task and the obligation of parents religiously to educate their children, held a conspicuous and a foremost place in the code of Jewish morality. The facts and the doctrines of their religion were things which they heard and knew; and therefore, to make use of the language of the Psalmist, they did "not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He hath done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them—even the children which should be born, and should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments."

Here, then, we have the example of a great duty, and that for the fulfilment of a great object, even the maintenance and pre-

servation of religion in the land—this duty we say not monopolized or exclusively engrossed by one party, but shared between two—it being held, in these Old Testament times, to be the rightful care of the king upon his throne, to look after and provide what in him lay for the religion of his subjects; and the no less rightful care of the parents of families to provide what in them lay for the religion of their children. We are here presented with the example of two powers or two influences, blended together in friendly co-operation for the accomplishment of one and the same design. There was no conflict—no contrariety between them. The one party did not fear to do too much, lest it should be left to the other party to do too little. Such a jealousy, we believe, was never once heard of in these days. On the one hand, it would have been held quite monstrous in the king to say, that the morality and religion of the young is not my affair, but that of their own parents; and I will therefore care for none of these things. And, on the other hand, it would have been held still more monstrous and unnatural for parents to say, that the education of our children is the duty of our rulers; and we shall take no part of a burden which legitimately lies upon them. Such a contest as this, if it could be imagined, wherein each of the two parties strives, for its own exoneration, to cast as much of the weight as possible upon the other, were not the way of bringing about the result of a well-trained or well-taught boyhood in any land; but between them, we should behold the melancholy spectacle of a depraved and degenerate society. The utmost effort and vigilance of both will fall greatly short of perfection; and the neglect of either were of deadly and withering influence on the virtue of any commonwealth. With an irreligious population, even under a religious government, we should have many an exhibition of reckless defiance, both to the Divine law and to human authority—as when good king Hezekiah sent his posts from city to city, through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even to Zebulun, to invite the people to return to the Lord from whom they had revolted, and to keep His passover; and they laughed them to scorn, and they mocked them. And, on the other hand, with an irreligious government, though with the benefit at first of an orderly and religious population, we should witness the rapid declension and disappearance of all sound principle in the land as in the days of the idolatrous Ahab, when a hidden and unseen remnant of true worshippers was all that continued stedfast with God among the

many thousands of Israel. It is miserable work this shifting of the responsibility backward and forward from one party to another. Both parties in this cause are responsible—parents to do all they can for the right and religious schooling of their children; and government to provide, in right institutions, all helps and facilities for the same object. And it is only when a common spirit actuates them both—when the influence of the Christian parent in his household is backed by the paternal influence of a Christian government in the State, that the sacred cause of good education will prosper in any land; or that, as if by the circulation of a healthful life's blood from the heart to the extremities of the body politic, a people, now in the rude infancy both of character and civilisation, will be matured into a nation of well-principled and well-conditioned families.

The records of the children of Israel tell us what religious kings did for their people, and religious parents did for their children; but they tell us nothing of what religious philanthropists did for the cause of education in their respective neighbourhoods. Confident we are, that if any such sprung up at that period, their number and their exertions, instead of deadening the zeal of any right-minded government in the same noble enterprise, would but stimulate their energies the more, by the ascent of a virtuous influence from the people to the throne. And, on the other hand, the munificence of the government would lay no check or discouragement on the liberality of private individuals. It is not conceivable that the manifestation of such a spirit in the high places of the land would cause that, throughout the community at large, the love of men for their fellows and acquaintances around them should therefore wax cold. The effect would be precisely opposite to this. The patriotism of statesmen, and the philanthropy of private citizens, would act and react with powerful and most salutary operation on each other. Both would flow in the same current; and their union is fitted to enrich a land with those institutes for the promotion of knowledge and virtue, which, when rightly conducted and rightly patronized, constitute the real wealth and wellbeing of a nation.

But though we know little respecting such a union of efforts and contributions between the prince and the people, during the subsistence of the Jewish monarchy, to promote schooling for behoof of the young—we know a great deal, for we read often in the Bible, of a union between these two parties, to uphold the

services of religion for behoof of the community at large. There was, in the first instance, a legal provision for the maintenance of ecclesiastical men, which it would have been not only spoliation but sacrilege for the state to have invaded. But, in the second instance, this did not supersede the free-will offerings of the pious and the well disposed—both for an additional maintenance to the priest, and more particularly for the erection of ecclesiastical fabrics. The truth is, that, in the history of the Jews, notwithstanding the more express and explicit sanction of the Divine authority for their Church establishment than for that of any of the nations of Christendom, yet, so far from the legal support of religion superseding the voluntary, the voluntary went before the legal. And accordingly, when they abode in the wilderness, we find that the costly tabernacle was reared, not by a tax, but by a subscription from the produce,—not of a compulsory assessment, but of spontaneous contributions from the generous and the willing-hearted of the children of Israel. And this way of it was distinctly authorized by God himself; for He commanded, not that the people should give—He did not thus overbear their inclinations—but He commanded Moses to take of every man that gave willingly with his heart, and Moses made proclamation, that whosoever was of a willing heart should bring him an offering to the Lord; and such were the power and productiveness of this method, that the people not only brought what was sufficient, but too much, so that they had to be restrained from bringing any more. Thus did the voluntary method precede the legal; and even after the legal method was established, it did not supersede the voluntary. For we afterwards find that, as it was resorted to in the erection of the tabernacle, so it was resorted to in the erection of the temple—for the raising of which there was a composition of the legal and the voluntary. David gave of his treasure, and the people gave of theirs; and, under the impulse of a common enthusiasm, all jealousy between these two parties was given to the winds—for we read that the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. It is interesting to remark, how, in these days, instead of an arena of conflict, on which the two principles of the legal and the voluntary were placed in hostile array, as if the triumph of the one should lead to the extermination of the other—both subsisted, nay flourished contemporane-

ously, not as warring elements, but in friendly and most effective coadjutorship; when the free-will offerings of the people were superadded to the levies of Solomon, and the magnificent temple of Jerusalem was the result of this happy and harmonious combination. Nor does this twofold method of supporting the worship of the Lord seem to have been lost sight of, even to the latest ages of the Jewish dispensation—as, in the days of King Joash, when the temple needed repair, he quoted the example of Moses for a collection; and accordingly a chest with a hole bored in the middle of it, was made by his orders, and set out at the gate of the temple; and this authoritative commandment of the king met with the willing cordiality of his subjects—for we read, that all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought and cast in until they had made an end, and thus they gathered money in abundance. And in the days of Hezekiah, when there was another revival from idolatry, we are informed of the people bringing in their tithes, their legally ordained tithes; but, along with these, that they also brought in their free-will offerings. And in the reign of Josiah, another bright and sunny period of the Jewish history, we are again told of a collection at the door of the temple for the reparation of its fabric; but, over and above this, of money gathered over the land, by men who went forth in deputations among the people of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin, and returned with their contributions to Jerusalem. Further onward, at the rebuilding of the temple, do we meet with the same composition of the legal and the voluntary; and with this remarkable peculiarity, that a heathen prince gave his authority to the one, while a believing people gave out of their abundance to the other—he commanding his own subjects to help the enterprise, with their silver and their gold and their goods and their beasts; they coming forth, of their own accord, with their free-will offerings—he ordering a grant for the edifice, for we expressly read of money being expended on it “according to the grant which they had of Cyrus king of Persia;” and agreeably to the terms of the decree, that the expenses be given out of the king’s house. Yet this did not supersede the “free-will offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem”—neither in the days of Cyrus, nor after him in the days of Artaxerxes, who decreed, that whatever more should be needful for the house of God, should be bestowed out of the king’s treasure-house, and gave

orders to his treasurers accordingly. In these days there was a perfect coalescence of those two elements, between which now we read of nothing but fiercest controversy. To the public treasures of the prince, and the legal tithes of the people, there were added the spontaneous offerings of both; and even in the days of the New Testament, while there still subsisted a priesthood, and that legal economy yet unrepealed by which their maintenance was secured to them—we can trace nevertheless the hand of private liberality, in furtherance and support of the same cause; as in the case of the Roman centurion, honoured by the people of Judea among whom he was stationed, as a good man, because, in the language of their own approving testimony, he loved their nation and had built them a synagogue.

Even from this brief and rapid induction which we have now offered, it is impossible not to conclude, that, in the times of the older dispensation, the public and the private, the legal and the voluntary, coalesced in the support and service of religion; and that, for the promotion of this glorious object, they worked as it were into each other's hands. If there was any contest between them, it was not, at least in the best days of the Jewish commonwealth, it was not which should contribute the least, but which should contribute the most, to the maintenance of the worship of the God of Israel. In the full tide of a common and a rejoicing sympathy between the king and his people, they provoked each other to love and to good works; and, whatever rivalry was felt on either side, it was founded on a noble and generous emulation, that led each party to render the greatest possible offering to the cause of piety and the public weal. And if ever there was an approximation to the joy of heaven upon earth, it was at one of those great convocations, which took place under the good kings of the children of Israel—a moral festival, when the whole nation held jubilee; and the heart of the king upon his throne beat in unison with the hosannahs of the multitude. The spirit which reigned over such an assemblage as this, is as unlike as possible, is removed by the whole distance of the antipodes, from that spirit, cold and withering and heartless, which animates the paltry economics of the present day. The king, on the one hand, did not abandon the support of religion to the voluntary principle, or say that it was for the people alone to bear the expense of their own ministrations: Neither did the people leave altogether this highest interest of themselves and their families to the legal principle; or say that it was for

the state alone, to do all and provide all for the religion of the land. The two principles moved in harmony together; and we leave yourselves to judge, whether in their generous concurrence, or in their fretful and fiery opposition, we behold the best and happiest state of the commonwealth.

Now all this, instead of being a narrative of useless and exploded antiquarianism, admits of a close and practical application to the present times; and more especially to the present juncture in the state and history of our own nation. A lesson might be read out of it to each of the two parties, whose proceedings we have just been describing to you—that is, to the Government on the one hand, and to the people on the other. When the rare opportunity occurs of addressing the first, as, for example, in a public sermon to the two houses of Parliament, a considerable stress, when advocating a legal provision for the services of religion in a land, should be laid on the Jewish analogy—for, though not so absolutely conclusive as if a specific and express precept could be appealed to, requiring the same aid and countenance from the civil governor in the economy under which we now live, as was then rendered under an economy that is dissolved and passed away—it should ever be recollected, not only that, having in one notable instance in past history, even that history of which the apostle tells us that it has been preserved and transmitted downward for our admonition on whom the latter ends of the world have come—not only in that great and memorable instance, have we the distinct and declared sanction of the divine authority for the maintenance of the church by the state; and which therefore, as being in that instance an express appointment of God, can have nothing in its own nature that is morally or absolutely wrong—But we should further recollect, that what was thus commanded to Jewish kings in many passages of the Old Testament, has never been forbidden to Christian kings in a single passage of the New Testament; and therefore that there is nothing in Scripture to countervail, but rather everything to confirm that argument, by which the lawfulness, or rather the bounden and positive duty of every Government to provide for the religious education of the people, has, on every principle, as we think, of piety and sound patriotism, been made the subject of a resistless demonstration. But on this we expatiate no further at present, for it is with the other party, with a certain portion of the people, that we are now holding converse; and the more proper theme therefore of our pre-

sent occasion is the second lesson—the duty which lies, not merely on rulers but on private citizens, to provide for the education of the community both in the things of sacredness and the things of ordinary scholarship.

The first consideration then which we offer is, that if, even under the Jewish economy, it was the part and duty of the people to help onward from their own liberality the maintenance of religion in the land—there lies a still more distinct and palpable obligation on private individuals, under the economy of the present day. For recollect, there could be no mistake, as there rested no obscurity, on the duty of kings or the duty of the Government in Judea, to provide for the same object—for these, of all others, were the times of the most palpable and declared connexion between the church and the state, when the support of ecclesiastical institutions and of ecclesiastical men was interwoven with the whole jurisprudence and polity of the Israelitish nation. And yet, even during the subsistence of that theocracy, when God laid His immediate command on the rulers of the Hebrews, to look after and provide for the religion of the people; and not one step of reasoning was necessary, to make out the connexion between this being the duty of the king, and the promulgated will of Him who is the king of kings—yet, even then, when so express and intelligible an obligation lay upon the one party, that is, on the monarch—this did not exonerate the other party, that is, the people, or discharge them from all part or fellowship in the exercise of the same duty. In that land where, of all the countries of the earth, there was the greatest amount of tithes—there also was there the greatest amount of free-will offerings; and, along with the immense property and firmly constituted rights of an established priesthood, there flourished at the same time, in the utmost exuberance and vigour, the generosity of a willing people. The one party did not fear to give largely, lest the other party should give less. The people did not, on the maxim that it was the duty of the Government to support religion, decline, on that account, the further support and extension of it themselves. It was at the best and brightest periods in the history of the nation, that both parties gave with the most unsparing hand; and if ever there was a time when the heart and the treasure-house of the king were most open to the necessities of religion—then also was the time when the hearts of the people, as if touched by responsive sympathy, were most alive to the same cause; and the

fullest and freest contributions were made by the citizens, for perfecting the services, or repairing the wastes and the breaches, that had taken place in the worship of the God of Israel.

We have no doubt of its being the wisdom and the duty of a Christian, as well as of a Jewish monarch, to furnish all necessary expenses for the instruction of his people in the knowledge of the true religion; and for the maintenance of the true worship of God in his dominions. But it must at the same time be admitted, that the obligation of the one is not so pointedly or so unequivocally told him in the Bible, as the obligation of the other is. A king of the Jewish nation could not possibly shut his eyes against the express requisition laid upon him in Scripture, to provide for the services of the sanctuary; or, if this failed, he could not shut his ears against the rebuke of those living prophets, who were sent from time to time to denounce the wrath of Heaven against the neglect and abandonment of Heaven's own ordinances. We believe the obligation of the king in a Christian nation, to be no less real; but then it is not so palpable. He is more left to find it out by a train of inference, which, though grounded on the truths and principles of revelation, often does not tell so powerfully on the consciences—as when the lesson is visibly given forth, and presented as it were to the intuition of the mind in the immediate characters and very words of revelation. A king in Christendom, therefore, might more readily escape from the sense and conviction of his duty, than a king in Judea could; and we ask if this do not lay a greater responsibility on the people of Christendom—because it may often leave them more to do for the maintenance of religion in their respective lands, than fell to the share of the people in Judea. Nothing can be imagined more direct or peremptory than that voice from the God of heaven, which devolved on every Jewish king the maintenance of the established religion within the limits of his monarchy; and yet the Jewish people did not, on that account, hold themselves absolved from all participation in the good work—and so they lent a helping hand, and added their free-will offerings, both to the legal endowments that had been fixed at the original institution of their church, and to the grants that from time to time were issued by royal command from the public treasury. Now if, in these days of perfect certainty about the duty of their kings, nevertheless the Jewish people over and above came forward and did so much—in our days of controversy and denial about the duty of our kings, and

when it is contended by many that the Scripture giveth forth an uncertain or even an adverse sound upon the matter, are we the Christian people to stand by and to do nothing? In the Old Testament period, both parties joined their efforts and their sacrifices; and all proved little enough for the maintenance of the temple, and synagogues of the land. If, in the New Testament period, the one party, or the Government, are beginning to sit loose to their duty, or even threatening to cast it off altogether—whether is that a reason for us, the other party, sitting loose to our duty also, or binding it all the more firmly on our conscience and observation than heretofore? Should we imitate their example; or were it not all the more incumbent on us, that we should flee to the rescue of the church, when hostility lowered upon us from high places, and rumour was afloat that old friends were forsaking us, and the main earthly pillar of the edifice was on the eve of giving way? Is this of all others, we ask, the reason for adding one desertion or one act of abandonment to another; and what shall we think of those, who, when asked to do something either for schools or churches, plead absolved, on the aphorism of which they tell us in didactic phrase and with the cold metaphysical face of a jurist on the question, that it is the part of the Government to do all—and, on the pretext of shifting the duty to its proper quarter, always contrive to shift the burden of it away from themselves.

Be assured that the true principle is, for each party, as they have opportunity, to do all they can for the glory of God, and the good of their fellow-men. Though all others should do their part to the full, there is still a part left for each to do—as when the kings of Israel did most for the Church, still there was ample room for the children of Israel to manifest their liberality in behalf of the same cause. And if we live in times when kings and governments are inclined to do little, this just leaves us all the more room, and lays upon us a greater weight of obligation, to support and extend as we may the Christianity of the world. And, instead of looking only to the principle, let us look also to the effect, of such a true right and Christian policy on our parts; and we shall find it far the likeliest and most effectual method of recalling to their duty, those who for a time may seem to have abandoned it. In proof of this, we bid you look to the first ages of Christianity, when the kings of the earth were persecutors; and disciples had to fight the battles of the faith, not only unsupported and alone, but were resisted even to the blood—their

goods spoiled, and their persons given up to martyrdom. Innumerable were the calls made in these days on the liberality of Christians, for the erection of churches, for the entertainment of ministers, and for the expense of those missionary journeys by which they leavened all the cities—though they did not, and indeed could not, not even after the zeal and enterprise of three centuries, fill up all the provinces of the Roman empire with the lessons of the gospel—which, in the retirements and fastnesses of the country, still remained, down to the reign of Constantine, in a state of Paganism. And how were these calls met? Were they resisted by the disciples, on the ground that the maintenance of the gospel, within the territory of the monarch under whom they lived, formed no part of their concern? Were they for shifting off the obligation from themselves, and laying it upon others? Least of all, were they for waiting till the eyes of a blind and hostile government should be opened, and those rulers who now plundered and persecuted the churches should see it their duty to uphold them? They did not leave undone the work of expounding the duty of governors. They reasoned, and they remonstrated, and they made every attempt to enlighten the great potentates of the earth, on the merits and claims of the gospel of Jesus Christ—as may be seen in the noble apologies which have come down to our own times, addressed by the venerable fathers of the Christian Church to the Emperors of Rome. But they did not stop here; nor were they satisfied with simply telling the duty of our civil and earthly superiors. That duty, while neglected by others, they took upon themselves; and out of their own property, as far as it survived the confiscations that had been made of it by the hand of power, did they plant churches, and maintain clergymen, and defray the expenses of a Christian ministration in many thousand places of the empire. Instead of waiting, which might have been for ever, till all this was done by the Government, they took it up at their own hands; and this proved the very instrument or process, by which the eyes of the Government were opened, and their resistance was at length borne down, when, after the commencement of the fourth century, the lordly autocrat of his vast dominions gave in to the energy of the public sentiment; and, whether from motives of piety and principle or from the motive of policy we know not, provided an entrance for the teachers of the gospel to every little district of the then civilized world*—and so,

* Were it necessary for the purposes of our argument, we should rather say that, in strict

bringing the Church into contact with the plenteous harvest of a vineyard heretofore too mighty for its grasp, cleared a way for the message of the gospel to all the families of all his population.

Now what was the process then should be the process still. In the first ages of our era, the Church had no aid or protection whatever from the State; and so the whole territory was without the blessings of any legal provision, till the Christian people so multiplied both their places of worship and their worshippers, that the Government at length was carried, and Christianity became the established religion of the empire. But it is possible, nay it has become the actual condition of things amongst us, that, from the increase of population, the original establishment of the country may become so inadequate to the number of our families, that nearly half the territory may be without the benefits of an establishment; and, to obtain these benefits, the Christians of the present day may have to do, for this half of the territory, what the Christians of the first three centuries had to do for the whole of theirs. Even however friendly the Government of a land were to such an enterprise, it is the whole tenor of my argument, that this ought not to supersede the exertions and the liberality of private Christians. But should the Government not be friendly to this extension of the Church, then is it still more incumbent,—as incumbent in fact on the faithful disciples of the Saviour now, to do the same for the waste and unprovided places of the land, as of old the disciples did for the vast and unfurnished domain that lay before them. When Christianity at its outset went forth on the then unbroken heathenism of the Roman empire, the voluntary system was put into operation first; and, when it carried the Government, the legal or endowed system was put into operation afterwards. And when we proceed, not against an entire mass but against numerous and scattered portions of heathenism, in the over-crowded towns and parishes of our own land—the voluntary now may still have to precede the legal, even as it did then. It is therefore most wretchedly preposterous, when application is made for the aid of private Christians in this enterprise of additional churches, in any of them to say, We shall wait to know what the Government does before we do anything. This is neither fair to the Government nor to the Church, for the Government does

historical precision, only a beginning of this work was made by Constantine—and that it took a lengthened period of time to fill up the present territorial establishment of Christendom.

not lead but follows the march of public sentiment; and grant that it is reluctant, or not enlightened on the present question, the efforts and sacrifices of the people all over the land constitute the very means by which to enlighten our rulers—the very instrument by which, with moral compulsion, their reluctance is at length done away. To fetch an example from our very doors. It is by the generosity of private Christians, or on the strength of their voluntary subscriptions alone, that, within these few years, one hundred and eighty additional churches have been built, or are in process of erection in various places of Scotland. Thus much for the contributions of the one party; but, so far are they from superseding or being exclusive of the other party, they, in effect, form one hundred and eighty arguments, for that aid which we seek from the Government, and by which alone these places of worship can be made fully available for the families of the labouring classes in their respective neighbourhoods. In a little time, there will be the voice of one hundred and eighty congregations, the testimony and influence of one hundred and eighty neighbourhoods, all bent on such a provision from the state, as might enable us, not to sell the gospel as now for those golden seat-rents which are so shamefully extorted, and can only be paid by the higher and middling classes—but, if possible, to preach the gospel to our workmen, our artificers, to one and all of our toil-worn population, without money and without price. The case is becoming more palpable and stronger every day, and must at length prove irresistible. We have only to multiply these erections; and every new fabric will be a new stepping-stone, which shall bring us so much nearer to the wished-for consummation. Instead of you waiting for the Government, why, it is all the other way—the Government are waiting for you. It is clear that if both parties wait, nothing will be done. And therefore it is, we call on you the one party to do your part; and this is the high way to insure the other party doing theirs. The united efforts of private Christians for this best and highest interest of the people, will at length gather into a moral force which can be withstood no longer—when, not without your contributions, on the oft-repeated maxim that Government should do all; but by your contributions, or on your doing something, it is that Government will do the rest: Or, in other words, it is through the medium of the country that the Government will be carried.

We should not have detained you so long with this argument,

had it not admitted of the strictest application to the object of our meeting this day. There could not be a wiser or more patriotic act in any Government, than to institute a system of schooling, that should provide a sound and good and cheap education for all the families of the land. But great bodies move slowly; and though the glaring deficiency of schools, more especially in towns, has been expatiated on for upwards of a quarter of a century—we know not if, even yet, any desirable approximation has been made towards the remedying of so great an evil. We have done nothing by our reasonings; but we shall have done a great deal, once that you and others are so far prevailed upon, that you shall begin to act. Let but a process of school extension be entered on; and I think it would start with even a fairer prospect of ultimate success, than did the process of Church Extension at the first—however much our prospects have brightened of late, by the general and enthusiastic support which our scheme has met with in every quarter of the kingdom. Now in several places, a beginning of this sort has been actually made; nor do I know if a better parish could have been selected, for typifying or holding forth a good miniature exhibition of the whole argument, than that one for the educational interest of whose young I now stand before you. The College parish contains a population of upwards of four thousand, the immense majority of whom, indeed we may almost say all, are of the common people—or of that class in society, whom to enlighten and to elevate and every way to better, both in character and comfort, and more especially by the lessons of the gospel, were the very highest achievement which philanthropy can overtake, and the noblest boast of philanthropy did she succeed in the undertaking. Now a most natural question is, How much would be necessary fully to provide for the schooling of such a population? It is greatly beneath the common estimate on this subject, when we say that at least five hundred, out of four thousand, should be at all times under the process of their elementary education; and that at least four schools would be required for conducting this education in a complete and effective manner. Were we living in the days of John Knox, we should certainly have contended for four schools. But living as we do in an age when private luxury is carried to an unexampled height, while the most wretched parsimony in public objects, and more especially in providing for those national institutes which might best subserve the intelligence and virtue

of the people is the order of the day—we will not venture to specify more than three schools, with the respective school-houses and district teachers, as the proper complement for such a parish. Well then, as there has been yet no legal provision for this necessity, the voluntary principle has put forth an effort and done something for the cause. And, when compared with what is doing in other places and other parishes, it has, in this parish, considering the almost unexcepted poverty of the great mass of its inhabitants, done nobly and well. But it is truly instructive to remark that, though the exertion made here greatly outruns the average of private and philanthropic exertion all over Scotland, still it is greatly, very greatly, beneath the exigencies of the parish. With a severe struggle, and in which it has been found impossible altogether to escape the burden of an oppressive arrear, they have managed to keep agoing one school, and to furnish an almost gratuitous education to about a hundred scholars—or, in other words, as regards the number of schools, they have not accomplished one-third; and, as regards the number of scholars, not one-fifth of what would be required to support an adequate system of instruction for the boyhood of this parish. Even for but one school, the allowance is both a penurious and a precarious one; and while there is a general conviction among those who have engaged in this enterprise of benevolence, that they will not be able with all their efforts to do more—there is even a well-founded doubt, whether they will succeed in keeping the ground which they have gotten, or continue year after year for any length of time to do as much. There cannot be a more vivid illustration of the inadequacy of private means, and of the indispensable necessity for a public and legal provision—ere a right economy for education in a parish, and still more for education over a whole country or congeries of many hundreds of parishes, can possibly be perfected.

But though the voluntary principle falls so immeasurably short of the completion of a right educational economy, it does admirably for the commencement of it. Though carried to its utmost extent, the voluntary system will never overtake what the endowed system alone is equal for; but let it be carried to this extent, and, as forming the most effectual of all harbingers, it will be sure to usher in the endowed system at the last. The philanthropy of the citizens is the most effectual instrument for awakening the patriotism of the Government; and could we only

see as much done by every congregation in our large towns for its corresponding parish, it would compose such a weight and body of influence in behalf of this cause, as would ultimately be felt in high places; and it should not be long ere we witnessed the espousal of it by our rulers, who at last would bring the means and the resources of the State to bear upon it. It is well that the voluntary principle should begin the cause; but it will not end the cause. It may start under the auspices of the voluntary system; but it will issue in the establishment of the endowed system. And we care not from what quarter the endowment comes. We rejoice to understand that the managers of one of the great public charities in this city, have resolved to apply a large portion of their funds to the planting of schools in various districts within the royalty; and it is our respectful but earnest suggestion, that in no section of the territory will they meet with a field of greater promise, and at the same time of greater necessity than in the parish attached to this church—or a fitter scene on which to prove the wisdom, as well as benevolence, of the application which they so rightly propose to make of the wealth that has been intrusted to their charge.

We have one observation more to make on this subject, and we deem it an important one. The school for which I am pleading is a scriptural school, in the character and system of the good olden time—where the Bible and the Catechism are taught; and the minds of the children are brought into contact with those holy principles and truths, by which alone they can be made wise unto salvation. We trust you perceive a momentous interest involved in the support and multiplication, not merely of schools, but of such schools. If there be any soundness in our argument, it is the voluntary system which germinates the endowment; and they are the schools which the one originates, if only raised in sufficient number and with a sufficient force of public opinion, that the other will perpetuate and extend. Let these voluntary schools then be carried far enough; and they will not only give birth at the last to a far greater progeny of endowed schools, but, what is of capital importance, of schools in their own likeness: And upon your support therefore of such schools as are taught scripturally and soundly, it depends, whether in the days of your posterity, the land in which we live is to be blessed with a right and a religious, in one word, a good healthful Protestant system of national education. To revert once more to our analogous example—we have raised, or are in

the act of raising, a hundred and eighty new churches, and are making it at the same time our strenuous endeavour that we shall obtain an endowment for them ; and not this only, but an endowment for as many more as might supply the whole ecclesiastical destitution of the land. Now were these Catholic or Unitarian churches, such a measure might have operated with a deadly blight on the spirit and principle of future generations ; and it serves to demonstrate the prodigious importance of an extended voluntary support, not for churches generally, but for the right kind of churches—that on this the alternative hinges, whether a pure or a vicious and corrupt theology shall emanate from the great mass and majority of the pulpits in our land. Now what is true of the kind of churches, is as true of the kind of schools. If it be important to anticipate the Government with a right kind of churches, it is also important to anticipate them with a right kind of schools. Let there be a sufficient rallying around these two great objects, of all the leal-hearted and well-principled in our land ; and we shall make sure both of a sound Protestant theology in our pulpits, and of a sound and entire Bible education in all our parishes. The national system hereafter, will take on the form and the character which individuals now may choose to impress on it. I stand before you in behalf of one such school, having this guarantee both for its being well constituted and well administered—that it is conducted under the immediate eye, the governance and guardianship of one of the most zealous friends to the prosperity, and ablest champions for the purity of the Church of Scotland. Let but this school, and a sufficient number around it in its own likeness, be upholden for a few years amid the difficulties which now encompass them ; and we have every reason to anticipate that, with the blessing of Heaven, the whole will expand into a general and well-organized system for transmitting the knowledge of the pure word of God throughout the families of our people, from generation to generation.

THE INFLUENCE
OF
PAROCHIAL ASSOCIATIONS
FOR THE
MORAL AND SPIRITUAL GOOD OF MANKIND.

INFLUENCE OF PAROCHIAL ASSOCIATIONS, &c.

ARGUMENT.

1. The Objection stated.—2. The Radical answer to it.—3. But the Objection is not true in point of fact.—4. A former act of charity does not exempt from the obligation of a new act, if it can be afforded.—5. Estimate of the encroachment made by a Religious Society upon the funds of the country.—6. A Subscriber to a Parochial Society does not give less to the Poor on that account.—7. Evidence for the truth of this assertion.—8. And explanation of its principle. (1.) The ability for other acts of charity nearly as entire as before.—9. (2.) And the disposition greater.—10. Poverty is better kept under by a preventive, than by a positive treatment.—11. Exemplified in Scotland.—12. A Parochial Society has a strong preventive operation.—13. And therefore promotes the secular interests of the poor.—14. The argument carried down to the case of Penny Societies.—15. Difficulty in the exposition of the argument.—16. The effects of a charitable endowment in a Parish pernicious to the Poor.—17. By inducing a dependence upon it.—18. And stripping them of their industrious habits.—19. The effects of a Parochial Association, such as we plead for, are in an opposite direction to those of a charitable endowment.—20. And it stands completely free of all the objections to which a tax is liable.—21. Such an Association gives dignity to the poor.—22. And a delicate reluctance to pauperism.—23. The shame of pauperism is the best defence against it.—24. How a Bible Association augments this feeling.—25. By dignifying the Poor.—26. And adding to the influence of Bible Principles.—27. Exemplified in the humblest situation.—28. The progress of these Associations in the country.—29. Compared with other Associations for the relief of temporal necessities.—30. The more salutary influence of Parochial Associations.—31. And how they counteract the pernicious influence of other charities.—32.—It is best to confide the secular relief of the Poor to individual benevolence.—33. And a Parochial Association both augments and enlightens this principle.

1. WITHOUT entering into the positive claims of the Bible Society, or of any similar Association, upon the generosity of the public, I shall endeavour to do away an objection which meets us at the very outset of every attempt to raise a subscription, or to found an institution in its favour. The secular necessities of the poor are brought into competition with it, and every shilling given to such an Association is represented as an encroachment upon that fund which was before allocated to the relief of poverty.

2. Admitting the fact stated in the objection to be true, we have an answer in readiness for it. If the Bible Society accomplish its professed object, which is to make those who were before ignorant of the Bible better acquainted with it, then the advantage given more than atones for the loss sustained. We stand upon the high ground, that eternity is longer than time, and the unfading enjoyments of the one a boon more valuable than the perishable enjoyments of the other. Money is sometimes expended for the idle purpose of amusing the poor by the gratuitous exhibition of a spectacle or show. It is a far wiser distribution of the money, when it is transferred from this object to the higher and more useful objects of feeding those among them who are hungry, clothing those among them who are naked, and paying for medicine, or attendance, to those among them who are sick. We make bold to say, that if money for the purpose could be got from no other quarter, it would be a wiser distribution still to withdraw it from the objects last mentioned, to the supreme object of paying for the knowledge of religion to those among them who are ignorant; and, at the hazard of being execrated by many, we do not hesitate to affirm, that it is better for the poor to be worse fed and worse clothed, than that they should be left ignorant of those Scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

3. But the statement contained in the objection is not true. It seems to go upon the supposition, that the fund for relieving the temporal wants of the poor is the only fund which exists in the country; and that when any new object of benevolence is started, there is no other fund to which we can repair for the requisite expenses. But there are other funds in the country. There is a prodigious fund for the maintenance of government, nor do we wish that fund to be encroached upon by a single farthing. There is a fund out of which the people of the land are provided with the necessaries of life; and before we incur the odium of trenching upon necessaries, let us first inquire, if there be no other fund in existence. Go then to all who are elevated above the class of mere labourers, and you will find in their possession a fund, out of which they are provided with what are commonly called the superfluities of life. We do not dispute their right to these superfluities, nor do we deny the quantity of pleasure which lies in the enjoyment of them. We only state the existence of such a fund, and that, by a trifling act of self-denial on the part

of those who possess it, we could obtain all that we are pleading for. It is a little hard that the competition should be struck betwixt the fund of a Parochial Association for the moral good of others, and the fund for relieving the temporal wants of the poor, while the far larger and more transferable fund for superfluities is left out of consideration entirely, and suffered to remain an untouched and unimpaired quantity. In this way the odium of hostility to the poor is fastened upon those who are labouring for their most substantial interests, while a set of men who neglect the immortality of the poor, and would leave their souls to perish, are suffered to sheer off with the credit of all the finer sympathies of our nature.

4. To whom much is given, of them much will be required. Whatever be your former liberalities in another direction, when a new and likely direction of benevolence is pointed out, the question still comes back upon you, What have you to spare? If there be a remainder left, it is by the extent of this remainder that you will be judged; and it is not right to set the claims of the Parochial Association against the secular necessities of the poor, while means so ample are left, that the true way of instituting the competition is, to set these claims against some personal gratification which it is in your power to abandon. Have a care, lest, with the language of philanthropy in your mouth, you shall be found guilty of the cruellest indifference to the true welfare of the species, and lest the discerners of your heart shall perceive how it prefers some sordid indulgence of its own to the dearest interests of those around you.

5. But let me not put to hazard the prosperity of our cause, by resting it on a standard of charity far too elevated for the general practice of the times. Let us now drop our abstract reasoning upon the respective funds, and come to an actual specification of their quantities. The truth is that, to take one example, the fund for the Bible Society is so very small, that it is not entitled to make its appearance in any abstract argument whatever; and were it not to do away even the shadow of an objection, we would have been ashamed to have thrown the argument into the language of general discussion. What shall we think of the objection, when told that the whole yearly revenue of the Bible Society, as derived from the contributions of those who support it, does not amount to a halfpenny per month from each householder in Britain and Ireland? Can this be considered as a serious invasion upon any one fund allotted to

other destinations; and shall the most splendid and promising enterprise that ever benevolence was engaged in be arrested upon an objection so fanciful? We do not want to oppress any individual by the extravagance of our demands. It is not in great sums, but in the combination of littles, that our strength lies. It is the power of combination which resolves the mystery. Great has been the progress and activity of the Bible Society since its first institution. All we want is, that this rate of activity in favour of all good associations be kept up and extended. The above statement will convince the reader that there is ample room for the extension.* The whole fund for the secular wants of the poor may be left untouched, and, as to the fund for luxuries, the revenue of our Christian Societies may be augmented a hundred-fold before this fund is sensibly encroached upon. The veriest crumbs and sweepings of extravagance would suffice us; and it will be long, and very long, before any invasion of ours upon this fund shall give rise to any perceivable abridgment of luxury, or have the weight of a straw upon the general style and establishment of families.

6. But there is still another way of meeting the objection. Let us come immediately to a question upon the point of fact. Does a man, on becoming a subscriber to a Parochial Association, give less to the secular wants of the poor than he did formerly? It is true there is a difficulty in the way of obtaining an answer to this question. He who knows best what answer to give, will be the last to proclaim it. In as far as the subscribers themselves are concerned, we must leave the answer to their own experience, and sure we are that that experience will not be against us. But it is not from this quarter that we can expect to obtain the wished-for information. The benevolence of an individual does not stand out to the eye of the public. The knowledge of its operations is confined to the little neighbourhood within which it expatiates. It is often kept from the poor themselves; and then the information we are in quest of is shut up with the giver in the silent consciousness of his own bosom, and with God in the book of His remembrance.

7. But much good has been done of late years by the combined exertions of individuals; and benevolence, when operating in this way, is necessarily exposed to public observation. Subscriptions have been started for almost every one object which

* Could we obtain a penny a-week, not from each individual, but from each family in Scotland—this alone would yield a hundred thousand pounds in the year.

benevolence can devise, and the published lists may furnish us with data for a partial solution of the proposed question. In point of fact, then, those who subscribe for a religious object, subscribe with the greatest readiness and liberality for the relief of human affliction, under all the various forms in which it pleads for sympathy. This is quite notorious. The human mind, by singling out the eternity of others as the main object of its benevolence, does not withdraw itself from the care of sustaining them on the way which leads to eternity. It exerts an act of preference, but not an act of exclusion. A friend of mine has been indebted to an active and beneficent patron for a lucrative situation in a distant country, but he wants money to pay his travelling expenses. I commit every reader to his own experience of human nature, when I rest with him the assertion, that if real kindness lay at the bottom of this act of patronage, the patron himself is the likeliest quarter from which the assistance will come. The man who signalizes himself by his religious charities, is not the last but the first man to whom I would apply in behalf of the sick and the destitute. The two principles are not inconsistent. They give support and nourishment to each other, or rather they are exertions of the same principle. This will appear in full display on the day of judgment; and even in this dark and undiscerning world, enough of evidence is before us, upon which the benevolence of the Christian stands nobly vindicated, and from which it may be shown that, while its chief care is for the immortality of others, it casts a wide and a wakeful eye over all the necessities and sufferings of the species.

8. Nor have we far to look for the explanation. The two elements which combine to form an act of charity are the ability and the disposition; and the question simply resolves itself into this, "In how far these elements will survive a donation to a Parochial Association for religious objects, so as to leave the other charities unimpaired by it?" It is certainly conceivable that an individual may give every spare farthing of his income to this institution. In this case there is a total extinction of the first element. But, in point of fact, this is never done, or done so rarely as not to be admitted into any general argument. With by far the greater number of subscribers the ability is not sensibly encroached upon. There is no visible retrenchment in the superfluities of life. A very slight and partial change in the direction of that fund which is familiarly known by the name of *pocket-money*, can, generally speaking, provide for the whole

amount of the donation in question. There are a thousand floating and incidental expenses which can be given up without almost the feeling of a sacrifice; and the diversion of a few of them to the charity we are pleading for, leaves the ability of the giver to all sense as entire as before.

9. But the second element is subject to other laws, and the formal calculations of arithmetic do not apply to it. The disposition is not like the ability—a given quantity which suffers an abstraction by every new exercise. The effect of a donation upon the purse of the giver, is not the same with the moral influence of that donation upon his heart. Yet the two are assimilated by our antagonists; and the pedantry of computation carries them to results which are in the face of all experience. It is not so easy to awaken the benevolent principle out of its sleep, as, when once awakened in behalf of one object, to excite and to interest it in behalf of another. When the bar of selfishness is broken down, and the flood-gates of the heart are once opened, the stream of beneficence can be turned into a thousand directions. It is true, that there can be no beneficence without wealth, as there can be no stream without water. It is conceivable that the opening of the flood-gates may give rise to no flow, as the opening of the poor man's heart to the distresses of those around him may give rise to no act of almsgiving. But we have already proved the abundance of wealth (N.B. see 8). It is the selfishness of the inaccessible heart which forms the mighty barrier; and, if this could be done away, a thousand fertilizing streams would issue from it. Now this is what our Parochial Associations in many instances have accomplished. They have unlocked the avenue to many a heart which was before inaccessible. They have come upon them with all the energy of a popular and prevailing impulse. They have created in them a new taste and a new principle. They have opened the fountain, and we are sure that, in every district of the land where a Parochial Association exists, the general principle of benevolence is more active and more expanding than ever.

10. And, after all, what is the best method of providing for the secular necessities of the poor? Is it by labouring to meet the necessity after it has occurred, or by labouring to establish a principle and a habit which would go far to prevent its existence? If you wish to get rid of a noxious stream, you may first try to intercept it by throwing across a barrier: but in this

way you only spread the pestilential water over a greater extent of ground, and when the basin is filled, a stream as copious as before is formed out of its overflow. The most effectual method, were it possible to carry it into accomplishment, would be to dry up the source. The parallel in a great measure holds. If you wish to extinguish poverty, combat with it in its first elements. If you confine your beneficence to the relief of actual poverty, you do nothing. Dry up, if possible, the spring of poverty, for every attempt to intercept the running stream has totally failed. The education and the religious principle of Scotland have not annihilated pauperism, but they have restrained it to a degree that is almost incredible to our neighbours of the south: they keep down the mischief in its principle; they impart a sobriety and a right sentiment of independence to the character of our peasantry; they operate as a check upon profligacy and idleness. The maintenance of parish schools is a burden upon the landed property of Scotland, but it is a cheap defence against the poor-rates, a burden far heavier, and which is aggravating perpetually. The writer of this paper knows of a parish in Fife, the average maintenance of whose poor is defrayed by twenty-four pounds sterling a year, and of a parish of the same population, in Somersetshire, where the annual assessments come to thirteen hundred pounds sterling. The preventive regimen of the one country does more than the positive applications of the other. In England they have suffered poverty to rise to all the virulence of a formed and obstinate disease. But they may as well think of arresting the destructive progress of a torrent by throwing across an embankment as think that the mere positive administration of relief will put a stop to the accumulating mischiefs of poverty.

11. The exemption of Scotland from the miseries of pauperism is due to the education which their people receive at schools, and to the Bible which their scholarship gives them access to. The man who subscribes to the Divine authority of this simple saying, "If any will not work, neither should he eat," possesses, in the good treasure of his own heart, a far more effectual security against the hardships of indigence than the man who is trained, by the legal provisions of his country, to sit in slothful dependence upon the liberalities of those around him. It is easy to be eloquent in the praise of those liberalities; but the truth is, that they may be carried to the mischievous extent of forming a depraved and beggarly population. The hungry expectations of

the poor will ever keep pace with the assessments of the wealthy ; and their eye will be averted from the exertion of their own industry, as the only right source of comfort and independence. It is quite in vain to think that positive relief will ever do away the wretchedness of poverty. Carry the relief beyond a certain limit, and you foster the diseased principle which gives birth to poverty. On this subject the people of England felt themselves of late to be in a state of almost inextricable helplessness ; and they were not without the fears of some mighty convulsion to come upon them with all the energy of a tempest, before this devouring mischief could be swept away from the face of their community.

12. The best thing to avert this calamity from England is the education of their peasantry ; and this is a cause to which the Religious Societies are contributing their full share of influence. A zeal for the circulation of the Bible is inseparable from a zeal for extending among the people the capacity of reading it ; and it is not to be conceived that the very same individual can be eager for the introduction of this volume into our cottages, and sit inactive under the galling reflection that it is still a sealed book to many thousands of the occupiers. Accordingly we find that the two concerns are keeping pace with one another. The Bible Society does not overstep the simplicity of its assigned object ; but the members of that Society receive an impulse from the cause, which carries them to promote the education of the poor, either by their individual exertions or by giving their support to the Society for Schools. The two Societies move in concert. Each contributes an essential element in the business of enlightening the people. The one furnishes the book of knowledge, and the other furnishes the key to it. This division of employment, as in every other instance, facilitates the work, and renders it more effective. But it does not hinder the same individual from giving his countenance to both ; and sure I am that the man whose feelings have been already warmed, and whose purse has been already drawn in behalf of the one, is a likelier subject for an application in behalf of the other than he whose money is still untouched, but whose heart is untouched also.

13. It will be seen, then, that our Parochial Societies are not barely defensible, but may be pleaded for upon that ground on which their enemies have raised an opposition to them. Their immediate object is neither to feed the hungry nor to clothe the naked ; but, in every country under the benefit of their exer-

tions, there will be less hunger to feed, and less nakedness to clothe. They do not cure actual poverty, but they anticipate eventual poverty. They aim their decisive thrust at the heart and principle of the mischief; and, instead of suffering it to form into the obstinacy of an inextirpable disease, they smother and destroy it in the infancy of its first elements. The love which worketh no ill to his neighbour, will not suffer the true Christian to live in idleness upon another's bounty; and he will do as Paul did before him—he will labour with his hands rather than be burdensome. Could we reform the improvident habits of the people, and pour the healthful infusion of Scripture principle into their hearts, it would reduce the existing poverty of the land to a very humble fraction of its present extent. We make bold to say that, in ordinary times, there is not one-tenth of the pauperism of England due to unavoidable misfortune. It has grown out of a vicious and impolitic system; and the millions which are raised every year have only served to nourish and extend it. Now, Religious Education is a prime agent in the work of counteracting this disorder. Its mode of proceeding carries in it all the cheapness and all the superior efficacy of a preventive operation. With a revenue not equal to the poor rates of many a country, it is doing more even for the secular interests of the poor than all the charities of England united; and while a puling and injudicious sympathy is pouring out its complaints against the Societies which support this education, it is sowing the seeds of character and independence, and rearing, for future days, the spectacle of a thriving, substantial, and well-conditioned peasantry.

14. I have hitherto been supposing that the rich only are the givers, but I now call on the poor to be sharers in this work of charity. It is true that of these poor there are some who depend on charity for their subsistence, and these have no right to give what they receive from others. And there are some who have not arrived at this state of dependence, but are on the very verge of it. Let us keep back no part of the truth from them. "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." There are others again, and these I apprehend form by far the most numerous class of society, who can maintain themselves in humble but honest independence, who can spare a little, and not feel it; who can do what Paul advises,* lay aside

* 1 Corinthians xvi. 2.

their penny a week as God hath prospered them ; who can share that blessedness which the Saviour spoke of when He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive ; who, though they cannot equal their richer neighbours in the amount of their donation, can bestow their something, and can, at all events, carry in their bosom a heart as warm to the cause, and call down as precious a blessing from the God who witnesses it. A Parochial Society is opposed on the ground of its diverting a portion of relief from the secular necessities of the poor, even when the rich only are called upon to support it. When the application for support is brought down to the poor themselves, and, instead of the recipients, it is proposed to make them the dispensers of charity, we may lay our account with the opposition being still more clamorous. We undertake to prove that this opposition is founded on a fallacy, and that, by interesting the great mass of a parish in the objects of religious benevolence, and assembling them into a penny association for their support, you raise a defence against the extension of pauperism.

15. We feel a difficulty in this undertaking, not from any uncertainty which hangs over the principle, but from the difficulty of bringing forward a plain and popular exhibition of it. However familiar the principle may be to a student of political science, it carries in it an air of paradox to the multitude, and it were well if this air of paradox were the only obstacle to its reception. But to the children of poesy and fine sentiment, the principle in question carries in it an air of barbarity also, and all the rigour of a pure and impregnable argument has not been able to protect the conclusions of Malthus from their clamorous indignation. There is a kind of hurrying sensibility about them, which allows neither time nor temper for listening to any calculation on the subject ; and there is not a more striking vanity under the sun, than that the substantial interests of the poor have suffered less from the malignant and the unfeeling, than from those who give without wisdom, and who feel without consideration :

“ Blessed is he that *wisely* doth
The poor man's case *consider*.”

16. Let me put the case of two parishes, in the one of which there is a known and public endowment, out of which an annual sum is furnished for the maintenance of the poor ; and that in the other there is no such endowment. At the outset, the poor of the first parish may be kept in greater comfort than the poor

of the second; but it is the lesson of all experience, that no annual sum, however great, will be able to keep them permanently in greater comfort. The certain effect of an established provision for the poor is, a relaxation of their economical habits, and an increased number of improvident marriages. When their claim to a provision is known, that claim is always counted upon, and it were well, if to flatter their natural indolence, they did not carry the calculation beyond the actual benefit they can ever receive. But this is what they always do. When a public charity is known and counted upon, the relaxation of frugal and providential habits is carried to such an extent, as not only to absorb the whole produce of the charity, but to leave new wants unprovided for, and the effect of the benevolent institution is just to create a population more wretched and more clamorous than ever.

17. In the second parish, the economical habits of the people are kept unimpaired, and just because their economy is forced to take a higher aim, and to persevere in it. The aim of the first people is, to provide for themselves a part of their maintenance: The aim of the second people is, to provide for themselves their whole maintenance. We do not deny that even among the latter we will meet with distress and poverty, just such distress and such poverty as are to be found in the average of Scottish parishes. This finds its alleviation in private benevolence. To alleviate poverty is all that can be done for it; to extinguish it we fear is hopeless. Sure we are that the known and regular provisions of England will never extinguish it, and that, in respect of the poor themselves, the second parish is under a better system than the first. The poor-rates are liable to many exceptions, but there is none of them more decisive with him who cares for the eternity of the poor, than the temptation they hold out to positive guilt, the guilt of not working with their own hands, and so becoming burdensome to others.*

18. Let us conceive a political change in the circumstances of the country, and that the public charity of the first parish fell among the ruin of other institutions. Then its malignant influence would be felt in all its extent; and it would be seen that it, in fact, had impoverished those whom it professed to sustain, that it had stript them of a possession far more valuable than all it had ever given; that it had stript them of industrious

* Acts xx. 35; 1 Timothy v 8.

habits, and left those whom its influence never reached wealthier in the resources of their own superior industry, than the artificial provisions of an unwise and meddling benevolence could ever make them.

19. The comparison betwixt these two parishes paves the way for another comparison. Let me now put the case of a third parish, where a Parochial Association is instituted, and where the simple regulation of a penny a week throws it open to the bulk of the people. What effect has this upon their economical habits? It just throws them at a greater distance from the thriftlessness which prevails in the first parish, and leads them to strike a higher aim in the way of economy than the people of the second. The general aim of economy, in humble life, is to keep even with the world; but it is known to every man at all familiar with that class of society, that the great majority may strike their aim a little higher, and, in point of fact, have it in their power to redeem an annual sum from the mere squanderings of mismanagement and carelessness. The unwise provisions in the first parish, have had the effect of sinking the income of the poor below their habits of expenditure, and they are brought, permanently and irrecoverably brought, into a state of pauperism. In the second parish, the income, generally speaking, is even with the habits of expenditure: In the third, the income is above the habits of expenditure, and above it by the annual sum contributed to the Parochial Society. The circumstance of being members of such a society, throws them at a greater distance from pauperism than if they had not been members of it.

20. The effect on the economical habits of the people would just be the same in whatever way the stated annual sum was obtained from them, even though a compulsory tax were the instrument of raising it.* This assimilation of our plan to a tax may give rise to a world of impetuous declamation; but let it ever be remembered, that the institution of a Parochial Society gives you the whole benefit of such a tax, without its odiousness. It brings up their economy to a higher pitch; but it does so not in the way which they resist, but in the way which they choose. The single circumstance of its being a *voluntary* act, forms the defence and the answer to all the clamours of an affected sym-

* I must here suppose the sum to be a stated one, and a feeling of security on the part of the people, that the tax shall not be subject to variation, at the caprice of an arbitrary government.

pathy. You take from the poor. No! they give.—You take beyond their ability. Of this they are the best judges.—You abridge their comforts. No! there is a comfort in the exercise of charity; there is a comfort in the act of lending a hand to a noble enterprise; there is a comfort in the contemplation of its progress; there is a comfort in rendering a service to a friend, and when that friend is the Saviour, and that service the circulation of the message He left behind Him, it is a comfort which many of the poor are ambitious to share in. Leave them to judge of their comfort; and if in point of fact they do give their penny a week to a Parochial Society, it just speaks them to have more comfort in this way of spending it than in any other which occurs to them.

21. Perhaps it does not occur to those friends of the poor, while they are sitting in judgment on their circumstances and feelings, how unjustly and how unworthily they think of them. They do not conceive how truth and benevolence can be at all objects to them; and suppose, that after they have got the meat to feed, the house to shelter, the raiment to cover them, there is nothing else that they will bestow a penny upon. They may not be able to express their feelings on a suspicion so ungenerous, but I shall do it for them: "We have souls as well as you, and precious to our hearts is the Saviour who died for them. It is true we have our distresses, but these have bound us more firmly to our Bibles, and it is the desire of our hearts that a gift so precious should be sent to the poor of other countries. The Word of God is our hope and our rejoicing; we desire that it may be theirs also, that the wandering savage may know it and be glad, and the poor negro, under the lash of his master, may be told of a Master in heaven who is full of pity and full of kindness. Do you think that sympathy for such as these is your peculiar attribute? Know, that our hearts are made of the same materials with your own; that we can feel as well as you; and out of the earnings of a hard and an honest industry, we shall give an offering to the cause; nor shall we cease our exertions till the message of salvation be carried round the globe, and made known to the countless millions who live in guilt, and who die in darkness."

22. And here it is obvious, that a superior habit of economy is not the only defence which a Parochial Society raises against pauperism. The smallness of the sum contributed may give a littleness to this argument; but not, let it be remembered, with-

out giving an equal littleness to the objection of those who declaim against the institution on the ground of its oppressiveness to the poor contributors. The great defence which such a Society establishes against pauperism is, the superior tone of dignity and independence which it imparts to the character of him who supports it. He stands on the high ground of being a dispenser of charity, and, before he can submit to become a recipient of charity, he must let himself farther down than a poor man in ordinary circumstances. To him the transition will be more violent; and the value of this principle will be acknowledged by all who perceive that it is reluctance on the part of the poor man to become a pauper, which forms the mighty barrier against the extension of pauperism. A man, by becoming the member of a benevolent association, puts himself into the situation of a giver. He stands at a greater distance than before from the situation of a receiver. He has a wider interval to traverse before he can reach this point. He will feel it a greater degradation, and, to save himself from it, he will put forth all his powers of frugality and exertion. The idea of restraining pauperism by external administrations seems now to be generally abandoned. But could we thus enter into the hearts of the poor, we would get in at the root of the mischief, and by fixing there a habit of economy and independence, more would be done for them than by all the liberalities of all the opulent.

23. In those districts of Scotland where poor-rates are unknown, the descending avenue which leads to pauperism is powerfully guarded by the stigma which attaches to it. Remove this stigma, and our cottagers, now rich in the possession of contentment and industry, would resign their habits, and crowd into the avenue by thousands. The shame of descending is the powerful stimulus which urges them to a manful contest with the difficulties of their situation, and which bears them through in all the pride of honest independence. Talk of this to the people of the South, and it sounds in their ears like an Arcadian story. But there is not a clergyman amongst us who has not witnessed the operation of the principle in all its fineness, and in all its moral delicacy; and surely a testimony is due to those village heroes who so nobly struggle with the difficulties of pauperism, that they may shun and surmount its degradation.

24. A Parochial Association gives additional vigour and buoyancy to this elevated principle. The trifle which it exacts from its contributor is, in truth, never missed by him; but it

puts him in the high attitude, of a giver, and every feeling which it inspires is on the side of independence and delicacy. Go over each of these feelings separately, and you find that they are all fitted to fortify his dislike at the shame and dependence of pauperism. There is a consciousness of importance which unavoidably attaches to the share he has taken in the support and direction of a public charity. There is the expanding effect of the information which comes to him through the medium of the circulated Reports, which lays before him the mighty progress of an institution reaching to all countries, and embracing in its ample grasp the men of all latitudes and all languages, which deeply interests him in the object, and perpetuates his desire of promoting it. A man with his heart so occupied, and his attention so directed, is not capable of a voluntary descent to pauperism. He has, in fact, become a more cultivated and intellectual being than formerly. His mind gathers an enlargement from the wide and animating contemplations which are set before him; and we appeal to the reflection of every reader, if such a man will descend as readily to a dependence on the charity of others, as he whose mind is void of information, and whose feelings are void of dignity.

25. In such associations the rich and the poor meet together. They share in one object, and are united by the sympathy of one feeling, and of one interest. We have not to look far into human nature to be convinced of the happy and the harmonizing influence which this must have upon society; and how, in the glow of one common cordiality, all asperity and discontent must give way to the kindlier principles of our nature. The days have been, when the very name of an association carried terror and suspicion along with it. In a Parochial Association for religious objects there is nothing which our rulers need to be afraid of; and they may rest assured, that the moral influence of such institutions is all on the side of peace and loyalty. But to confine myself to the present argument: Who does not see that they exalt the general tone and character of our people; that they bring them nearer to the dignity of superior and cultivated life; and that, therefore, though their direct aim is not to mitigate poverty, they go a certain way to dry up the most abundant of its sources?

26. Let me add, that the direct influence of Bible principles is inseparable from a zeal for the circulation of the Bible. It is not to be conceived, that anxiety for sending it to others can

exist, while there is no reverence for it among ourselves; and we appeal to those districts where such associations have been formed, if a more visible attention to the Bible, and a more serious impression of its authority, is not the consequence of them. Now, the lessons of this Bible are all on the side of industry. They tell us that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that, therefore, a man who, by his own voluntary idleness, is brought under the necessity of receiving, has disinherited himself of a blessing. The poor must have bread, but the Bible commands and exhorts, that wherever it is possible, that bread should be *their own*, and that all who are able should make it their own by working for it.* No precept can be devised which bears more directly on the source of pauperism. The minister who, in his faithful exposition of the Bible, urged this precept successfully upon his people, would do much to extinguish pauperism amongst them. It is true that he does not always urge successfully; but surely if success is to be more looked for in one quarter than in another, it is among the pious and intelligent peasantry whom he has assembled around him, whom he has formed into a little society for the circulation of the Bible, and whose feelings he has interested in this purest and worthiest of causes.

27. Nor is the operation of this principle confined to the actual contributor. We have no doubt that it has been beautifully exemplified even among those, who, unable to give their penny a week, either stand on the very verge of pauperism, or have got within its limits. They are unable to give anything of their own, but they may be able at the same time to forego the wonted allowance with they received from another, or a part of it. The refusals of the poor to take an offered charity, or to take the whole amount of the offer, are quite familiar to a Scottish clergyman; and the plea on which they set the refusal, that it would be taking from others who are even needier than they, entitles them, when honestly advanced, to all the praise of benevolence. A spirit of pious attachment to the Bible would prompt a refusal of the same kind. "You have other and higher claims upon you—you have the spiritual necessities of the world to provide for, and, that you may be the more able to make the provision, leave me to the frugality of my own management." In this way the principle descends, and carries its healthful influence into the very regions of pauperism. It is the only principle

* 2 Thess. iii. 12.

competent to its extirpation. The obvious expedient of a positive supply, to meet the wants of existing poverty, has failed, and the poor-rates of England will ever be a standing testimony to the utter inefficiency of this expedient, which, instead of killing the disease, has rooted and confirmed it. Try the other expedient, then. The remedy against the extension of pauperism does not lie in the liberalities of the rich. It lies in the hearts and habits of the poor. Plant in their bosoms a principle of independence. Give a higher tone of delicacy to their characters. Teach them to recoil from pauperism as a degradation. The degradation may at times be unavoidable; but the thing which gives such alarming extent to the mischief, is the debasing influence of poor-rates, whereby, in the vast majority of instances, the degradation is voluntary. But if there be an exalting influence in Parochial Associations to counteract this; if they foster a right spirit of importance; above all, if they secure a readier submission to the lessons of the volume which they are designed to circulate, who does not see, that in proportion as they are multiplied and extended over the face of the country, they carry along with them the most effectual regimen for preventing the extension of poverty?

28. And here it may be asked, if it be at all likely that these associations will extend to such a degree, as to have a sensible influence upon the habits of the country? Nothing more likely. A single individual of influence in each parish would make the system universal. In point of fact, it is making progress every month; and such is the wonderful spirit of exertion which is now abroad, that in a few years every little district of the land may become the seat of a Parochial Society. We are now upon the dawn of very high anticipations; and the wholesome effect upon the habits and principles of the people at home, is not the least of them. That part of the controversy which relates to the direct merits of the objects of our Parochial Associations, may be looked upon as already exhausted; and could the objection, founded on their interference with the relief of the poor, be annihilated, or still more, could it be converted into a positive argument in their behalf, we are not aware of a single remaining plea, upon which a rational or benevolent man can refuse his concurrence to them.

29. And the plea of conceived injury to the poor deserves to be attended to. It wears an amiable complexion, and we believe that, in some instances, a real sympathy with their dis-

tresses lies at the bottom of it. Let sympathy be guided by consideration. It is the part of a Christian to hail benevolence in all its forms; but when a plan is started for the relief of the destitute, is he to be the victim of a popular and sentimental indignation, because he ventures to take up the question whether the plan be really an effective one? We know, that in various towns of Scotland, you meet with two distinct Penny Societies, one an association for religious objects, the other for the relief of the indigent. It is to be regretted, that there should ever be any jealousy betwixt them; but we believe that, agreeably to what we have already said, it will often be found that the one suggested the other, and that the supporters of the former are the most zealous, and active, and useful friends of the latter. We cannot however suppress the fact, that there is now a growing apprehension lest the growth of the latter societies should break down the delicacies of the lower orders, and pave the way for a permanent introduction of poor-rates. There is a pretty general impression, that the system may be carried too far; and the uncertainty as to the precise limit has given the feeling to many, who embarked with enthusiasm, that they are now engaged in a ticklish and questionable undertaking. I do not attempt either to confirm or to refute this impression, but I account it a piece of justice to the associations I am pleading for, to assert, that they stand completely free of every such exception. Our associations are making steady advances towards the attainment of their object, and the sure effect of multiplying the subscribers, is to conduct them in a shorter time to the end of their labours. A society for the relief of temporal necessities, is grasping at an object that is completely unattainable; and the mischief is, that the more known, and the more extensive, and the more able it becomes, it is sure to be more counted on, and at last to create more poverty than it provides for. A Bible Society, for example, aims at making every land a land of Bibles; and this aim it will accomplish, after it has translated the Bible into all languages, and distributed a sample large enough to create a native and universal demand for them.* After the people of the world have acquired such a taste for the Bible, and such a sense of its value, as to purchase it for themselves, the society terminates its career; and, instead of the corruptions

* But this native demand never will be created without the exertion of Missionaries; and the above reasoning applies, in its most important parts, to Missionary Associations.— See *Appendix*.

and abuses which other charities scatter in their way, it leaves the poor to whom it gives, more enlightened, and the poor from whom it takes, more elevated than it found them.

30. "Charity," says Shakspeare, "is twice blest. It blesses him who gives, and him who takes." This is far from being universally true. There is a blessing annexed to the heart which deviseth liberal things. Perhaps the founder of the English poor-rates acquired this blessing; but the indolence and depravity which they have been the instrument of spreading over the face of the country, are incalculable. If we wish to see the assertion of the poet realized in its full extent, go to such a charity as we are now pleading for, where the very exercise of giving on the one hand, and the instruction received on the other, have the effect of narrowing the limits of pauperism, by creating a more virtuous and dignified population.

31. There is poverty to be met with in every land, and we are ready to admit, that a certain proportion of it is due to unavoidable misfortune. But it is no less true, that in those countries where there is a known and established provision for the necessities of the poor, the greater proportion of the poverty which exists in them is due to the debasing influence of a public charity on the habits of the people. The institution we are pleading for counteracts this influence. It does not annihilate all poverty, but it tends to annihilate the greater part of it. It arrests the progress of the many who were making a voluntary descent to pauperism, and it leaves none to be provided for but the few who have honestly struggled against their distresses, and have struggled in vain.

32. And how shall they be provided for? You may erect a public institution. This, in fact, is the same with erecting a signal of invitation, and the voluntary and self-created poor will rush in, to the exclusion of those modest and unobtrusive poor who are the genuine objects of charity. This is the never-failing mischief of a known and established provision,* and it has been sadly exemplified in England. The only method of doing away the mischief is to confide the relief of the poor to individual benevolence. This draws no dependence along with it. It is

* We must here except all those institutions, the object of which is to provide for involuntary distress, such as hospitals and dispensaries, and asylums for the lunatic or the blind. A man may resign himself to idleness, and become wilfully poor, that he may eat of the public bread; but he will not become wilfully sick or maimed, that he may receive medicines from, or undergo an operation in an hospital.

not counted upon like a public and proclaimed charity. It brings the claims of the poor under the discriminating eye of a neighbour, who will make a difference betwixt a case of genuine helplessness, and a case of idleness or misconduct. It turns the tide of benevolence into its true channel; and it will ever be found, that under its operation, the poverty of misfortune is better seen to, and the poverty of improvidence and guilt is more effectually prevented.

33. My concluding observation then is, that the extension of Parochial Societies, while it counteracts in various directions the mischief of poor rates, augments that principle of individual benevolence, which is the best substitute for poor-rates. You add to the stock of individual benevolence, by adding to the number of benevolent individuals; and this is the genuine effect of a Parochial Association. Or, you add to the stock of individual benevolence in a country, by adding to the intensity of the benevolent principle; and this is the undoubted tendency of a Parochial Association.* And, what is of mighty importance in this argument, a Parochial Association for these higher objects not only awakens the benevolent principle, but it enlightens it. It establishes an intercourse betwixt the various orders of society; and, on no former occasion in the history of this country, have the rich and the poor come so often together upon a footing of good-will. The kindly influence of this is incalculable. It brings the poor under the eye of their richer neighbours. The visits and inquiries connected with the objects of our Parochial Society, bring them into contact with one another. The rich come to be more skilled in the wants and difficulties of the poor; and, by entering their houses, and joining with them in conversation, they not only acquire a benevolence towards them, but they gather that knowledge which is so essential to guide and enlighten their benevolence.†

* See § 9.

† There never perhaps was so minute and statistical a survey taken of the poor families in London, as by the friends and agents of the Bible Society. That this survey has given rise to many deeds of secular benevolence, I do not know from any positive information; but I assert it upon the confidence I repose in the above principles, and am willing to risk upon this assertion the credit of the whole argument.

APPENDIX.

It is evident that the above reasoning applies, in its chief parts, to benevolent Associations instituted for any other religious purpose. It is not necessary for example to restrict the argument to the case of Bible Associations. I should be sorry if the Bible Society were to engross the religious benevolence of the public, and if, in the multiplication of its auxiliaries over the face of the country, it were to occupy the whole ground, and leave no room for the great and important claims of other institutions.

Of this I conceive that there is little danger. The revenue of each of these Societies is founded upon voluntary contributions, and what is voluntary may be withdrawn or transferred to other objects. I may give both to a Bible and a Missionary Society; or, if I can only afford to give to one, I may select either, according to my impression of their respective claims. In this way a vigilant and discerning public will suit its benevolence to the urgency of the case, and it is evident that each institution can employ the same methods for obtaining patronage and support. Each can and does bring forward a yearly statement of its claims and necessities. Each has the same access to the public, through the medium of the pulpit or the press. Each can send its advocates over the face of the country; and every individual, forming his own estimate of their respective claims, will apportion his benevolence accordingly.

Now, what is done by an individual, may be done by every such Association as I am now pleading for. Its members may sit in judgment on the various schemes of utility which are now in operation; and, though originally formed as an auxiliary to the Bible Society, it may keep itself open to other calls, and occasionally give of its funds to Missionaries, or Moravians, or the Society for Gaelic Schools, or the African Institution, or to the Jewish, and Baptist, and Hibernian, and Lancasterian Societies.

In point of fact, the subordinate Associations of the country are tending towards this arrangement, and it is a highly beneficial arrangement. It carries in it a most salutary control over all these various institutions, each labouring to maintain itself in reputation with the public, and to secure the countenance of this great patron. Indolence and corruption may lay hold of an en-

dowed charity, but when the charity depends upon public favour, a few glaring examples of mismanagement would annihilate it.

During a few of the first years of the Bible Society, the members of other Societies were alarmed at the rapid extension of its popularity, and expressed their fears lest it should engross all the attention and benevolence of the religious public. But the reverse has happened, and a principle made use of in the body of this pamphlet may be well illustrated by the history of this matter.* The Bible Society has drawn a great yearly sum of money from the public; and the first impression was, that it would exhaust the fund for religious charities. But while it drew money from the hand, it sent a fresh and powerful excitement of Christian benevolence into the heart; and, under the influence of this creative principle, the fund has extended to such a degree, as not only to meet the demands of the new Society, but to yield a more abundant revenue to the older Societies than ever. We believe that the excitement goes much further than this, and that many a deed of ordinary charity could be traced to the impulse of the cause we are pleading for. We hazard the assertion, that many thousands of those who contribute to the Bible Society, find in themselves a greater readiness to every good work,† since the period of their connexion with it, and that in the wholesome channel of individual benevolence, more hunger is fed, and more nakedness clothed, throughout the land, than at any period anterior to the formation of our Religious Societies.

The alarm, grounded upon the tendency of these Societies, with their vast revenues, to impoverish the country, is ridiculous. If ever their total revenue shall amount to a sum which can make it worthy of consideration to an enlightened economist at all, it may be proved that it trenches upon no national interest whatever; that it leaves population and public revenue on precisely the same footing of extent and prosperity in which it found them; and that it interferes with no one object which patriot or politician needs to care for. In the meantime, it may suffice to state, that the income of all the Bible and Missionary Societies in the island, would not do more than defray the annual maintenance of one ship of the line.‡ When put by the side of the millions which are lavished without a sigh on the enterprises of war, it is nothing; and shall this veriest trifle be grudged to

* See § 9.

† Titus iii. 1.

‡ This calculation applies to the year 1814.

the advancement of a cause, which, when carried to its accomplishment, will put an end to war, and banish all its passions and atrocities from the world?

I should be sorry if Penny Associations were to bind themselves down to the support of the Bible Society. I should like to see them exercising a judgment over the numerous claims which are now before the public, and giving occasionally of their funds to other religious institutions. The effect of this very exercise would be to create a liberal and well-informed peasantry; to open a wider sphere to their contemplations; and to raise the standard, not merely of piety, but of general intelligence amongst them. The diminution of pauperism is only part of the general effect which the multiplication of these societies will bring about in the country; and if my limits allowed me, I might expatiate on their certain influence in raising the tone and character of the British population.*

* It is thought by some that the assumption of the title "Bible Association," carries in it an obligation to devote all the funds to the Bible Society. The title may easily be modified, so as to leave the most entire liberty to every association to give of its funds to any religious society whatever.

THE EXAMPLE OF OUR SAVIOUR

A GUIDE AND AN AUTHORITY

IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

THE EXAMPLE OF OUR SAVIOUR

A GUIDE AND AN AUTHORITY

IN THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

“ Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat : and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.”—MATTHEW xv. 32.

“ When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither ? Jesus answered them, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”—JOHN vi. 24-26.

“ But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence : and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all.”—MATTHEW xii. 15.

COMPASSION is that feeling which arises in the heart of a human being, when he looks to the misery of another—which, if unmixed with other feelings, keeps him restless and dissatisfied till the misery be done away—which prompts him to measures of relief ; and at length finds its ultimate gratification in the deliverance of its object from that suffering which called forth the sensibility that we are now adverting to.

But there may be other feelings excited by the very same object, and which tend to modify or to suspend the exercise of compassion altogether. The misery in question may be the infliction of a punishment ; and our sense of justice, if it do not prevent the existence of a sense of compassion, will at least so far keep it in check, as to restrain us from obeying the impulse of it. Or it may be the pain of a severe but salutary operation ; and then the sensitive compassion which we would feel in common with children, we do not like children follow—and just be-

cause we put it under the control of a higher and more intelligent compassion. Or it may be the immediate suffering of a correction, administered for the moral good of him who is its object; and still there may be a moral rectitude in withstanding the dictate of compassion, while we feel the emotion of it. And thus, while it goes to form a revolting unloveliness of character, to have a heart unmoved by even the slightest or more transient distresses of our common nature—yet it also goes, not to impair but to perfect the character, when all these constitutional movements are brought under the guidance of principle, and of a virtuous and intelligent regard to the higher interests of our species.

In a matter of charity, a man may have the intelligence without the instinct; and we then look to him with something of the same dread and aversion, that we do to one of those mutilated spirits among the infernal, who are permitted to retain the energies of their nature, after all its moralities have been extinguished. Yet that is no good reason, why all our preferences should be directed to him, who has only the instinct without the intelligence—why the question should not be looked to with the eye of discernment, as well as with an eye of tearful sensibility—why thought and experience and wisdom should be banished from this department of human affairs—why the higher powers of the mind should not be admitted into the deliberations of charity—or, when sense is offered as well as sympathy upon the subject, why all the voices both of male and female sentimentalism should therefore be formed into one mighty effort to cry it down.

There is perhaps no one agony to which by our corporeal frame we are liable, that draws forth a readier compassion, or leads more surely to a consequent act of relief, than the agony of hunger. It is positively not in nature, to remain steeled against the look of despair, or the look of pining consumptiveness, with which it implores a relief to its cravings. There may be the suspicion of imposture, to shut and to harden the heart; and little do the poor among the people know, how their deadliest enemies by far, and they who have done most to shift the flood of liberality away from them, are to be found among those who have counterfeited their sufferings, and handled their words and their sighs deceitfully. But let there be no deceit on the one side, and no imagination of it on the other; and it would argue a man to be a monster, could he withstand the piercing or the plaintive cry of a brother in the agonies of hunger. The

law which would inflict such a suffering as this, even for the worst of crimes, would, in any humanized country, be reduced to a dead letter, for the want of agents to carry it into execution. There would not be found, even among the hardest officers of a jail, men of nerve enough and sternness enough to be faithful to the barbarity that was assigned to them. The whole vicinity of such a place of torture, would itself be in torture, under the consciousness of any one portion of our nature being within its reach, and lingering under the inflictions of a calamity so exquisite. The very poorest of the people could not bear the thought of it; and they would be seen to elude the eye of half-conning sentinels, and to cast a pittance of their own scanty fare through the gratings of this cell of anguish. Humanity would rise in rebellion against such a proceeding; and the law be trampled, as it ought, into utter inefficiency. So that, however man may blunder his arrangements for the anticipation of eventual hunger, man, if not an outcast from the general character of his fellows, never can listen unmoved to the claims of actual hunger. The speculation which would harden him into such indifference as this, deserves to have the seal of infamy set upon it—and no talent by which it is defended, no eloquence by which it is set forth to public acceptance, should go to shield it from the vengeance of public reprobation.

Nothing then can be more clearly imperative on the disciples of Christ, than to follow out those impulses of compassion, by which they are prompted to the redress of such sufferings, as are presently before them. “If a brother or sister be actually naked or actually destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and clothed, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body—what doth it profit? And whoso hath this world’s goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him—how dwelleth the love of God in him?” And further, nothing is more thoroughly accordant with the whole spirit and character of our faith, than when, under the instigation of a more active and aspiring good-will, man, instead of waiting until distress presents itself before him, goeth forth on the errand of search and of discovery among its likely habitations—than when with something more than a house and a heart open to the applications of the wretched, he maketh his own positive and personal aggressions on the territory of wretchedness—than when he not only consents to relieve, but offers to re-

lieve; and not only welcomes the proposals of charity, but originates the proposals of charity—visiting the fatherless and the widow in their affliction; alive to all the actual distress that is within his reach; and holding the very existence of misery, whether seen or unseen, to be a claim upon his attentions and his services.

But what I think is egregiously wanted on the part of the benevolent public, is a clear and steady discernment of the difference that there is—between a proposal for the redress of present suffering; and a plan, which, additionally to this object, does, by the stability of its mechanism and the perpetuity of its operation, involve in it a proposal for the redress of future suffering. The object is altogether excellent. The desire that such distresses as are not yet in existence should be relieved when they arise, is just as much the natural and legitimate working of a principle of compassion, as the desire that the distresses now around us should be so relieved. Propose to compassion, either a suffering that now is, or a suffering that is certainly to be; and you in each case place before it the very object on which it fastens, and in which it finds matter for its proper and congenial exercise. In thus doing you make an appeal to the heart. But when you come forth with a plan, you come forth with an appeal to the understanding. A plan may, it is very possible, aggravate the distress which it proposes to do away. It may beget a delusive hope of its efficiency as a corrective to human suffering, and thus slacken the operation of all the preventives of human suffering. Instead of drawing the rich into a closer and kindlier habit of intercourse with the poor, it may, through the intermedium of that body of management on which its execution is devolved, rise as a barrier of separation between them. It may be such a system of public and regulated charity, as goes to stifle and supersede the compassion of the heart instead of softening it; and, with the seemingly apparatus of direct security which it has raised for the accommodation of the destitute—all it may ever do, is to force one great stream into an abyss that is bottomless; and to dry up or divert those innumerable lesser streams, which else would flow, in fruitful and refreshing circulation, among the many reservoirs of private society. All this may be a man's understanding; and, whether in error or not, it may be the understanding of one who, along with the principle of intelligence in his bosom such as it is, may have room in its receptacles for lodging a compassionate heart. It may be the un-

derstanding of one, who feels compassion for all the misery that now is ; and with whom it is the whole aim of his most strenuous philanthropy, to maintain among mankind the entireness and the efficacy of compassion, in unimpaired reserve for all the misery that is to come. It may be the understanding of one who partakes in all the sympathies of nature, and at the same time has such confidence in their wise and ready adaptation to the sufferings of nature—that he looks on the intermeddling, either of legislative or municipal wisdom, as pregnant with danger and disturbance to the best interests of humanity. It is not because he is hostile to commerce that he deprecates the interference of public regulation ; but because he thinks that commerce thrives most prosperously, when left to the operation of her own unfettered principles on the wants and activities of the species. It is not because he is hostile to benevolence, that he protests against every attempt to turn a matter of kindness into a matter of compulsion ; but because he thinks that benevolence, left to her own free and spontaneous energies, will shed a more abundant blessing upon the land, than benevolence moulded into the shape and lifelessness of a statue, by the hand of legislation. If he be wrong, he is only wrong in understanding ; and for this error, let him be taken to the field of argument, and there let him endure all the severities of the contest, and, if so be, all the disgrace of an overthrow. But it ceases to be argument, and sours and blackens into calumny, when the impeachment is raised not against his notions, but against his sensibilities—when denounced as the enemy of all benevolence, because, in resistance to modern inventions, he proclaims her authority in the way which he thinks to be coeval with the law of revelation and the law of the heart—when charged with the guilt of a rebel against the established maxims of charity, because he cannot bow the knee to the mandates of those courts and corporations of charity, which owe their title of established only to the perpetuity of error—when represented as a transgressor against nature, because he resists the deviations which have been made from her ; and as trying by wisdom to school away all the sympathies of the human frame, only because he resists the encroachments, which the wisdom of man has made on the wisdom of Him who, as the architect of the human frame, is also the alone rightful architect of all human morality. It is then that the poison of injustice enters into the controversy. It is then that the torch of truth is exchanged for the firebrand of discord ; and her

angry flash is all that remains to lighten up that field where the war of argument has now become a war of recriminations. Let us cease to wonder that, amid the thickenings of such a warfare, evil should be called good, or good should be called evil; that they should be traduced as having no heart, who have stood forth the most zealous champions of all its prerogatives—as having tried to extirpate humanity, who have done most to rescue her from thralldom—as having aimed by the weapon of an intellectual demonstration at the overthrow of benevolence—when their whole aim was the overthrow of those intellectual perversities, which have been gradually embodied into the practice of the existing generation; and which have done so much to congeal benevolence, and to cramp all its feelings and all its generous aspirations among the entanglements of an artificial mechanism.

We now proceed to the direct consideration of the passages which have already been submitted to you.

I.—From the first of them do we learn the effect which the exhibition of actual suffering had on the heart of Him who, both in feeling and in morality, is held forth in Scripture as a pattern to us. Without any reference, then, to the origin of the suffering, was He immediately moved to compassion on His view of the existence of it. There may have been a culpability in the origin. There may have been a want of foresight on the part of the people. There may, with some of them, have been the abandonment of their regular occupation for a few days on the impulse of an idle curiosity. There may, even at this earlier stage of their experience of Jesus Christ and of the rule of His proceedings, have been the sordid expectation of a miraculous supply from heaven to relieve that hunger against which they had failed to provide by their own industry. But no matter. Here is wretchedness in actual being, however it may have originated. Here is a multitude overtaken and now in agony. Here a sense of their helplessness and of their danger and of their distance from food, is now spreading a visible alarm through this crowd of population. Here symptoms of increasing restlessness, and groups of busy consultation, and the evident awakenings of one topic and of one terror among them all, and a gathering hue of despair on the countenance of mothers, and the cries of famishing children—are now beginning to give authentic proclamation of nature in distress. And what was the effect, we ask, on Him who took upon Him this nature; and that, too, with the design of authorizing and exemplifying all the

virtues of which it is capable? Did they suggest to Him at the moment any calculation either of causes or of consequences? None, or none at least that we read of. Did they lead Him to brood, in chilling thoughtfulness, over either the habits of past improvidence or the possibilities of future unbelief? No. Did He, in the conduct of relieving them, devise any line of separation betwixt the deserving and the undeserving? No. Did any one maxim of economy or of science offer to lay an arrest upon his sensibilities, or to deafen the energy of that pleading voice which now arose from the multitude before Him? No. He looked to them, we are told; and He had compassion on them that they had nothing to eat; and He could not send them away fasting—lest they should faint on the way. He felt the urgency of the call, and he forthwith acted upon it. He provided for the whole extent of the present emergency; and, without delay or without discrimination, did He bring forward food for all, so that they did all eat and were filled.

And so may it happen in the present day. Distress may come at unawares; and this distress may extend to a multitude. By one unlooked-for evolution in the mechanism of trade, a whole class of society may suddenly be overtaken; and what with the actual misery of the present and the gloomy forebodings of the future, may realize the very sensations which drew out a miracle of loaves from the pitying Saviour. It is clearly our part to feel as He felt, and, as far as we are able, to do as He did. And were it possible to single out from the mass with which they are intermingled the verily destitute; and so to conduct the ministration that they should obtain all the benefit, without the encroachment of unworthy competitors; and so to pour in a stream of liberality on the one hand that it shall not be neutralized on the other, as it often is in the case of a public and combined movement of charity, by a consequent and a further depression in those very wages, the insufficiency of which is the cause and the essence of the whole disaster—in a word, were it possible actually to know, as our Saviour knew, the whole length and breadth of the calamity—actually to bring it forth into a distinct place, as our Saviour did, and, by the might of an uplifted arm, to crush it there into utter annihilation—actually to send forth such a flood of copiousness on this epidemic plague as to quench and to overwhelm it—and so by some process that has not yet been discovered, to meet the recurring visitation, that instead of an invariable cry sent forth as if from the devouring

grave that it is not yet enough, some fragments of the distribution were left and gathered up after all were satisfied—if it be in the power of assembled men thus to surmount this evil, without the infliction of greater evil both upon the character and interests of humanity—then let the charities of all be formed into one great and visible aggregate for the purpose of sweeping it away. But if this is not possible—if man cannot do with success by a combined effort upon the multitude what every man might do, each with a measure of success on his separate portion of it—then does it not follow that because the wisdom of man has failed, the will of God should fail—that because the contrivance of man should be abrogated, the commandment of God should be abrogated—that because the machinery of human concert has been found ineffectual and may therefore be dissolved, the morality of human conscience should also be dissolved. Compassion is still the unrepealed law of every individual heart, and that whether man by his laborious combinations has done more to aid or to impede the execution of its dictates. If a right economy of general and extended distribution, like one of the secret things of God, be above his skill, that is no reason why any of the revealed things of God should be deemed beneath his submission—or why he who is rich in this world should not be rich in good works, and ready to distribute, and willing to communicate. O no, my brethren. Let men controvert, and calumniate, and strive with each other in the contests of mutual vanity and intolerance about plans—be assured that you will never lay hold on eternal life unless you keep your firm and your fast hold upon principles—that compassion is a principle of uncancelled authority; nor can you expunge it from your bosom without expunging from it the resemblance of the Godhead, in one of the brightest of its lineaments—that in this, and in every season of general disaster, there is a louder call for its exercise; and each should now be looking with a wakeful and a pitying eye to the want and the wretchedness that multiply around him—that each should fill up his own little sphere of attention with the offices of kindness; and, in despite of cold speculation either about the origin or the result of our present sufferings, should hold, even as our Saviour held, the existence of suffering to be in itself a claim upon his sympathies, to be in itself a call upon his services.

If any plan of wide and artificial co-operation should be found effectual, then the advocate of compassion does not embarrass this

plan—he only stimulates its formation, and puts more alacrity into all its movements. If again, with all the devices of a deep and variously exercised sagacity, no such plan can be adjusted—it is not he who is chargeable, but the impotency of human wisdom, or the uncontrollable difficulties with which it meets in the constitution of human society. This may be matter of regret, just as we regret any other evil for which there is no remedy. But if anything can alleviate this regret, or rather do it away altogether, it will be the discovery, that the remedy does not lie in the devisings of human wisdom at all, but in the simple doings of human obedience—that if each individual be left to the force of his own conceptions of duty, and the play of his own unsophisticated feelings, a better compound result will be obtained than ever can be reached through the bye-paths and the intricacies of any great political contrivance—that there lie scattered through the mass of society such vigilance each for himself, and such sympathy each for another, as, if unmeddled with by legislation, will insure a better state of things than legislation with all her powers ever can effectuate—that, even separate from Christianity, nature works too powerfully in the hearts of individuals—as that, if famine do not withhold the materials of subsistence, no human being ever will be permitted to perish for hunger in the sight of his fellows—that if to the compassionate instincts of nature in any given neighbourhood, there be superadded the lights and the lessons of the gospel, there will be placed in the way of an event so distressing, the barrier of a moral impossibility—that in such a state of things, abundance does find its way, in a thousand rills of unseen beneficence, among the habitations of the destitute ; and comes into kindlier and more effective contact with human suffering than ever can be reached by the unwieldy operations of a large and general superintendence—In other words, that a problem which is now exercising and baffling the ingenuity of many speculators, owes all its difficulty to the ambition of meddling with a matter that is too high for them—that if they would simply let it alone, and leave nature and Christianity to their own influence, they would do for the cause of philanthropy what parliament does for the interests of trade, when, repealing alike her restrictions and her encouragements, she withdraws that hand by which she meant to help, but has only embarrassed the operations of merchandise. In a word, we cease from our regret for the inefficiency of plans, when made to see that any mechanism of general and apparent

distribution which art can devise, goes only to supersede the operations of a previous and a better mechanism—that, in spite of the prevalence of selfishness in our world, more is done for it even now, by each kind-hearted individual betaking himself in simplicity and in silence to his own separate walk of acquaintanceship among the poor, than by all the paraded charities of our land. And the delightful anticipation is before us, that, in proportion as Christians are multiplied; in proportion as Christian instruction is dealt out in larger quantities among the families of a heretofore neglected population; in proportion as the mass of our assembled millions is broken down into manageable fragments, and facilities are opened for the intercourse of wisdom and piety throughout the habitations; in proportion as men go forth amongst their fellows on the one errand of preparing them for heaven—in that very proportion will a mutual kindness be diffused through every neighbourhood, to reduce and to sweeten all the hardships of the pilgrimage which leads to it—So that if any hearer among you is like to be lost in bewilderment among the intricacies of a plan, be assured that your best contribution to the good of society, is to submit your heart and conduct to the authority of a principle; and, while I proclaim the sanctions which the principle of compassion has gotten from the law of God, and the example of our Saviour—learn that your duty is, under the workings of this sensibility, never to hide yourself from your own flesh, but to devise liberal things in your heart, and to do with your hand and with all your might that which the hand findeth to do.

II.—The next passage which I shall offer, is from John vi. 25-27. Here there is no miracle of loaves recorded, and it is likely that none was performed. We read only of two instances of such a miracle; and in each of them the multitude were overtaken with hunger. Even His own disciples, familiarized as they were to the supernatural achievements of their Master, were not, in either of these instances, counting on any miracle in their behalf, and far less, it is to be presumed, would the people be counting on it. He, in both these cases, felt a movement of compassion towards them, and He followed it. But when, instead of hunger overtaking them, they voluntarily courted hunger for the sake of the indolence which came before, and of the relief which they hoped would come after it—when, instead of being assailed by it in the shape of an unlooked-for visitation, they were actually drawing it upon themselves in the

prospect of another compassionate interference—when dependence on the power and the kindness of another was undermining the dependence they ought to have felt on the resources of their own care and their own industry—let us observe in this passage, how the discerning eye of the Saviour marked the first dawning of this sordid and mercenary expectation in their hearts, and how immediately He repressed it. There was room, it would appear, in His moral constitution, both for that softness of character, which is easily touched and awakened by the sight of human misery; and also for that firmness of character, which could promptly minister a wholesome correction, and set up a preventive stay to the progress of human worthlessness. Those philanthropists, who calculate as well as feel for the good of humanity, may take comfort under all the imputations of harshness and barbarity which are preferred against them—when thus made to understand, that calculation had its place, as well as feeling, with Him whose character was above every imputation—with Him in whose person all the graces were mixed and at-tempered with all the solidities of human virtue—with Him of whom it is recorded, that He both cast a weeping eye over the sufferings of our nature, and looked with the full scrutinizing gaze of an unclouded penetration on its sin and on its sordidness—who, on one occasion, put forth a miracle, that He might minister food to the actual hunger of the multitude around Him; and, on another occasion, withheld that miracle, lest it should minister food to the depravity of the same multitude. There is much to be gathered from the way in which He at one time relieved their necessities, and He at another time checked their expectations—And let this passage of our Saviour's history, while it may serve to guide, serve also to console every faithful disciple of His, who suffers under the execrations of a generous but mistaken sensibility; and that too, at the very time when laboriously toiling in all the duties of benevolence, and anxiously exploring a clear and conscientious path through all its difficulties.

Our Saviour could have ministered food to the destitute, with as great facility as He ministered health to the diseased; and it is a question worthy of being considered, why He was so sparing in the one, and so abundant and so indiscriminate and for anything we read so universal in the other ministration. We know not that He ever sent a petitioner for health uncured or disappointed away from Him; and we know not, at the same time,

if He ever above twice in the whole course of His history upon earth, interposed with a miracle for the relief of hunger—while, in the passage before us, it appears, that instead of meeting, He rebuked the expectations of those who were running after Him in the hope of such a miracle. The truth is, that our Saviour's progress in Judea had before this time become a path of public notoriety. The eye of general observation was upon all His footsteps, and the report of every transaction of His was now sure to circulate through the land. So that the operations of His beneficence were quite equivalent, in effect, to the operations of a proclaimed charity; and you have only to conceive the effect that it must have had on the habits of the people—did the Saviour, by an indefinite multiplication of loaves, hold out the assurance to all who followed Him, that they would also be fed by Him. It would, in fact, have deranged the whole mechanism of Jewish society; and the people, at large from the regularities of their wonted employment, would have carried a thickening and accumulating disorder along with them over the whole country. Every wholesome habit of industry would have been suspended—had the great teacher of moral righteousness been thus transformed into the almoner of assailing multitudes. And it would not only have brought a great civil and political mischief upon His countrymen. It would have also raised a subtle and unsurmountable barrier in the way of every conversion from sin unto God. It would have marred the success of His own peculiar enterprise in the world. His object was to lead men on the path to heaven; but it is essential to the act of walking on this path, that there be the self-denial of every earth-born propensity—so that, from the very nature of the case, it ceases to be a movement heavenwards, when men are led to it by the bribery of this world's advantages. Godliness, by being turned into gain, ceases to be godliness. His undertaking was to accomplish in the person of every disciple, a triumph of the spiritual over the sensitive part of the human constitution; and to raise the affections of our degenerate nature, from the things which are beneath to the things which are above. Had He, in possession of the gift of multiplying loaves, done without measure and without consideration, what many of our scheming philanthropists would have counted so desirable, He in fact would have nullified His own errand. He would have stifled that principle which He wanted to implant, and nourished that principle which He wanted to destroy. He would only have

deepened and confirmed that sunken debasement into which humanity had fallen ; and, besides throwing the whole population among whom He expiated into a state of restless and dissatisfied turbulence, the only other effect of His visit would have been, to have graven on the character of our species the traces of their selfishness and their sensuality, more indelibly than He had found them.

Something surely is to be learned from the caution, wherewith our Saviour put forth such miraculous powers as might tempt the indigent away from their regular occupations. There was an unavoidable publicity in His proceedings ; and there is a publicity equally unavoidable in the proceedings of every corporate and combined charity. The lesson of the passage now under consideration, is not surely that any private individual should steel his heart against the sufferings of the poverty that is now in existence. I have attempted to draw an opposite lesson from the first of these passages. But it ought at least to make every body of individuals advert to that publicity which their doings have in common with the doings of the Saviour ; and to be alike cautious with Him of the mischief which may flow from it. We are not to overlook the distinction which obtained in His practice, between miracles for the relief of hunger and miracles for the relief of disease. It may suggest a like distinction in our practice, between public measures for the relief of hunger and public measures for the relief of disease ; and know that, while it is the duty of each to carry in his bosom a heart most feelingly alive to all the sufferings of the poverty now in existence—it follows not, that it is therefore his duty to enter into any scheme or organization, which may have the effect of bringing more poverty into existence ; of alluring men from their habits of self-dependence and self-respect ; or, under the guise of liberality, of bringing a cruel disappointment on all its desires, and stamping an impotence and a folly on all its devices.

III.—We now come to the third passage—from which, when taken in connexion with the whole history of our Saviour's miracles, we infer, that the caution which marked His proceedings when acting in the capacity of an almoner, He put altogether away from Him when acting in the capacity of a physician—that, whatever restraint He laid on His supernatural power of ministering to the necessities of indigence, He laid none whatever on His supernatural power of ministering to the neces-

sities of disease—that, however fearful of mischief He seems to have been, had He expatiated with all the publicity, and all the dependence that might have attached to Him on the one walk of beneficence, He seems to have had no apprehension of danger to the sufferers themselves by His expatiating with all publicity and freedom on the other walk of beneficence—healing every sickness and every disease amongst the people; leaving no recorded instance behind Him, of a single petitioner for a cure being sent disappointed away; and repeatedly, are we told, when surrounded by crowds of imploring sick, looking to them, and having compassion on them and healing them all.

It may be right to advert shortly to one great distinction in point of effect, between a public and indefinite system of operations for the relief of indigence, and the same system of operations for the relief of disease—as it may both serve to explain the conduct of our Saviour, and guide us in the paths of a wise and enlightened imitation.

The great cause of the distinction between these two cases is this.

To be an object for the one charity, a man has only to become poor; and though there be no charm in poverty itself, yet there are charms innumerable in the path of freedom and indolence and dissipation which leads to it. Poverty is the spectre which stands at the termination of this path; and so frightful in aspect that, when seen though afar without mitigation and without disguise, it is able to scare away the great majority of the world from any wilful approximation. On the entrance of that descending avenue which leads to want, there lie a thousand temptations; but, such is the power of human foresight, that a view of the spectre at the other end is generally of force enough, and counteraction enough, to neutralize them. Now a public charity for the relief of want disarms this spectre. It relieves men of their present care, and of their present strenuousness; and so it is ever found that, in proportion to the amplitude of such a charity, is the number of candidates for admission—and each having the real qualification too, of actual poverty to plead for them.

To be an object for the other charity, a man must be under disease; and, unless when disease is the effect of vicious indulgence, there is a strong and universal recoil on the part of nature from the very first approaches of it. No man, generally speaking, will take on disease for the sake of its remedy—any

more than he will put out his eyes for the benefit of a blind asylum ; or will break a limb for the sake of its amputation ; or will inflict any wilful mutilation upon himself, for the benefit of admittance into an infirmary. Men find their way to the one charity by a transition of pleasure—they find their way to the other by a transition of pain. The one in this way multiplies its objects, beyond its powers of relieving them ; and thus adds, we believe, to the misery, as well as to the worthlessness of our species. The other does not so multiply its objects ; and thus, by all the relief which it deals out on them, does it effectuate, without deterioration to the character, a clear abridgment on the sufferings of humanity.

In order to obscure the line of distinction between these two charities, it might be alleged that, by exertion and economy on the part of individuals, each may render himself independent on charity for the relief of his wants ; and that it is just by a higher degree of the same exertion and economy, that he renders himself independent on charity for the relief of his diseases. And certainly, as it does argue a higher independence in fact, when a man is able, on his own resources, to meet all the contingencies of his lot—so it does argue a higher independence of feeling, when a man aims, not merely at paying for himself what an hospital of poverty might otherwise offer to provide and to pay for him, but also to pay for himself what an hospital of disease might otherwise offer to provide and to pay for him. But still the one case does not melt into the other by a continuous gradation. There is a broad and immutable line of distinction between them. The one enlists the human will on the side of poverty ; and therefore is sure to increase its ills, up to and beyond the measure of its own alleviations. The other never can enlist the human will on the side of disease ; and therefore effectuates an unqualified good, by every inroad that it makes on the mass of involuntary wretchedness. Open the door of any public receptacle for indigence ; and let the whole of this argument fall to the ground, if the invariable result of such an experiment has not been—that the amount of poverty left out, swells instantaneously beyond the amount of all that poverty that was untouched and unrelieved at the outset of this operation. Open the door of a public receptacle for disease ; and, by each patient who enters in, is the field of general humanity more delivered from the burden of that distress which lay upon it. There is, by a principle of our nature, a creative and multiplying process to fill

up all the vacancies, which the hand of a public and permanent charity attempts to make on the territory of indigence. There is no such principle, and no such process, for filling up the vacancies which the hand of public charity makes on the territory of disease. By every shilling surrendered for the one object, you recede from its accomplishment. By every shilling surrendered for the other, you draw nearer to its accomplishment. Push the one to its uttermost; and you arrive at the result of a beggared population absorbing for its maintenance the whole wealth of the country, and the wealth of the country withering into decay from the decaying industry of its population. Push the other to its uttermost; and, with a small and definite fraction of the country's wealth, you accomplish all that can be accomplished for the mitigation of the evils to which, by nature and by Providence, the people of every country are liable. By every step in the progress of the one operation, you feed and inflame the mischief which you are vainly trying to extirpate. By every step in the progress of the other, you make a clear and satisfying advance towards an assignable fulfilment.

Doubtless the mind of an Icelandic native is sustained at a higher pitch of anticipation, and it may go to induce a habit of more virtuous economy—that, in addition to the cares of the men of other countries, he has to provide against the ravages of the impending volcano. Yet, if practicable, who would spare the combined expense, that could divert those fires to the bottom of the ocean? And it nerves and elevates the character of a northern peasantry, that they have to look forward to the severities of the coming winter; yet, if it could be purchased, who would not think it worthy of being so—that, by some mighty contribution, they obtained a softening of their climate and an everlasting exemption from its storms? And those men who live in a region of pestilence, would have a loftier cast of intelligence than their fellows, were they at all times wisely and carefully prepared for its periodic visitations. Yet what surrender of wealth would be counted extravagant, that could bring some healing stream to circulate through the land, and to chase for ever the contagion away from it? And, in like manner, we, though we live at a distance from these extremes, have still the inflictions of nature and of necessity to contend with. And it doubtless argues a higher tone and state of a family—when, by the moral force of industry and care, it can not only provide for the ordinary accidents; but also for the accidents of blindness,

and derangement, and dumbness, by which any of its members may be visited. Yet if nature could be bribed by money, tell me what would be the sum too large, to obtain from her in every district of the land, a medicinal well, of effect to cure and to alleviate each of these calamities? Would not such an accommodation as this, both of public notoriety and of permanent continuance, just translate our country into permanently better circumstances than before? The supposition is altogether fanciful. But it serves our purpose—if a public institution for any of these objects, formed out of the united sums of many contributors, is just, in its economic effect on the character and condition of our people, an equivalent to one of these wells. It is only, by the substitution of art for nature, translating our land into the condition of a more richly gifted country. By the money laid out on an asylum for indigence, you do not strike out a new fountain of abundance in the country—you do not purchase additional fertility to our fields—you do not obtain a larger proportion of food to the population—you only change the distribution of the food, and make it a worse distribution than before. By the money laid out on an asylum for disease, you strike out a new fountain of health in the country. You erect a Bethesda, out of which there may issue a refreshing stream on the sick and infirm of our population. And in all these ways may it be proved, that there is indeed a firm barrier of distinction between a public and indefinite system of relief for pauperism, and a public and indefinite system of relief for disease. The one, in truth, never can overtake the cases which its own operations tend to multiply. The other may be safely carried onwards, till, by the interest of a permanent capital, it becomes commensurate for ever to all the demands which the country may make upon it.

There is not only wisdom, but a profoundness of wisdom, in the example of our Saviour. And in the matters of human charity will it be seen, that, both by the actions of His history, and the admonitions of the greatest of His apostles, He not only provides in the best manner for the worth of individual character—but that He also provides in the best manner for the economic regulation of the largest and most complex societies.

He in the first instance gives us an example of the softest compassion at the sight of human misery; and He lets us know by it, that, if there be actual hunger within our reach, for which there appears no remedy—it is our part to give way to the sen-

sibilities of our nature, and to stretch forth a helping hand for the purpose of relieving it. He would have spared the miracle, had other resources been at hand; but the people were far from the food of markets, or the food of their own habitations. He would have left the case to themselves, could they have supported the fatigue of reaching it themselves; but they would have fainted on the way—and therefore, as an example to us to give in such a predicament out of our abundance, did He call down a miracle from Heaven, that the people before Him might eat and be filled.

In the second instance, what He granted to the urgent necessities of the people, He refused to their sordid expectations. It was not His habit to provide food for His followers in this extraordinary manner. He left poverty to the effect of its natural exhibition on the compassionate nature of those who were near it—and a nature which all His lessons are fitted to render more compassionate than before. He must have thought that it was better thus to leave it—than to bring out the clustering multitudes around Himself in the capacity of an almoner. All His doings were of public notoriety; and, in point of effect on the comfort and character of His countrymen, would they have been the same with the operations of a public charity. And we are not afraid to affirm—that generally it were better still, to leave the cause of indigence to the play of those innumerable sympathies which are to be met with in manifold detail, and in deeply-extended diffusion, throughout every community of human beings—than that, by the existence of a great and widely visible institution, either the recipients of charity should be tempted away from the resources of their own industry; or the dispensers of charity should be tempted away from the work of each cultivating his own province, and lavishing those generousities of character which adorn the man and are altogether indispensable to the Christian, on the walk of his own separate and familiar acquaintanceship.

But in the third instance, when he threw off all reserve, and stood publicly out to the eye of His countrymen in the capacity of a divine teacher—He also threw off all reserve, and stood as publicly out to the eye of His countrymen, in the capacity of one who healed all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people. He did not bring down subsistence by miracle, and cast it abroad amongst them. But He brought down health by miracle, and cast it abroad amongst them. He

did not encourage the people to forsake their callings and to riot after Him in trooping disorder through the country for food ; but He laid no such prohibition on blameless and helpless disease. He did not choose that the report of His appearance should be the signal for a jubilee of idleness and dissipation among His countrymen ; but when it brought out the maimed, and the halt, and the dumb, and the lunatic, and those who were sick and sorely afflicted with various infirmities, from the surrounding villages, He sent them not away. He saw a distinction between the one claim and the other, and He acted upon it. The restless philanthropy of the day, ever scheming and ever intermeddling with the previous arrangements of nature, may gather some lessons from that peculiarity, which characterized the march of His wise and effective beneficence through the land of Judea. Whatever discouragements it may draw from His example in the erection of an asylum for indigence, it can draw none against the erection of an asylum for disease ; and while the boding apprehension both of moral and physical disaster hangs over the one institution, do we infer that, with the other, may its door be thrown open, and all its accommodations be widened and multiplied—till every imploring patient be taken in, and a harbour of sufficient amplitude be provided for all those sufferings, which an uncontrollable necessity has laid upon our species.

I shall conclude this argument with three observations : First, we are quite aware of the advantage, which they, who contend for a public and proclaimed charity in behalf of indigence, appear to have over their antagonists. On the first blush of it, it looks like the contest of human sympathy against human selfishness—of kindness pressing a measure of positive beneficence, against steeled and hardened barbarity, labouring with all its strenuousness to put it down. We are aware of the apparent advantage which this gives to the combatants on the other side of this deeply interesting controversy ; and we are equally aware of the uncandid and unmerciful use that they have made of it. Strange that the plea of compassion should be so vehemently urged, in defence of a system under which the virtue of compassion withers into lifelessness. Let it grow as a distinct plant in every heart, and be cherished among the privacies of kindly and familiar neighbourhood ; and then will it be sure to scatter its innumerable leaves in every quarter of society, for the healing of the population. But it loses all its succulence,

and all its blossom, in the chilling atmosphere of an alms-house. Fostered there into a tree of leafless magnitude, it stands in monumental coldness—having the body without the breath of charity; and, for the support of its unwieldy materialism, is it now drying up all the native sensibilities of our land. If you wish to restore benevolence amongst us to its healthful circulation, this forced and factitious excrescence must finally be cleared away. Thus and thus alone will you bring back to compassion all the scope and all the excitement, by which she may break out again into the vigour and the efflorescence of liberty; and when so brought back, will there arise a thousand securities which are now dormant, against every one of those calamities, which law has only aggravated, in its vain attempts to combat and to reduce them. The lesson of our second passage, so far from counteracting, only affords space and encouragement for the lesson of our first. And in opposition to all that declamation has uttered, against the aggressions of the understanding upon the province of the heart, do we aver, that never were the powers of the one more directly engaged in affirming the prerogatives and in vindicating the outraged sensibilities of the other—than when helping to release the business of human charity from the grasp and the regulation of human power: And never will political philosophy have rendered so brilliant a service to the good and to the virtue of our species, as when she reinstates charity upon its original basis; and commits the cause of human suffering back again to those free sympathies of nature, from which it had been so unwisely wrested by the hand of legislation.

But secondly, whatever may have been said to damp or to deaden our regards towards a public institution for poverty, nothing has been said to alienate from a similar institution for disease. When charged with the desolating influences of speculation upon the heart, let it be understood that there is an opportunity on which every economist may, by his ample contribution in behalf of a cause that is free from every exception, render to his own favourite science the most satisfying of all vindications. If the thought that indigence with all its ills is fostered and augmented, just in proportion to the amount of that fund which is publicly provided for it—if this be the thought which restrained his liberality, let us see what is the style in which his liberality will expatiate, when this restraint is lifted away from it. In reference to the objects of a charity for disease, nature supplies

him with a definite number of cases which no benevolence can increase; and let us therefore see whether his benevolence will flag, or whether it will persist with untired and undiminished energy, till the number be overtaken. If his reason told him that an asylum of one kind may be a vomitory of evil, both physical and moral, to the people of the land, and he therefore turned a deaf ear to all its applications—let us see what the sensibility and what the sacrifice will be, when his reason tells him that there is an asylum of another kind, which acts in every instance as an absorbent of human suffering, and in no instance as a fountain of mischievous emanation. We do not say it is wrong that the heart should be placed under the custody of the understanding; or that the one should lay its limitation on the feelings and exercises of the other. But we cannot know the character of the heart, till the time and the place occur when every limitation is removed. And so, when pleading for the relief of disease, instead of a forbidden glance from the intellectual power, she lends her full consent and smiles her approving testimony—when no voice of boding anticipation is lifted up to deafen the solicitations of charity—when a path of safe and undoubted progress is opened, in which philanthropy may walk, till she reach the full achievement of her purposes—when she is moving on ground, where every step carries her forward in nearer approximation to a most complete and gratifying accomplishment—when a few of our brethren, whom the hand of nature hath mutilated of their faculties, are standing before us with the credentials of their impressive claim, stamped and authenticated upon their persons, and just as if Heaven had affixed a mark by which to select and to set them apart for the unqualified sympathy of all their fellows—when feeling urges us onwards in behalf of misfortune, so signalized and so privileged; and philosophy places no cold obstruction in her way—with all these favourable circumstances surrounding the cause, and all these incitements to bear us forward to its triumphant consummation, let us not cease to stimulate and to draw from the resources of the country, till every such institution be wide enough to take in all for whose relief it is adapted; and till it rise in the shape of a permanent endowment, among the most securely established and best provided charities of our land.

It is thus that an institution for disease should stand before the eye of the public with a claim and a character which ought to secure it from every fluctuation. It should be brought out

and peculiarized, from among the crowd of ambiguous and questionable charities. There are many other advantages in the combination and resources of a public society, formed for the mitigation of disease, on which I have no time to expatiate. And I shall only therefore remark of each such institution, that if not placed on the stable foundation of a sure and permanent capital, there ought at least to be a yearly subscription ample enough for the purpose of meeting every application. At all events it ought to have such an homage rendered to it, as to make it independent of any vindication which may be offered from the pulpit in its behalf; and it is a reproach to an intelligent public, that ministers have to descend so often from the higher walk of parochial and congregational usefulness, in order to stimulate their languid energies, in behalf of charities which ought long ago to have been made productive enough for their interesting but limited necessities.

ON
THE APPLICATION OF STATISTICS
TO
MORAL AND ECONOMICAL QUESTIONS.

[READ AT THE MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION HELD IN GLASGOW,
SEPTEMBER 1840.]



APPLICATION OF STATISTICS

TO

MORAL AND ECONOMICAL QUESTIONS.

THERE are certain principles or general propositions, which may be truly affirmed of men and of human affairs—all of which have been learned, and can only be learned through the medium of particular observations. We are not called upon at present to lay down that process of the intellect, by which it is led onward from particulars to universals; or from special facts to general laws. Enough that we now advert to such a process, of which however we might remark, that some there are—men who, on the strength of their native sagacity alone, can carry it forward aright to its proper results and legitimate applications, unconscious of all aid either from rules of logic or a reflex metaphysics; or in other words, who can describe the process soundly and well, and yet have taken no distinct notice, or far less could make any explicit narration of its several footsteps. They somehow or other can, in the act of looking to a complex phenomenon, discriminate the causal from the casual—they can seize on the valid and essential principle, to the presence and operation of which some given effect is owing—they can set up that principle in the midst of some new combination; and confidently anticipate the same effect, although in circumstances which had never been all assembled together before. Now these men, after that they have proposed their scheme or even set it afoot; and after they have predicted the resulting consequence which was to ensue from it, but before the consequence is realized—in other words, between their prophecy and its fulfilment—they stand in a very peculiar position to all others who have not studied the same lessons of life and character which they

have done, and not made the same application of them. They have the faculty of analysis, by which to detect the essential causation which leads in one place, or amid one set of circumstances, to a given result; and they have the faculty of synthesis, by which to transplant that causation into another place and among other circumstances—where, proceeding on the constancy of nature, they foretell the same or a similar result. Now how is it that they are regarded by the men who are incapable both of the analysis and of the synthesis which their minds have undergone—and, more especially, during the interval which takes place between the utterance of what they have foretold and the accomplishment of it? They are characterized as theorists. Their anticipations are branded as theoretical—and that by men who do not share in these anticipations, just because unmindful or unobservant of all former experience, and incapable of profiting by its lessons. For you will observe, that the scheme, even at its first setting up, previous therefore to the working of it, and before any result can yet take place from its operation, may nevertheless be strictly an experimental one, and that because constructed on principles for the truth and efficacy of which we in past life have had the most abundant experience—just as the inventor of a new machine may have the utmost confidence in the effect which he predicts from it—not because he is the most sanguine of all theorists; but truly because he is the most studious of all experimentalists, or because of all his fellows he is the shrewdest and most diligent observer of Nature's laws. And as with a machine in the material, so may it be with a scheme in the moral world—devised we can suppose for the amelioration of human society, in some one of its departments. The scheme itself may never have been previously tried; but all the principles on which it is constructed, and which its author counts on for success, may have been abundantly tried. Such a scheme may never before have been put into operation; and therefore, viewed as a whole, or in connexion with all its adjuncts and accessaries, it may be regarded as altogether new—and hence as requiring an after experience, ere we can make sure of the promised good which we expect to follow in its train. We do not object to this after experience, and consider the demand for it as altogether fair and reasonable, nay as necessary for the purpose of conclusively accrediting the scheme. Only, we would not have you forget the beforehand experience which preceded the scheme, and guided its originator onward to the

adoption of it. Its success may carry in it no instruction to him ; for it may but exemplify the one or more principles, or general propositions, which suggested the scheme to his mind—and the truth of which principles or propositions may rest on the basis of a manifold experience. It may have been this experience in fact—a cautious, considerate, well-weighed experience—and not an ardent temperament at all, which both inspired and warranted his hope of a prosperous result. It might have been because, of all his fellows, he profited most by an experience which has been thrown away upon them ; and while surrounded by critics and observers, who distrust and perhaps denounce him as an ambitious speculator, it may turn out after all—that he has proved the most submissive and patient disciple at the school of experience—the most respectful observer of her lessons.

But, quitting these generalities, we shall be more intelligible if we descend at once to particular illustrations. Let me instance then one experience, which, on the moment of its being intimated, will, I think, recommend itself as a familiar acquaintance, or as a sort of common and every-day finding which none can fail to recollect—so common, in fact, that the very utterance of it will be felt a commonplace, and which we should almost be ashamed to bring forward, were it not for its momentous applications. What we want not to inform you of—for it cannot be a novelty to any, but to remind you of—is the difference in point of effect when you wish to obtain the consent of others to any given proposal—the difference, we say, between your moving with it to them, and their moving for it to you. Lest we should be still too general, let me give you the example of your seeking to obtain the signatures of a town or neighbourhood for a parliamentary petition—what we desire to impress, is the much larger result if you go round with the petition from house to house, rather than leave it in some place of rendezvous whither all who will may find their own way to it. The former method is tenfold more prolific of names than the latter—for thousands there are who will not refuse their subscriptions to a document thus brought to their door, yet who would not move the distance of half a street for the purpose of appending their names to it. The principle is well understood by those agents of charity, who, in the capacity of district visitors, have now learned to ply every family with their periodic calls, in behalf of some philanthropic design ; and find how much more productive it is than leaving each to make

his own call on some one, or on any number of receiving houses : And equally well understood by those aspirants in the walk of merchandise, who want either to create or to extend a business ; and who, instead of waiting till customers shall come to them, go forth over their surrounding neighbourhoods—and whether by the specious advertisement sent across every threshold, or even by the urgency of a living voice brought to bear on the occupiers within, prosecute the strenuous attempt either to find or to multiply customers. It is thus that the amount, either of liberality in the one case or of custom in the other, may be inconceivably augmented—for the carrying of which into effect, it is obvious that a locomotion is required ; and the whole question is, on which side the locomotion should begin—whether on the side of him who wants to enlist another, or on the side of him who waits to be enlisted in a given arrangement. All sense and all experience declare in favour of the former ; and there are many influences which might be alleged in explanation of its superior efficacy—not merely the influence of juxtaposition to overcome the obstacle, whether of short or long distances ; and of the knowledge whereof many might have remained destitute, had they not been accosted by an information brought within our hearing—but the influence of one man's expressed wish over another man's pliant and practicable will, though yet neutral and in a state of indifferency—the power of entreaty, whether in the shape of simple desire brought to bear on the kindness, or of moral suasion brought to bear on the consciences of men—the power also of contiguous example, in virtue of which one man is carried more readily along in the stream of imitation, if made to know that next-door neighbours have already done the thing in which he is solicited to join them. All these taken together explain the mighty power, often of one single mind, to impress a gregarious movement in the same direction over a whole vicinity—what a French author, whom I lately read, called the impulsion of individuals upon masses in cases where nothing could have been effected but by a moving force made to operate *ab extra* ; and nothing would have been effected in an aggregate of human beings, had all been abandoned to their own *vis inertiae*, or each been left at random to take his own part in some given combination by a separate and spontaneous movement of his own.

But it is high time to enter on the detail of specific cases ; and we hope that the first of these will not be thought less fitted

to illustrate the principle and philosophy of our subject, that it happens to be of a strictly professional character—or that, because of its supreme moral and religious importance, its scientific importance will not therefore be overlooked. The little field or platform on which the experiment was made, and the subsequent experience was realized, is a small suburb district on the immediate confines of Edinburgh; and certainly at that time it formed not only one of the poorest, but one of the most profligate assemblages in or about the metropolis of Scotland. It consisted of 1356 human beings, all inhabitants of a place named the Water of Leith, and of two straggling hamlets each at the distance of a stone-throw or a little more from the main village. We undertook our ecclesiastical survey of its population, by which there could be ascertained at least one branch of its moral statistics; and found that not one for every nine of its whole number, or not a ninth part of its resident individuals were in the habit of attending any place of worship—leaving a fearful amount of Sabbath idleness or profanation, which, as is well known to those who are conversant with the habitudes of the lower orders, forms the surest indication or earnest to all sorts of week-day profligacy. There were two ways in which one might have proceeded to operate on this mass of irreligion and consequent moral degeneracy. The first was to have built a church, and left the attendance on it to a gratuitous and unbidden volition on the part of the people themselves. This we felt to be altogether hopeless. We therefore took to the second way, which was to build a church; and, availing ourselves of the principle which has now been expounded, assign to its minister the task not merely of preaching on the seventh day, but of prosecuting his round of household visitations among the families of that district, with its certain prescribed and definite boundaries, by which it was surrounded. We never counted on a spontaneous forthgoing of the people to church; but rested all our hopes of success on the frequent and sustained forthgoing of the minister among the people. In a word, the essence of our experiment lay in this, that, instead of the people being left to seek, they were now to be sought after; or, to express it otherwise, the burden of the initial movement, instead of being laid as heretofore upon them, was transferred to another party—not on the recipients of the moral benefit, of whom we knew well, that they would never of their own accord go forth in quest of it, nay that, though placed within their sight, scarcely

one would in the first instance choose to come for it ; but on the dispenser of the moral benefit, whose business it should be to make search and entry in every house that returned his approaches, and press it on the acceptance of all the families. And we counted beforehand on a prosperous result—for though we call it an experiment, we felt that, anterior to the experiment, we had a solid groundwork of experience on which to sustain our confidence. For, over and above the general principle on which we have already expatiated, we knew the peculiar facilities which belonged to a minister of religion, on the strength of which he could pioneer his way through this moral wilderness ; and, even among the rudest of nature's children, find an access for himself both to their hearts and to their homes. We knew that, even at the outset of this enterprise, the welcome which attended or rather which opened a way for his footsteps would be all but universal. We had read of the omnipotence of Christian kindness in prisons ; and felt sure of the still stronger likelihood, that the very same experience would be verified in parishes. We believed, in spite of all that is figured by superficial observers to the contrary, that there was no substantial difference between the inhabitants of town and country—the same play of domestic affections—the same deeply-seated instincts and sensibilities of a constitution, the stubborn identities of which were not to be obliterated or overborne by any change of situation or exposure—the same susceptibilities, and that even behind a front of seeming hardihood, the same susceptibilities of a softer nature when any touch or demonstration of kindness from without was brought nigh to evoke them—the same gratitude for attentions to children—the same kindly response to the overtures, whether of a week-day education for their young, or of a religious education on the Sabbath both for themselves and for their families—the same visitation of seriousness on their spirits, when death entered within their threshold and tore away with rude hand the dearest of its inmates—above all, the same reverential affection for that man of God, who by his frequent presence lighted up the scene of distress, and shed over its dying bed the halo of his sympathies and his prayers. We did, notwithstanding the frightful pictures which are given of a city, as if wholly dissimilar and distinct from a country population, we did calculate—and not on the strength of a sanguine imagination, as some who now listen to our description may perhaps be ready to conceive, but on the strength of repeated and hard-won

experience—we did calculate on the same moral results, if only the same moral regimen were brought to bear with equal degrees of vigour and constancy on both. And accordingly, though charged as we have been with luxuriating all our days among the visions of Utopia, we did venture to predict—that if a man not of gigantic but of ordinary dimensions, for we have no taste and no value for anomalies—and not by dint of incessant labour which few would undertake, but of certain plain and practicable assiduities which are competent to all—if such a man, giving up a certain portion of his strength and his time to the task, would but charge himself with some manageable hundreds of these neglected outcasts, and never by any persuasion be induced to accept of more than two thousand of them: But if on such a limited field as I have now prescribed for him, if he would enter every house; and make his periodic inquiries of kindness at every family; and be on the alert at every call of distress; and strike in on every occasion when either the alarms of conscience, or the solemnities of an approaching dissolution, opened a wide and welcome door for the message of the gospel; and, by his presence at every funeral, at once dignify and gladden each group of plebeian mourners who had assembled to carry a neighbour to his grave; and, to sum up all, let him be furnished with such means and facilities as might enable him to offer, we do not say relief to their poverty—that is a distinct object, and which will be taken up afterwards—but to offer and on easy terms a remedy for their ignorance—the scholarship of letters for the young at a week-day seminary within reach of all, and the scholarship of religion from his own lips on the Sabbath, and to which he invites the attendance especially of those who had hitherto been strangers to the habits and the decencies of a Christian land—Let all this be done, and it has been our confident averment for years—that on the strength of these simple Christian attentions, reiterated and centred on the people of a given locality, and where the minister was not exposed to the distractions of a general congregation from all parts of the city—He in a very few months would obtain the same ascendancy for good in the most putrid lanes of a metropolis, that is realized by the village pastor with a church embosomed in foliage, and beset on all sides by peaceful and smiling landscapes. Utopianism! Pray who are the Utopians?—They who, in the unwearied rounds of their daily experience, encounter the homebred realities of life in the worst alleys of a town, and tell us on the

result of their own findings there, that human nature both in its propensities to evil and its capacities for good is of the same staple all the world over; or they who descant on the hopeless and impracticable difference between our urban and our rural populations—and, like children of sweetest poesy, imagine that, because the scenery of fields and woods and whitewashed cottages is so much finer than the noisome smoke of manufactories with the din of their ringing anvils in the suburb streets and among the hovels of the working families which belong to them—therefore picture forth to the eye of their minds a corresponding diversity in the character of their living occupiers; forgetting all the while that it may be just as imaginative to look for nothing in the one locality but humanity in all its rudest and most revolting forms—as to conceive of the other, that, because lapped in beauty and fanned by the pure air of heaven, we must therefore look for a people of another race, the simple-minded patriarchs and happy swains of Arcadia.

But let us remember that it is with science, not with sentiment, whether just or extravagant, that in this place we have properly to do; and we therefore proceed to exhibit the credentials of our argument, which, we think in the present instance, approximate very nearly, if they do not reach altogether, the precision of strict mathematics.

The field of our enterprise then was a contiguous population of 1356, of the very humblest rank in society, consisting of carters, and quarrymen, and pig-feeders—where not one in nine were in the habit of going to any place of worship whatever—and of whom we wanted to ascertain in how far they were reclaimable to the good old Sabbath observation, as the surest step or precursor of their return to the sobrieties, and the regularities, and the everyday virtues of our Scottish forefathers.

We had no hope of any prosperous result whatever from the mere juxtaposition of a chapel, though erected in the midst of them, and made to send forth, in the hearing of the villagers, the intimation of its coming services. Yet we behoved to provide ourselves with some such apparatus—though the only substitute we could get for a sacred edifice was an old malt-barn, into which four hundred human beings were capable of being squeezed; and which, moreover, we equipped outside with a second-hand manufactory bell, in no way remarkable either for melody or power, but which yet could make itself be heard throughout all the dwelling-places of a small and compact population.

But we knew well, that however audible the summons, it were of itself but a voice in the wilderness—wasting its sweetness in the desert air—and calling forth no response from the sluggish and lethargic mass over which it verberated. We knew that the *vis inertiae* of the people had to be operated upon in another way, and that, as in physics, a force *ab extra* adequate to move and to impel must be brought to bear upon them. We knew that, to evoke any reaction from the living mass, it must be acted upon by a living agency; and, accordingly, in the very earliest and most rudimental stage of our undertaking, while it was yet in embryo, and to call forth the first heavings of a multitude sunk in settled and deep ungodliness—there behoved to go forth, and to move in busy circulation throughout all the recesses of this deep and dark interior, one endowed with the voice, and the heart, and the intelligence, and all those feelings of brotherhood, which tell so powerfully in the way of suasion and sympathetic impulse between man and man. I will not tell over again the encouragement which hailed even the initial footsteps of our missionary, whose business it was to preach or to officiate as a minister on the Sabbath, and to ply the families of his assigned district with all the attentions of Christian kindness, or to officiate amongst them as a pastor through the week,—I have not time to explain how admirably and efficiently it is, that these two offices conjoined in the same person, and discharged by him towards the contiguous population of one and the same locality—how powerfully and how wholesomely it is that they work to each other's hands;—suffice it to say, that it gives rise to what may be termed a reciprocating movement between his week-day attentions and their Sabbath attendance. But it is of capital importance to understand that the whole charm and efficacy of the operation depend on the first movement being laid on the right party—that is, on the minister, and not on the people. In the order of cause and effect, it is he in the first instance, who, in the course of his itinerancies from door to door, opens every house and finds his way to many hearts; and they, in grateful response for his assiduities and Christian services, come back upon him on the Sabbath; and so fulfil what has now become an adage, I understand, in the mouths of our city philanthropists,—that a house-going minister creates a church-going people. But I must now hasten forward from a description of the process to a statement of the result. The malt-barn was, in the course of a very few months, filled first to

compression, and then to an overflow, and that mainly by the very families, the reckless midthriven outlandish families, for whom it was intended. Men and women, young and old, returned to the habit which had perhaps been extinct among them for one or two generations; and, as the fruit of his benevolent and devoted labours, did this painstaking missionary earn for himself the proud achievement of a local or parochial congregation, made up of the rudest and most neglected of nature's children.

We now come to our statistics. In the spring of 1836 the Royal Commissioners, on the question of Religious Instruction in Scotland, sat in Edinburgh—when, previous to offering myself for examination, a little survey was commenced and carried through, having for its special object to ascertain with numerical precision the success of this our peculiar method for recruiting an incipient church from a territory of aliens. We deemed it a signal advantage, that in our immediate neighbourhood, not more than a few stone-throws from the eastern limit of our own selected vineyard, there stood another place of worship, open to the ingress of our population for many more years than our malt-barn had been for months, but open alike to all parts of the town (the minister having no charge or cognizance of any territory out of doors); and therefore left to be filled, as I am sorry to say almost all city churches or chapels still are, at the spontaneous choice of hearers who must therefore have a predisposition for the services of Christianity—a predisposition which does not exist among the thousands and tens of thousands, in the first, second, and third rate towns of our empire, who have lapsed into heathenism. The precise distinction between our missionary and the clerical neighbour who was nearest to him lay in this—That whereas, for the purpose of bringing a minister and a people together—in the former case the first movement was made by him, in the latter case the first movement was made by them; and the precise object of our statistical investigation was to determine the distinct results of these two very distinct processes. Accordingly we caused entry to be made into every house of our own locality; and our first question to each was, How many of that household attended the malt-barn; our second, How many attended the handsome and commodious place of worship that was nearest to it. The sums total of the two returns astonished even ourselves. The malt-barn had in a few months gathered from the locality in question 364 regular hearers. The chapel

again had not for the same or a greater number of years drawn more than five. The one, with a missionary going forth through the week amongst its dwelling-places, may be said to have proceeded by the method of aggression; the other, trusting to the mere effect of the Sabbath services on the same population, may be said to have proceeded on the method of attraction. Here, then, to speak mathematically, are two forces, and to borrow another term from the phraseology of the exact sciences, here are two forces in moral dynamics; and where the ratio of the first to the second can be given with all the accuracy of a numerical expression. The force of aggression is to the force of attraction as 364 to 5, or as nearly as may be 73 to 1, which gives an overpassing superiority to the aggressive principle—a most important law, and the practical value of which cannot be too highly estimated—seeing that, although other methods may retard the decline of virtue in a commonwealth; by this method, and by this alone, can we hope to recover a population from the degeneracy into which they have fallen. To the anti-septic property of being a preserver of moral health, which other appliances might have though in a far less degree, it adds the property which is all its own,—of being a restorative.

Before proceeding to other instances, let me here interpose a few brief remarks on the benefit of statistics.

First: by subjecting, when possible, every process for the amelioration of society to the touchstone of actual numbers, you put a conclusive stamp on the amount, whatever it may be, of the real worth and soundness which belong to it. No scheme, however shrewdly it may have been devised, or whatever be the seeming strength of that antecedent experience on which it rests or by which it may have been suggested, may claim to be exempted from this ordeal—either to accredit its solid wisdom, or otherwise to detect and make it manifest that there is a vitiating flaw in the whole speculation.

Second: such a verification of the scheme as this may often be the only way by which to convince many, perhaps the great majority of men, of its experimental character—able to comprehend results, yet unable to comprehend processes. Its projector may have been qualified for his discovery, just because signalized above all his fellows both for the practice and the philosophy of observation. Yet meanwhile, or till tested and made palpable by statistics, he must be content to have his invention

stigmatized as theory, that most convenient and often most senseless of all by-words, by men, too, as little able to penetrate the inner laboratory of nature or discern there the working of those principles which lead to a visible fulfilment, as they are able to explore the mechanism or trace the evolutions of Mr. Babbage's calculating machine, while abundantly able to read off the numbers which cast up by the operation of it. This last they can do, and perhaps little or nothing more.

Third : the statistics which furnish a measure for the intensity or the regularity of certain moral forces that operate and are of influence in human affairs, may at length give to certain moral and economical subjects a near approximation to the exactitude, and precision, and certainty of mathematics. This consideration, if well weighed, may perhaps reconcile and satisfy those gentlemen of the physical departments, who felt a difficulty in admitting our Statistical Section within the scheme of the British Association. Not that the essential distinction between the moral and the mathematical can ever be obliterated, any more than in mathematics itself we can obliterate the essential distinction between geometry and algebra. It is now forty years since I heard Professor Robison of Edinburgh, all whose tastes and preferences were on the side of geometry, state, and felicitously state, in behalf of this his more favourite method of investigation, that so long as the mind was engaged in it, it was in more direct and immediate contact with what he expressively termed the *ipsa corpora* of the subject—whereas in algebra, while he did all homage to the latter as being the more powerful instrument of research and discovery, after that lines were committed to symbols, the thinking principle had no more to do with the real and original elements of the question ; but, losing sight of these, had only to do with certain artificial and representative characters, in the management and transformation of which it was altogether occupied. Now certain it is that they are only the observers of life and character who hold sensible commerce with the *ipsa corpora* of our department—the principles or the phenomena of human nature ; and that the mere statisticians are only taken up with the resulting numbers which come forth of the working of these in communities of assembled men. Nevertheless, in the tables of the statist, as well as in the formulæ of the analyst, we may have correct exhibition of objective realities in the eternal world—a rigorous expression, in the one case, of things in the world of motion and inanimate matter ;

an accurate registration in the other of things in the region of human society.

Fourth : in further recommendation of our theme, and which indeed I hold to be its prime recommendation, let me bid you ponder well the distinction between the statistics of a small territory, and the general sketch or state of a large one—or between your thorough minute microscopic acquaintance with but the segment of a field, and your wider but necessarily on that account your more superficial view of the whole. It is this which so enamours me with the business of our special department—that when compared with those surveys which are given in authorship to the public, of the state of the world, or the state of a continent, or the state of a country, or even the state of a single city—I believe that a deeper insight is often to be gained into the principle and philosophy of many questions in the economics of society, from the statistics of a single parish, a single street, often a single household or family. I feel that the further down you carry this subdivision, the more intense must be your study of the last and the least portion to which you have arrived, and the nearer you come to the infinitesimals, or, so to speak, the corpusculars of your subject ; and so a profounder wisdom might thence be gathered, and a more searching penetration effected into the essence or else hidden and interior nature of things—just as from the treatment of little specimens in chemistry, as a bit of chalk or the merest handful of earth or salt or charcoal, along with a close and diligent inspection of the results, there might be evolved laws in nature of the widest possible extent and most beneficial operation. The man whose eyes, like those of Solomon's fool, are on all the ends of the earth, may prize the dazzling outlines of a great and magnificent panorama ; but it is only on the basis of patient and skilful observation, patient of all drudgeries and cognizant of all details, that a science of firm substratum or stable endurance can be raised.

But, lastly : there is one special reason why, in the present style and temper of our age, I desiderate statistics, in the elucidation of all those questions which bear on the economic comfort, and still more on the present reform and future amelioration of the species. It is difficult to handle these topics at all without betraying a certain sympathy and felt interest in the concerns and fortunes of the human family ; but mark the instant effect which the betrayal of any such emotion has, in lighting up a

leer of incredulity, if not of contempt, on the faces of our hard and heartless utilitarians. They have altogether disjoined and isolated from each other the intellectual from the moral and the emotional faculties of our nature, as if the perceptions of a man's understanding and the sensibilities of his heart could not be in play at the same instant; and, accordingly, on the moment that a man begins to feel, he in their estimation ceases to discern. For their sakes, therefore, and as they seem to hold that science and sentiment are incompatible with each other, I think it most desirable not certainly to suppress the one, but to make full acquittal of our pretensions to the other; and seeing that they are disposed to regard with suspicion all the effusions of an ardent philanthropy, as if they were mere fancies or figures of speech, I would provide, and in abundant supply, the only others which they seem to care for,—the figures of arithmetic. This, it would appear, is the only demonstration to their liking, the osteology of a bald, numerical, naked skeleton. I should imagine that they had a marvellous preference for dried specimens, and that the freshness of a living subject was utterly distasteful to them. Though they have greatly increased of late years, yet they are not altogether new to the world, nor quite peculiar to the generation in which we live; for, in the age immediately before us, we can descry their genuine predecessors, of altogether their own likeness, in those members of the British Parliament, whose constant practice it was to leave the House on the moment that Edmund Burke commenced one of his elaborate demonstrations, under the conception, I presume, that because there was so much brilliancy on the surface, there was, therefore, no substratum of wisdom or philosophy beneath. They have broken up the association between two ideas, which, in the finer and juster apprehension of the ancient Greeks, were so implicated together, or rather so identified, that in their language one and the same word was expressive of either or of both. The *τὸ καλόν* was significant of truth or of beauty, or of the two together, whereas it seems to be almost a category with these modern philosophers, that nothing can be true which is beautiful, and nothing can be beautiful which is true. May the statisticians of the British Association fully awake to the charms of the one, and to the paramount claims of the other—erect to their honour a common shrine, at which they may yield a conjunct affection, and vindicate the high prerogatives of both.

But let me proceed to other instances of the good of statistics,

for the determination of moral and economical questions, with one sentence more, however, on that case of a more professional character than any of the others, which I have already given.

When in London in the summer of 1837, I waited on the Marquis of Lansdowne, and, aware of his taste and talent for statistics, I presented him with the results of the survey which I have now explained to you; and more especially directed his attention to the arithmetical test, by which we could measure and ascertain the effect of this our peculiar method of territorial cultivation. The proportion of church-goers in the given locality was less than one in nine; and I put the supposition, that, by so many months or years of perseverance in the operations of the aggressive system, it should become one in three—commenting, at the same time, on the improvement of character and habit which such a change would imply. It gives me pleasure to think that the proportion now is still more favourable, though it ought at least to be one in two, or the half of the whole population, of which proportion it still comes short, from a barrier which, though removable, is not yet removed. On this point we cannot at present explain ourselves; but we rejoice in the evidence that we have already gathered, and of a strictly experimental character, as warranting the confidence we feel, that, on certain obstacles being removed, a patent way will lie before us for carrying that best and highest of all education, the education of principle, down to the humblest and onward to the lowest of the people.

There are fifteen similar enterprises to the one I have now described in and about Glasgow, and upwards of one hundred and fifty now going on in the whole of Scotland. I do hope that, as one fruit of the visits from the British Association by which our country has been honoured, the numerical results of the success which has been earned in many of our localities will be prepared and transmitted on every future year—sure, I am confident, of a respectful welcome from those enlightened men, who will not deem it unworthy of a place in their repositories, and among their other accumulated treasures; that they should have the statistics of reform, or of the people's moral amelioration, as well as the statistics of crime, or the statistics of disease, or the statistics of mortality, or the statistics of pauperism.

There is one fact more in regard to the Water of Leith which I earnestly recommend to the attention of general educationists. A week-day school was provided for this district of 1356 people,

where, in virtue of the monitorial system, between two and three hundred could be admitted without injury to the scholarship of the learners. It was intimated from the pulpit on the Sabbath, and filled *per saltum*, so that more than the Prussian proportion, more than one in seven of the population were assembled at a primary school, and that from a community of the poorest of the poor. It is to the virtue of the local and aggressive system that I would give the credit of this result, for the notice and recommendation were given by the missionary, and came with weight from his lips, because of the general confidence which he had earned by his frequent and familiar movements among the families.

But let me now quit these experiments in Edinburgh for a few cases and experiences in Glasgow.

In illustration of my fourth general remark on the subdivision of the territory, upon which either processes are instituted or observations are made, I would mention, that, so far back as 1816, I made a single parish the subject of no less than forty distinct and independent operations, each carried forward in a small and separate district of its own. A parish of 11,000 people was broken up into a congeries of Sabbath-schools on the local principle, the efficacy of which altogether turns on the difference between seeking and being sought after. To every teacher were assigned about fifty contiguous households; and his business was to go round and solicit the attendance of the children. When left to themselves, as they were under the general system, I am confident that not more than a hundred from the whole parish attended Sabbath-schools. Under the aggressive operations which we had instituted, the yield amounted to fully 1200 of our juvenile population—an experience which naturally led to a transition in our thoughts from a model to a machine, or from a thing in miniature to a thing in bulk. We see no difference between the case of Sabbath-evening schools for the young, and the case of churches which are Sabbath-day schools for the community at large, or people of all ages; and it is our conviction, more and more riveted by the observations of every year, that an operation at once territorial and aggressive forms the only tactics by which to reclaim *en masse*, or to work with aught like general and sensible effect on the aggregates of a city population.

I have now to record another experience which I hold in great value, as a beautiful exemplification of the same principle,

The same local and aggressive system which I found so productive of scholars, both in Sabbath and common week-day seminaries—I tried with equal success in the institution of little home sewing-schools for girls. This species of education is peculiarly called for in Glasgow, and all similar manufacturing towns—where many of the young are transplanted at a very early age into the public works, and without availing themselves even of the briefest interval for obtaining an acquirement of such importance to good housewifery; and the consequence is, a general ill-conditionedness among that class of families in respect of clothing, due it is well known to the incapacity of the mothers for any sort of needle-work. To remedy this, we determined to provide them with an opportunity; and, true to the principle of laying the right initial movement on the right party, instead of waiting till they should take advantage of it, to press it on the attention of all. A very simple machinery sufficed for the accomplishment of our object. We calculated that, as the lessons of a single year might do for the elements of plain sewing, there could not be so many as one in fifty attending at a time on this branch of education, confined as it was to one sex—at which rate half a dozen small household seminaries, with an attendance of thirty on each, would meet the demands of a population of nine thousand. For the completion of this arrangement, we succeeded in getting as many decent female householders, to undertake for a salary of five pounds a year and the weekly payment of twopence from each of the pupils, that they would receive into their own houses all of their own vicinity who might require this education at their hand. The salary in each instance was made out by the contributions of five ladies, who visited both the schools and the families to which the scholars belonged. One most important practice in these little institutions, was that each pupil in turn should take charge of the apartment in which they met, and keep it in right order, after which they were expected to do the same in their own houses—a practice carried by them into visible effect, and so as to humanize, in a way that was quite noticeable, the aspect of their own homes. I look back with the greatest pleasure to this experience—for never was there an operation so thoroughly pervading. The yield of scholars exceeded our previous computations; and whether I looked to the improvement in the appearance of the girls and change for the better of their domestic habits which ensued from it, or to the recognitions which took

place between the visitors and their young charge when they met on the pavement and exchanged the notices of cordial acquaintanceship with each other, I could not but feel the vast importance of a well-directed agency of ladies for speeding on the work of civilisation, even among the most ungainly of our city multitudes. With the growing benevolence of the age, the growing interest that is felt in the fortunes and families of the working classes, it needs but a thorough subdivision of the territory, that each may have a task put into his hands which he can thoroughly overtake—to redeem the consequences, I will not say of past mismanagement, but mainly of past heedlessness, and inattention to the state both as to the comfort and character of our heretofore neglected population.

The readings subsequent to this were on the subject of Glasgow pauperism, which, in the fourth section of our treatise on the Sufficiency of the Parochial System, have already been presented to the reader in a more expanded form.

END OF VOL. IX.

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