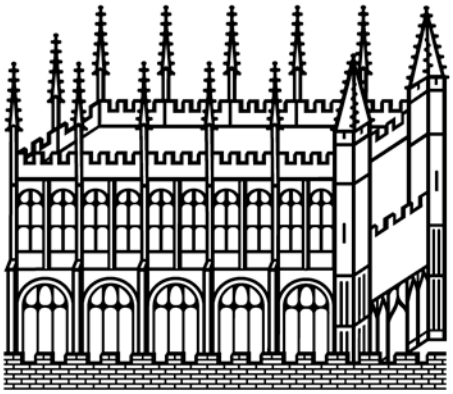

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SOCIAL DELUSIONS

CONCERNING

WEALTH AND WANT.

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SOCIAL DELUSIONS

CONCERNING

WEALTH AND WANT.

BY

RICHARD JENNINGS, M.A.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;

AUTHOR OF "NATURAL ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY."

"He who loses himself in the details of the social mechanism, while he overlooks those moral powers which give motion to the whole, ... must remain in total ignorance of those primary causes on which depend the prosperity and the safety of nations."—DUGALD STEWART'S *Lectures on Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 17.

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PREFACE.

THERE is, perhaps, no more striking feature in the character of "England during the nineteenth century" than the marked regard which is everywhere evinced by the more prosperous, for the less advanced ranks of society. It is now generally conceded, that the condition of our working classes requires improvement, and it is agreed that the only question for consideration is, how this object can be best accomplished. Publications, sufficient in number to constitute a branch of literature, are devoted to the elucidation of "the condition of England;" schools, dispensaries, philanthropic societies of all kinds, are the theme of perpetual

discussion; on every side humane and benevolent institutions, unknown to our forefathers, afford ample evidence that the wants of our industrial population occupy generous attention, and enlist active sympathy.

It is nevertheless very certain, that, when compared with the number and the condition of those who are raised above poverty, the number and the condition of those who are sunk in poverty still deserve serious attention. Vast sections of our population live in garrets and cellars, the state of which is known to be lamentable and appalling. Throughout large country districts the remuneration of labourers is such, that it is wonderful how they and their families can subsist. It requires but little acquaintance with this abject condition of our poor to discover what are its causes, and what alone can be its remedy. They who are most conversant with its details easily perceive that occasional alms-giving can do but very little to

rectify a misapplication of means, and to remedy a consequent inadequacy of supplies, the effect of laws and customs that have been established, with intentions however good, on wrong views of natural conditions. To give rightly is to furnish a kindly medicine; to regulate expenditure rightly, and to make right laws, is to nourish the life-blood, and to protect the health of a community. We give liberally, but we do not spend wisely, nor legislate according to the requisitions of nature, although we act under the guidance of schools of professed Economists, who doubtless exhibit much logical acumen, and are actuated by the most sincere motives, but who continually betray an unhappy discrepancy of opinions. The eulogists of our civilisation often love to contrast the supply of water, which is now conveyed to our houses through pipes, with that which water-carriers formerly distributed in buckets; charity is the bucket,

expenditure is the pipe which supplies the necessities of the poor. Our expenditure, the largest, probably, that has ever been dispensed by any people, is led by no fixed rules, either of legislation or of private conduct, to promote the "*general good*," and indeed can find no accredited guide to direct it to this object, because the numerous writers who have undertaken to expound the elements of Political-economy are divided into numerous sects, which obey no single master, and deduce their tenets from no common principle.

Does it do good to the working classes to keep large hunting establishments, to employ numerous gamekeepers, to give expensive dinners and balls, to promote changes of fashion, to maintain costly equipages, large retinues of domestic servants, houses filled with elaborate furniture? These and innumerable other questions of the same character, which continually present themselves to all who take an interest

in the social questions of the day, do not certainly receive conclusive answers, if indeed they receive any answer in our existing schools of Political-economy. The most popular creed, probably, at the present moment, is that it "does good" to "give employment," and to "encourage trade;" in other words, that barren expenditure and fruitless consumption are beneficial *to the community at large.* It is doubtless often found difficult to reconcile this creed with the conviction which every one must entertain, that the use of machinery is prodigiously beneficial to the community, because it spares our labour, and increases the quantity of our commodities; it is found perplexing to hold, at the same time, that the employment of machinery is good because it spares labour and enables us to produce more, and that expenditure is good because it employs labour and causes us to consume more. To some it must appear evident, that the simultaneous operation

of such opposite principles puts the wants of a community in the same predicament as the urns of the daughters of Danaus, which could never be replenished because the supplies were wasted as fast as they were poured in. Popular instinct accordingly, so often the forerunner of true philosophy, has in some degree changed or modified this creed, and we may now sometimes hear a prudent husbandry of private means pronounced to be, on the whole, most conducive to the ends of philanthrophy and of patriotism. These questions however, with their all-important bearings on the occupations, the means, the health, the morals of our industrial classes, must at present be considered to be open questions. It cannot be a matter of surprise that, when the principles on which the welfare of this great section of our population depends are thus unsettled, and are therefore incapable of being embodied in consistent measures and rooted practices, the condition of the lowest

grades of society is found to baffle every attempt of justice and of humanity.

It is the object of the following pages to exhibit, in a familiar manner, the fallacies of our present system of Political-economy, to illustrate the first principles on which the science must naturally rest, and to show how an easy and practical knowledge of the subject can and ought to be employed by each of us in our several vocations, for the good of our country. Many of us have votes—most of us have sometimes occasion to spend money—we have all the means of disseminating political truth, and of discountenancing political error through the influences of daily intercourse. This power we, in our time, must either exercise, or suffer to lie dormant. False philosophy is hard to be converted, and is notoriously long-lived; if we wait until error dies out, and truth is set up in high places, our opportunities for action may pass away. These opportunities we can only,

under present circumstances, secure through the employment of our own unfettered judgment. Acquired knowledge ought indeed ever to take the command of natural sense, but when unsound knowledge has struck root, the shrewd instincts of our nature often supply better tools to eradicate it, than keen and polished ratiocination.

It will probably be found that in the attempt to procure an insight into the *true nature* of Political-economy, they who are least familiar with the present doctrines of the science will succeed the best. *They*, for instance, will probably be surprised to learn that these doctrines take no cognizance of the laws of the human mind and body—that man can scarcely be said to fall under the consideration of this system of philosophy — and that national events are pronounced by its expositors to be governed by abstract laws which bear no reference whatever to the principles of human nature; whilst in-

doctrinated Political-economists may require to be aroused, perhaps with unwelcome and unseemly violence, before they will awake to a sense of the incongruities of such a method of advancing knowledge. It is accordingly to the uninitiated, and especially to those who desire not so much to learn abstract theories, as to regulate aright their daily conduct in reference to the claims of our industrial classes, that the following remarks are addressed, and for their perusal they are principally designed, although not with any ambition to imitate, but rather with a wish to depart from, the general character of popular works on abstruse subjects. It has been truly said of many such works that, like certain travellers who, when asked for an account of the Colisæum or the Pyramids, will exhibit a fragment of stone neatly packed and carefully preserved, they present a condensed specimen of the subject of which they treat, undeniably accurate, but little adapted

to interest or to edify. It is hoped that they who now enter for the first time on the subject of Political-economy may find in these pages a guide more nearly resembling those modern Handbooks for Tourists, which, whilst pointing out new roads and prospects, canvassing the directions of travellers who have gone before, and sometimes expressing a superfluous regard for our character and our conduct, are yet found to be, on the whole, instructive and agreeable companions.

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SOCIAL DELUSIONS

CONCERNING

WEALTH AND WANT.

CHAPTER I.

NATURAL POLITICAL ECONOMY.

THERE are probably few readers who have not, at some period of their lives, dwelt, with the pleasure with which we contemplate all that is true to nature, on one of those amplifications of the "History of Robinson Crusoe,"* which represent a whole family as cast away on a desolate island, with a scanty stock of the necessaries of civilised life, and as dependent,

* Such as *The Swiss Family Robinson*, or *Masterman Ready*, by Captain Marryat.

therefore, on their own exertions for the satisfaction of their wants.

The head of such a family, after the first bustle of landing had subsided, and every vestige of the wreck had disappeared, would naturally proceed to consider what employments would be best suited to the capacities of each member of his little community, and be most conducive to the general good of all, and he would take counsel with himself in order to determine to what purposes their common stock could be best applied. It is easy to conceive in what fashion he would think fit to direct that the efforts of each individual should be turned towards some definite and appropriate end; — those of the younger members of the family to the light and easy occupations of turning turtles on their backs, of searching for their eggs, of collecting salt from the hollow rocks, of heaping up cocoa-nuts, or of gathering limes and lemons, — those of the female members of the family to the feminine avocations of providing for the internal arrangements of the

hut, of milking the goats, of making or mending articles of dress, of cooking the food, of taking care of and educating the youngest children,—those of the adult males, according to their strength and skill, to the tasks of building the raft, of preparing the ground for the crop of barley, of digging the entrenchments and constructing the palisade, of keeping a look-out for a sail, or a watch against savages,—how all would thus be judiciously employed, according to age and sex, skill and strength, in encountering the difficulties or improving the opportunities offered by the soil, climate, and other natural conditions of their island.

If the father of a family thus circumstanced should have leisure to reflect upon the nature of the rights and duties incident to his own position, he might be led to observe that, by an unexpected dispensation of Providence, he was now called on to discharge the functions not merely of a parent, but also of *a patriarchal ruler;* that he had become, in fact, the governor

of the island, and the lawgiver of its inhabitants. Should he be led to indulge further in this train of reflection, he might naturally proceed to consider whether, under these circumstances, he could not collect for his own guidance some instruction from all that has been written or said respecting the domestic policy of a state; and especially whether, in administering to the production, the distribution, and the consumption of commodities by his little community, he should not promote its prosperity if he were to yield a respectful deference to the scientific principles which have been applied by professed statesmen to govern the economy of a nation. He might, perhaps, remember the oft-repeated observation, that "political economy is to the state what domestic economy is to the family," * and since the objects of his care would now obviously constitute both a family and a state, he might reasonably surmise that it would be well to

* *Political Economy*, by James Mill; Preface. *Macculloch's Political Economy*, p. 1.

govern their economy by the principles of Political-economy; he might fairly anticipate that, by following this course, he should be able to take advantage of all the *discoveries* which have been made by the famous writers who have explored and expounded the principles of economic science, and that he should profit by their experience, and act safely under the guidance of their precepts. Can it be imagined (and this is the point which concerns us here), that if he were seriously and thoughtfully to examine the truth of many of the doctrines, and the policy of many of the precepts which are at present accepted amongst us, he would resolve on adopting and employing them, or that he would not see that, if they should be adopted and be applied by him, they would be extremely prejudicial to the interests of his little community?

If, for example, he were to think seriously of applying the cherished maxim of some of our Political-economists, that "it is *in every case* sound policy to leave individuals to pur-

sue their own interests in their own way,"* or "that, in prosecuting such branches of industry as are most advantageous to themselves, individuals *necessarily* prosecute such as are most advantageous to the public," can it be imagined that he would accept with complacency the obvious consequence, that he might rest satisfied with the prosperity of the island, provided only he could see every individual employed, and without considering *the nature of the commodities produced by such employments;* that, for instance, he might rest satisfied with seeing the plot of barley-ground unsown, whilst they to whose care it was naturally committed were scouring the island in pursuit of grey parrots; or with being told that the younger members of the family were engaged in *productive* occupations, when they passed days in searching for shells, or in polishing pebbles, whilst the eggs and the salt remained to be collected?† Or if

* *Macculloch's Political Economy*, p. 54.

† "An occupation may be futile and trifling to the last degree without being unproductive." — *Macculloch's Political Economy*, p. 587.

he were to propose to himself to apply the dogmas, that "the discovery of *an artificial want* is the first step to exertion, and without exertion in the individual, there can be no progress in the nation;" * and "that it signifies nothing to the main purposes of trade how superfluous the articles which it furnishes are: whether the want of them be real or imaginary, whether it be founded on nature, or opinion, or fashion, habit, or emulation, it is enough that it is actually desired and sought after;" † would he thoughtfully endeavour to invent imaginary wants, or attempt to encourage artificial tastes in his little society? Would he, for instance, direct his family, some of its members being, perhaps, inadequately supplied with the necessaries of life, to devote a large amount of

* *Tests of a Thriving Population*, by Dr. Twiss, Oxford Professor of Political Economy.

† *Paley*, vol. ii. p. 8., quoted with approbation by *Macculloch*, p. 587. Paley continues: "A watch may be a very unnecessary appendage to the dress of a peasant, yet if the peasant will till the ground in order to obtain the watch, the true design of trade is answered."

exertion, and to apply valuable materials to the purpose of forcing fruit at untimely seasons of the year, or of producing articles of dress neither useful nor becoming, and significant of nothing but the amount of toil bestowed on them? He would surely rather feel disposed to resolve that if, by the bounty of Providence, all the wants of his family should ever be adequately supplied, he would thankfully relieve its several members from a part of the incessant toil under which their better nature appeared to be suffering; and he would feel confident that the hours thus gained would be better passed in avocations for which little time had hitherto been found, whether in such æsthetical pursuits as singing, music, and gymnastic games, in the invigorating and ennobling cultivation of poetry, philosophy, art, and science, or in those duties of moral and religious culture which have the highest claim on the attention of mankind. If, again, instead of considering the abstract doctrines of economic science, he were to turn his attention to their

embodiment in our popular opinions and our daily practices, is it more easy to believe he would be anxious to reap the fruits of these doctrines? If, for instance, he were to consider the popular opinion, that it does good to give employment, would he resolve to procure for the several members of his family *work* of which he could not perceive the benefit to the community—would he direct any individual to wear out more clothes, to eat more food, to burn more fuel than necessity required, in the belief that it would do good by affording employment? To all such precepts and practices we must unhesitatingly conclude that he would refuse his assent, clearly perceiving that his little state would derive no benefit whatever from the instructions of this school of Political-economy, but *very much the reverse.*

Nor is there any reason to believe that our patriarchal economist would alter his opinion if the number of persons under his care should happen to be much increased. If, for instance, other vessels were to be wrecked against the

island, and their crews, amounting, perhaps, to several hundred individuals, were to land, and, struck with the prosperity of his family, were to place themselves voluntarily under his administration, it is not probable that he would on this account become a convert to the tenets of Political-economy to which we have referred. As the population of the island would have now become more numerous, artificial modes of communication would doubtless be introduced, and many things which had before been held in common would now be appropriated and exchanged, or bought and sold for money; but these and similar improvements in the details of its internal organisation would in no way affect the integrity of the vital principles on which the prosperity of the community had been originally established; we may confidently decide that its ruler would still continue to regard with aversion every doctrine tending to foster artificial wants, and to cause the misapplication of labour. Nor further, is there reason to hold that he

would alter his opinion should several neighbouring islands be explored, and means of trafficking with their inhabitants be eventually opened. Under these circumstances it would probably become desirable that the peculiar products of the island, or the peculiar talents of its inhabitants, should receive special attention: it might, for instance, become expedient to manufacture toys and trinkets *in such quantities as would be requisite for the purpose of bartering* with the savages; but it would not be thought desirable to encourage in the civilised community a taste for such objects as toys and trinkets, in order to divert labour from other purposes to new channels of industry.

Nor, under any other imaginable circumstances, can it be believed that our patriarchal economist would be led to depart from the general principles, according to which he had, in the first instance, been led by the instructive guidance of common sense, to administer the industrial resources of his little community. To whatever degree of opulence the society might advance, it cannot

be conceived that he would consent to abandon these principles in favour of any of our popular dogmas derived from the great fundamental fallacy, that * *all value is derived from human labour;* a fallacy which, although expressed in an abstract proposition and in limited terms, poisons, in its ulterior consequences, the whole administration of our political economy. Should the patriarchal economist ever be

* It will probably be found that our public opinion respecting this subject is at present in a great measure based on the theory of value propounded by Adam Smith, built upon by Ricardo, and propagated in the works of Macculloch, James Mill, De Quincey, &c. The influence of this theory may be traced to the fact that it is the only theory of VALUE which has received public acceptance from a *considerable number* of writers and speakers; J. S. Mill, Whateley, Senior, and other eminent authorities in this country, to whom we may add Say, Sismondi, and Bastiat, among foreign writers, when not supporting it, having either contented themselves with criticising it negatively, or not having succeeded in agreeing so far as to give a *locus standi*, in point of authority to any other theory. "They have overturned their master's (Adam Smith's) throne, instead of securing it on the everlasting foundation — *labour* — on which he placed it."—*Economist*, 1855.

pressed by others, insisting on the weight of authority, and the example of celebrated statesmen, to adopt this tenet and to accept its consequences, he would probably reply, that the tenet, regarded as the assertion of a condition of nature *, is itself unsound, and that the consequences of adopting it and of acting on it, have been found, like all the fruits of error, to produce unforeseen mischief. He might point out, that where the master has taught that † "*the value of a thing depends on the relative quantity of labour which is necessary for its production*," the pupils have naturally fostered the fallacy by calling that labour its value ‡, whilst the

* "It so happens, by the appointment of Providence, that valuable articles are, in almost all instances, obtained by Labour, but still this is an *accidental*, not an *essential* circumstance."—*Whateley on Political Economy*, p. 252.

† *Ricardo's Political Works*, chap. i. sect. 1.

‡ *Whateley's Logic*, p. 404.: "All these differences appear to arise from a confusion of cause and effect. Having decided that commodities are valuable in proportion to the labour they have cost, it was natural to call that labour their value."

public, naturally evincing still less caution, has been led on to regard Labour and Value as almost identical. He might remark, that statesmen have consequently denied, that to consider the purposes to which labour is applied is a consideration worthy of their attention, however improvident the enterprises, or wild the speculations to which it has occasionally been directed; and that the possessors of property have attached the notion of positive good to laborious occupation, without any regard for its kind and degree, or rather with a purposed and professed disregard for any such considerations, as if it were equally, and under all circumstances, a beneficial enhancement of value. He might observe, that the abstract identification of Labour and Property too nearly resembles the abstract dogmas by which slavery is defended not to produce an occasional forgetfulness of the claims of humanity; and that in fact, through the ascendancy of this principle, carried into practice, and strongly co-operating with motives of

vanity and caprice, Labour and Capital have been, and are, constantly applied, on an extensive scale, to the production of the toys and trinkets of civilised life for *home consumption*, in the absence of a supply of the necessaries of civilised life, sufficient for all the members of the community. It might be added, as a warning of easy inference, that in whatever country this tenet should continue to be in the ascendant, expenditure would continue to be a bane, and that, whilst the rich might become richer, the poor must inevitably become poorer, to such a degree as would ultimately cause a too copious emigration, or perhaps endanger the stability of Government and the institutions of the country, however such consequences might be for a time averted by the passing circumstances of the day.

CHAP. II.

SCHOLASTIC POLITICAL ECONOMY.

BUT are these imputations likely to be well founded? Are we to esteem so lightly the opinions of learned men? Have we no respect for authorities? Can philosophers be wrong when common sense is right? May we venture thus to cut the Gordian knot? The character of these questions may be illustrated by an incident of common occurrence.

The Antwerp steam-boat is crossing the channel on a dark and stormy night; the passengers have all been driven below, and the most learned amongst them are discussing the statistics of their passage. One observes that the vessel cannot have got far on her way, because the wind was dead against her at sunset; another suspects that it has dropped a good deal, and

remarks that the tide must soon begin to flow; a third observes that the spring tides are now very high; a fourth, that the vessel has two hundred horse power, but that wooden boats do not go through the water like iron boats; and so the conversation continues, leading eventually to arguments respecting the merits of paddle-wheels and screw propellers, aneroids and barometers, and many similar topics familiarly known to men of science and masters of philosophy. At last the sick passenger in the corner, unable to bear this learned trifling any longer, cries out, "Steward, go on deck and see where we are." "Just passed the North Foreland Lighthouse; soon be in the Nore, Sir," replies the matter-of-fact steward, and silence ensues.

The learned controversialists are those lights of Political-economy to whom we have referred; the state of the sick passenger is the state of the nation, and the instruction of practical common sense is what the nation at present requires.

The truth is, that men of cultivated intellect have, in all ages, occasionally delighted to exer-

cise their talents, as accomplished fencers fence, principally for the pleasure of the encounter, and to pursue laws of nature as true sportsmen sport, without attaching much importance to the objects of their pursuit, or as true gamesters gamble, without caring much for the acquisition of the stake.

The occasion chosen for these intellectual gymnastics has usually been the early stage of each science, apparently because few facts have been at that period collected to curtail the liberty of imagination. Political-economy at the present moment can scarcely be said to be more than a century old.* Now it is a matter of history that there is scarcely any branch of knowledge respecting which, when it was at this early stage of its growth, the common sense of mankind was not perplexed, blinded,

* "Political Economy was not treated as a whole or in a scientific manner until about the middle of last century." — *Macculloch's Political Economy*, p. 25. "Political Economy, properly so called, has grown up almost from infancy since the time of Adam Smith." — *J. S. Mill's Political Economy.*

and led astray by the theories of learned philosophers. The science of numbers, for example, which it might be supposed would have been more exempt than any other from the misguidance of master minds, was, it will be remembered, so darkened by learning in its infancy, that in the days of Pythagoras no unlettered person could have given a more decisive proof of ignorance respecting the nature of goodness and beauty, than by mistrusting the virtues of certain numbers.* Archytas wrote a treatise on the number 10; Proclus said that the intellectual Gods produce all things triadically; 7 was said to be a virgin number, and was sacred to Minerva; 6 was a perfect number, and was sacred to Venus. Whoever in that age produced, consumed, distributed, or acted in any of the common affairs of life, without reference to these laws, was doubtless despised as ignorant, or denounced as mischievous. Astronomy, again, in her youth-

* *Whewell's History of the Inductive Sciences.*

ful days, presuming on the feelings of wonder and reverence with which the aspect of the starry sky must ever be contemplated, taught her pupils to regard it as a Book of Fate, and induced mankind to believe that some planets are male, and others female, and that each has its peculiar influence; that the fixed stars are divided into houses, each of which presides over a particular part of the body, as Aries over the head, Taurus over the neck, and so on; and that on the sign which happens to be in the ascendant at the birth of any person depend his future life and death, his marriage, his progeny, his riches, and his honours. Such, we know, was the early teaching of that science which now exhausts, by its accuracy, the means of mechanical art, and establishes, by its certainty, the most remote power of prediction. Chemistry, again, our modern science of manipulation and test and experiment, taught in her infancy, that the metals have secret and strange sympathies with the heavenly bodies, gold with the sun, silver with the moon, copper,

iron, tin, lead, with Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn; that the action of these metals is like the action of living beings, and that they may be said, not in flights of poetry, but in the disquisitions of sober reason, to have a king and a queen, to conquer and be conquered, when combined to be married, and when resulting in products to produce children. With the misguiding precepts, to which the infancy of more complex branches of knowledge has been exposed, we are probably still more familiar, as, for instance, with the successive theories of medicine and pathology, with the numerous political constitutions, each perfect and final, with the systems of moral philosophy, and with the mythological creeds, all taught in their time by men of cultivated intellect. It is needless to multiply instances in order to prove, that philosophers, not at any particular period of man's history, but continually, as each science has successively struggled into existence, at the brightest as well as the darkest political epochs, have loved to indulge their imagination, and

have at first wielded their logic rather against than in furtherance of the dictates of instinctive common-sense; they have thought more of the exercise than the profit of their pursuit; they have loved to hunt by scent rather than by sight. Nor have the effects of their delusions, even in the case of the most simple subjects, been usually confined to the closet, and ended in mere abstract theory: on the contrary, they have often widely influenced the conduct of private life, and effected the administration of public affairs; the delusions of astronomy, for instance, led to professional and judicial astrology, with all the horrors of superstitious foreboding, and cruel injustice; the delusions of chemistry induced many to sacrifice life and fortune in searching for an *elixir vitæ* and a philosopher's stone, and led to the enactment of iniquitous laws, and the infliction of barbarous tortures, for the purpose of preventing and punishing supposed practices of magic. History seems almost to establish it as one of the natural conditions of human progress, that

each branch of philosophy, as it shoots forth, shall not only be hidden for a time by the luxuriance of imagination, but shall also bear unripe and noxious fruit, before it can swell into the broad girth which renders it fit to be *cut down* and squared and used in the construction of science.

When, therefore, we consider how youthful Political-economy now is, and we read its history from its origin as a branch of learning to the times *immediately preceding our own*, we are not surprised to find that the character of its tenets, and of their consequences, agrees with this general character of nascent science; that the principles which it used to advance *in all past times* are now held by universal consent to have been "dark conceits," and that the effect of their adoption by wise and powerful men is now pronounced to have been *in the highest degree prejudicial* to the best interests of humanity. When, for instance, we read, that after the contempt for industrial pursuits which marked the classic ages had cleared away, and

priesthoods, long the great possessors of knowledge and of property, had handed over both to the people, and the soil being prepared for the growth of a science of Political-economy, the master minds of political wisdom in this country during the reigns of the Stuarts taught*, that *gold and silver alone constitute wealth;* that *the excess of the value of exports over that of imports* is the great cause of progress in the accumulation of wealth; that consequently the *balance of trade* ought to occupy the undivided attention of a Minister of Finance, and that a profound knowledge of the MERCANTILE SYSTEM can alone enable statesmen to promote the prosperity of a country, — we are not surprised to find that these doctrines, once universally believed, are now universally reprobrated. We acquiesce almost without a pause in the propriety of the judgment passed upon this class of tenets by the critic †: — "There are very few political errors

* *Macculloch's Introductory Discourse to the Wealth of Nations.*

† M. Storch.

which have produced more mischief than the mercantile system, . . . armed with power, it commanded and forbad where it should only have protected, ... in short, where it has been least injurious it has retarded the progress of national prosperity; everywhere else it has deluged the earth with blood, and has depopulated and ruined some of those countries whose power and opulence, it was supposed, it would carry to the highest pitch."

When, again, in continuing the history of this science, we read that the celebrated M. Quesnay was enabled to overthrow the system thus justly condemned; that he held it to be the basis of every true system of Political-economy that *the earth is the only source of wealth*, and "LABOUR IS ALTOGETHER INCAPABLE OF PRODUCING ANY NEW VALUE;" and that, when the "Tableau Economique, intended to exhibit the various phenomena attendants on the production of wealth, and its distribution among the productive, proprietory, and unproductive classes, was published at

Versailles, with accompanying illustrations, in 1778, the novelty and ingenuity of the theory which it expounded, its systematic and scientific shape, and the liberal system of commercial intercourse which it recommended, speedily obtained for it a very high degree of reputation;" and that its principles were widely disseminated in France, Italy, and Germany, through the exertions of Mirabeau, Turgot, and the other illustrious men who were regarded as the master minds of Political-economy by the "Economists or Physiocrats" — we are not at all surprised at the concluding judgment of the commentator, to which there would not probably now be found one dissentient voice, that "Quesnay and his followers mistook altogether the nature of production."

When, in continuing the same history down to *our own times*, we read that Adam Smith, in opposition to the Economists, showed that *labour is the only source of wealth*, and we are informed that "the fundamental principles on which the production of wealth depends were thus placed

beyond the reach of cavil or dispute;" and we find that the principles thus enunciated have in fact alone secured the unanimous acquiescence of *several* celebrated authors, who have succeeded in modelling our financial measures, and in moulding our habits of private expenditure according to their views; must we on this account accept their conclusions without hesitation, and should we feel quite convinced that there is no error in these principles, and no mischief in these practices, did we weigh the present in the same scale in which we weigh the past, or did we not gaze curiously on the dogmas of our ancestors, whilst we carry the dogmas of our contemporaries in the wallet on our backs?

CHAP. III.

OUR PRESENT SCHOOL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.

"DE vivis nil nisi bonum"—reverence the living—is a maxim which is alike suggested by inclination, and recommended by prudence. The spirit of censure is odious when applied to our contemporaries, and there is no occasion to forget that if we pass judgment on them they can also pass judgment on us, or that it is one thing, to attack the opinions held by eminent men from the times of Pythagoras to those of Quesney and Turgot, and another and a very different thing, to attack the opinions held by those whose names and influence guide public opinion in our own days.

But it is, unhappily, among the conditions of human progress, that truth can only be diffused

after the overthrow of error, that right cannot be maintained without the suppression of wrong, and that a species of destructive warfare must therefore be waged in the intellectual world, so long as any considerable tracts of knowledge continue to be unreclaimed.

When it is proposed to introduce to notice new aspects or new applications of natural laws, if we proceed without adverting to the tenets which are at present in the ascendant, we may not always make it clear how far our purpose is supported by or is opposed to them; popular opinions, however inconsistent or contradictory, may be cited against it; and reason may scarcely be able to work when trammelled by the fetters of authority. Whilst, however, reluctance is felt in undertaking to clear the ground before we attempt to build on it, and we profess that we yield unwillingly to the necessity of commenting on others, it cannot be imagined, nor must we admit, that there is any property in error, or that an apology can be required or expected from those who attempt to sweep it

away. Every worthy mind must scorn to think that the cause of truth should in any case suffer from personal considerations. True lovers of philosophy are fellow travellers, embarked in the same voyage of discovery; and although divided into parties, and often advocating opposite sides of the great questions of science, all must contribute to advance its progress when public opinion is at the helm. It must also be urged that if there be a subject in the discussion of which the etiquette of carpet-logic is out of place, it is that with which we are here engaged. It has been truly observed*, with respect to the distribution of wealth, "that is a matter of human institution solely. The things once there, mankind, individually or collectively, can do with them as they like; they can place them at the disposal of whomsoever they please, and on whatever terms." In other words, our present principles of Political Economy are responsible for the present distribution of wealth in

* *Political Economy*, by J. S. Mill, vol. i. p. 240.

this country. To bring then to the examination of these principles no other feeling than a stern regard for truth, must be the desire of all who have, and who has not, reflected on our present distribution of the material means and appliances of life among the various classes of society.*

It is usual, as we have already observed, for our present leading authorities on Political-economy to describe the science, the true science, as having now attained a growth of rather less than a century. If this be so, we may assert, without fear of contradiction, that this science has not stood the test of ages; that it does not come to us stamped with the seal of

* This is not the place to enlarge upon a topic unhappily so fruitful; but, by way of general illustration, we may allude to one circumstance which is painfully familiar to the promoters of our reformatory institutions — that it is usually found impossible to treat the inmates, however vicious or guilty, as common humanity would dictate, without rendering their physical condition an object of envy to a large section of the guiltless poor; such is the normal condition of the lower ranks of our labouring classes."

antiquity; on the contrary, we may almost say that it is the work of its admirers, of their friends and acquaintance, or of those at whose feet they have received instruction. Now it must be conceded, that when we are called on to repose implicit confidence in the precepts of a science thus circumstanced, we have a right to require that the fundamental principles which it advances shall be agreed upon, and accepted by its professors, as clearly and demonstrably true; not, perhaps, that a large body of such principles shall be advanced, but that some little nucleus of truth, some one principle, at least, shall be brought to light, so clear and intelligible as to command respectful deference whenever it is mentioned, and to ensure a conviction that round it the grains of future discovery will be clustered. It is fortunate for our purpose that circumstances have induced some of our great authorities on Political-economy to state how far the present state of their science answers these just expectations:

"It does not seem yet to be agreed," says

Mr. Malthus *, "what ought to be considered as the best definition of wealth, of capital, of productive labour, or of value; what is meant by real wages; what is meant by labour; what is meant by profits; in what sense the term demand is to be understood," &c. &c. In commenting on "the different definitions or employment by Political-economists of some of the commonest and most important terms, viz., Value, Wealth, Labour, Capital, Rent, Wages, Profit," Archbishop Whateley makes the following observations †: "There is no one of these in the use of which all the most eminent writers have agreed with each other, and hardly one of them in the use of which some one or other of these writers has not occasionally disagreed with himself. Mr. Senior remarks, in his introductory lecture, 'I almost regret now that I did not suggest in each place the definitions which appeared to me the most convenient;'

* *Malthus, Definitions in Political Economy*, p. 2.

† *Whateley on Political Economy*, p. 244.

that he did not, however, I am inclined to think better on the whole." When such is the character which the definitions of this new science are said to deserve, and this, too, by its most profound investigators and most admired expositors, may we not hesitate before we consent to build the economy of a nation on its precepts? Still more necessary does it appear to be to hesitate before we consent to such a course, when we proceed to ask to what purpose these doubtful definitions are applied in the investigation of the subject. "The prominent part" we are told, "and that which demands the principal share of our attention in Political-economy, strictly so called (i. e. considered as to the *principles* of the science), must be the *reasoning process, ... the Logical not the Physical* investigation."* On what foundation, then, is this prominent reasoning process to be built? From which of these numerous definitions is the chain of argument to be suspended? Who will

* *Whateley on Political Economy*, p. 239.

assure us that of each class of definitions the chosen category on which is rested the whole fabric of our ratiocination is right, and that the others are wrong? Another writer on this subject truly informs his readers that "if they proceed to a subsequent proposition before they are sufficiently imbued with the first, they will of course experience a difficulty." * With which, then, of these first propositions are we to be so imbued, and for what reasons, and on what authority?

The answer offered to these objections by the advocates of our system of Political-economy would probably be, "The fault is in logic, in language, not in our science; we have abundance of knowledge, as would be evident to all the world, had we but the power of expressing it." But is this credible? Can we believe, not that an uneducated speaker, or a hasty writer, but that a school of learned and accomplished men, some of whom are the very

* *Elements of Political Economy*, by James Mill.

flower of esteemed logicians, cannot, after mature consideration and long debate, find words to express their meaning, or rather that nearly all of them are forced to employ different words, having very clearly different and sometimes opposite significations, in order to denote one and the same object, and this, too, when the topic of discussion is a matter so perceptible, so common-place, we might almost say so vulgar, as wealth? When navigators discover and land upon a new coast, and survey the mountains, rivers, and other natural features which mark the interior of the country, they seldom find much difficulty afterwards in describing or in naming them. It has sometimes, however, happened that voyagers have contented themselves with viewing a coast from a distance, or have touched and departed without exploring the interior, and yet, on their return, have been tempted to offer descriptions of the country, with every particular of name and place. These descriptions, it is needless to say, subsequent navigators have usually found it very difficult

to recognise, or impossible to reconcile, and their comments have, consequently, sometimes given rise to long and angry discussions. We cannot but suspect that our Political-economists have not yet *surveyed their proper field of inquiry*, and that it is on this account they are unable to agree respecting the true classification and the proper terminology of their science.

If we can conceive it to be possible that the inconsistencies and contradictions which are thus exhibited in the definitions of Political-economy do not infect its doctrines, or that error at the source does not vitiate the stream, we may be induced to proceed, and ask what is the general character of the leading doctrines of our Political-economy—are they maintained with harmony, consistency, and unity, or are they the prize of varied conflicts, if not the sport of popular favour? The great practical end of our standing works on Political-economy appears to be, to foretell the ultimate result of the race which is supposed to be perpetually

maintained between profits and wages, or between the remuneration of capital and the remuneration of labour; a problem which, it is commonly said, must depend for its ultimate solution on the rate at which population increases. "The prospects," says Mr. J. S. Mill*, "of the existing system of society depend upon this. What chance is there that opinions and feelings grounded on the law of the dependence of wages on population will arise among the laborious classes?" It is not permitted to us here to stop and wonder why the luminaries of economic science have so largely withdrawn their attention from our present social wants, in order to direct it to the interpretation of future contingencies; why laymen have summarily divorced the virtues which Romanism joins together—celibacy and fasting—and have balanced the merits of "positive and preventive checks" against the demerits of poverty; still less to

* *Principles of Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 446.

marvel how they who believe in the immortality of the soul, or who read "blessed are the poor," can advocate restraints on population, whilst, on the one hand, there is a vast extent of ever fruitful earth uncultivated, or half cultivated, and, on the other hand, there is a prodigious amount of labour devoted, through a misapprehension of the functions of industry, to the gratification of artificial, if not unnatural, tastes and desires; our object here is to inquire whether any theory of population has been applied *consistently* to the vital interests which it is said to determine, whether the lamp of the science has burned *steadily*, whilst its votaries have been engaged in acting on the instructions of their most revered oracles. Every student of Political-economy knows what answer must be returned to this question. From 1798 to 1826, the celebrated principle of Malthus, that population increases faster than the means of subsistence, was constantly laid before, and generally accepted by, the public. Mr. Macculloch, taking the opposite side of the

question from that period up to the present time, has maintained, in his popular and elaborate works, that "the desire of the bulk of the people not merely to preserve themselves in their present position, but to attain to one still higher, does in all ordinary cases effectually hinder the too great development of the principle of population, and renders it subordinate to the increase of the means of subsistence." Mr. J. S. Mill*, on the contrary, returning to the other side of the question, in his work first published in 1848, has devoted much energy to the refutation of the tenet, that "human beings may call into existence swarms of creatures who are sure to be depraved, and most likely to be miserable." Mr. Rickards, on the contrary, as Oxford Professor of Political Economy, in 1854, thus advocates the tenet so denounced:—"Rejecting the assumption opposed to facts, and replete with anomalies and contradictions, that 'population has a tendency

* *Principles of Political Economy*, vol. i. p. 419.

to increase in a greater ratio than subsistence,' we establish as the law of social progress the converse principle, that *the productive power of a community tends to increase more rapidly than the number of the consumers.*"*

Can we, then, say that the *stability* of its leading doctrines atones for the defective definitions of modern Political-economy? When we are told that "the differences which have subsisted among the more eminent of its professors have proved exceedingly unfavourable to its progress,"† are we to regard this fact as a mark of the folly or of the wisdom of those who have expressed no willingness to be initiated into such discordant principles? Can we be surprised when we find that, under these circumstances, the most sincere and the most earnest of its investigators have arrived at the conclusion, some that they know nothing, others that they can and ought to do nothing? Are we to express our disapprobation when M.

* *Population and Capital*, p. 257.

† *Macculloch*, p. 13.

Bastiat, justly named by the present Oxford Professor "one of the master minds of modern Political-economy," concludes his work on the fallacies of the science with the remark*, "I have no pretensions that the reader should exclaim, on shutting the book, 'I know!' Would to heaven that he may say sincerely, '*I am ignorant?*'" Can we be surprised when we hear the suicidal sentence passed by many of its most earnest advocates on this branch of political government, "it is in all cases sound policy to leave individuals to pursue their own interest in their own way?"† Can we object that such a sentence, if accepted, decides that all Political-economists are superfluous, and that the practice of their art is a public evil?

But one more remark, and we may conclude the unpleasant task of reprobation. It sometimes happens, especially in this country, that however faulty a theory may be, it is found to work well in practice. Whether through the

* *Sophismes Economiques*, translated, p. 162.

† *Macculloch's Introductory Discourse*, p. xliv.

principle of co-operative adjustment, which is so remarkable a feature of the Anglo-Saxon character, and which constitutes, perhaps, the hidden key-stone of the British Constitution, or through some other principle of our nature, we oftener, perhaps, than any other people on the face of the earth, contrive to extract success from theoretical absurdity. Let us, then, pass from the principles to the practice of modern Political-economy, and ask if we have reason to be satisfied with that part of the condition of England of which it takes charge. A crotchetty gardener may, obstinately and irrationally, insist on doing a thousand things differently from all the rest of the world; an impracticable nurse may provokingly adhere to mysterious and superstitious observances; but, if the garden and the nursery prosper, it is often good policy to let matters rest as they are. Ought this to be our conduct with respect to our present school of Political-economy? Does it work well, or to speak more correctly, and more professionally, does good result from its not work-

ing at all, in compliance with its cardinal maxim, "laissez passer," "laissez aller," laissez faire?"

This is a question which unhappily conveys its own answer. The minds of Englishmen have become so habituated to discussions respecting "the condition of England," that the very expression has come to signify the wretched state of the homes of the great masses of our population; and English feelings have become almost accustomed to regard this state as smallpox and scurvy were formerly regarded, with indifference if not with apathy, because appearing to be unsusceptible of prevention or of improvement. When the advantages of savage and of civilised life are compared, it is usually said, that although the civilised man must renounce the charms of the forest and the prairie, and can seldom enjoy the pleasures of the chase, or listen to the songs of birds, or imbibe the odours of flowers, or have leisure to cast off care in the sunshine of forgetfulness, he is compensated for the thousand delights of

an unfettered life by the command of an ample and a certain supply of necessaries. Every one knows how far the English operative is dependent on the state of trade, the most uncertain of fluctuating elements, and what, amongst the lowest classes of society, is the amplitude of supply. Every one who has been thrown in contact with these classes, either in town or in country districts, knows that the great features of their normal condition are want and uncertainty. Of the numerous publications which have undertaken to depict our social condition, there is not one probably that does not exhibit, in some form or another, these painful results of our Political-economy.* The nature of the revelations to be found in these

* *Meliora*, edited by Viscount Ingestrie, John Parker and Son. *The Perils of the Nation*, Seeley. *London Labour and the London Poor*, by Henry Mayhew. *The Ragged School Magazine*, Partridge, Oakey, and Co. *The City Mission Magazine*, Seeley. The *Reports* of Female Dormitories, of Reformatories, of Refuges for the Destitute, and other institutions in number about eight hundred and fifty, which have been raised in London alone to resist the torrent of physical suffering.

works is thus indicated in an able review * of them: — "When population presses closely on the means of subsistence, whole classes live in the constant and imminent danger of distress. A slight fluctuation in the trade of silk half starves the wide district of Spitalfields. The long frost of last year caused bread-riots among the marine and river population. The costermongers or vendors of provisions in the streets, amounting to not less than 30,000, may at any time be brought to the verge of famine by a three days' rain. Many callings at the best scarcely supply the necessaries of life." It is interesting, as an illustration of our present subject, to observe, that whenever special, religious, or charitable purposes are not present to the minds of the authors of these publications, and they are consequently at liberty to examine the painful scene before them in all its bearings, those vicious principles of Political-economy which we are here engaged in con-

* *Quarterly Review*, 1855, p. 410.

sidering seem to be forced on their attention, as the cause of our social evils. "Encouragement for Capital," says the author of the 'Perils of the Nation,' 'Prevention for Population;' these have been the two leading ideas with statesmen and legislators for the last thirty years. They have now succeeded in their object. They have immensely increased the growth of capital; and, *pari passu*, the growth of misery and distress also. . . . . Such are the leading maxims inculcated by the highest authorities in Political-economy, and honoured and rewarded by statesmen of all classes; and that which we are now reaping, in peril and in suffering, is nothing else than the fair legitimate result of these maxims and these practices."

It will also be remarked that when this part of the condition of England is examined by foreign writers, whilst its horrors, as might be naturally expected, are more freely depicted, they are more directly traced to our vicious system of Political-economy, and more boldly

ascribed to its professors. Thus, after citing, amongst other comments, a remark made by M. Buret respecting the state of England, "that, by the side of an opulence, activity, elegance, and wide-spread comfort of which the world has no example, every great city contains a real ghetto, a cursed quarter, a hell upon earth; where the reality of misery, depravity, and every hideous form of human suffering and degradation surpasses anything that the imagination of a Dante ever conceived in describing the abode of devils," M. de Sismondi* remarks, "I differ essentially from those philosophers who, in our time, have professed in so brilliant a manner the economical sciences from Say, Ricardo, Malthus, and Macculloch. These philosophers appear to me constantly to have put aside the obstacles which embarrassed them in the building up of their theories, and to have arrived at false conclusions from not having distinguished things which it gave them trouble to distinguish."

* *Political Economy*, translated, p. 119.

From this review, however brief and imperfect, of the principles which are at present generally admitted to guide our legislation, and to influence our private conduct, in reference to the subject of Political-economy, we must surely conclude that the definitions from which they are derived are arbitrary and conflicting, that the principles themselves are unstable and mutable, that the course of legislation which they direct, when most triumphant, triumphs only by undoing what it has before done, its great victories, as, for instance, the Repeal of the Corn Laws and the various enactments of Free Trade, not being victories over natural obstacles, but over the works of previous legislation, and that the fruit of these principles is misery the most appalling. Is it not, then, our duty to provide that no dicta pronounced by the masters of such a school shall impede our search after the truth? Darkness and light cannot stand together, and they whose character and position are involved in the maintenance of the former have sometimes used

logic, authority, and persecution, to delay the advent of the latter. Truth must eventually prevail; but every reader of the history of philosophy is aware how long an interval has usually elapsed before a vicious system has been thoroughly eradicated, and sound principles have taken root in its place. It is for those who can judge freely to provide, that such a change in the institutions and manners of our country, shall be delayed as short a time as possible, through the influence of that system of Political-economy which we have here attempted to describe.

CHAP. IV.

CHOICE OF A NEW SYSTEM.

THE easy introduction of this perplexity into our laws, and of this darkness into our homes, is principally due to the circumstance that whilst philosophers have generalised too rapidly, announced laws incautiously, and taken up a position too remote from human life to enable them to observe how often events negative their dogmas, their pupils, naturally placed in a position whence they can only in parts discern the effects of their actions, have found occasion to be satisfied with what they could so discern. It may be remarked as a very unfortunate circumstance, that each of the positions thus occupied is alike conducive to the reception of the fallacious dogma, that "the value of a thing depends on the relative quantity of labour

which is necessary for its production;" when viewed from the former, this dogma appears to be an interesting discovery, a key to many important social problems, and a means of power; when viewed from the latter, it appears to afford an easy principle according to which we may frame our laws, or spend our money without the care of looking after the ultimate results of labour, or being satisfied if the small number of persons with whom we immediately come in contact are prosperous through the effects of our actions.

The warning which is evidently to be derived from this circumstance is, that, whatever system of Political-economy we examine, it must be our care to guard against the influences which have thus deluded both the masters and their pupils, and to commence our observations by carefully selecting a favourable position. If others have observed the state of the nation from too great a distance, we must observe it more nearly. If others have regarded each part or interest of the body politic separately, we must regard them altogether. Notwithstanding our authorised tenets respecting this ques-

tion, it is evident that the *interest* of every proprietor and of every class of proprietors, whatever course of conduct circumstances compel them to pursue, is *opposed* to the welfare of the public regarded as a whole. It is the interest, for example, of the possessors of corn that corn should become scarce, because their stock would then command a higher price; of the possessors of wine that wine should become scarce, for the same reason; of the possessors, in short, of every kind of commodity that that commodity should become scarce*; but it is the interest of the whole nation that corn, wine, and every other kind of commodity should be abundant. It is no refutation of this argument to insist, that the *actions* of each trade,

* It has been well observed by Bastiat, that not only is there a radical antagonism of interest between buyers and sellers, but that the worst evils of humanity — distress, hunger, cold, ignorance, vanity, cupidity, bad faith, maladies — are all profitable to professions. "Which is the greater good to man and to society, abundance, or scarcity? . . . . . I do not hesitate to say that the theory of *scarcity* is much the more popular of the two." — *Sophismes Economiques*, translated.

and of each individual, are generally so guided by the conditions of society as to promote the good of the whole community; our proposition still remains intact, that the *separate interest* of each part is generally opposed to the interest of the whole. It is clear, therefore, that they who observe any interest apart from the others, and endeavour solely to promote its prosperity, run a great risk of militating against the public welfare. If they attempt to compare and to balance conflicting claims, and to measure out the due share of encouragement to each interest, they undertake a task which it is almost beyond the power of human wisdom to execute. To attempt such a task is scarcely less extravagant than if a physician were to attempt to regulate the health of a patient by observing separately the different parts of his body, the hand, the foot, the spine, the head, and so on, considering how much of his attention each ought to receive, in order to administer according to an equitable scale to their just necessities. We may add, that to deduce the doctrines of do-nothing-ism from the results of

such a method of treating political bodies, is scarcely less extravagant than if the physician, finding this method of treatment unsuccessful, were to embrace the conclusion that every attempt to administer to the economy of the human frame must be mischievous, and that non-interference is in all cases the highest wisdom of medical art. Our right position, for observing and administering to the economic state of a nation, must be outside the body politic, at such a distance that we can see and act upon all its co-ordinate members at the same time.

Placing ourselves in this position, the same, it will be observed, as that which we have supposed to be occupied by our Patriarchal Econonomist, let us inquire how the Political-economy of the country can be rightly administered, and how we in our several states of life can help to procure that it shall be so administered. Patriotism and self-interest alike must make us desire the enjoyment of this, one of the most essential parts of good government. It is the

business of each of us to assist in its accomplishment; how can we discern the right method of conducting this business, and how can we secure its performance?

How do we manage our own affairs, or such of them as are not entirely within our knowledge — the business, for instance, of our property, or of our health? Every sensible person has of course two modes of proceeding in these cases: one for ordinary, the other for extraordinary occasions. If an emergency happens, the case is put in the hands of the professional man who has specially studied the subject, the lawyer or the doctor, and is fully confided to him; when there is not occasion for more knowledge than falls to our own lot, we gladly dispense with his assistance, and manage the business ourselves. It is the same with the share of the business of Political-economy which belongs to each of us; we have the professed statesman, the minister, member of parliament, or other functionary, who has specially devoted his attention to the study of

the several branches of political administration, and to his hands the business of great occasions, such as the framing of executive and legislative measures, must necessarily be entrusted: on the lesser occasions of political consideration, when it would be superfluous or ridiculous to seek for the assistance of a professed politician, we require to learn so to regulate our conduct that the public welfare may be promoted, or at least may not suffer through our actions.

It is therefore essential to consider two questions, 1st, how we are to choose the minister, the representative, or other professional man to whom we commit the care of our Political-economy; 2ndly, how we are to regulate our ordinary every-day private conduct in reference to the same object.

Every prudent inquirer will be careful to keep these two considerations distinct, applying severally the answer which each may receive to the circumstances to which it is adapted, and not permitting the application

of one to interfere with the application of the other.

It is, indeed, no uncommon occurrence to meet with persons who, without having devoted much time to the study, consider themselves qualified to practise the art of professional statesmanship. As there are amateur divines, amateur lawyers, amateur doctors, who disturb their consciences, empty their pockets, or ruin their health, and perhaps perform the same offices for their friends, there are amateur politicians who, with the best intentions, cause serious interruptions to the various processes of political administration. Divinity is a very difficult science, yet it is by no means uncommon to hear persons who have seldom bestowed a thought on the subject decide conclusively concerning its deepest mysteries; the study of law is difficult — *viginti annorum lucubrationes* are now more than ever requisite to make a lawyer understand its difficulties — yet persons who have never opened a law book will not unfrequently offer a decided opinion on a litigated

case; the science of medicine is difficult, yet few ignorant persons will hesitate to prescribe; political philosophy is not less difficult than any of these sciences, yet it often happens that persons who have given little attention to the study will pronounce summarily on the character of any measure, or perhaps undertake to dictate to politicians the course which they ought to pursue in any emergency. Nothing, however, as is felt by those who are best acquainted with each science, can be more prejudicial to truth than the toleration of such pretensions; none are greater enemies to the progress of knowledge than they who forget the boundaries of reason and authority.

With respect to the first of these purposes, that of learning how to choose and to observe the statesmen who are to have our confidence, and in a greater or less degree to represent our opinions, it is material to consider what kind of acquirements are necessary for this purpose. It is quite certain that the amount of knowledge which each of us possesses on this subject is

not greater, but on the contrary is much less, than that which is possessed by the statesmen from amongst whom we are called on to select, and whom we must therefore in some manner judge; that the less learned, therefore, are called on to examine and to decide between the more learned. But ought this to be so? can such a function as this be exercised without arrogance or undue pretension? Undoubtedly it can, provided we possess a right understanding of *the first principles* of the subject in question, not necessarily an extensive acquaintance with its details, but a well-grounded conviction respecting its first principles and its elementary propositions; we shall then be enabled to select those who profess such principles and accept such propositions, trusting to their character and ability to carry them into practice. As we choose or change our medical advisers without an extensive knowledge of medicine, deciding on the merits of practitioners in allopathy, homœopathy, hydropathy, mesmerism, and galvanism, without pretending to the possession of an

amount of knowledge, respecting the methods of applying the remedies, equal to that possessed by any one of these practitioners, and judging only from the general nature of their treatment, so, in order to exercise rightly a choice between rival statesmen, as far as their claims to our support depend on the system of Political-economy which they profess to pursue, it is only necessary to have a right understanding of the *first truths*, the *natural* and *only true principles*, from which every right method of administering to national wealth must be deduced.

It is scarcely necessary to say that it is the business of the statesman who practises Political-economy to preside over the production, the distribution, and the consumption of wealth. As the Patriarchal Economist would watch over the supplies of food and clothing, and the means of exercise and amusement enjoyed by his little community, taking care that they should be produced abundantly, distributed judiciously, and consumed frugally, the states-

man who practises Political-economy should perform the same functions for his country, but with this difference in his method of acting, — instead of personal communication, and the exercise of direct authority, he must operate unseen and at a distance, principally through the indirect influence of *changes of value.* These changes, it is needless to say, are chiefly produced by ministers through the agency of the taxes which are imposed under their influence: it is the exercise of their discretion in imposing the taxes, which, as we know but too well, the necessities of nearly every state require to be raised, that enables them to apportion those burdens among the different classes of the community, and consequently to influence the production, distribution, and consumption of different species of property, whether fruitful or barren, useful or useless, conducive to the welfare of the community or the reverse. The ground-work, therefore, on which the administrative Political-economist must rest the solution of his problems and the

accomplishment of his purposes, is a knowledge of the true principles of value, and of the laws according to which it changes when the existing quantity of each kind of property is changed, and according to which its own changes cause the production of each kind of property in different quantities. If, for example, he should contemplate putting a tax on any commodity, it must be his object to ascertain how far the quantity produced or exported would be diminished, and consequently how far the condition of persons concerned with this commodity would be affected. Should it, again, be foreseen that in consequence of any circumstance a change of quantity would occur, it would be his business to determine how far the value of the commodity would be affected by the change. The first rudiments, therefore, of true Political-economy ought to teach what are the action and reaction, of value on quantity, and of quantity on value, or what are the mutual relations of value and quantity; and accordingly the first inquiry of those who learn the science ought to

be, what are these two objects, and by what bond of relationship are they connected? What is *quantity?* What is *value?* And what are *their mutual relations?*

What is meant by *quantity*, we all know tolerably well. It is not the nature or quality of any one thing in particular distinguished from others, as iron, coal, corn, cotton; but the special modification of each thing to which we refer, when we wish to particularise concerning it. We can determine the amount of quantity, though not with any great degree of accuracy, through the information of our unassisted senses, as of size and distance by means of the sense of sight, the sense of feeling, and sometimes the sense of hearing, or of weight by means of the muscular sense; we can determine its amount much more accurately with the assistance of the various instruments commonly denoted by the term weights and measures: in the former case we say the quantity is great or small, much or little; in the latter we call it, with the certainty of being accurately under-

stood, by specific names, as a yard, a gallon, a bushel, a pound.

But what is *Value?* This is a question on the right solution of which, without attempting "to magnify our office," it may be asserted that at present rests the welfare of the lower classes of society *; it is the helm, on the direction of which depends alike the course of public opinion, and of the mighty force of legislation; it is the turning point which divides the roads that lead to the physical happiness or the misery of millions.

What is Value, is nevertheless a question to which a conclusive answer cannot be obtained in any existing school of Political-economy: it should rather be said, it is a question to

* "The question of Value is fundamental. Almost every speculation respecting the economical interests of a society thus constituted implies some theory of value; the smallest error on that subject infects with corresponding error all our other conclusions." — *J. S. Mill's Political-economy*, vol. i. p. 514. "Political Economy might be called the science of values." — *Macculloch*, p. 3.

which all these schools return different and contradictory answers. *Quot homines tot sententiæ.* "As value," says Archbishop Whateley*, "is the only relation with which Political-economy is conversant, we might expect all economists to be agreed as to its meaning. *There is no subject as to which they are less agreed.*" We have already seen that, as one school formerly taught that all Value is centred in money, and another that it is centred in land, so at the present day the school of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Macculloch teaches us that it is entirely centred in labour, whilst this doctrine is very far from being universally accepted even in this country.† Since, therefore, there is the widest disagreement in the opinions which are held respecting this cardinal point of Political-economy, we may, without presumption,

* *Elements of Logic*, Appendix p. 503.

† Value has been said by Mr. J. S. Mill to consist in the power of purchasing; by Mr. Senior to consist in scarcity; whilst from foreign writers it has received various other interpretations, as utility, exchange of services, &c.

consider ourselves at liberty to repeat the question once more—What is Value?

Before we attempt to return the true answer to this question, we may observe, and it is a very remarkable fact, that none of the definitions of Value which have received from philosophers any share of favour denote the same signification that popular instinct, so often right when early philosophy is wrong, has attached to this term. Not that science can ever be justly blamed for attempting to affix more definite and clearer significations to words which have been carelessly used, or which have become common by neglect. Knowledge ought to reclaim our language, not less than our ideas, and the power of knowledge is well employed in both cases when attempting to establish more certain boundaries; but it is remarkable, that where so many philosophers have desired and attempted to appropriate a word commonly used in popular discourse, each should have decided on employing it in a different sense, and that its meaning should consequently have

become not more clear, but *very much more obscure*. Such a circumstance must be admitted to afford at least a certain degree of presumptive evidence that the *popular notion* of Value is fundamentally true to nature, and that nothing more is requisite than to explain and to define this notion, in order to exhibit in their true character the first rudiments of Political-economy.

Before we attempt to signify what this common popular notion of Value is, it may be useful to observe that it is not the same as the popular notion of price; price is commonly used as *a measure* of Value, and an exceedingly useful measure it is whenever it can be so applied, but it is not generally regarded as Value. When we have to deal with land, or goods and chattels, or whatever else is secured by law to the owner, and therefore constitutes property, it is very convenient to express the Value of such things in terms of money—to say "the worth of a thing is what it will bring," "this is worth a penny, that is worth a thousand pounds;" but every-

body feels that this price is but a systematised sign or measure of Value, that degrees of money only serve to measure the magnitude of Value, under certain circumstances, in the same manner in which the degrees of the thermometer sometimes serve to measure the coldness of the atmosphere, and the degrees of the barometer sometimes serve to measure its weight. It is quite clear that a person living on a solitary island would value his property, his carpenter's chest, for instance, or fire-arms and ammunition, not less, and probably much more, than do the inhabitants of a city, although under such circumstances none of these things could be said to bear a price. We all, in short, *value* health, friends, character, and many other objects which are not metaphorically, but in the language of sound philosophy, pronounced to be "beyond *price*."

To take the simplest case, if by accident a mirror is cracked, its Value is thereby lessened, clearly because it has become less useful and ornamental. If a piece of paper is made the

recipient of a composition exhibiting literary or artistic talent, its Value is thereby increased, clearly because the blank has been filled up with an interesting or a useful object. In this manner we all know that changes of Value are caused, through intentional consumption, through wear and tear, through accidents by fire or water, and through all that enters into the philosophy of waste or war, on the one hand, and on the other hand, through the refinement of metals, the cultivation of land, the erection of buildings, the elaboration of textile fabrics, the expression of works of art, and by means of every other application of industry under the guidance of science and taste. This is evidently true as far as it goes, and it is certain that these causes of the change of Value have largely, if not exclusively, occupied the attention of Political-economists. But we have to ask here, are these the *only* causes of changes of Value? We know that the Value of a thing changes in consequence of the thing being itself changed. *Does the Value of a*

thing ever change when the thing itself is not changed?

Let us take a case of daily occurrence. It is five o'clock in the afternoon; the Evening Papers are out, and the Morning Papers have consequently fallen to about one-half of their original Value. If we look at their present price, their power of purchasing, the measure of their present Value, we find that this fact is established by the clearest evidence. A copy of the "Times," which this morning was sold everywhere for fourpence, is now sold for about twopence. It matters not whether the copy in question has been read or has been lying uncut and untouched; the same fact is still true; the Value of the copy has been diminished since the morning by about one-half. Now what is the cause of this change of Value? The material properties of the paper have gone through no changes, or none that are cognizable by the purchaser; it has not lost its freshness like fruit that has been kept, nor become faded like flowers, nor become stale like bread; how,

then, has its Value changed? We do not wish to be answered in the cabalistic words of any school of Political-economy; we are unwilling to be referred to "the laws of supply and demand," or to any other technical term, for an explanation of this natural phenomenon; but we desire to learn, in a manner satisfactory to reason, what are the principles in consequence of which the Value of a printed sheet is thus constantly changed in the course of a single day.

The real cause of the change is, doubtless, evident to all who are cognizant of the circumstances of the case, and make use of unbiassed common-sense. The news of the day has been read by nearly all who feel an interest in it, and who are within reach of the Morning Papers; the public mind has been made acquainted with their contents before the evening, and little further desire to read them is entertained; in short, the change in the Value of the newspaper has occurred, because a change has been occasioned, not among the conditions

of matter, but among the conditions of mind, — not in the substance of the printed sheet, but in the intellectual acquirements of its readers.

In this case, then, it will be readily seen that changes of Value are produced by mental causes not less directly than they are produced, under other circumstances, by physical causes; and it will probably be conceded that, in all such cases, reading, understanding, reflecting, remembering — all purely mental operations, — may rob a newspaper or a book of half its Value. A very little reflection will show that those commodities of which the Value is changed, solely or principally in consequence of changes of the *public mind*, are much more numerous than might be at first suspected. As the use or misuse of cultivation, elaboration, locomotion, embellishment, in all these various forms, may increase or diminish the Value of an object, its Value may be increased or diminished, in a large number of cases, by changes of knowledge, of opinion, of taste, of fashion; it must indeed be clear that there are few articles of luxury,

whether mansions, equipages, wines, dresses, pictures, or any other, the Value of which is not affected by this latter class of causes.

It will probably be less readily conceded, although it is not less true, that all the changes of Value which depend on changes of quantity are more proximately caused by laws of mind than by laws of matter. Let us instance a common case. A farmer has a rick of good old hay. Every one knows that the Value of this rick will depend very much on the success of the approaching hay harvest. If much hay is spoiled, the Value of the rick will rise; if much hay is well got in, the Value of the rick will fall. Why is this? There stands the rick, well thatched and fenced, and inaccessible to all the influences of external matter. Why should its Value change? Clearly because information will be received, and the minds of all who are interested in the subject will be made cognizant of facts of which they are at present necessarily ignorant; or, in other words, because a change of mind will be caused by circumstances by which the properties of

this particular rick will not be affected. The same explanation evidently applies to all cases in which changes of Value are caused by changes of quantity; it may, indeed, almost be said that, as in every case in which the *quality* of an object is changed, the change of its Value is caused through the direct operation of laws of matter; in every case in which the *quantity* of a class of commodities is changed, the change in the Value of each commodity is caused through the proximate intervention of laws of mind.

It is clear, therefore, that Value, with all its important incidents, is dependent not simply on qualities of matter, but on relations of both mind and matter, and consequently that if each of these parties to the relation remain unchanged, the Value of commodities will remain unchanged, whilst if a change occur in *either of them*, the Value of commodities will be changed. . . What is the difference between a quality and a relation, we all understand sufficiently well. Changes in the quality of an object

cannot occur, unless the object itself is changed; changes in a relation may be occasioned through changes in *either* of the objects related. There are indeed cases in which the continued existence and the stability of one of the parties to the relation can be so certainly relied on, that the relation may be treated simply as if it were a quality of the other party; thus weight, which is a relation of heavy bodies and the earth, may be treated simply as a quality of such bodies, and may be regarded as increasing and diminishing with their mass, because we feel assured that the bulk of the earth will remain constant; although we know that their weight might be increased or diminished in any degree without any change occurring in them, should the mass of the earth be increased or diminished in that degree. Some vague belief probably in such a state of quiescence on the part of the public mind has induced Political-economists to pass over the part which it plays in causing changes of Value; there is certainly no ground, on which they ought to undertake to explain these pheno-

mena without considering the phenomena of human nature, but this, — that human nature is so constant, and so stable, that in it, as a department of the statesman's field of action, no changes can be expected to be evinced, or none which will affect the changes of Value. To insist, however, that fickleness is a quality inherent in *arbitrio popularis auræ*, to prove that information is ever on the march, that opinions fluctuate, that tastes differ, that fashion lives on change, must be needless. It cannot, therefore, be doubted that some insight into those principles of human nature which cause such changes, however distasteful in some cases may be the acquisition of this branch of learning, and some distinct application of such knowledge to the subject, are essential to a right understanding of the first principles of Political-economy. If Value springs from a relation of two objects — mind and matter — both of which are variable, to leave one of these parties to the relation unnoticed, is to leave the whole science of Value, and its consequences, in that state of darkness

and confusion, in that circumvallation of arbitrary definition and dogmatic assertion, in which we have found that the vital truths of Political-economy are actually bewildered at this moment.

Why, then, do not our masters in this branch of political philosophy systematically advert to the principles of human nature, and apply for assistance, in the midst of their perplexities, to those laws and conditions, a knowledge of which has won distinction for the venerated names that are enrolled in the annals of mental philosophy? Why do they almost ignore man whilst expatiating on matter? Why are they blind to the sensations and the motives, the toil and the gratifications, the pleasures and the pains of the human mind and body, whilst dwelling so long upon material wealth? For many reasons. First, because mental philosophy and human physiology have been little taught in our places of education, and have only recently received attention at our English Universities. Political-economy is a new

science. New sciences commonly fall, in the first instance, into the hands of those whose education is completed, or at least of those who consider that their education is completed, and who will not go to school again to acquire what they have not learned. Add to this, that many departments of mental philosophy are undoubtedly obscure and unsatisfactory, and that the genius of our fellow-countrymen, as compared with that of other nations, is probably less ready in dealing with the phenomena of mind than with those of matter. These circumstances may, perhaps, in some measure account for the fact that our Professors of Political-economy have invariably passed by, not merely one-half, but a co-ordinate and correlative, an indivisible and essential moiety, of the subject of which they have treated.

There is not, however, any impossibility, nor indeed any great difficulty, in applying the laws of mental philosophy to the elucidation of our present subject.* It would be inopportune, in

* For an exposition of this method of inquiry, refe-

this place, to attempt to investigate any system of abstract philosophy; our present object is merely to point out how we ought to be guided in the choice of our administrative Economists by a knowledge of the first principles of Political-economy; it may, however, serve to establish a conviction that so much of our legislation as relates to this subject ought to be founded upon a knowledge of the definite principles of human nature, if we briefly illustrate the manner in which the doctrines of physiology, and of psychology, must be applied to determine the first principles of Political-economy.

The consideration of this topic we shall reserve for the next chapter.

rence can only be made to a treatise by the author, entitled *Natural Elements of Political Economy*, Longman and Co.

CHAP. V.

ABSTRACT PRINCIPLES.

As the functions of matter, on account of which *it* enters into the relation of Value, may be said to be, generally, mechanical and chemical, so the functions of mind, on account of which *it* enters into the relation of Value, may be said to be, generally, experience of the past, and anticipation of the future, or a recollection of the past services, and a confidence in the future services of the object. The Political-economist must recognise the elementary fact that, as both matter and mind are essential to the existence of Value, so it is essential that the mind, which entertains this relation of Value, should have some knowledge of the qualities of the object from experience of the past, and also some degree of confidence that they will be found useful in

the future. If the qualities of commodities are not known, as has sometimes been the case with precious stones, works of art, rare manuscripts, they cannot be adequately valued; if no degree of belief is entertained that these qualities will be available hereafter, as in the case of imminent peril by sea or by fire, very little, if any, degree of Value can be attached to them. In dealing, therefore, with changes of Value, the Political-economist has to consider two great classes of phenomena exhibited in the human mind, — those which arise from a recollection of the past services, and those which arise from a confidence in the future services of commodities, both interesting to the lover of abstract philosophy, and deeply affecting the happy administration of State-economy.

With respect to *confidence in the future*, it must be unnecessary to enlarge upon the cases in which this state of mind affects the regard which we bestow on commodities, and the trust which we repose in our fellow-men, from the Value which it gives to a pin, to the

credit which it lends to the merchant or the banker, and to the stability which it imparts to the securities of a country; we all feel that it is the buoyant element on which alike the smallest objects of Value are supported, and the greatest objects of industrial enterprise are carried forward. Whilst in this belief in the future, entertained by the human mind, lies one of the fundamental truths of mental philosophy, every one is aware that the degree in which this belief is entertained, with respect to property, by a nation depends mainly on the conduct of Statesmen, and that by its regulation is determined the steady progress, or the alternate excitement and depression of industry. When we comment on the want of security for property which is felt under the sway of Eastern despots, or on the want of confidence which usually follows the overthrow of dynasties, we all know that it is a contemplated uncertainty of conduct on the part of their political head that occasions this unhappy feeling among the people. When we mourn over

those speculative manias which usually follow the attainment by capital of novel and unexpected methods of employment, or of new facilities for co-operation, and which we can surely foresee will be followed by a corresponding depression of industrial energy, we all feel that a want of knowledge and skill on the part of our political administrations, of depth of learning and firmness of purpose, gives room to these lamentable convulsions, and that financial measures, timely applied, would check undue speculation, whilst undue depression would in consequence be of rare occurrence. What are the effects of the alternate excitement and depression of trade, how its fluctuations influence the lower grades of society, what is *their* share in commercial revulsions, and what call *their* condition makes on the attention of abstract philosophy, will be most readily understood by those who are best acquainted with the population of our seats of industry, and who have witnessed, on the one hand, the hours of riotous excess, of exhausted energy, of ne-

glected opportunities, of moral degradation, which spring from excessive work and high pay, and on the other hand, the details of trade-unions, strikes, lock-outs, and other similar hostile combinations, which spring from an enforcement of inaction on a large population stimulated by unaccustomed want.

With respect to *memory of the past*, it is evident that the kind and degree of Value which is attached to a commodity is derived from the recollection of its past effect on human sensations; what, therefore, the Political-economist has to consider, is the nature of the various sensations produced by various forms and qualities of external matter. Such sensations are principally of two kinds, those which accompany production, and those which accompany consumption: the latter being generally of an agreeable, the former of an opposite character. The sensations which accompany consumption may be conveniently distinguished according as they are derived from necessaries or from luxuries; indeed, it is absolutely essential that

they should be so distinguished, on account of differences in the characteristics of those classes which the statesman cannot overlook. But what are necessaries, and what are luxuries? There is no stronger proof of the impossibility of solving the problems of Political-economy, without the intervention of the sciences of human nature, than the inability of every existing system to answer this question. Turn to the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the mineral kingdom, examine their properties natural and artificial, trace their boundaries, compare their relations, yet no distinctions corresponding to the characters of necessaries and luxuries will be found. But turn to human nature, and there will be immediately discerned separate and distinct classes of sensations, one class attached to organs the satisfaction of which is *necessary* for the support of life, another class attached to organs the satisfaction of which is very clearly *auxiliary*, and not essential. Under the latter description fall the organisms of the five special senses, and the commo-

dities which serve to gratify them are therefore naturally classed as luxuries: thus pictures and statues serve to gratify the sense of seeing, music the sense of hearing, perfumes the sense of smelling, delicacies the sense of tasting, soft raiment the sense of touching. Under the former descriptions fall the organisms administering to what is usually termed common sensation, and the commodities which serve to gratify it are therefore naturally classed as necessaries;—such are those which supply resistance, as necessary furniture; those which afford or maintain warmth, as clothing, fuel, houses; and those which satisfy hunger and thirst.

When these classes of valuable objects have been thus distinguished, it is no very difficult task to trace the effects of different quantities on the exigencies, the wants, the powers of consumption, and the range of susceptibilities which are incident to human nature. It may readily be seen that only a certain quantity *can* be consumed; that as the quantity of a commodity that can be offered to the senses becomes

less, the possession of it is regarded with more comparative satisfaction, and that this satisfaction becomes most evident when the quantity is very small, like rays of heat when brought to a focus. From the recollection of this relation of changes of quantity and changes of satisfaction, it is easy to see that there is derived that relation of changes of quantity and changes of Value which affects the interests of every member of a civilised community, and which ought to be an object of the highest interest to all who undertake to administer to the welfare of a people through the functional influences of taxation.

Human labour, again, which has so long foiled every attempt to classify it, may be readily marked off into classes by the incidents of our mental and bodily organisation, and from the sensational accompaniments of each class may be deduced a knowledge of the various degrees of difficulty which retard the progress of different rates of Production. It is essential to determine the primary laws

which govern rates of Production, in order that the effect of changes of Value on changes of quantity may be determined, and this can only be accomplished after investigating the nature of human action. The curious and interesting laws, which govern our mental and bodily activity, are thus found to offer a class of problems the explanation of which enables us to explain how it is that the phenomena of Political-economy continually recur in unceasing regularity, or that, notwithstanding the freedom of the human will, the quantities of commodities specified in Statistical tables, as produced and consumed, imported and exported, recur with the same kind of regularity as the quantities of the fruits of the earth, which grow and ripen under the influence of the seasons. It is certain that the Political-economist can never safely trust to the operation of the laws which govern the events of which he takes cognizance, until the innermost nature of the human actions with which he has to deal is exposed to the light of science.

Without pursuing the subject further in this place, we must repeat, that by the study of human nature alone can be determined, not only the effect of Value on quantity and of quantity on Value, but also the effects of those subordinate fundamental principles which modify the phenomena of production, of consumption, of distribution, and of accumulation, or which, in other words, influence the quality and quantity of the supplies, and the degree and duration of the work of every industrial population. Until this study shall be systematically pursued for the purpose of applying its results to the elucidation of these phenomena, Political-economy cannot deserve to be called a science, nor can even be said to deal fairly with the facts disclosed by statistics.*

It may be observed, in support of these remarks, that the method of inquiry which we

* "All the departments of statistics above described may be cultivated to the development of as many branches of moral sciences." — *Objects and Regulations of the Statistical Society*, p. 2.

have thus cursorily indicated does not rest on the foundation of mental philosophy alone, but is also supported by principles of an entirely different character. In almost every case, the facts of Physiology, so palpable, so definite, and often so interesting, may be brought in aid of Psychology, when a knowledge of man's nature is applied to solve the problems of Political-economy. It is very obvious that when mind acts upon external matter, and also when external matter acts upon mind, these effects are caused through the agency or the intervention of bodily organs; in each of these cases the action of external organs, such as the eye, the ear, the tongue, in the one case, or in the other case the hand, the arm, the foot, is perceptible to every observer. When, therefore, we wish to denote these phenomena of mind, we may, if we so please, generally indicate them, with a distinctness that places their existence beyond the reach of doubt or cavil, by pointing to the bodily phenomena which invariably follow or precede them. Thus, when we wish to refer

distinctively to the sensations derived from luxuries and from necessaries, we may, if we so please, point to the action of the special organisms of the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the skin, or to the general nervous system distributed over the other parts of the human body; when we wish to denote the occurrence of mental or of physical labour, we may, if we please, point to the action of the brain, or of the spinal column; when we wish to denote the phenomena of production, or of consumption, — the effects which pass to matter from the mind, or to the mind from matter,— we may, if we please, point to the action of the two nervous channels of transmission in opposite directions,—the afferent nerves, or the efferent nerves, — as respectively marking the two classes of actions in which they are employed. The skilled metaphysician will probably regard the adoption of these means as unnecessary, if not ridiculous; he, indeed, will not require them, "*nabit sine cortice,*" but it must be borne in mind that of the very

numerous politicians who are interested in our social condition, very few, comparatively, are skilled metaphysicians; on the contrary, a familiar recognition of the laws of Psychology is by no means a common occurrence in this country — by many of those who have examined them they are regarded as vague, indefinite, and unsatisfactory—the British public, it is sometimes said, does not believe in metaphysics. Interest and prejudice, in the meantime, are always ready to obstruct changes of domestic policy, such as those which we are about to advocate, and to their attacks no more inviting opportunity can be offered than an avowal that the system which we desire to introduce is based on the philosophy of the human mind. On the other hand, no one is incredulous respecting Physiology; there are, indeed, few who do not admire its discoveries, and feel an interest in its expositions. To raise, therefore, through its means, a scaffolding that may afford a footing whilst a higher edifice is being reared, is a device which, although possessing

no claim to be considered a manifestation of taste or of talent, is nevertheless useful, if not absolutely necessary, at the present moment, in order to constitute a system of Political-economy that shall be competent to deal with our great social problems.

In whatever form, however, this knowledge is acquired and applied, it is clearly our duty to provide that no principles of Political-economy, which are not derived from an applied knowledge of the sciences of human nature, shall be permitted to contravene the dictates of instinctive common-sense. The functions of human nature, and the properties of material nature by which it is surrounded, in this as in every case in which we deal with living objects, must *both* receive adequate attention; if either of these subjects is overlooked, the science will be either neglected or improperly treated. No one with a tolerable knowledge of horticulture would be satisfied with merely gathering the fruit at the proper season, and storing it with due care; he would remember that the *trees*,

in all their variety of age and condition, and nature and habit, also require attention; and that they must be dressed, and pruned, and trained, and grafted, according to the rules of art. No one with a scientific knowledge of human nature, undertaking to administer the resources of a nation, should be satisfied with merely gathering taxes and applying their produce; he ought also to attend to the condition of the *living organisms from whom they are gathered*, and to use processes of art for the purpose of improving the condition of these organisms. It is our part at least to provide that the knowledge of the human mind and body, possessed by those who undertake to preside over the administration of our national resources, shall be as great as appertains to the character of such an undertaking. In inferior offices we require a *special* knowledge of the subjects which we commit to others; in the management of our private affairs we require from a head gardener some knowledge of botany and vegetable physiology; from a head groom some

knowledge of the healthy and diseased condition of horses; from a bailiff some knowledge of the physiology of sheep and cattle, pigs and poultry. That human physiology requires study, and that the philosophy of the human mind requires endowments of a peculiar character (if indeed this last statement be well founded), can scarcely be received as conclusive proofs that we ought to elect public men, who have no professed knowledge of these branches of philosophy, to conduct the administration of our Political-economy.

What, then, ought constituencies to do? Shall we go to members of parliament and to ministers, and undertake to instruct them how to legislate, and how to govern, by pointing out to them the principles of human nature which require their attention? Heaven forbid! It sometimes happens that a well-meaning man of letters, full of newly acquired knowledge, will enter the shop of a handicraftsman, and undertake to teach him the theory of his art, or to instruct his wife how to treat the baby, to cure

the chimney, to cook the broth, or to fatten the pig; whatever show of respect such counsellors may receive from operatives, their counsel is usually esteemed but lightly. It sometimes happens that the worthy occupant of a farm, or a shop, will undertake to instruct in the principles of legislation those who, at our public schools and universities, have devoted the freshness of their youth, and the vigour of their manhood, to the study of history, and law, ethics, and politics; but it is only among the uninitiated that the courtesy of the candidate on the hustings, or of the minister at the government office, is held to confer distinction on the communicative inquirer. The legislator is not more out of place when attempting to teach a handicraftsman, than the handicraftsman when attempting to instruct a legislator.

What we have to do is, as has been already said, to *select* our statesmen, not to instruct or to guide them, and in making this selection we can exercise our power, wisely and efficiently, by satisfying ourselves respecting the *first*

principles, or the general nature of the system on which each candidate is prepared to act. We have merely to ask a question, and the precise question which for our purpose we ought to ask, we are now in a condition to determine. All Political-economists agree, and it is perhaps the only point on which they agree, that the one vital truth, on the discovery of which the beneficial exercise of their art must rest, and consequently, on a knowledge of which the social welfare of the masses must depend, is the *real nature of Value*. When, therefore, the pretensions of any statesman to administer our Political-economy are brought under our notice, we may, in the present state of our knowledge of this subject, be satisfied with asking what theory of Value he professes to hold, and what system of dealing with Value he adopts. Does he profess to hold that Value consists in money, in land, in scarcity, in labour, or does he hold that it is a mental condition, resulting from the relation of human wants and appetencies with the objects vouch-

safed to us for their satisfaction and gratification? In order to render this question more direct, we may confine our view at the present moment to that creed which, in the legislation and in the popular opinion of this country stands almost alone, and ask—does be believe that all Value is derived from Labour? By limiting ourselves to this question, we indeed delay the assertion of the entire dependence of Political-economy on known physical and metaphysical laws, and the consequent propriety of improving by art the natural condition of a nation, as we improve by art the natural condition of every other organised body over which we have power; but truth is great, and in this case is vital, and when it has been once exposed to the light of observation, it infallibly will strike root and grow, if only the ground is properly cleared for its reception. We may therefore be satisfied with asking, respecting every public man whose investiture with power over the financial concerns of the state in any degree depends upon our votes or interest—

does he profess to believe that Value is centred in Labour? Should this question be answered in the affirmative, let summary rejection be awarded to pretensions founded on a principle which is in the abstract radically erroneous, and which gives vent to its errors in a wide flood of misdirected toil and needless want.

The reply which it is most to be apprehended will be offered to this question, is not that the natural method of investigating Political-economy is wrong, that our definitions are untrue, or that our reasonings are vitiated by fallacies,—such objections may be readily met by an invitation to examine and to judge,—but what is most to be apprehended is the objection, that it is difficult to see any connection between such abstract propositions and the economical state of our nation, or that at all events it is difficult to understand the importance of this connection. What difference, it may be asked, can it make to the prosperity of capitalists, or to the welfare of operatives, whether Value is said to reside in land, or in labour, or in money, or in the

relations of man, sentient and industrial, with matter, improved and consumed? "The administration," it may be asserted, "of other branches of Government is carried on without a knowledge of this vaunted philosophy of human nature; we who are within the pale of administrative traditions have not been used to discourse of Sensations, Opinions, Emotions: why should these subjects be now for the first time obtruded upon our notice?" It might be sufficient to reply, that statistical phenomena are the only exponents of human action which offer themselves to the observer in exact and definite forms, and which also recur perpetually; that, at the present moment, this part of human conduct alone can be accurately measured, and distinctly classified, and scientifically ordered: that it has been shown that this may be done, and that the state of the nation calls out that it must be done. Should it, however, be felt that the practical connection of the abstract and the concrete still requires some illustration, the magnitude of the evils which are known to

have ensued, in past times, from the reception and ascendancy of false abstract principles, might be once again referred to, as enabling us to augur confidently, what judgment future historians must pass on the evils which flow from the fallacious dogmas that are accepted, and acted on, in our times. We have seen that the tenet, that all Value is centred in money, governed our financial legislation at one period of our history: what *importance* do the unbiassed commentators of our day attach to the consequences of admitting this abstract principle? "The results," observes a high authority*, "have been fraud, punishment, and poverty at home, and discord and war without. It has usually made nations consider the Wealth of their customers a source of loss instead of a profit; and an advantageous market a curse instead of a blessing. By inducing them to refuse to profit by the peculiar advantages in climate, soil, or industry possessed by their

* *Whateley's Logic*, p. 405.

neighbours, it has forced them in a great measure to give up their own. It has for centuries done more, and perhaps for centuries to come will do more, to retard the improvement of Europe than all other causes put together." Let us pause, and consider if the consequences resulting from abstract principles of Political-economy are not at least as important now as at any former period of our history; or if it can be doubted that future commentators will regard the miseries which are caused in our days, as not less lamentable than the miseries which have been caused in other days, by hallucinations respecting the nature of Value.

CHAP. VI.

HOW WE OUGHT TO LEGISLATE.

SUPPOSE, then, that we say to our representatives, "you must not carry into practice the precepts which have been deduced from this fallacious dogma, that all Value is derived from Labour—you must not act as if Value and Labour were synonymous—you must not confound man with property, nor the laws of human nature with the laws of material nature—you must not regard the physical and mental conditions of living society as requiring no watchful care, no superintendence, and as being incapable of improvement through the application of the art of government—you must not vote for the imposition of taxes adjusted only by chance, by visionary notions of equality, or by a regard for the power of contending fac-

tions, and not specially compounded with a view to tend, to foster, to cherish, the delicate or defective parts of our social organisation." Suppose, if we may use the expression, we apply the Labour-value test in the choice of our representatives, what change may we expect to see in our domestic policy, what novelty in our laws, and what improvement in the condition of the weakly or the suffering classes of society?

In attempting to elucidate this question, it will be borne in mind that it is not our business here to suggest measures, that may be thought worthy to receive the sanction of the Legislature, but only to point out such general consequences of the natural and only true method of pursuing Political-economy, as may serve to illustrate its principles, and to demonstrate their importance. Even thus we may well pause, after emerging from the domain of dogmatic authority into the province of free philosophy, before we venture to approach within an humble distance of the stupendous province of legislation. "The reform of a single poli-

tical grievance may in its ultimate effects be the producer of all which we admire in the thousand acts of individual patriotism — the opener of fields of industry — the diffuser of commerce — the embellisher of a land — the enlightener and blesser of those who inhabit it. It is not possible, indeed, to estimate how valuable an offering he makes to society who gives it a single good law. There are but few words, perhaps, that compose it, but in those few words may be involved an amount of good, increasing progressively with each new generation, which, if it could have been made known in all its amplitude to the legislator at the time when he contrived his project, would have dazzled and overwhelmed his very powers of thought."* Are we worthy to raise our eyes to a prospect such as this? Are we thoroughly free from the corrupting influences of scholastic sophistry, which have insensibly entwined themselves round our social habits, and even our private ways of

* *Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind*, p. 612.

thinking? It is one of the evils of a mistaken system of philosophy, that, after it has been exposed, it still exercises a deleterious influence. If a history is proved to be illogical, or a narrative to be incorrect, some of the facts recorded may still be innocuous, or may be usefully employed in other works; but when a philosophical system has been proved to be tainted with vital defects, its remains are worse than useless, because they have still a tendency to breed error, and to retard the progress of truth. Have we left the paths of mistaken Political-economy long enough to be thoroughly purified? Have we gone through the mental quarantine which truth requires from the former disciples of error? Are we strong enough in the principles of natural philosophy to approach questions of domestic legislation without regarding them as holy ground, as protected by the mysteries of non-interference concealed behind the inviolability of property, and as requiring from those who contemplate them the entire subjugation of reason to faith? If not, we may well pause

before we venture even to gaze upon the work of imperial legislation.

There is, however, one class of objections which we can now boldly confront, after the search into the conditions of human nature with which we have been engaged,—objections against legislation, derived from the circumstance that legislative interference has been tried by others who have not examined these natural conditions, that *their* interference has been found mischievous, and that *we* therefore must do nothing. Their measures have necessarily been found mischievous, because they have not been based on a knowledge of the subject to which they have been directed; their treatment of human nature has not been based on the principles of human nature, and they have, accordingly, had no motives of action to appeal to but ideal or conventional motives,—supposed rights,—unproved claims,—visionary notions of equity. From the practice of such an art as this,—an art purely empirical,—the maxim of our Political-economists, "leave

things alone, let nature do her own work," is well and wisely deduced. But when the laws of the human mind and body have been examined, and the existing state of natural conditions in each society has been considered, no argument for future inactivity can be adduced from the effects of past mismanagement. The knowledge and the power of the art of Economic Government are then totally changed; if the consequences of its former state were to be allowed to impede its present efficacy, empiricism might in all cases stay the hand of medicine, sophistry might stop the voice of philosophy, and the work of every human art might be arrested, on the pretext that it has been sometimes exercised ignorantly, and that on these occasions its interference has been attended with bad results. The more closely we examine the subject, the closer do we find the analogy existing between the treatment of organised living bodies and the treatment of political bodies; if the health of either be good in all its parts, to interfere, and to disturb it, is doubtless

foolish; if not, remedies are in the one case in the hands of the physician, in the other they are in the hands of the citizen and of the statesman.*

Were a Statesman, thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of all the natural elements of Political-economy, and mindful both of the wants and the tastes of human nature, and the properties and the quantities of valuable commodities, to regard the state of our nation as a patriarchal Economist would regard the state of his community, rising far above personal and party interests, and affectionately con-

* The effect of applying Physiology and Psychology to Political-economy will evidently remove this branch of learning from the condition of a political to the condition of a physical and a metaphysical science. The corrupt influences referred to in the following remark will then scarcely affect Political-economy. "Those who cultivate mathematical and physical sciences, or who devote themselves to literature or metaphysics, have rarely any selfish motive to bias their judgment, and to tempt them to conceal or pervert the truth. But it is not so with those who engage in political and *economical* discussions." *Literature of Political Economy: Preface.*

sidering whether its present condition is such as ought to satisfy his knowledge of the provisions of nature, and his means of action, it is probable that the first object that would arrest his attention would be the unnatural and often unhappy condition of nearly one half of our population—the female half—the more to be regarded because the weaker half, the more to be cared for in our legislative measures because devoid of the power of legislation. The position of that portion of our fair countrywomen who are raised above the claims of necessity would perhaps be dismissed from his attention after very brief consideration, not because there is not much room for improvement in their condition, but because it is susceptible of being rendered better and happier, rather through the influence of precept and high example, than through the direct agency of statutory enactments. But the condition of the remainder, constituting unhappily the great majority of our female population, could not be dismissed from his consideration

without the deepest concern, whether judged, in its better light, by the incidents of domestic service, and the circumstances of field-work, — or investigated amidst the protracted toil of factories, palliating, if it does not excuse, the brief hour of brutish excitement,— in the garrets and cellars of our cities, where the needlewoman, the ever helpless object of popular sympathy, draws out the thread of an existence but little more pitiable than that of the highly paid victim of fashion, — or where unhappy outcasts in vast numbers, "the way-trodden flowers" of their sex, support a life of which it is the single hopeful solace, that after an average duration of but a few months, human nature will succumb, and the wanderer will be at rest.

When we say that all, or nearly all, of these evils are caused by the pressure of physical want, by want of the proper avocations of women and suitable remuneration, by a dearth of the employments that are demanded by their natural capacities, by the degree of their strength, by the delicacy of their nature, and by the kind-

liness of their social affections, we only affirm what every one admits to be true. And why have they not these avocations? Has *nature* forgotten to provide them? Has nature made organic life without a field for its exercise, affections without objects, means without ends? If this were the case, woman would indeed offer a singular exception to the perfect harmony and beauty of Creation. But we all know that it is not so. Never was there placed among nature's works, with the power of freely employing and consuming them, a family amongst whom there was not found more than enough to occupy women, of things fit for women to do. Why, then, is so large a portion of the sex devoid of these occupations, in states that are highly civilised, and governed with the best intentions, under the guidance of our present tenets of Political-economy? For the same reason that they would be robbed of their property, of their character, of all that is dear to them, if Jurists were to adopt the maxims and to practise the system of non-interference;

because man is strong, and woman is weak; because the property of the poor is their employment, and the proper employments of one sex are forestalled and preoccupied by the other. Were Political-economists to apply to the natural avocations of women, not that legal and imperative protection which is rightly applicable only to the security of person and of property, but the fostering care of that subtle, and winning, and almost imperceptible influence which is placed in their hands, and which they cannot but administer *with some effect,* whilst determining the incidence of taxation, however they may strive to abrogate their office, these frightful evils might in a great measure be averted. It is clear that what is required is the exertion of a power which shall put women in their right place, and which, as a preliminary to this, shall put men in *their* right place. The natural conditions of our country, even if we overlook the necessities of our colonial empire, offer an ample field for the exertions of every industrious man; there is no appearance here, as is said to be the case

in China, that the population is redundant, that it is too great for the soil; on the contrary, our inexhaustible minerals, our imperfect agriculture, our neglected fisheries, and many other natural sources of wealth, call aloud for stout arms and manly hearts, could they but be withdrawn from those feminine occupations for the want of which women are perishing. This is very obvious, and these calls of humanity and justice must long ago have received attention, were it not for the stern veto contained in the oft repeated maxim, that Labour is Value, and that to influence Labour* is to violate the rights of property.

Suppose our legislators were to be brought to believe that, in determining the incidence of taxation, the amelioration of the condition of

* It has been found impossible, as is the case with whatever is untrue to nature, to maintain this maxim inviolate. Legal interference on behalf of women and children working in mines and factories has, however, rendered advance only more difficult, every such concession being accompanied by a protest against further violation of orthodox principles.

women is an object worthy of attention, and financial measures having this object in view were to be enacted, — what beneficial consequences might we expect to witness? Suppose, for instance, the tax on in-door men-servants, which is at present raised solely for fiscal purposes, were to be largely increased for the express purpose of encouraging the employment of women in feminine occupations, what would be the consequences, not the fiscal consequences (for no larger amount of revenue would probably be collected than under the existing law), but what would be the consequent change in the condition of women? It is, as we all know, a consequence of opinions derived from the feudal ages, when crested chieftains were surrounded by their armed tenants, and *livrée* or delivery of possession constituted a tenant, and services were the usual condition of a tenancy, that a *cortège* of livery servants is traditionally regarded in this country as a badge of respectability. And very troublesome is this badge sometimes found to be. It is not, in a

large number of cases, for the purpose of rendering any real services, worthy of the giver and the receiver, that several of the picked men of our villages are placed in this ridiculous position; on the contrary, their services are seldom much required, whilst their disservices are frequently a matter of serious consideration. It is a circumstance important to the Economy of the country, that in our present state of civilisation and our ordering of social conditions, in order to induce each of these men to forego the natural charms of suitable avocation, of domestic affection, and of partial independence, it is necessary, in wages and in keep, to pay the amount, twice told, that is sufficient to support in comfort a country labourer with a wife and several children. Were a preventive tax to be imposed on the indulgence of this pernicious practice, it would gradually become less common, and whenever rank or station should require display, they would be able to accomplish their object at the cost of a smaller number of misplaced men, whilst the effect on the condi-

tion of women would be of inappreciable importance. In days when patent locks are cheap, and policemen abound, stout-hearted gentlemen would discover that they could safely retire to rest without having several men to guard the plate, and faded dowagers that their character would not be exposed to obloquy should they walk by the side of a female companion unattended by men in livery. "Neat-handed Phyllis" would, in many cases, trippingly open the door, or smilingly wait at table, whilst Corydon "would bind the sheaves," freed from the restraints of plush and powder, or buttons and broadcloth. Whatever should be rightly deemed unfit for women to execute, as to clean the outside of houses, to attend on carriages, and the like, might often be conveniently performed by youths of tender years. To be a page was in former days thought no unfit education for a knight; to learn betimes the manners and feelings of the softer sex, was wisely regarded as likely to be useful to those who were destined to pass their lives in the labours

and hardships of war. In an humbler sphere of life, if this object were to be regarded, and youths, refined in manners and morals by a tuition of some years among the softening influences of cultivated life, were to be continually sent forth to do the battle of life in our country districts, it might be found useful in assisting the work of education, in providing fit husbands for female servants desiring to quit service, and in bridging the chasm between the refinement of the landed proprietor and the rusticity of his labourers.

But it is more important to observe, that, if an example of regard for the condition of our female population should thus be set by our upper classes, there would probably be little difficulty in applying the same indirect influences to those branches of trade and of manufactures in the prosecution of which women ought to be employed. The youths who, with white hands and neckcloths, stand in long array behind the counters of our shops, would surely be better occupied in cultivating the products

of the earth, on the green sward, or among the echoing woods, whilst their fair customers would be better able to practise the familiarities of shopping with maidens of education and experience. A small tax levied on the employment of men in shops would, doubtless, in a short time, provide suitable occupations for a large number of intelligent and skilful shopwomen, whose intellignce is now lost, and whose skill is yet untried. Should circumstances require a further use of this means of action, it would be found that a large proportion of the work of copying clerks, compositors, watchmakers, tailors, and many other classes of operatives, might be placed in the hands of women, and would doubtless be skilfully discharged by them, with far less effort than is at present exerted by many who can scarcely obtain the means of living.

However startling it may be to contemplate suddenly such changes, it will be borne in mind that the changes themselves would not be sudden. Legal injunctions and prohibitions occasion violent and unhealthy dis-

ruptions, but the "*lene tormentum*" of taxation accomplishes all things gradually, and in order; its gentle pressure only serves to direct and to confirm, under the influence of time, the natural growth of social arrangements, which public opinion has instinctively pointed out, and never ceases to desire. What the consequences would be, both in peace and in war, should there thus be restored to their legitimate avocations, those who, by nature and by nurture, are among the effective force of England, what would be the increase in our supplies of food, of fuel, of houses, and of all the necessaries of life, when the large amount of labour now lying dormant, or misapplied, should be concerned in their production, these, and a thousand other collateral advantages, it is not a part of our present purpose to enumerate; our object here is to point out the change which would ensue, through the adjustment of taxation, in the position of the female part of our population, or of that large portion which is dependent on honest employment for an honest

living, should England ever discover that those oracles are false which have pronounced, that it is necessary to offer her daughters as a sacrifice, in order to secure her triumphs in the struggles of competing industry.

This is but one instance in which a very easy remedy is withheld from a frightful evil in consequence of the fallacious dogma that all Value is the offspring of Labour, and of the consequent sophism that to influence the course of Labour is to violate the rights of Property. Let us take another view, and again look upon the state of our nation as a patriarchal Economist would look upon the state of his community. We see children under ten years of age everywhere set to work, attending or watching in the fields, sweeping, hawking, or stealing in the streets, if not surreptitiously employed in mills and mines. Every one knows that this is very bad economy, were we only to regard their employment as we regard the work of animals. To work a very young horse is not only a cruel but also an extravagant practice; the inevitable

consequences are splints, windgalls, curbs, and spavins, condemning the poor animal to the knacker's yard at an untimely age. But we cannot regard the work of children as we regard the work of animals; we must look beyond bent limbs, stunted growth, untimely graves, and ask how are employed the eyes which ought to be bent on the page "rich with the spoils of time," or the hearts which ought to be early attuned to the love of their Creator and of their fellows. Why is the cause of national education unable to advance? Neither the nation, collectively, nor the majority of private individuals, can be said to be indifferent to its progress; on the contrary, it is the one subject which is discussed everywhere *usque ad nauseam;* there is no other which occupies more frequently and continually the attention of Parliament, none that is more talked about and systematised, or for which more earnest attempts are made, and greater sacrifices are offered by private individuals. The principal obstacle to the progress of national education

is the Moloch of Labour, ever stepping in and claiming its victims when the youthful mind is on the point of profiting by instruction. However cheap the rate at which school-instruction is offered, parents scarcely less aware of its importance than are their children, as soon as an opportunity offers, are tempted to send them to work. Every one who is at all conversant with the phenomena of national education, is aware that it is of no avail to open a cheap and good school in an ignorant or demoralised neighbourhood, unless visitors can be found to urge continually upon parents the duty of refusing to sacrifice their children to the tempting price offered for their services,—that the old, the hardened, the corrupt, must be persuaded, and in some measure instructed, before the young and pliant and innocent mind will be suffered to receive instruction. When this preliminary process can be heartily performed, how frequently and how lightly schools become deserted, thousands of the most energetic promoters of education can testify. This is the

age — the age of machinery — when, not stout hands and manly hearts, but *many little fingers* often contribute most to the realisation of private fortunes; the consequence is the double injury, when legislation abrogates the functions of supervision, that able adults are without employment, whilst unformed minds and slender frames do the work. Were the principle of Labour-value to be abandoned, and an assessment to be levied on the employers of every child under ten years of age in the event of their paying wages, directly or indirectly, for such child-labour, a great temptation would be removed from the path of the poor and ignorant, who would, doubtless, yield to the calls of duty, thus sanctioned by the State, far more willingly than when urged by the harassing solicitations of local authorities. Such an impost, indeed, it can scarcely be doubted, would have the effect of pouring new life-blood into our schools for the poor, with what ulterior consequences through succeeding generations may be easily surmised, on their language, their manners, and

their morals, their domestic economy, their skill in applying the principles of each craft, their facility in apprehending new discoveries, and their conduct under the inevitable trials of life.

It would be easy to adduce other instances of terrible evils, not perhaps so extensive as those which may be noticed in the condition of women and children, but still terrible evils, springing from the confusion which exists in the public mind, between the rights of property and the right, or rather the duty, of neglecting our social organisation. Dwellings in which the poor might live without sacrificing health and morals *,—cemeteries in which affliction

* "My position is this," says the Rev. N. Bickersteth: "that there are tens of thousands in the metropolis whose physical condition is a positive bar to the practices of morality. Talk of morality among people who herd —men, women, and children—together, with no regard for age or sex, in one narrow confined apartment. You might as well talk of cleanliness in a sty, or of limpid purity in the contents of a cesspool."—*The Labourer's Friend*, No. CXXXI.

would not be outraged by indecency, — cheap railways leading from the hearts of our cities to the country,—would readily spring up under a judicious remission of rates and taxes for such purposes. Intoxication, the poison in the cup of life to many an able artisan,—gambling, the spiritual fire-water that so extensively tempts the youthful poor to ruin,—would be robbed of half their sting by a judicious employment of fiscal duties for the prevention of such practices. These instances may, perhaps, suggest numerous objects to which the encouraging or preventive influences of taxation might be applied, were the natural tenets of Political-economy to be received and acted on. It is not, as we have before said, our object here to propound laws, but only to adduce cases for the sake of exemplifying the importance of a new theory. It must be long before public opinion can be brought to believe that changes, such as these, are pointed out by the unbiassed advice of natural philosophy, — that such a change of measures is the natural consequence of a true

theory, or that a theory has not been invented in order to introduce novel and plausible measures. It is probable, indeed, that such a revulsion of public opinion will never be effected, but through an extended knowledge of the sciences of human nature, and a general recognition of the manner in which this knowledge ought to be applied to the interpretation and to the supervision of the events that are disclosed in Statistical returns. It is, as yet, too early to characterise more fully the social consequences of legislating upon a new system. Few persons, says an old proverb, think about the sun so long as his lustre is unobscured, but no sooner does he suffer an eclipse than he receives general attention. When our present tenets of Political-economy shall have been thrown into the shade, public attention will be directed to the real nature of the science, and she will then probably be seen to emerge, casting a clear light and shedding a genial influence on the social condition of England.

CHAP. VII.

ON THE POLITICAL EFFECTS OF ACCUMULATION.

When scholastic sophisms have thus unintentionally led astray the steps of our social legislation, or intentionally paralysed its power, we cannot wonder that it has made the administration of our private expenditure depart widely from the path of public interest. In framing laws and devising executive measures relating to finance, to do good to the community is the first and paramount object of consideration, but when private persons administer their own money matters, to do good to themselves, to their relations, and to their friends, are naturally their first objects, and the public interest is thought of only incidentally and secondarily. When, therefore, the dictates of acknowledged authority lead the affluent in the same direc-

tion in which they are attracted by a love of repose, of pleasure, of self-indulgence, the most general allurements of human nature, it would be wonderful were they to hesitate to spend their money according to its direction; it would be wonderful, for instance, were they to hesitate to repose faith in Macculloch when he objects to Adam Smith, that "he does not say that such branches of industry as are found to be most for the advantage of individuals are necessarily at the same time most for the advantage of the public,"* and that "his leaning to the system of the Economists made him so far swerve from his own principles, as to admit that individual advantage is not always a true test of the public advantageousness of different employments." The thoughtful may, and probably do, sometimes marvel at this mysterious identity of self-interest and public interest, this strange coincidence in the paths of self-indulgence and

* Introductory Discourse, p. xliv.

public virtue — the *débutante* whose heart has been bleeding over "the song of the shirt," or the "hardships of milliners' apprentices," may momentarily shrink, whilst giving orders for more hours of toil to be suffered by aching eyes and weary fingers, notwithstanding newspaper paragraphs and smiling shopmen repeatedly insist that it does good to encourage trade, and to give employment to labour; the graduate, fresh from the pursuit of laws of nature, and the study of classic humanities, may feel at first perplexed when he ponders over the economic aspects of labour diverted from the purposes of reproductive industry to the purposes of artificial pleasure and barren consumption — but such employments are clearly for the benefit of individuals, or they would not be pursued, and when leading Political-economists assure us that individual benefit is the test of public benefit, why should it be our duty to question doctrines of authority so high, and of acceptance so general? If a few independent thinkers do at heart persist in refusing assent

to such dogmas, they are as nothing when compared with the number of those who believe and act upon them; and so the tide rolls on almost without interruption, and nearly every one who has the command of money, confidently and complacently "does as he likes with his own," orders what pleases himself, buys what he prefers, without reference to the persons by whom the order is to be executed, or the commodity to be manufactured, and, should he chance to be very deeply sensible of the claims of philanthropy and patriotism, spends in this way as much money as he can possibly afford, for the express object of employing labour, and of doing good to trade.

Employment! labour! the sweat of the brow! the curse of sin! that the innocent, the good, and the powerful should, in our country and in our times, in this toiling England of the nineteenth century, be taught to give this to the poor as a boon, that the young and the lovely should be taught to "give orders" as a patriotic pastime, and to practise "shop-

ping" as an elegant accomplishment! "As a nail," says the son of Sirach, "sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling." That they who are uninitiated in trade, and little versed in the processes of labour, who have perhaps never witnessed the surrender of exercise and of recreation, the sacrifice of health, the waste of mental energy, the subjection to the prejudices of ignorance, and the exposure to temptation, which ever accompany excessive toil, knowing that money is power, and believing that power cannot be exercised without responsibility, that these should be taught so to exercise the command of money! When scholastic sophistry can so misguide the actions of the purest and of the best, it is indeed time for natural philosophy to assert her empire.

We shall have occasion to examine briefly the public effects of different modes of private expenditure, but it may previously be well to consider, with more attention than the question generally receives, what are the effects of non-

expenditure or accumulation; before we ask how the money which we have to spare ought to be spent with reference to the public welfare, it may be well to ask if it ought to be spent at all. Of the many fallacies which environ the subject of Political-economy, there is none, perhaps, of greater importance than that which is involved in the opinion popularly entertained respecting this question. It is perhaps generally accepted as an axiom, that to spend money does good *per se*, not that money is only an instrument of distribution, the employment of which in expenditure enables us to take a portion from the public stock, and to appropriate it, worthily or unworthily, to ourselves or to others; not that the expenditure of money only takes from one class in order to give to another class; but that to spend money is a good action as respects the public, an action of which the good effects predominate over the bad effects. The truth is precisely the reverse. Very little consideration will show that, in our days, to save is to do the greater

public good, to spend is to sacrifice the greater good to the lesser. To *give**, without reference to ulterior consequences, is now generally admitted to be a wanton waste of the supplies of a community; to *spend*, without reference to ulterior consequences, is an action that is wasteful in the same manner and in the same degree. We are not here concerned with the consideration of morals, otherwise it might be opportune or necessary to insist that accumulation may serve as well to build a church, to endow a charity, to provide for a family, as to gratify avarice, the most unseemly of all mental diseases. Our object is simply to consider the effect of private expenditure on the public welfare; and respecting this important consideration our proposition is, that when money is needlessly spent, there are very few cases in

* "It is now generally acknowledged that relief afforded to want, as mere want, tends to increase that want . . . . . an important principle, often overlooked, not only by the generality of men, but by the most experienced statesmen and the ablest philosophers."— *Whateley.*

which as much good is done *to the community at large*, as when it is not spent, but saved.

Let us here pause for a moment, and consider the meaning of our words, before we decide respecting the validity of this proposition. By spending, we of course mean purchasing objects for the purpose of consumption. Necessaries all must have, and there is no question about them; we may, therefore, narrow our terms by saying that we mean, by spending, purchasing superfluous articles for the purpose of consuming them, or spending money on all that variety of fancied ornament and forced amusement which is so much the object of vulgar admiration, and which is seen in its brightest efflorescence during the "seasons" of places of fashionable resort.

But what do we mean by saving? Certainly not burying money in a hole, or hiding it in a cracked teapot — since the days of Dick Turpin, none but recluses and dotards have been guilty of such practices. By saving we of course mean what every rational man does

when he saves, putting money out to interest in some form, or, in bankers' phraseology, leaving it "to be invested and accumulated." It matters not by what methods, direct or indirect, the money saved thus becomes, not dormant but active, not a log but a living tree; the principle is the same, whether the money is lent directly to individuals engaged in industrial undertakings, or is invested in shares of Companies for Railway, Canal, Steam Navigation, Gas, or Mining purposes, or in Government Securities which compensate the holder, with a portion taken from the fruits of industry, for setting at liberty a part of the capital employed in producing those fruits, — it is quite clear that when money is *thus* saved, it is employed by us, or is suffered by us to be employed by others, in *works of productive industry.*

Our proposition, therefore, that labour is better employed, and trade is more encouraged, when we save than when we spend, amounts to this, that these effects are caused in a greater

degree, more widely and more permanently, when money is employed in works of reproductive industry, than when it is employed in works of superfluity or luxury for the purpose of barren consumption — that the former of these employments is the better employment, so far as the employment of money affects the present and future condition of our working classes.

But it may be asked, "how do we know that the persons to whom we lend our money will employ it in works of continual productiveness — may they not employ it so as to devote labour and commodities to the ends of barren consumption, by supplying the fashion, or administering to the caprice of the day?" Or, again, "how can the condition of the workman be affected by the destination of his work — what difference can this make to him, so long as his occupation is not injurious to his health, and he earns fair wages?"

To answer these questions is not difficult, if we only take a *comprehensive* view of our subject, and bear in mind that our purpose is

to determine the effect, not of a single action, but of a course of conduct pursued for a long time and by many persons, and the effect of this conduct, not on the condition of a single workman, but on the permanent condition of a large industrial body and of their posterity. Were considerable sums of money to be steadily withdrawn from the purchase of a certain class of commodities, the capital employed in this branch of production would soon become unprofitable, and these commodities would be produced in smaller quantities. Were the same sums of money to be steadily invested in the purchase of other commodities, their production would become profitable, and their quantity would be continually increased. Were there to be a reduced market for articles which only serve to gratify vanity or to foster luxury, these would be produced in less quantities; were there to be an extended market for the objects requisite to support industry and the means of multiple production, these would be produced in larger quantities: laces, silks, cambrics, velvets, perfumes, would be produced in smaller quantities;

axes, spades, ploughs, threshing-machines, steam-engines, crops of corn, would be produced in larger quantities. But how would this affect the condition of the community at large? To those who are accustomed to consider these questions it may be sufficient to reply, that the physical condition of every industrial society depends principally on the proportion between the amount of its population and the amount of its capital, and that the condition of every such society may be as much improved by an *increase in its capital*, of which we hear so little, as by a repression of the increase of population, of which we hear so much. But, if this reply be not sufficiently clear, let us recur to the case of our Patriarchal Economist, and suppose, that seeing a part of his community to be insufficiently fed, ill clothed, badly housed, and moreover to be *in want of employment*, he were to order the number of persons employed in manufacturing the materials necessary for producing such commodities as food, clothes, and houses, to be increased,

the manufacture of articles of superfluity being partially superseded or suspended. Such an order would doubtless occasion for a time some disruption of occupations, but it may fairly be presumed that when the necessary implements should be placed in the hands of the distressed classes, the commodities necessary for their sustenance and comfort would be produced, and the physical wants of the society would be relieved. It can scarcely be necessary to observe that an order to make a commodity differs very little, except in point of time, from a purchase of that commodity. If money is spent habitually on any one class of commodities, instead of the effects of a special order the effects of a general order are produced, and they who thus spend their money, determine, though unseen, the purposes to which the effects of a corresponding number of labourers shall be directed through long periods of time. It is a consequence of the influences surrounding our position within the confused circle of the social mechanism, that we are led to take a different view

of the good of the community from that which would be taken by one who could regard its interests like those of his own family. We see the evil that would be caused by a little disrupture of employments, but we do not see the great good that would result. We discern that capital is necessary for labour, that the position of the labouring classes depends entirely upon the amount of accumulated property devoted to the purposes of reproduction; that a man without tools can do nothing, and that what he can do depends very much on the quantity and quality of the material appliances placed at his disposal, bnt we are so misled by sophistical fallacies, so perplexed by the medium of money through which we see these subjects, and so hurried on by the influence of our feelings over our reason, that, while holding in our hands the seeds of perpetual wealth, we rest satisfied with causing final acts of production, — we order a thing to be produced which in its turn can produce nothing, and think that we do good, when by spending money, instead of committing it to

the hands of accumulative industry, we divert labour from the cultivation of fruitful objects, and employ it in producing other objects which serve only to fulfil the purpose of evanescent and barren consumption. The conduct of the countryman who, as the fable relates, killed the goose that laid the golden eggs, would have faithfully portrayed this part of our social conduct, had he been represented not as immediately seeing his error, but as indulging in self-laudation while consuming his goose.

These comparative effects of the actions of spending and of saving appear to be so evident, that it would probably be sufficient merely to state them, were it not, as we have before said, for the deference which is usually, and on most occasions very properly, paid to names that stand high among learned authorities. When we are told by the oracles of this department of knowledge that labour, however employed, is equally beneficial to the State, we may say, as many have said, that we cannot understand Political-economy, but the fault is very naturally

judged to be in ourselves, and the "*ipse dixit*" of some well-known name is complacently cited as conclusive evidence of the truth. The principal cause of the deference that is so strikingly evinced, whenever this subject is approached, for authorities however discordant, and for deductions however illogical, is doubtless to be found in the insufficiency of our natural powers, when untaught and unassisted, to deal with the vast magnitude of political bodies, and with the subtilty of national interests. As a child naturally believes that every fruit which pleases the sight and has a fragrant smell and a sweet flavour is good for food, until experience or instruction have proved that many fruits possess noxious properties; or as a philanthropist naturally believes that to give money to rags and tears is a good action, until taught that there exist organisations of rags and tears for the purpose of duping the benevolent, and that to use the power of money to reward and encourage this purpose is to take from honest industry and to give to dishonest idle-

ness; so the purchaser, and still more the direct employer of labour, at first naturally believes that actions, which produce good *so far as he can see*, produce good to the whole community, and is led to persist in the performance of such actions, until he has gained an extensive view of their remote effects, and of their hidden influences. When we thus find in various ways that our sight is naturally defective, that half the truth is a falsehood, and that a want of knowledge and of experience frequently disappoints the rectitude of our intentions, we naturally turn to the books specially devoted to each subject for the purpose of enlarging our sphere of vision; if these oracles prove false, can we be justly blamed for the errors which we commit in deference to their authority? If these authorities further teach us to recognise, in the course of our daily conduct, a pleasant harmony between the calls of duty and of self-indulgence, we are still less to be blamed for believing that doctrines must be profitable which we find so agreeable. Were an

ignorant person, wishing to learn the appearance of the sun, to be made to look at it through a kaleidoscope, instead of a telescope, he would not increase his knowledge of astronomy, but he might be excused should he continue to hold in his hand the ingenious toy from motives of curiosity and gratification. To render acceptable the doctrine that it does good to spend money, a multitude of motives are combined which naked truth will, it is to be feared, long find it difficult to resist, — the love of a popularity, itself both the cause and consequence of error, the pleasure derived from the polite urbanity of the shopman, the thankful gratitude of the operative, the officious satisfaction of the servant,—all too often heightened in effect by a want of real objects of sympathy, and aided by the unconscious instigations of every innate taste and desire that wealth can serve to gratify. "Riches, like manure, must be spread in order to do good," but instead of being scattered broadcast *, they

* In support of this principle we may happily refer to

must, through our knowledge and care, be conducted to the channels which lead to the roots of productive industry, an object which is most readily effected, when the proprietor is not himself engaged in a branch of industry, by committing them to the hands of those on whose skill and prudence he can most prudently rely.

What effects would ensue if the faith which rests on the vicious dogmas of our Political-economy were to be overthrown, and the belief were to become general, that to invest and to accumulate our spare means does more good than to spend and consume them, it is not difficult to conjecture. It is quite clear that all that constitutes the wealth of England, as of every other country, is the result of accumulation — that it is the proper

the authority of the present Oxford Professor, "If a man must waste his time in mere personal gratifications, let him not seek to extenuate his moral responsibility by economical delusions." — *Population and Capital*, p. 27. *Rickards.*

use of what has been saved that makes us among the first of the great, the noble, and the free, — that if our ancestors had spent all that they produced, they would have left us nothing to employ in this manner — and that if we spend all that we produce, we shall leave no provision for the future increase of our population. But, however weighty this consideration ought to be, that which more immediately concerns us is the effect of accumulation on *the population of our own times.* If all that should be accumulated during the next hundred years should, at the end of that time, be thrown into the sea, our proposition still holds, that during that time the necessary funds would have been applied to the production of food and other requisites for the maintenance and the employment of our labouring population, and that full occupation and adequate remuneration would have been provided *for all.* In effecting such a change, the importance of which can only be duly estimated from a knowledge of the normal condition of our lowest classes

under our present administration of wealth, a degree of loss would probably be incurred by those whose capital or whose talents are irrevocably engaged in producing the objects of our unnecessary or wasteful expenditure, sufficient to remind the statesman of one of the most painful conditions of human progress — that no advance can be made without some evil. Concerning this subject, however, it must be needless on this occasion to enlarge, because the numerous treatises which have been addressed to the labouring classes, when suffering from changes consequent upon the introduction of machinery, have, doubtless, proved that it is the interest of each and all of us to concur in changes which tend, ultimately, to the good of society.

It will not, however, be imagined that, should this change in the employment of money be adopted by all who have the means and opportunity, less encouragement would be extended to the cultivation of literature and of the fine arts, or that there would be a diminu-

tion in the funds applied to religious and benevolent purposes. In denying the virtue of expenditure, simply as expenditure, we advance nothing that can militate against the gratification of an ennobling love of the sublime and of the beautiful, whether through colour or form, through music or poetry, through philosophy or science, nothing that can make those who mourn for others' woes, deaf to the calls of charity, or those who indulge loftier aspirations, unwilling to dedicate the first fruits of human labour to the service of the Most High. We may, on the contrary, rather assert that one reason why cathedrals formerly grew where now, with a ten times greater amount of wealth in the neighbourhood, a church can scarcely be built, why charitable institutions were erected which now scarcely find support, why literature and art can now so rarely find a patron, is the existence and the acceptance of those dogmas which teach that all kinds of expenditure, whether made with a noble or a base, a patriotic or a selfish intent, are equally beneficial to the

community. It is only when there have been fully satisfied the highest purposes to which material wealth can be applied, that a question arises concerning the application of that which overflows from the reasonable wants and wishes of the affluent. Were it to be generally believed and taught among all classes as a principle of education, that this part of our resources is not philanthropically or patriotically spent in administering to fictitious tastes and imaginary wants, and that they who so spend it are not public benefactors but the reverse, a vast amount of property would be rescued from waste, and laid at the feet of devotion or of charity, when not placed in the hands of productive and ever fruitful industry.

The love of praise, of admiration, and of popularity, are in our country among the chief causes of unproductive expenditure; were public opinion to be rightly informed respecting the effect of this course of conduct, they would no longer cause it to be pursued. The large sums which in the metropolis are devoted, and often

with the best intentions to ostentatious display, would be, in part at least, devoted to public works, or to reproductive enterprises. The rival parties who in our counties strive for predominance, the Guelphs and Gibellins of our rural districts, who carry on intestine wars, directly by means of newspapers and public meetings, indirectly by means of wasteful methods of expenditure addressed to the eyes of the populace, would certainly discontinue this latter practice, if stripped of its popularity by being proved injurious to the welfare of the indigent classes; and the ambitious possessors of wealth would eventually exhibit their power, more after the fashion of the classic ages, and much more to the benefit of the community, in the construction of permanent works for purposes of public utility or of decoration. It needs but very little acquaintance with our Anglo-Saxon character to be enabled to pronounce confidently, in what degree the manners and habits of every inferior grade of society would be affected, by such a change in the manners and habits of our

upper classes. It has often been said that in this country nearly every one desires to appear to move in a higher sphere than his own; the usual method of attempting to accomplish this object is, undoubtedly, for each aspirant to imitate the external characteristics of such a sphere, and most commonly to adopt its tone of expenditure. Were political and domestic economy to be avowedly regarded, in the highest ranks of society, as twin constellations, destined to guide the vessel of the state in its hour of darkness, no breach of domestic economy would continue to be regarded by any class as a public good. It would no longer be regarded as a mark of magnanimity in private gentlemen to emulate the expenses of noblemen, in tradesmen to emulate the expenses of gentlemen, in servants to emulate the habits of their masters, and to regard waste as aristocratic, and destruction as conducing to the good of trade, or in artisans to dissipate their wages whenever they should happen to be high, and to think that, by needlessly advancing beyond their usual

and reasonable rate of expenditure, they would rise above the level of their station.

We must repeat that we do not here undertake to indite a sermon. If the wealthy choose to renounce pomps and vanities in one place, and to cultivate them sedulously in another, or to rear their families in undesired luxury during their own lives, and to expose them at a subsequent period to straitened circumstances, it is no business of ours. The object of our consideration is not the observance of religious or moral duties, but simply the determination of some of the conditions of national prosperity. What sons would feel after leaving the paternal roof to live on the salary attached to a curacy, a commission, or a seat at a government office, what daughters would feel after commencing a solitary or a married life with an income not amounting to a tenth part of that in which their girlhood had participated, should they find the timely harvest of a principled economy brought to their assistance; — whether, as now, the career of prosperous

tradesmen ought so seldom to leave the means of adequate maintenance for their families — whether, as now, more than half of the inmates of our workhouses ought to consist of persons who have served in gentlemen's families — whether every revulsion of trade ought to find the well-paid artisan unable to provide a month's support for himself and his family — these and similar considerations, however they may, incidentally, favour the course of conduct which we advocate, do not directly concern our present subject. It is our business here to decide, apart from all private considerations, how far the practice of needless expenditure affects the welfare of our indigent classes, — to determine whether those precepts can be right which teach us that all employments which benefit the person employed must conduce to the benefit of the community, or whether under the guidance of such a precept, when a large proportion of our common stock of labour is diverted to the production of that class of commodities which is consumed without

aiding the work of reproduction, in a climate and on a soil such as ours, a large portion of the community must not live and die in helpless, hopeless want.

We find in fact that, under the influence of these principles, each of our great cities is divided into two parts, of which one is a charmed circle replete with all that can conduce, and with much more than does conduce, to ease, satisfaction, and pleasure, whilst the other, a much larger area, contains a scanty supply of these commodities, although, principally, the abode of those who produce them. Money must have its fruits, and its possessors must fully enjoy them, or it may cease to be an object of desire, and may no longer adequately encourage discretion and skill, or stimulate zeal and enterprise. But suppose that every rational enjoyment which wealth can purchase has been procured, — the possession of food and raiment, uninterrupted ease, adjustment of temperature, every gratification of the senses,

an unlimited command of literary and artistic productions, possession of the means of locomotion to any extent, add to these all that can stimulate the emotions, soothe the feelings, exalt the understanding — when every want and desire of human nature has been satiated, and selfishness itself would pause to think of accumulating funds for industry, if only for the pleasure of the thought, do not accost the wealthy in the garb of philosophy, and say to those who have never turned their serious attention to these subjects,—"let there be more drawing of the purse-strings, more purchasing of unserviceable objects, more direct and indirect giving of orders, more unprofitable expenditure of money, in order that 'labour may be employed,' and 'trade may be encouraged.'" The double-blossomed flower usually bears no seed. It is only through the accumulation of property in the hands of prudent capitalists that our wealth, as a nation, has become great; it is, principally, through our misguided ex-

penditure, on barren employments, and on fruitless objects, that the abundance of this wealth is so often seen in close contiguity with a want of sufficient maintenance, and an endurance of unnatural deprivations.

CHAP. VIII.

ON CHOICE IN PURCHASING.

"HISTORY tells us of illustrious villains, but there never was an illustrious miser in nature;" such is the opinion which is generally, and very properly, entertained respecting the character of a parsimonious economy. We have urged nothing that can justly be held to encourage a sordid propensity to save for the sake of saving; on the contrary, in advocating a sacrifice of the pleasures of consumption for the purpose of increasing the abundance of production, we have declared war in the most open and direct manner against every form of selfishness; yet so difficult is it to distinguish motives, and so ready is popular opinion to attach the stigma of avarice to any attempt to sacrifice the present to the absent, or to the future, that we may

well rejoice on quitting this unsavoury topic, in order to consider how the more popular process of spending ought to be performed,—a process which is almost always agreeable to the unreflecting, which may be said, when well performed, to be twice blessed, and which is often thought to be altogether as blessed as charity.

Yet this process is not always a source of unmixed pleasure to the purchaser. The child who is not wisely entrusted with money to spend, may dimly perceive that he has not yet acquired a full experience of the varying wants and tastes of his nature, and may feel perplexed in the conscious possession of power and responsibility, without adequate knowledge; or the child of a larger growth, who has perhaps experienced all that his own nature can suggest, but who has not fully learned by what means the objects which he proposes to purchase are produced, by what endurance of labour, or pressure on youth or age, or prostration under disease, or exposure to contamination, may feel unable to decide, to the

satisfaction of his better nature, how to select from amongst the numerous commodities offered to his notice. In such cases as these knowledge is felt to be essential to the proper exercise of the power of property,—self-knowledge in the first instance, and, as ancillary to this, an acquired knowledge of the wants, the wishes, and the desires of those who stand towards us in the relation of fellow countrymen and contemporaries, and who, by the decrees of fortune, are called on to administer to our necessities and our pleasures. The want of this knowledge is usually felt in a greater degree in proportion as the power possessed is larger. They who are concerned only in purchasing the necessaries of life have, comparatively, but a small number of commodities from which to select, and the processes by which these commodities are produced, are often of the most familiar kind; they, on the contrary, who are concerned in purchasing products of skill, works of art, objects of taste or vertu, have a very much wider range of selection, and

have therefore to consider the claims of many who are maintained through the exercise of very complicated processes of thought and of manipulation. In this, as in every other case, greater knowledge is found to be required for the proper exercise of greater power. Whether, however, the want of this knowledge has been sensibly felt or not, it is quite clear, as we have already had frequent occasion to remark, that by the purchases, or by the orders of the possessors of property, the occupations, the physical condition, and too often the religious and moral state, of the industrial classes are determined. If these purchases are made, or these orders given, without any consideration for the producer, the processes of industry *may be* healthy, continuous, and not inordinately toilsome, but if so, this happy disposition of circumstances is evidently not the result of human care and forethought.

We may, indeed, if we please, complacently assume that the thoughtless exercise of our power can only produce the best possible results, and this assumption, if it does

not conduce to the happiness of others, may at least save us much trouble. There are many who assume that laurels may be won in war by any English gentleman of ordinary ability from the picked genius and cultivated skill of foreign nations, and that, consequently, nearly all the talent of this class of society may, without detriment to the interests of the country, be absorbed by professions to which there is attached a more than nominal remuneration. There are many who assume, that whatever use is made of the power of property, by whatever orders the march of the peaceful bands of industry is directed, all their employments must conduce equally to the public good. Unless, however, we are satisfied with the fruits of these doctrines, unless we can look with complacency upon the blood of the bravest ignorantly squandered, and can daily and hourly contemplate with satisfaction the scarcely less horrible scene of health and strength wasted in our seats of industry, we must cease to be optimists, and be persuaded that, in

England as elsewhere, means are necessary for ends, and that to call a difficult art no art, is not the way to ensure success in its practice. In pursuing our present purpose of considering how the art of Political-economy may be applied in the daily business of life, we shall now have to examine the nature of the patriotic and philanthropic principles which ought to actuate, in purchasing, those who have the means and the opportunity of regarding something beyond the gratification of their own wants and wishes.

One of the most obvious methods of promoting social prosperity, is to establish such thriving and healthy occupations as command a remunerative return, and naturally make those who are engaged in them prosperous and contented, in the place of occupations which, stagnating, or having become effete, cause those who are engaged in them to be inadequately remunerated and consequently ill-supported, if they do not also become either discontented or servile; one of the first of our cares, accord-

ingly, should be to encourage occupations of the former, in preference to occupations of the latter class. Yet, plain as this proposition is, and obvious as are its consequences, nothing is more common than to meet with opinions and conduct of an opposite tendency. Some product of a thriving branch of industry is, perhaps, offered to us on the one side, and on the other some product of a decaying branch, as for instance, the work of hand-loom weavers, of Irish sempstresses, or of Italian boys; and we are told that if the latter class of articles be not purchased, the weaver must starve, the sempstress be left destitute, or the boys be refused food and lodging. We probably know that these unfortunately misguided operatives can only be maintained by the labours of those whose occupations are naturally, and therefore justly remunerative; but feelings of compassion prevail over our better judgment, and we decide on indulging these feelings in the blind hope that we are doing good to some without injuring others. Examples are not wanting

in which such a line of conduct has met with the sanction of even the highest authority; on a state occasion, for instance, which many can remember, large sums of money were withdrawn from the support of healthy trades, for the purpose of giving an unnatural stimulus to the manufacture of Spitalfields silk.* There will never, it is believed, occur in this country such another recognition of the fallacious doctrines of Political-economy; but this erroneous creed still finds very general acceptance, and even when it is not accepted in words, conduct conformable to it is often practised. The same propensity of our nature which occasions the encouragement so often perseveringly afforded to organised mendicity, is no doubt in some degree answerable for this unfortunate misuse of the power of the purse, and a very difficult propensity it is to subdue — the propensity of feelings ever awake, and easily suggested, to overshadow the

* On the occasion of the Spitalfields Ball in 1837, the walls of the Opera House were hung with silk, which, it was said, was afterwards destroyed.

remote dictates of acquired knowledge. There may sometimes arise cases in which industry can fairly claim charitable assistance for the purpose of obtaining means of introduction, or of surmounting temporary difficulties, but in these cases it will commonly be found that to give is better than to purchase. To purchase from charitable motives is to hang out false lights to trade, and to induce those who are sailing in a wrong direction, instead of abandoning it before it is too late, to continue in a course which must be difficult and dangerous, if it does not lead to certain ruin.

Another consideration, which on many occasions unduly influences our choice of commodities relates not to the kind, but to the degree of labour that has been bestowed on them. Is an article to be preferred because it is more elaborate than another? If several articles are offered for sale equally attractive on account of their utility, beauty, or other intrinsic or acquired properties, but differing very much in the amount of labour that has been bestowed on

them — if, for instance, some have been produced by means of long, persevering, painful, perhaps injurious toil, others by means of instruments contrived to spare the artificer much pains, which commodities ought we to prefer? Whether ought we to patronise, with a view to the welfare of the working classes, watch-cases hand-turned or engine-turned, lace made by hand or by machinery, landscapes taken by the hand of the artist or by nature-processes? Public opinion would, probably, at the present moment be led, by a regard for the interests of industry, to decide unhesitatingly in favour of the former class of objects.

If it be right to employ labour simply for itself, and not for its results, *if labour be value*, there can be no doubt that philanthropic feelings ought always to be associated with our estimation of elaborated commodities. But we must again repeat, neither is labour in itself a pleasure, nor does the performance of labour always and necessarily result in the production of satisfaction. True knowledge must ever

regard human labour as the ordained sacrifice necessary to procure the support and the solaces of human life, and must consequently consider every elaborate commodity as an embodiment of unwelcome toil that has been endured on account of it, or has been diverted from other purposes in order to be incorporated in it. If this toil has been bestowed without conferring on the commodity properties that conduce in an adequate degree to beauty or to utility, and it is consequently exhibited merely as an object of self-constituted value, every enlightened mind should, in our age and country, regard it with aversion, if not with horror, as suggestive only of misguided toil and unnecessary suffering. It may be well enough for Eastern despots to display the power which they can exercise over human actions by a purposed waste of human work; under such a government, amidst indolent races, and on a prolific soil, there may be possibly regarded with applause commodities made of fretted ivory, embroidered tissues, chased metals, exemplifications of the

barbaric boast "*materiem superante labore*," each, perhaps, representing the entire efforts of several human lives that are gone to their dread account. But is this well, under a free Government, on a soil which yields its wealth only to the persevering efforts of stimulated industry? The gossamer-web, the honey-comb, the coral-reef, are admirable, because the insects which produce them can accomplish no higher purposes; but let us not degrade civilised men by needlessly directing their efforts to work of this nature. Let it not be considered as a commendation of our purchases to say, that they exhibit wonderful minuteness, or astonishing perseverance, but let articles rather be selected simply for their material and essential properties; or, if some ideal associations must be attached to them, let them not remind us of sacrifices of long hours and protracted efforts, — sacrifices which, in our country and in our times, cannot be considered to be wanting, — rather let them remind us of ease, of quiet, of opportunity, blessings of which our

working classes unhappily know but little. The benevolent administrator of property will thoughtfully prefer, of things of equal use and beauty, that which has been produced with the least labour, and will always hail with pleasure any marks of the operations of those mechanical contrivances which, in so many cases, admirably assist or spare the weary hand of man.

But if this be true of merely elaborated commodities, or of labour which produces some permanent result, however barren or inadequate, what are we to say of labour which produces no result — how are we to judge that course of conduct which, under the authority of political precepts and state influences, continually invents new work for labour, and by a mere *dictum*, not by natural waste nor by the influence of physical causes, renders that work useless? In what terms are we to speak of that orthodox and approved system of expenditure which superadds to the curse of toil, and increases the severity of its sentence, by

uncertainty and anxiety of mind, — of that cunning device which frustrates the plans of the wisest, renders valueless the stock of the most prudent, throws out of work and consigns to destitution the hands which have painfully learned an art, for the purpose,—if indeed it has any acknowledged purpose,—of giving *éclat* to a few possessors of money who would otherwise be unknown, and of enriching those whom they employ? It has been remarked that two creatures only can mount to the top of a pyramid — the eagle and the reptile; scarcely less dissimilar in character are the leaders of our fashions. Can we speak in terms of too strong condemnation of that spirit of change which exists merely for the sake of change, which snatches the ball, from those who are remarkable for elegance and refined taste, to place it in the hands of persons endowed with far different qualities, content in leading the dance if only it is not continued long in the same direction? To be arrayed in beauty of form and in harmony of colour, is the lesson which Nature

teaches the lily and the rose; a change of clothing for the varying seasons of the year is the provision which Nature herself makes for animal life; but to leave the wide field that invites taste to a skilful adaptation of similitude and contrast to each variety of age, form, and occupation, in order to follow one promiscuous fashion, is scarcely less unbecoming to the purchaser than injurious to the producer. We speak not of the cast-off garniture which, in consequence of this noxious practice, is constantly placed in the hands of the lower orders of society — of encouragement given to the dangerous conceits of personal decoration — of countenance bestowed on the sacrifices of extravagance — these and other evils not strictly belonging to our subject will readily occur to every reader; it is rather our place here to advert to the social miseries which may be witnessed as the results of fashion, in the speculative uncertainty of trade, in the waste of time and of materials, and in the misapplication of labour. It is recorded that when George

III. discontinued the use of shoe-buckles, the effects of the consequent change of fashion threw out of employment several thousand persons whose destitute condition was afterwards the subject of frequent petitions to Parliament. This is only a small sample of the consequences which are produced when patterns of dress, jewellery, decorative furniture, and the innumerable other objects of fashionable caprice, are selected not because they are in accordance with a gradually progressing knowledge of the fixed principles of taste, but because they are "quite new" or "just come out," an expression which may perhaps indicate, that the hand of the manufacturer has been guided by the refinement of the monks of the middle ages, or by the delicacy of the ladies who ruled the court of Louis XV.* Against the changes

* "He" (Will Honeycomb) "knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French kings' wenches our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods; whose frailty was covered by such a sort of pet-

of the winds and the waves, the uncertainty of life, the chances of accident by fire, an insurance may be readily effected, but what prudent company would undertake to insure the manufacturer, the tradesman, or the operative against the changes of fashion? Yet the former class of vicissitudes is beyond human control, the latter lies very much within the power of our Political-economy. It is, at least, very clear that the extent to which this mischief has been carried in our times, when feelings of benevolence and philanthropy so generally prevail, is in a great measure due to the abstract maxim instilled through books of acknowledged authority into the minds of students, and acted on by them, and circulated throughout the country, — that the value of a thing depends on the relative quantity of labour which is necessary for its production, and that, consequently, labour of whatever kind is always and equally beneficial to the community.

ticoat, and whose vanity to show her foot made that part of her dress so short in such a year."— *Spectator*, No. 2.

There are, it is evident, many cases in which a right of option may be beneficially exercised by a considerate purchaser for the purpose of avoiding that disturbance of comfort, or perhaps sacrifice of health and abridgment of life, which are the consequences of certain occupations, or for the purpose of choosing the lesser amount of evil where these evils cannot be entirely avoided. For this end it is often only necessary to understand the details of a branch of productive industry. It may be frequently a matter of indifference, and sometimes a subject of embarrassment, to decide which of several materials, or fabrics, or colours, it is best to select; yet on this choice may depend the alternative whether working men and women shall devote many hours, perhaps weeks or months, to a healthy and engaging, or to a repulsive and deleterious, employment. Some occupations are perhaps unavoidably and irreparably noxious; the processes, for instance, necessary for manufacturing and applying some mineral colours are, at the present moment, inevitably prejudicial to human

life. Other occupations only become noxious through the absence of proper precautions*; thus the process of grinding and polishing steel very generally causes the workman to die at an early age, from disease of the lungs induced by the inhalation of sharp particles of metal, and the process of manufacturing black lace causes an early loss of eyesight. Other occupations, again, not in themselves noxious, become so by the needless and thoughtless pressure of the purchaser on the producer; the waste of health, of comfort, and even of life, occasioned by the orders of a London season, has often attracted public notice, whilst the misery caused by the unexpected announcement of drawingrooms, and by the frequency of general mournings, has obtained the highest recognition, and elicited a gracious restriction of these observances.

A little consideration of surrounding circumstances, and a little firmness in practising what

* Vide *The Influence of Occupation on Health, by Dr. Chambers.* PRACTICAL LECTURES TO LADIES, p. 135.

is felt to be right, are alone necessary to enable every purchaser to exercise some influence on the welfare of our working classes. In our country districts the poor are generally well "looked after" by those who are raised above poverty; the condition of labourers *there* generally receives a kindly attention from even the richest and the noblest of their employers. In large towns there are commonly causes, both moral and physical, which offer impediments to this generous supervision; in the great majority of cases the crowded state of the dwellings of the poor, the risk of contagion, contamination, and other causes, render a frequent personal intercourse, of those who work and those who do not work, almost impossible. There is no evil, however, without a remedy, and it is evidently the fit remedy in this case, when direct consideration cannot be bestowed upon the poor by the rich, that some consideration should be extended to them, indirectly, during the acts of purchasing and giving orders.

It needs no long acquaintance with the litera-

ture that portrays the condition of various branches of our manufactures — but little communication with those masters who profess an interest in the condition of their working people, and whose sympathy is manifestly stayed not by want of will but by want of means — an occasional brief interview with the curate, the doctor, the visitor, or the reader,—to attain all the information necessary for a beneficial exercise of this discretionary power. And are not the dispensers of money *bound* to exercise this power with care and thoughtfulness, not as a matter of choice, but as a duty for the discharge of which they are responsible? The landowner, whether living on his estate or an absentee, is justly held to be morally responsible for the condition of those from the fruits of whose labour he derives his income. The possessor of personal property, whether in funds, or stocks, or shares, or houses, or ships, or in any other form of investment, equally derives his income from the fruits of labour, and of all absentees he commonly takes the least part in the pro-

duction of his income, and knows and sees the least of those who work for him. For him the sailor keeps the midnight watch, the carpenter and the mason curiously devise or laboriously execute, the engine driver flies, the actuary calculates — for him labour of every description produces, and, in order that it may produce, must toil and suffer. Of these laborious processes the holder of personal property sees nothing, and perhaps thinks little, but it can scarcely be held that because he receives the fruits of labour, unseen and unheard, through the agency of others, he is therefore exempt from the moral obligations which, confessedly in other cases, connect the employer and the employed. Irish proprietors were never held to be the less responsible for the condition of their tenantry, because their estates were in hands of middlemen. It is easy to charge manufacturers who employ, perhaps, several hundred men in anticipating our demands and executing our orders, with not sufficiently providing for their physical and moral welfare, it is easy to ex-

patiate on the depravity of the employers of cheap labour, and to compare the amount of work which they exact with the sum which they pay for its execution; but it should be remembered, that *they* are in a very small degree, and that *purchasers* are in a much greater degree, the real employers of labour; the latter receive, in the commodities which they require, the larger share of the fruits of industry, the former are but middlemen, standing between the producer and the consumer.

It would be no uncongenial study, on the contrary, it would confer much of that pleasure which is always felt when theory is carried into practice, and knowledge becomes power, were they who are to be possessors of personal property to be taught the details of the industrial processes which they are destined to set in motion. "All things have been made double one against another;" power has always its duties, every kind of property has its responsibilities, although they are in some cases more, in others less, distinctly visible. The future

possessor of landed estates commonly learns at an early age not only the pecuniary business but also the moral responsibilities attached to his position, and purposely becomes acquainted with the character of the employments, and with the social condition of the rustic poor. The condition of the urban poor would be much improved, were the inheritor of personal property not found ignorant respecting the details of the social condition of those from whose labour his income is to be derived, or who are to produce what he is to consume, and over whose fortunes he must exercise an influence not the less powerful, because operating by means of purchased commodities, and of orders indirectly given. A very small portion of the time usually lavished on the literature of the ancient Greeks and Romans — a very small share of the sympathy that is freely bestowed on royal personages who died centuries ago — if extended to the men and women of our own days, our compatriots, our own labourers, would suffice to make us acquainted with the industrial

processes that are applied in producing every commodity which is offered for sale, and to give us an assurance that, if we so desire and decide, no object that is purchased shall cause a wanton waste of health, or denial of comfort. There are many, and those endowed with moral feelings of the highest order, to whom it would prove a source of gratification to reflect, that they would not thus come into personal contact with the objects of their care, but whilst holding the helm, would sit apart, and be little thought of by the labouring crew, — to feel that, like the fabled deities of Olympus, they would preside over the affairs of men from a distance, counselling for their good while receiving their offerings, and not allowing the sacrifice of toil to be altogether unrequited by sympathy and protection from above.

CHAP. IX.

ON SOCIAL INTERCOURSE AND EDUCATION.

THERE is yet one part of our social opinions, the consequences of which deserve the special attention of all who are interested either in the culture and diffusion of knowledge, or in the accumulation of material wealth, because the purpose aimed at under their guidance is usually not attained, whilst the endeavour to attain it is needlessly attended with a vast amount of unproductive consumption. Such is, most commonly, the character of our attempts to effect that species of interchange which is, of all others, the most important, although it has not always received proper attention from Political-economists — the interchange with one another of our ideas, and thoughts, and feelings, by means of social

intercourse, to which we may add the communication of knowledge by less cultivated to more cultivated minds, in the way of casual instruction, or according to established methods of education.

What judgment ought the philosophy of Political-economy to pronounce on the wasteful misdirection of labour, which commonly attends the "society" of our educated classes, and which is now regarded as almost indispensable for the proper interchange of cultivated ideas, by those of the one sex who have drunk deep at the founts of that learning which was the subject of conversation under the porticoes of ancient Athens and at the triclinia of classic Rome, who are conversant with all the discoveries of modern science and art, and replete with the latest intelligence from the Court, the Senate, and the Camp, or by those of the other sex who have devoted their youthful studies to the brightest periods of modern history, and whose memories are stored with the poetry and the wit of French and Italian literature,

and with the eloquence and the fancy of our own?

Do our opinions and habits hold out to all such, whether wealthy or not, the occasions and opportunities of enjoying the vast amount of social happiness that might arise from the well-ordered interchange of these mental endowments? There are few, probably, who will not be anxious to avow, that the hours which they have passed in congenial and instructive society are among the brightest of their sunny memories, that the superfluities of wealth have afforded no pleasures equal to these, and that when these have been long denied, every other gratification has palled upon the senses. Let us ask whether the attainment of these, the most valuable of our means of happiness, is at present well ordered, or whether it might not be greatly facilitated and extended, were our attempts to secure it less frequently accompanied with a large amount of wasteful expenditure.

England is the land of traditions, but few of

our traditions are more superstitiously observed than that which has been handed down from the* remote period of our history, when even among the upper classes of society the daily meal was an uncertain blessing, when they who tendered it were rightly deemed to exercise the virtue of hospitality, and for its realisation a special thanksgiving was meetly offered up. Whilst the reason for the practice has happily long since passed away, the traditional feeling still remains, that on every occasion, however misplaced, this so-called hospitality ought to be exercised, and to this duty our social delusions have added the further requisition, that the entertainment ought to be of the costliest description, not that the actual circumstances of the host justify, but that is consistent with the means of that class in which he would aspire to be enrolled. The consequence is, that before

* A more recent illustration of this state of things is found in the history of the Scottish Border, where we read that the chieftain's spurs were occasionally dished up to evince the necessity for a foray.

the torch of science can be lighted, servants must illuminate rooms; before wit can sparkle, diamonds and emeralds must be clasped on; before honeyed words can drop from the lips of the sage, ices and champagne must be dispensed. Whether or not, as the Roman poet complains, the introduction of corporeal appliances "affigit humi divinæ particulam auræ," the question which concerns us is, how does the practice of inseparably linking costly comestibles to social intercourse affect those whose means do not warrant the outlay which they require, and how does this practice diminish the supplies, and misdirect the efforts which would otherwise serve to feed the necessities of the indigent. It is quite certain that, from the consequences of a traditional and now irrational custom, there often, and perhaps generally, lie hid that accumulated knowledge and cultivated eloquence which, under the influence of other opinions, might illuminate our society with the brightest and most diffusive lustre, and that our *réunions* are, consequently,

sometimes pronounced to be at once needlessly expensive, and hopelessly insipid, by those who have been accustomed to the easy habits and the intellectual intercourse of continental society. It is not less certain that among the scenes which frequently accompany this substitution of parade for friendly communion, the extremes of wealth and want are seen in the closest contiguity, and their contrast is exhibited in the most appalling colours.

It is only natural that whilst the pleasures of society are thus often cultivated without much success by our upper classes, although at the cost of much wasteful consumption, amongst our lower classes there is found a less successful improvement of opportunities, and a more lavish expenditure of means. Why does a stream of population constantly flow from our country districts to our towns, whilst it scarcely ever happens that an operative voluntarily leaves a town to seek a country employment? Why do persons born and bred in an exhilarating atmosphere, among expansive

scenes, under genial influences, gladly fly from them to live and die amongst dead walls, in a polluted air, under a murky sky? Every one knows it is chiefly because the opportunities of social intercourse are generally found by the mass of mankind to be more productive of pleasure than the charms of inanimate nature. Why do unmarried labourers throng during their unoccupied hours to the "corner" of the village street, and when bad weather or night-fall intervene, adjourn to the temptations of the beer-shop or the public-house? Why do unmarried operatives, if not found in similar abysses of means and morals, seek for social intercourse at such resorts as cheap theatres and balls? Every one knows it is chiefly because man is by nature gregarious; because not only is fire struck by contact from the hardest natures, but when the labourer has been isolated during long hours of work, fellowship, communication, and sympathy become almost imperatively necessary.

Let this fact be only avowed as it exists, and the remedy is already half provided. Let it not

be confessed as a disgrace, but avowed as a law of human nature, that human beings all want society; that our countrymen, of whatever class, if in a less degree than other nations, yet still want it, and rejoice in it. Englishmen often strive to hide the better part of their nature, and would sometimes wish to be thought guilty of a fault rather than to be suspected of a weakness. Were this want not to be disguised under the semblance of such propensities as a love of drinking, a love of gambling, a love of gaiety, and the like, but to be avowed without shame, reasonable means would soon be taken to meet it. Since guilds and fraternities have disappeared from our towns, and farm-labourers have commonly ceased to live in the houses of their employers, the urgency of this necessity has been most deeply felt. Were its existence to be openly recognised, and special means to be employed to satisfy it, we should probably find that by no other means could an equal amount of innocent gratification be purchased at the same price.

Little more would be required than rooms of easy access, suited to the circumstances of each locality, and professedly devoted to the purposes of social recreation and amusement, in order to furnish not only a retreat from dreaded temptations, but also a fertile source of pleasure and of profit. Nature has provided, with respect fo our knowledge as with respect to our commodities, that each of the parties to every prudent exchange shall profit by the transaction. Should the interchange of ideas resulting from this natural provision not be found sufficient, inexpensive ways and means might easily be devised to supply the deficiency. The Orientalist, from time immemorial, has loved to listen to story-tellers; our own princes used formerly to apply for tales to their jesters; readers might in these days easily be found who would lend life to the silent page for the benefit of those who cannot read with a full understanding; or harmless games might serve to supply active occupation, and to stimulate

interest. There will probably be much variety of opinion as to the best means of satisfying this great want, but the fact on which we here insist is incontrovertible, that civilised man must and will have an interchange of thoughts and feelings not less than an interchange of commodities, and that this want, if rightly understood, can be satisfied at a tithe of the outlay now wasted in places of public, and often profligate, entertainment; whilst if the right means of satisfying it be not understood, it will continue to be satisfied by other means, at whatever cost, and with whatever sacrifice of comfort and happiness. We must add, so long as our present opinions concerning Political-economy continue to be in the ascendant, this course of conduct will be much increased by the belief that its consequences conduce to the good of trade, and that its adoption evinces liberality, generosity, and patriotism.

One of the principal causes that the social interchange of thoughts and feelings amongst our lower classes is carried on thus imperfectly,

or is attended with deplorable circumstances, is doubtless to be found in the admitted fact, that the skilled production of thoughts and feelings, if such may be called the cultivation and elaboration of the mind which constitute the work of education, is usually conducted by us with but little success. This is not the place to plunge into the deluge of arguments which the dark mysteries of our national education have evoked; but it may be opportune to remark here, that the failure of all the attempts of Government to educate the people worthily, the inefficacy of an unprecedented amount of money, care, and discussion bestowed on this subject, may be traced to the same cause to which we have traced the faults and failures of our whole system of Political-economy—the unwillingness which exists in this country to apply a knowledge of the principles of the human mind to the practical arts of observing its processes, and of regulating their results. So long as this branch of knowledge shall be neglected, so long will our practitioners in educational and poli-

tical art be like an engineer without a knowledge of gravitation, a chemist without a knowledge of elective affinity, a physician without a knowledge of the anatomy of the human frame.

See what a course is now pursued in our National Schools under the latest and most approved system of instruction. Books ought to be, to the generality of mankind, but A, B, Cs of a larger growth—an alphabet which is to teach them to read the great language of Nature. Yet books, and book learning, books learnt in order to learn other books, form, in nearly every case, the highest end and aim of all that is offered to the minds of our intelligent working classes. An acquaintance with the history of kings and queens who died centuries ago, with places hundreds and thousands of miles distant from them, with plants and animals which they will probably never see, constitutes the most approved food, even the milk for babes, which Privy Councillors and Committees on Education provide, and expect

to see swallowed with avidity, and consider to be all sufficient for the moral strength and satisfaction of those who read with difficulty now, and will probably not read at all hereafter, but who are keenly alive to the natural objects which meet their senses, and are anxious to reap every advantage that can be derived from a knowledge of their properties. The principles of infant education are now properly understood, and are sometimes carried into practice in a manner that mental philosophy cannot but approve; ideas, for instance, are systematically fixed in the memory by means of pleasing associations, and habit and method are purposely not prescribed by the teacher, but are left to be imbibed from the company of playmates. But here philosophy usually ends, and conventionalism begins. In National Schools such knowledge ought undoubtedly to be given, in the first instance, as is most productive of amusement, and most replete with immediate profit; when the value of learning has been thoroughly felt, and a taste for know-

ledge has been acquired, it is time enough to begin the exposition of that kind of knowledge which confers no pleasure, and of which the profit is not immediately and distinctly perceptible. It is clear, also, that no interval of time should be suffered to elapse between the labour and its reward; young hounds are blooded to the chase at the moment of trial and success, and not after they return home. School feasts and school prizes, given in defiance of this principle, whatever outward manifestations they may engender, commonly produce but little moral effect, and are indeed frequently regarded, both by parents and children, as offering but an illogical comment on the text that "wisdom is pleasant in all her ways."

If the precepts of mental philosophy were to be followed, it would not be difficult so to order the march of that knowledge which our working classes require, that the pleasure of the exercise should at first be felt, more than the difficulty of the exertion. If, for instance, pupils were to be taught the natural laws and

conditions which determine the character of the district in which they live, whether town, or country, manufacturing or commercial, mining, agricultural, or pastoral, in such a manner as to give them the means of deriving pleasure or profit from circumstances which frequently fall under their observation, the poor would soon cease to entertain that feeling of secret contempt which their practical wisdom at present so often attaches to every kind of book-learning beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic. Why should not the children of each locality be allowed to taste of the fruit of near and common knowledge, before they are required to become acquainted with distant objects, and to draw remote conclusions? Is not the intelligence of the young peasant able to appreciate the wonders of animal and of vegetable life, to understand with pleasure the changes of the caterpillar the chrysalis and the butterfly, the ways of snails and spiders, ants and aphides, and the wondrous economy of the bee-hive? Do not the structure and functions of do-

mestic animals, their diseases and the means of preventing or curing them, — the circulation of the sap of plants, their deposit of bark, their succession of bud, and flower, fruit, and seed, and the practices of sowing, budding, grafting and pruning them, — the constituents of every hedge-side fruit, the staple of wine and vinegar, — the constituents of milk, and the practices of breaking the pellicles of one to constitute butter, and of neutralising the solvents of another to precipitate cheese, — fill a page in the book of nature which, if written in easy language, might be read with delight, and stimulate a thirst for further knowledge in those who are placed among natural objects of this description?

Why should not the children of those who live near the sea learn to construe intelligently the circumstances which fall under their observation? The ebb and flow of the tides, the build of ships and their powers of sailing, the fabrication of nets and tackle, the shapes and habits of each sort of fish and the

uses of their different parts, the instincts of the cuttle-fish and the hermit crab, the organisation of the sea-anemone, and the jelly-fish, the fairy-purse, and the bladder-fucus, with the conformation and the colouring of each shell, are but specimens of a large class of subjects which always afford pleasure to childhood when illuminated by knowledge.

Why should not the youth of our towns learn at school to understand those natural objects which habitually fall under their observation? Around them are displayed innumerable works of art, which, instead of being regarded as dark mysteries, might become causes of endless wonder and delight; or if the works of men's hands should be judged to afford less vivid and less improving sources of pleasure than the workings of Nature, even here the judicious instructor might have occasion to find "sermons in stones," that would be listened to both with pleasure and with advantage, and to use the light of knowledge to transform the "weeds" of cities into "wild flowers." In the surrounding circumstances of

the dullest street, on the dullest day, the little wanderer might be taught to see bright visions of past and present power, — as he casts his eye on the pavement, he might be enabled to discern in the plane flag vestiges of that ancient lake from whose waters it received its smooth particles and level surface—in the knotty kerb-stone he might trace the work of telluric fires, — in the globular drops which hang from the railings he might see the agency of the forces which made the world so round — in the clouds flying over head, cumulous, stratous, or cirrhous, he might observe the skyey influences of heat and cold, wind and electricity, — or should he feel pleasure in the dreams of history, he might draw from the walls of brick many thoughts of the walls of Babylon with all their recent disclosures, or of the Egyptian bondage, or of the Roman rule in Britain — from the mortar he might draw bright imaginings of that wondrous unknown chemist who first taught men to discard "the pitchy slime," and to knit their walls with bands of rock — from the names written over each shop he might, by the

help of etymology, draw many historic musings,—from Smith, he might be led to think of the smiters, the stalwart workers in wood and metal, the chief caste among the aborigines of our race; from Archer, of the companions of bold Robin Hood; from Pringle, of the pilgrims who heard the words of Peter the Hermit, and trod in the steps of the Crusaders—from innumerable objects such as these he might drink deep of the fount of association, until he should turn away satiated with the pleasure which well-chosen knowledge enables all to draw from circumstances which "they who run may read."

In whatever manner it is to be accomplished, learning must be made at the outset both pleasant and profitable to the children of the poor;—knowledge must be made its own immediate reward, or it will never be widely diffused in this country, where, as must always be the case, compulsory measures cannot be adopted to enforce the education of the people. It may be necessary for the children of the rich

to swallow tasteless or repulsive learning; they may calculate on future opportunities of tasting its sweets; although it might be found that our seats of learning would be more respected were the advantages of knowledge more frequently made evident to the students, by other means than adventitious prizes, and the pecuniary endowments of scholarships and fellowships. But with respect to the education of the people the case is widely different; facts such as those to which we have alluded may, perhaps, be learned sooner or later, but their acquisition must be prejudicial, instead of conducive to the cause of systematic education, if they are acquired in consequence, not of attendance at, but of absence from school. "Regular attendance" and book learning are everywhere fighting a battle, and hitherto with little real success, against casual attendance and out-of-doors experience; it would be well were the former not only to be better armed, but armed with weapons taken from the latter. Nor would it be found that sacred truths

would be heard with less reverence, or received with less faith from lips accustomed to impart conclusive evidence, that all truth is great, and that all knowledge is power.

Nature provides liberally for the young; for the young plant, albumen; for the young animal, milk; for the young mind, pleasant novelties: if we desire to cultivate and to disseminate knowledge, we must apply mental means to mental conditions, with the same care with which, in order to grow and propagate plants and animals, we apply physical means to physical conditions. Working and studying are not processes that can ever be carried on simultaneously in after life with real success. The great advantage which an untaught mind of native vigour possesses, in approaching subjects that have been treated erroneously, may occasionally give to an uneducated observer the faculty of discerning faults, and the opportunity of introducing startling improvements; but however beneficial a change of employment may be found to be, for the purposes of recreation and

amusement, the student will never be a hearty labourer, nor the labourer a hearty student, because in each case nervous energy has already been partially exhausted. With respect to the whole of this important subject, it must be again repeated, that it is only by the early cultivation of youthful minds, under the guidance of the principles of human nature, that our production of moral and intellectual wealth can be made to accord with our production of material wealth. If national predilections forbid us to apply this branch of learning to the work of education, we must be content to exhibit that strange contrast which all Europe beholds with astonishment, between the results of the mechanical and chemical processes that are employed in our agriculture, our manufactures, our commerce, and the results of the processes by which we attempt to educe and to organise the mental capabilities of our people, and to make them available for the service of the country.

CHAP. X.

CONCLUSION.

THE times, of which we have been considering the social features, are our own; the legislative measures are principally the work of our hands; the daily practices are around and about each of us; their consequences cannot be dismissed from the memory as if portrayed in the annals of past generations, or represented in the images of romance, but exist, and will continue to exist, haunting our paths, and obstructing our progress, until earnest minds and ready hands be applied to remove them. To erase these evils from among our social aspects,—to mend in this respect the manners of our age,—is an object which would undoubtedly be feasible, were philosophical truth to be taken up in a free and bold spirit, diffused in our con-

versation, practised in our daily economy, and supported by our votes and influence; this object must therefore be numbered among the things that are done, or that are left undone, through the use or through the neglect of talents, for the employment of which we are responsible. A want of one quality alone is likely to retard or to prevent the accomplishment of this purpose,—a want of moral courage; courage to face public opinion; courage in the learned to face the taunts and ridicule of the majority of the learned and of their organs; courage in the rich to rebut the imputation of selfishness, little-mindedness, avarice; courage in the poor to bear the charge of singularity, meanness; courage in all classes to risk the loss of that which was the scorn of the great men of antiquity, but which is the idol of our days,—the loss of popularity. If, from the dread of a wounded sensibility, we are willing to allow the miseries caused by our vicious system of Political-economy to continue—to be contented when we

witness panics and convulsions, strikes and lock-outs—to persuade ourselves that these are the normal and necessary incidents of good government,—and to be satisfied when we find ourselves the contemporaries, the fellow-citizens, the near neighbours of the principal actors in such scenes as "The silk weaver's home," * "The home of the dock labourer," "The needlewomen's home," "The sweaters' homes," "The lumper's home," "The homes of the people in Jacob's Island,"—we have our reward. If not, if we choose the better part, the way is open; no privileges of sex, talent, or fortune are requisite to qualify those who wish to join in the good work, but each, according to his or her several ability, may lead or join the Crusade against the lethargic doctrines of State policy, and the noxious ordering of private expenditure, which have their rise in the tenets of Political-economy that are at present accepted amongst us.

* *Meliora*, p. 264.

In dealing practically with this subject, it will probably be felt that the first difficulty is to know how to dispose of the so-called definitions and laws, or, to name them aright, the ideal abstractions of our existing science. The fact cannot be overlooked that a number of imaginary principles, relating to a subject of the highest importance, have been authoritatively announced, have found their way into our language and literature, and have struck root among our most cherished elements of philosophy. It is true that the number of votaries who have undertaken to expound these mysterious tenets is very small. They who are acquainted with our Universities know best how limited a circle there profess to be initiated in these dogmas. All who read our debates know how seldom these oracles are there appealed to. But still we succumb to their dread influence, in framing our laws, and in regulating our daily practices, the more readily, perhaps, because it is so little understood, the more hopelessly, because it is derived from a great

number and variety of principles, amongst which, when we seek the truth, it evades our grasp and eludes our understanding, like those religious creeds that find safety, not in their strength, but in their flexibility and lubricity.

What, then, are we to do with these dark powers, these mysterious rulers of nature, when we would occupy the province of action in which they are believed to be omnipotent? It was a sensible practice of the ancient Romans, when they annexed a new province to the empire, and desired to gain the affections of its inhabitants, to admit the superstitions of the country to a place in their Pantheon. Cannot we introduce some of the *vital principles* of modern Political-economy to a place among the deified abstractions of ancient philosophy? They have done good service in their time; they have spared the trouble which would have been requisite for the investigation of very difficult laws of nature; they have accounted for many mysteries; they have gained for their votaries celebrity, and sometimes power. Let the re-

gions of mythology be opened to them, and let high Olympus be enlivened with their presence. "Raw materials" may be placed by the side of Chaos; Labour, productive and unproductive*, warring against, and consuming its offspring Capital, may sympathise with Saturn; Capital, fixed and circulating, may join the "back-flowing river" Oceanus; Value, the daughter of Labour, springing forth armed from a mysterious birth, may aspire to the society of Minerva; Demand † and Supply may find associates in Cupid and Psyche; Price, in all its pleasant variety of character, Real and Nominal, Natural and Market Price, may imitate

* An attribute apparently difficult to determine "Smith makes no scruple about admitting the just title of the workmen employed to repair a steam-engine to be enrolled in the productive class; and yet he would place a physician who had been instrumental in saving the life of Arkwright or Watt among those who are unproductive." — *Macculloch's Political Economy*, p. 587.

† A power partly mental or spiritual, and partly material. "Two things are necessary to constitute a demand: first, a wish for a commodity; secondly, an equivalent to give for it." — *James Mill's Political Economy*, p. 228.

the transformations of Proteus; the Laws of Profit, of Wages, of Rent, may follow Plutus, Vulcan, Ceres; — all the Principles, in short, of Economics of whatever denomination, may, perhaps, find a place among the Powers of Heathenism, and when thus inaugurated may become the subjects of mythic dramas, or the originals of pictures and statues, and may thus eventually afford to our descendants an agreeable means of commenting on the methods by which we in our day attempt to account for natural occurrences. Whether, however, through these, or through any other means, it is only prudent to conciliate, in the first instance, the sympathies of all who venerate these so-called Laws, in order that we may be suffered to make use of our natural reason, whilst investigating the important problems, and administering to the sad necessities of our economic condition.

The methods which, when the ground has been thus cleared, we may adopt in order to rear a better system, or to set the example of

a better practice, are evidently as many and as different as are our means, our occupations, and our abilities. In the preceding pages a variety of topics has been presented to the reader, notwithstanding the risk of sometimes offending by a dry exposition of abstract principles, and at other times of incurring ridicule by enlarging obtrusively on familiar customs and observances, because such a mode of treating the subject has seemed to be the best calculated to effect a reformation of our economic creed. Every one, probably, who has had occasion to listen to studied discourses, has sometimes found that various circumstances have incidentally occurred to his mind, insignificant perhaps in themselves, but producing, when combined together, a greater effect on his opinions than the wearisome array of logical expositions and rhetorical arguments. It is hoped that such has been the effect of our observations, that they have been found rather suggestive than conclusive, and that, principally from the consideration of circumstances already within the reader's know-

ledge, a general impression has been produced that all is not as it should be, in the notions which we at present commonly entertain respecting Political-economy. If this be so, the modes of relief applicable to the cure of these evils will not be limited to those facts from which our arguments have been adduced, but will be as many and as various as the facts that are within the knowledge, and the means that are within the grasp, of every humane and patriotic inquirer.

As a preliminary, however, to the formation of more correct opinions, and the performance of more beneficial actions, in connection with this subject, it is essential that we all take up a right position, that we quit mentally our places within the sphere of the community, losing sight of each separate individual trade, profession, or interest of whatever denomination, and grasping in one comprehensive view the great object — our national prosperity. If we would advance the interest of the whole, we must, anomalous as it may appear, disregard the sepa-

rate interest of each of its parts. The old fable of the belly and the members has often been cited, to show the folly of neglecting any branch of an organised community; the same similitude might, with a very slight change of circumstances, be applied to show the folly of fostering any single branch independently of the others. It is only by placing ourselves in the right position for observing the well-being of a nation that this can be clearly seen, and this position we have accordingly attempted to exemplify by the supposed case of a patriarchal economist, by whom the production, the consumption, and the distribution of wealth by a whole community would be seen in one point of view, and by whom the wants of the community would be regarded in the same just and loving spirit in which we are taught to regard the wants of domestic life by the dictates of natural affection.

There is nothing, it will be observed, in this necessity for considering the whole body of the community, instead of an isolated fraction of it,

that renders more difficult the exercise of sound judgment, or the indulgence of humane feeling, in administering to any part of our public taxation or our private expenditure. In little matters, as well as in great matters, the right position, if not at first, at least after a short time, is commonly the *easiest*, as well as the most commanding. When we are removed mentally, as when we are removed bodily, to a distance from the object which we contemplate, it is often found not only that we have a complete view, but also that distance lends enchantment to it. Thus, when we are prompted to make, or to join in making, a wasteful display for the benefit of a certain class of shopkeepers, to purchase highly wrought and elaborated goods for the encouragement of a certain branch of manufactures, to keep large establishments for the employment of numerous domestics, or in a thousand other ways to foster by means of expenditure isolated branches of the industrial community, it is not more difficult, whilst, on the other hand, it confers a

more conscious sense of extended power, of generous patriotism, of liberal philanthropy, to look at the whole than to look at some of its parts. We can then clearly discern that it never can be useful to waste, to consume, or to procure the application of human labour to objects which produce no proportionate degree of utility or satisfaction. We can perceive that all who are maintained, under whatever pretext, without helping to produce the necessaries of life, must be fed, and housed, and apparelled by the labour of others who produce these commodities, and that the larger the number of the former, the harder must be the work and the more wretched the remuneration of the latter. We can rise up superior to the short-sighted charity of those who, while wasting our common stock, misapplying active labour, or keeping labour which might be active in inactivity, through their expenditure of the bulk of their fortunes, claim our applause if they employ the remainder in taking again from the common stock, to give to those whom they have so

largely contributed to render helpless and inoperative, to the ragged child of overworked and brutalised parents, to the female castaway, or to the victim of sickness and premature age. When we stand on a height above the vortex of popular errors, the cries of contending interests, and the claims of personal consideration, we may easily see that, whilst in order to win the respect and the obedience of frail humanity, it is politic to decorate executive, legislative, magisterial, or whatever other authority is rightly placed over the people, for those who have wealth without power to make rival exhibitions of costly display, is to array themselves in borrowed plumes, that derogate from the privilege of those to whom distinction is due, and to accomplish this purpose by means which cruelly aggravate our rural poverty, and our urban destitution.

It must be admitted, however, that peculiar danger is incurred by those whose object it is rather to indulge in philosophical speculation, or to form theories of legislation, than to regulate

their private conduct, or to influence that of others, when they take up a position that segregates them from the ties of individual feeling, and from the claims of personal and party interest. Removed from the promptings of these natural instincts, they must trust to the guidance of pure reason; if this serve them truly, they will be led by the highest authority; if otherwise, they will be without a guide. It is proved by experience that no greater temptation can be offered to the philosophic inquirer than the temptation of fancying that he sees, and of believing that he may venture to announce, the existence of a law of nature hitherto unknown; no fancied discovery gives greater pleasure, no imaginary possession is surrendered with more reluctance. The whole history of philosophy discloses a series of premature attempts on the part of its votaries to persuade, and sometime to enforce, a belief in such laws. In Political-economy the "law of supply and demand," and the "law of population," may be instanced as specimens of so-

called laws, which, instead of being treated as mere tendencies, and cautiously pointed out as indefinite approximations to truth, have been announced with all the pomp and circumstance, and acted on with all the confidence, which rightly belongs to proved laws of nature.*

It has commonly happened that when principles such as these have been applied to practice, and the practice has been found to do more harm than good, the practitioners have exclaimed, in obedience to the promptings of natural disappointment, "*laissez-faire* — the matter clearly passes the bounds of human rea-

* I believe that the theories of Malthus and Ricardo, which have for some time reigned paramount in the English School of Political-economy, have not generally found acceptance in the United States. There is an obvious explanation of this circumstance, which I am inclined to regard as the true one — the theories in question are not found to square with the facts presented by the new world. . . . . This circumstance in itself appears to me to afford a strong presumption against their truth; for the laws of Political-economy, properly so called, must be of universal application."—*Population and Capital. Preface. Rickards.*

son — the dictates of the most profound truth show that we can only do harm by interfering with the provisions of nature — let us do nothing, and leave things alone." It has rarely occurred to such hasty lovers of philosophy to reflect, that there may be truths more profound than any of those which they have discovered. When the Hindoo abandons a sick parent on the banks of the Ganges, or a Chinese Emperor counsels his subjects to have nothing to do with any form of religion, each doubtless believes that he is a wise advocate of do-nothingism, but we know how injuriously the conditions of physical and of spiritual welfare are thus treated. We know also in what a position Political-economists place us, when they assume for a garb this elaborate *négligé*, and pronounce *otium cum dignitate* to be consistent with, or necessary for, the government of a mighty nation? They tell us, and tell us truly, that there are immutable laws of nature which govern the subject-matter of Political-economy. It is impossible to glance at the returns ex-

hibited in statistical tables under the different heads of Consumption, Importation, Exportation, Post Office, Railways, and the like, without feeling convinced, that the recurrence of the phenomena recorded is governed by fixed principles, producing movements which, when viewed on a large scale, are seen to be regular and uniform. We must therefore believe in the existence of fixed natural laws of Political-economy. Again, they tell us, and tell us truly, that, if we would aspire to make use of these general principles, we must frame general rules, whether for the guidance of imperial legislation or of private conduct, without regard to isolated cases of hardship, which, through the imperfection of all human art, must and will occur. But when they have thus induced us to abstain from exercising our natural powers of judgment, and have secured our acquiescence in the application of some general rules, of what character are the rules which they call on us to follow, and to what a position do these lead us? Instead of clear

and exact truths they give us mere flickering shadows of truth, and leave us almost in darkness, or they deliberately turn us adrift on an ocean without chart or compass, and say, "leave things alone — you are afloat on a running stream, which, without any care on your part, will surely and steadily carry you on in the right direction — you have the law of population, or the law of supply and demand for your guide* — what more can you require for the care of your dearest interests, or as a guarantee for the health, the happiness, the very existence of your poor and dependant population?

This is the danger which the lover of philosophical theory has to encounter when he takes up a position at a distance from the personal feelings and instincts of human nature — the danger of being hurried on by hasty generalisation, of

* *Quarterly Review*, 1855, p. 413. *The Charities and the Poor of London.* "But what has taken place is in exact conformity with the laws which regulate supply and demand."

being misled by laws existing only in the imagination, and not based on the evidence of the senses. As the unscientific Political-economist incurs the risk of not separating himself sufficiently from the objects of every-day life to be enabled to look at the community as a whole, the scientific Political-economist incurs the opposite danger, of forgetting human nature itself in his zeal for the propagation of abstract Laws. Between these, however, the Scylla and Charybdis of our subject, there is room enough for all of us to take up our appointed stations. The unscientific Political-economist will find little difficulty in following proper guidance whenever it shall be offered, but for those who profess to lead there is but one means of success — a conviction, that if "the proper study of mankind is man," most emphatically is it the proper study of all who in any way assume to influence the physical welfare of mankind, and that such must consent to seek for, if they have not yet acquired, a knowledge of those branches of philosophy which explain

the mysteries of man's mind and body — the wants and wishes, the senses and feelings, the thoughts and emotions of his invisible nature, and that visible machinery of receptacles and organs with which they are so intimately con nected.

When a right position has been occupied by Political-economists, and the delusions which naturally beset those who occupy the highest station have been foreseen and provided against, there can be little doubt that each of us will be enabled, in our proper spheres, to act with confidence and with vigour, and to ameliorate in some degree the social condition of England. Should a change in the manners and habits of our upper and middle classes be found impracticable, or should the change not be found sufficiently instrumental in raising the condition of our lowest classes, the aid of a higher power might be required, and legal measures might have to be applied with a cautious hand, and with a careful regard for the wants and the weaknesses of our social condition. It is

obvious, however, that nothing would, in such a case, tend more to defeat the object of legislation, than any measure at all approaching to the character of a sumptuary law. Laws prohibiting practices which they cannot prevent only furnish them with the means of triumph; like defeated conspiracies, such laws even serve to inspire with new confidence those against whom they are directed. Were falsehood ever to be prohibited by law, there can be little doubt that the moral power by which it is now restrained would be in a great measure abrogated; whilst the legal penalty, being easily evaded, would infuse into that "mixture" which, as Bacon tells us, "doth ever add pleasure," the stimulating zest of a victory over a superior and obtrusive power. There can be little doubt that wasteful practices formerly received a stimulus, both in this and other countries, from the circumstance that laws which must ever be inoperative were directed against them.

It is not, therefore, the force of prohibition, but rather the winning influences of taxation

that would, in this case, be employed, and these would be directed by a wish, not to satisfy the claims of an imaginary equality, still less to gratify the possessors of a certain kind of property, or the directors of certain branches of industry, but to aid or to train those who cannot change their nature, and who by nature require to be aided or to be trained; as, for example, to aid women, who cannot cease to be women, but who, if exposed to competition with men, must ever be unfittingly occupied, and scantily remunerated, or to train children who require to be trained, but who, if suffered to receive wages, must ever be prematurely set to labour. Should it be found that measures of this character would not suffice, but that the languor everywhere perceptible in the functions of Distribution, coupled with a morbid and misdirected activity in the functions of Production, must receive more active treatment, it needs but little foresight to discern that foremost among the measures for ameliorating the condition of England would stand measures affect-

ing the integrity of testamentary and hereditary successions.

But it may be hoped that, without any further change in our laws * than the application of financial measures to specific defects in our social organisation, the opinions of the wealthy respecting the proper employment of wealth will eventually be so modified as to effect, though indirectly, a vital change in the condition of the lowest ranks of our working classes. In our days customs are more powerful than laws, example has more followers than precept. Were it to be taught by high example, and to become an admitted axiom, that to accumulate is more patriotic than to consume, or, in other words, that to save is more philanthropic than

* It is painful to observe that the enormous influence of our taxation, under its latest adjustment, whilst it *discourages* accumulation, *encourages* expenditure, and, most of all, expenditure on unproductive labour and deleterious objects; witness the imposition of a heavy Property tax, with a diminution of taxes on male servants and carriages, and of duties on wines, ardent spirits, and playing cards.

to spend, an ever increasing amount of capital would flow into new channels of reproductive industry, and a constantly multiplying stock would be provided of the things most necessary for the maintenance and the employment of the labouring poor — a stock as much larger than the aggregate funds of all our Charities, as the sums which are usually spent on superfluities are larger than the sums which are usually devoted to private benevolence. It is impossible to read the signs of the times without observing that public opinion, the instinctive forerunner and herald of demonstrative knowledge, is gradually bending the thoughts and habits of the affluent in this direction. It is, now, not uncommon to hear the vendors of luxuries lament that there is at the present day a perfect mania for economy; if this be so, the cause of their complaint is, undoubtedly, in a great degree owing to the circumstance, that the majority of thinking minds find it impossible to reconcile the extensive application of labour to the production of objects of luxury, with the

almost destitute condition of large masses of population. If this natural feeling, instead of being, as at present, confounded by the pressing claims of near and conflicting interests, should be led by knowledge to occupy that high position whence "the general good" can be seen in one point of view; and still more, if, instead of being opposed and rebuked, it should be encouraged and supported by the precepts of those who speak with authority on the subject of Political-economy, our cities would doubtless present an altered appearance; there would indeed be fewer glaring shops, fewer preposterous articles of dress, fewer superfluities of all kinds, with the absence, perhaps, of some objects which would deserve regret, were it not that mankind must live by labour, and that our labour is all too little for our wants; but there would also be an absence of crowded garrets and cellars, of cruelly protracted work, of miserably insufficient pay, and of all that constitutes the worst features in the social condition of England.

Among the less extensive, but still exceedingly important consequences, that arise from the manner in which we spend, when we spend money, and from the manner in which we order, when we give orders, much improvement would evidently ensue from a rightly placed and rightly timed scrutiny of our actions, in defiance of the current fallacy, that whatever is done must be equally beneficial to the community. Additional labour in our country is an evil. There may be countries in which it would be politic to incite an indolent population to active industry, but that is not the case here. In our England of the nineteenth century all who live by labour are obliged, in order to live, to make quite as much exertion as is consistent with physical health, timely recreation, and moral culture, — in most cases very much more. If we purchase elaborated commodities, or order a bootless application of labour, without reference to remote consequences, we only add to the weight already supported by an over-burdened population. If, whilst obeying the dictates of a

false charity, we insensibly acquire a taste for barbaric pomp, and take pride, not in showing by what simple means an accurate knowledge of the principles of art enables us to produce impressions of the sublime and the beautiful, but in piling up commodities suggestive of nothing but misguided toil, our conduct serves not only to aggravate labour, but to injure art. Such as the patron is, such will the artist be; where taste is wanting in the former, success will rarely attend the efforts of the latter. If objects, remarkable only because their manufacture requires much labour, were to be banished from our dwellings, the expediency of supplying their place with objects remarkable for beauty of form and for harmony of colour would soon become apparent; the artificers who should be most successful in producing such objects would receive high remuneration; every spark of native artistic talent would be fanned into a flame, and artistic works worthy of the genius which our countrymen undoubtedly possess would be no longer wanting in the English

department of Exhibitions of Industry. Should purchasers, thus made duly cognizant of the real interests of the community, add to a care for the right direction of labour an intelligent regard for the welfare of those who labour, a thoughtfulness respecting the time at which they give orders, and the time within which they require the orders to be executed; respecting the character of those to whom the order is given, and by whom it is to be communicated to the hands which are to execute it; respecting the place in which the work is to be done, the remuneration which is to be received, and the character of the Clubs, Institutes, Associations, or other forms of social union that are open to the workman, such kindly regard would not meet with that disappointment which is almost inevitable when, as now, it is guided by mistaken tenets of Political-economy.

Improvements, of much importance to the interests of the working classes, would doubtless be effected in the ordering of our amusements and our entertainments, were

their consequences to be made distinctly visible by the light of unsophisticated knowledge. Every one knows for how many months the cost of a fashionable *réunion*, as at present conducted in this country, would maintain a poor family at the present rate of wages, but the resolutions which would otherwise flow from such considerations in every humane mind are very generally swayed by the authorised opinion, that it does good — more good than harm — to support, to encourage, to multiply, the producers and the vendors of elaborated luxuries. Were this fallacy to be exposed in all its hideous deformity, self-indulgence and sensuality would at least be deprived of their most potent ally, and practices which are now deemed a mark of consideration, or are advertised as worthy of public approbation, would be discontinued, or would hide their heads in secrecy and silence.

It is not to be denied that state purposes may require costly sacrifices at feasts and festivals, but this necessity cannot render such

practices laudable, when no such purposes are aimed at. It is not to be denied that the owners of much wealth ought to have some means of showing the magnitude of their property, or wealth may cease to be an object of ambition; but can no better means be found to accomplish this purpose than to waste wantonly, amidst ignorant applause, the labour of an over-worked and ill-provided people? Might not a proper exercise of influence and power* receive as much applause as ostentatious expenditure, were public opinion to be directed to the true objects of Political-economy? Amusement has been said to be like a porter's knot, easing the burden, when required, but being itself a burden, when it is not required. Were they

* There are innumerable country districts devoid of instruction because the inhabitants are not *quite able* to support a school. In such cases 5*l.* a year, applied to provide a room and fire, will generally serve to strike the balance, and to supply a circuit of four miles' diameter with education, and with education chiefly maintained by the resources of those for whose benefit it is conferred.

who now needlessly bear this burden to devote the portion of their wealth that is employed in supporting it, to the active duties of patronage, and of citizenship, an important influence over the fortunes of the state might be exercised by them, whilst they might enjoy the charms of a society not limited, as at present, to the paucity of congenial spirits that can be selected among the wealthy, but extended to all those who now shrink from incurring a debt of expensive obligation, which they cannot conscientiously hope to repay.

It is no Utopian dream which leads us to imagine, that, if the incalculable power of machinery, and the steady light of new discovery, which are now so largely devoted to satisfy the demands of our home-market for change and fashion, novelty and artifice, decoration and display, were to be applied mainly to the production of the natural requirements and solaces of human life, the increase of their products might do more than keep pace with the wants of our increasing population,—that machinery

might eventually become in a great degree a substitute for labour,—and that a time might at length arrive, execrable* according to the "Labour-value" tenets of our Political-economists, but blessed in the opinion of every unprejudicial politician, when a reasonable time set apart for work would be sufficient to supply the labourer with plenty of all things, when spare hours would be afforded for other purposes of life, and the operative would have the opportunity of becoming something more than *a working man.* If, through changes of our customs and our laws, such an epoch should ever arrive, it would become more and

* "The imaginary community of Utopians has been represented by Sir T. More to have found 'their time set off for labour more than sufficient for supplying them with plenty of all things;' but we are at liberty to suppose them to have had very few wants, and most assuredly an existing community, if there were any so circumstanced, would, as a state, be but little removed above actual barbarism."—*Tests of a Thriving Population, by Dr. Twiss, Oxford Professor of Political-economy.*

more evident that, to fill up the intervals of recreation and repose, means must, in all cases, be provided for civilised man, in conformity with the epoch of his civilisation. Athletic exercises, philosophical discussions, the rehearsal of poetic compositions, graced the leisure of classic Greece, as mob politics, and compulsory combats of prisoners and of wild beasts, were the pastimes of degraded Rome. Should England ever again have time and opportunity to become not merry England, but happy throughout all her homes, comfortable, contented, cheerful England, our age, our climate, and our character would alike point to the necessity, not merely of providing for the people an acquaintance with books, in itself only the means of knowledge, but of so training the intelligence of the masses that it might derive nourishment from the external objects with which it should chance to come in contact, — that the senses, rich with associations, might derive more than native pleasure from a contemplation

of the vegetable world, and the passing crowd of animal existences, from the music, the pictures, and the statues displayed in Palaces of Art, and from the relics of antiquity exhibited in Museums; that the intellect might survey the force and velocity of machinery, the changes of form and colour produced by chemistry, the corporeal and incorporeal consequences of mental energy, with reason and with understanding; and that the moral feelings might derive a tutored satisfaction from practices of humanity and kindness, and from permitted exercises of devotion.

Such, expressed in the most general terms, are the changes that might be expected to occur in our social condition were Political-economy, freed from the delusive influences of dogmatic assertion and scholastic sophistry, to be practised by the unlearned according to the dictates and suggestions of instinctive common-sense, and by the learned according to the most advanced knowledge of the principles and

the conditions of human nature. To the professed Statesman his course is pointed out by urgent duty, and by him it will doubtless be eventually pursued with caution and with vigour; but in our age and country, the course of Statesmen is, comparatively, of little consequence, except so far as it influences and is supported by public opinion. There are many whose attention is worthily engrossed by the duties of high position; many to whom the calls of family and of kindred leave no time to think of claims less near and less dear; but there are yet very many who have time and opportunity to regard the lamentable condition of some sections of our population, who feel that charity, whether public or private, can do little, very little, to relieve misery apparently constituted by our laws and customs, and who observe, perhaps indistinctly, that if a permanent solace is to be applied by the hands of the benevolent, it must be not by means of what they give, but through their influence on legislation, and through the

careful administration of their daily expenditure. To such these pages are addressed, in the conviction that this subject, even in these days of the power of knowledge, is one of the most important branches of secular inquiry that can engage the attention of the upper and middle classes of society.

THE END.

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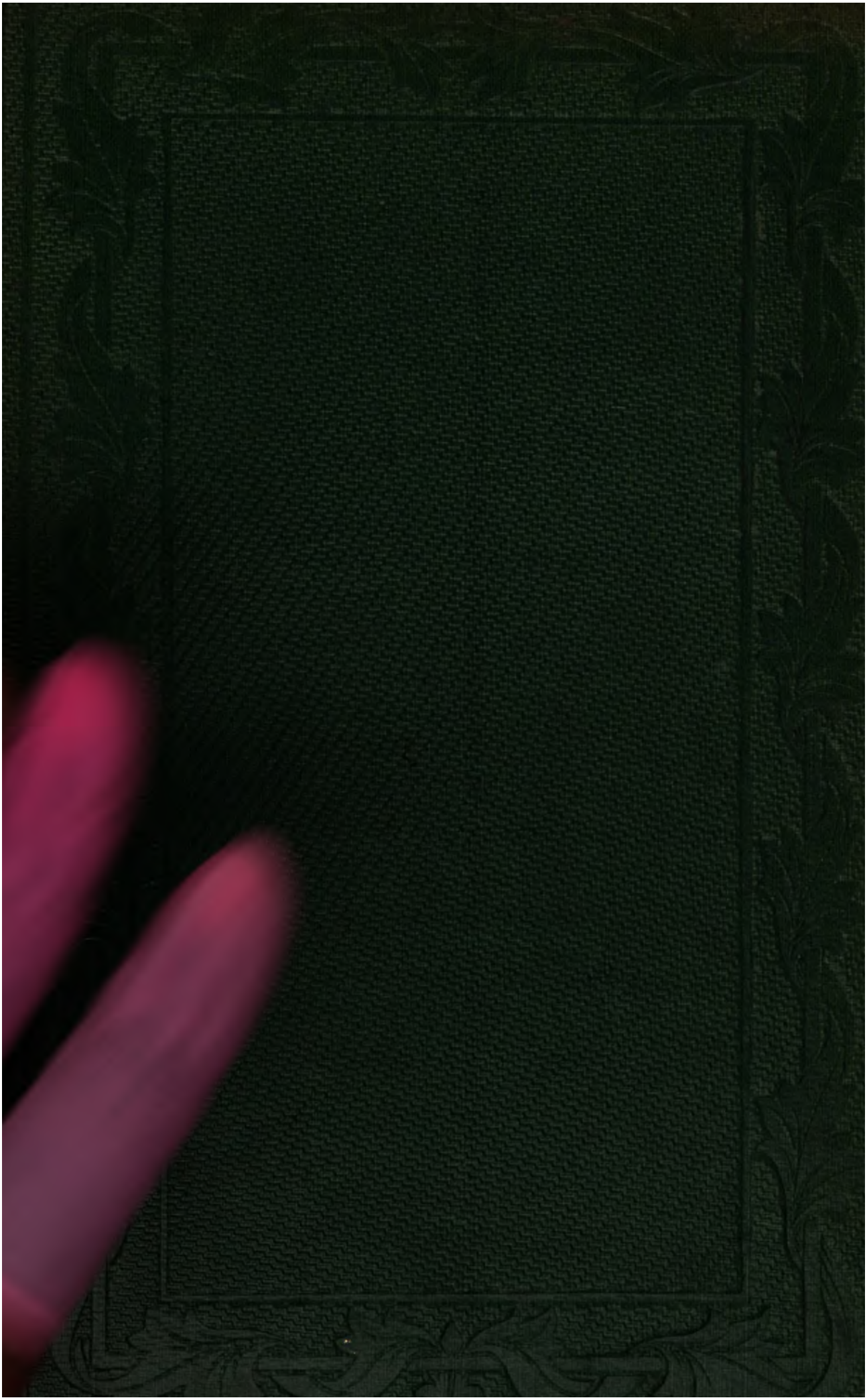
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