

REMARKS

ON

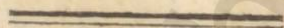
THE PRACTICABILITY

OF

MR. ROBERT OWEN'S PLAN

TO IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF

THE LOWER CLASSES.



“We can in no way assimilate ourselves so much with the benign disposition of the Creator of all, as by contributing to the health, comfort, and happiness of our fellow creatures.”—CICERO.



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Houses of the Oireachtas

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE substance of a portion of the following pages has already appeared in two periodical publications. The writer is conscious that much apology is due for the unconnected manner in which his humble speculations are submitted to the public. Nothing but the urgent importance of a highly interesting subject would have induced him to obtrude his opinions; and he trusts, from the testimonies adduced in support of them, they will not be considered as expressed with too much confidence, especially when it is observed that they have no pretension to originality.

Actuated by no other motive than the desire of accelerating the progress of truth, for

the purpose of relieving the misery that exists in society; should he be so fortunate as to excite attention to proposals calculated to raise the indigent without depressing any other class, his object will be fully attained.

TO
WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

SIR,

YOUR name is so intimately associated with every subject involving the welfare of mankind, that any apology for this address might be construed into a doubt of your sincerity: but besides the zealous interest which you are known to exert in benevolent objects, there is another reason which induces me to appeal to you upon the present occasion. If I mistake not, you always consider political measures abstractedly from the individuals with whom they originate; and although those who are accustomed to decide from preconceived opinions cannot understand the conscientious deliberations of a mind sincerely desirous of distinguishing truth from prejudice, yet a retrospect of your parliamentary conduct will not fail to convince impartial observers of the consistency of your intentions. Your views regarding our foreign relations have been misunder-

stood, when they were held subordinate to those higher considerations which, as they added to our moral character, contributed to the real strength and to the dignity and glory of the empire. You have shown that "Christianity, in its regards, steps beyond the narrow bound of national advantage in quest of universal good. It does not encourage particular patriotism in opposition to general benignity; or prompt us to love our country at the expense of our integrity; or allow us to indulge our passions to the detriment of thousands. It looks upon all the human race as children of the same father, and wishes them equal blessings: in ordering us to do good, to love our brethren, to forgive injuries, and to study peace, it quite annihilates the disposition for martial glory, and utterly debases the pomp of war*." Many years have passed away since you first gave to the world a "Treatise on Practical Christianity," and you have exhibited in the long career of your public life a splendid illustration of its principles.

Impressed with these sentiments of your candour, I do not apprehend that you will reject some of the

* Bishop Watson's Sermon before the University of Cambridge.

opinions expressed in the following pages, merely because they have been before advanced in union with doctrines dangerous to society, or advocated by men whose subsequent conduct has proved they were actuated by unworthy motives. The extraordinary fact, that at this period of the world the country distinguished above all others for its beneficence, where the greatest exertions have been made by individuals and societies to relieve distress, and to promote moral and religious improvement, should present a prospect of growing demoralization, affords a powerful argument in favour of the supposition that there must be some radical defect in our present system. This is still further confirmed by the discordancy of opinion that has prevailed among the numerous and respectable authors who have written on the subject of the poor laws, and the want of confidence with which each remedy is suggested; for it is surely fair to presume, that if the true cause of the evil had been assigned, there would no longer be any doubt as to the nature of the antidote. I have made some extracts from an author* whom, in your speech upon the "Religious

* Dugald Stuart.

instruction of the natives of British India," you have characterized as "one of our greatest philosophers and most able writers:" and I have no hesitation in saying that his observations on the subject of education, and upon the influence of political circumstances in the formation of character, and in the prevention of crime, will be found in unison with the principles I have attempted to vindicate.

I am, with great respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

PHILANTHROPOS.

REMARKS.

“As a contrast to the glare of wealth and the splendour of opulence, we have the mortification to see our dungeons filled with criminals, our gaols with debtors, our poor-houses with wretched objects of all descriptions, and our streets and villages with scenes of human misery, while the dreary dwellings of the indigent exhibit to the view of those who will condescend to visit them, a still more aggravated picture of distresses and sufferings, which are never witnessed without shocking the feelings of humanity.

“The existence of such evils, ascertained by the most irrefragable evidence, should beget an anxiety and solicitude to ascertain the causes, lest, ‘like the lofty tree, proudly spreading its extended branches, displaying its luxuriant foliage, while a canker is working deeply at the root; we should be rising only to fall a more splendid picture of departed greatness.’”

COLQUHOUN on Indigence, page 184.

OF the various subjects that have recently occupied the public mind, there is not one which in every point of view presents itself with stronger claims to our attention than the condition of suffering humanity; nor is there a question which appears more effectually to have allayed the animosity of party feeling, and to have united all hearts in the prosecution of inquiries which, with whatever difficulties they have been hitherto attended, are not likely to terminate without some beneficial result. Those who a few years since were unwilling to investigate

the state of the poor, from an apprehension of rendering them more sensible of their grievances, or from despair of affording any permanent relief, are now the most forward in their endeavours to ameliorate their condition; convinced that unless some speedy correction of our political disorder is discovered, the destitute, as well as those who are supported in idleness, may be led astray by the sophistry of designing men. If the hardships of the poor are not real, the representation of them will have very little effect in occasioning dissatisfaction; but if they do undergo these sufferings, they are more likely to bear them patiently when they observe attempts are making to remove them. No certain advance can be made towards the discovery of any lasting remedy of our evils, until we arrive at an accurate knowledge of their source. As the annual increase of crimes commenced many years before the termination of the war, they cannot be wholly attributed to that event, although there can be no doubt it aggravated the evil*; and there are now so few among the poor who cannot read and write, that the great increase can scarcely be ascribed to defective education. There are many who have been apprehensive that to give the lower classes education would render them discontented with their sphere in life. Their present character lends an apparent confirmation to this opinion; and the

* See Appendix, A.

advocates of Dr. Bell's and the Lancasterian System are sometimes at a loss to refute their objections. That education alone will prove ineffectual in the suppression of immorality, we may conclude from the slender influence it maintains over many in the middling and higher orders of society, in proportion as they are exposed to the temptations incident to their respective stations. If we educate the poor, and yet suffer their circumstances to deteriorate, it seems to be a consequence that more vice prevails than at a period when their minds were less informed but the comforts of life were more within their reach. Can it be supposed that the peasant, with his family about him, would less enjoy his cottage and little garden, after he had been taught the blessings of religion? On the contrary, would not all his domestic pleasures be heightened by the most interesting associations, and new sources of enjoyment opened to his mind, in the rural scenery of his native country*? But if we teach him to estimate more highly these advantages, and then deprive him of the means of rendering his cottage habitable, or of obtaining for himself and his children a scanty and miserable subsistence, perhaps compelling him at last to depend upon parochial relief,—better had he remained in ignorance, than that his feelings should be refined

* The Scotch peasantry afford a distinguished instance of the power of education in improving local attachments.

only to endure his degradation with more acute sensibility. But if some are disposed to maintain, that as the reluctance of the poor to be supported by the parish is considerably diminished, the process of instruction cannot have been adopted long enough for adults to have experienced its benefits, I suspect they will soon discover that although religious education is of the highest importance, and of indispensable necessity, reliance must not be exclusively placed upon it for the revival of a more independent conduct.

Privation being the more general and immediate incitement to vice among the lower classes, it must be the object of our endeavours to ascertain the causes reducing them to that state. Without dwelling upon the variety of obvious causes,—such as ill-conduct, old age, decrepitude, misfortune, &c.—always operating in a more or less degree to deprive some part of the community of the common necessities of life, we will proceed direct to one which has been many years almost imperceptible in its progress, but which recent circumstances have now placed in a point of view too conspicuous to be any longer misunderstood,—depreciation in the value of manual labour.

The introduction of machinery into almost every branch of manufactures* and in agriculture, but

* See Appendix, B.

more particularly in the former, has become so extensive, that a very large proportion of the lower classes are thrown out of employment. But not only have these inventions widely operated as a substitute for the labour of the poor; they have also entered into unequal competition with those who are employed, obliging them to overwork themselves, to the great injury of their health; and so far reduced the value of their services, as to leave them wages totally inadequate to their decent support. "Labour," says Adam Smith, "may be said to have a real and a nominal price. Its real price may be said to consist in the quantity of the necessaries and the conveniences of life which are given for it;—its nominal price, in the quantity of money. The labourer is rich or poor, is well or ill rewarded, in proportion to the real not to the nominal price of his labour*." As one improvement in mechanism leads to many others, these discoveries, with all their consequences, be they good or bad, accumulate in a geometrical ratio†. The demand for manual labour will decrease in an accelerated degree, while the poor, from the encouragement held out to marry by our Poor Laws, and the employment of children in our manufacto-

* Wealth of Nations, vol. i. page 51.

† This explains why the Custom House Returns are increasing without any sensible improvement in the condition of the lower classes,—the articles exported having been produced chiefly by machinery.

ries, will multiply with the advance of population; their numbers will also be increased, by many who are now elevated a few degrees above them gradually sinking into pauperism. The small farmer has disappeared, and the smaller manufacturers are superseded by large capitalists, who alone can afford to purchase expensive machinery. In proportion to the augmentation of these productive powers, the consumption of the manufactured articles will decline; as the poor, from the low rate of wages, will have it still less in their power to become purchasers:—hence the decline of trade, and the falling into indigence of many engaged in its pursuits. “The whole consumption of the inferior ranks of people, or of those below the middling rank, it must be observed, is in every country much greater, not only in quantity but in value, than that of the middling and of those above the middling rank. The whole expense of the inferior is much greater than that of the superior ranks. In the first place, almost the whole capital of every country is annually distributed among the inferior ranks of people, as the wages of productive labour. Secondly, a great part of the revenue, arising from both the rent of land and the profits of stock, is annually distributed among the same ranks, in the wages and maintenance of menial servants and other unproductive labourers*.” It will be seen by

* Wealth of Nations, vol. iii. page 375.

the foregoing extract, how extensively the effects of a reduction in the value of labour are felt throughout society. Labour is all the poor man has to give in exchange for the comforts and necessities of life, of which he obtains less as his labour is depreciated ; and when it is altogether superseded, he is driven to want, contracts idle habits, and then we expect him to be able to resist the force of circumstances, although we daily witness the failure of more cultivated minds under similar temptations. If destitution, disease, crime, punishment, and sometimes death,—if wretchedness of every description appear to be the almost inevitable result of a state of things beyond the controul of the poor,—how much is their condition to be commiserated ! and how forcibly does this reflection call to remembrance the words of the excellent Boerhaave, who never saw a criminal dragged to execution without asking himself, “Who knows whether this man is not less criminal than me.”

Should it be urged, that the use of machinery having been carried to a comparatively limited extent in agriculture, the great increase of the poor-rates in counties chiefly devoted to husbandry cannot be accounted for on this principle ; we may observe, that whatever affects the price of labour in manufactures, must indirectly influence its value in agriculture. If the artisan is not sufficiently rewarded for his time, or is thrown out of work, he

seeks employment in the fields ; a greater competition for agricultural labour follows, and wages are reduced.

The rapidity with which every manufactured article is now supplied, soon overwhelms the market with superfluous quantities : the consequent depression in the prices not remunerating manufacturers for their expenses, many suspend their works until a comparative scarcity raises the market. All in possession of valuable machinery are then eager to avail themselves of the improved demand : the supply soon becomes superabundant, and wages are again reduced. To the distressing effects of this oscillation are our working classes exposed : alternately cheered by the prospect of better days, or borne down by disappointment, their liability to crime would be less, and their chance of amelioration more certain, under an unvarying depression : for if they were unacquainted with occasional comforts, they could better endure want and resist temptation ; and the efforts of the benevolent to improve their condition would not then be slackened by the delusive hope of reviving prosperity. It has been advanced, in refutation of the opinion that want of employment is one of the leading causes of crime, - that manufacturers, when in full work, find it difficult to procure hands. In answer to this we may observe that, during the period of a dull trade, the poor acquire idle habits, and perhaps are

led to the commission of some trifling offence ; this is of course followed by the loss of character, and then every prospect of a restoration to society is at an end.

I should have much more hesitation in presuming to offer an opinion at variance with authority so high as that of Dr. Adam Smith, if there was not great reason to suppose, that had he lived in our days he would have been induced to retract some of his conclusions. The advertisement prefixed by Mr. Playfair to the edition of his "Wealth of Nations," published in 1805, after enumerating many political occurrences which had transpired since 1775, (the year Dr. Smith first published his celebrated work,) adds : " Under these circumstances it is to be presumed that if Dr. Smith were still alive, he would have found ample ground for additions, and perhaps he might have been inclined to make some alterations." The following, I apprehend, will be found an illustration of this remark. "A certain quantity of materials," continues Dr. Adam Smith, "and the labour of a certain quantity of workmen, which had before been employed in supporting a more complex and expensive machinery, can afterwards be applied to augment the quantity of work, which that or any other machinery is useful only for performing. The undertaker of some great manufactory, who employs a thousand a-year in the maintenance of his

machinery, if he can reduce this expense to five hundred, will naturally employ the other five hundred in purchasing an additional quantity of materials, to be wrought up by an additional number of workmen. The quantity of that work, therefore, which his machinery was useful only for performing, will naturally be augmented, and with it all the advantage and conveniency which the society can derive from that work." This was certainly true up to the time when Dr. Smith wrote; and for many years subsequent, every improvement in machinery had produced the effect he describes: but the present bears no analogy to any former period; this immense power pervading every department of the manufacturing system, has left no employment for surplus capital and workmen, and has given rise to circumstances not contemplated by political economists of earlier days. That improvements in machinery are calculated to produce a greater abundance of the conveniences of life cannot be denied; but it is not equally clear that they are advantageous to every society,—that must depend upon the constitution of the society. According to our existing arrangements, it is an evil of the most alarming magnitude: but when a right direction shall be given to this present rival to human industry, it will be felt in its true character as an invaluable blessing. The question, however, we are considering is, what effect it is now producing. Wealth

is accumulated: but wealth with nations, as with individuals, unless properly applied, is often destructive of all that is truly valuable. While we have supernumerary operatives in our manufactures, every new discovery in mechanism presses more heavily upon them, for although it renders the manufactured article cheaper, it reduces the value of their time in a still greater degree. The whole of our manual labour is in direct competition with the accumulating power of this mechanical agency, but against which it has no chance of success.

If I have succeeded in proving that depreciation in the value of labour is the chief cause of the increase of crime, it will be necessary to consider,

First, Whether there is a probability that the value of labour will improve; or,

Secondly, Whether it is expedient to regulate the price of labour by legal enactments; or,

Thirdly, What must be the nature of the remedy.

Obvious as the cause of the decline in the value of labour must appear to men of commercial experience, it should seem extraordinary that it is not referred to by the Committee of the House of Commons, appointed for the revision of the Poor Laws: but upon looking over the examination of the witnesses, we do not find that it is once ascribed to the introduction of mechanism in our manu-

factures. This may be accounted for by supposing that their attention was called exclusively to the more immediate causes of distress in the years 1815 and 1816; which they justly attribute to the cessation of war, the surrender of many of our colonies, and to the commercial rivalship of other nations in open markets. The Report of the Committee being founded upon information derived from the witnesses, they do not appear to have searched for causes beyond the limits of the evidence before them. Some part of that evidence refers to the natural operation and mal-administration of the Poor Laws, and for these suitable remedies are suggested:—the further encouragement of Sunday schools, the appointment of a permanent overseer, and the promotion of saving banks, are well calculated to afford a partial alleviation to minor evils. But if the Committee have not directed their attention to the real cause of the decline in the value of labour, they have strikingly portrayed its serious and inevitable consequences. “But, independent of the pressure of any temporary or accidental circumstances, and making every allowance for an increased population, the rise in the price of provisions, and other necessities of life, and a misapplication of part of these funds,—it is apparent that both the number of paupers, and the amount of money levied by assessment, are progressively increasing; while the situation of the poor appears not to be in

a corresponding degree improved: And the Committee is of opinion, that whilst the existing Poor Laws, and the system under which they are administered remain unchanged, there does not exist any power of arresting the progress of this increase, till it shall no longer be found possible to augment the sums raised by assessment.

“For if the means could be found to distribute the burthen more equally, by rendering the interest of money, and the profits of the stock, liable to the assessment; these funds being also in themselves limited, must finally be absorbed, by the increasing and indefinite amount of the demand*.”

Three years have elapsed since the return of peace: the large stocks of manufactured goods on hand, at that time, had gone off before the sitting of the Committee in the early part of last year, as it was stated by several of the witnesses that the manufacturers were again at work: more than sufficient time has been allowed for the re-establishment of our commercial relations, and yet the poor-rates are but partially diminished. Should another war break out, it might, for a short period, re-animate our manufactures, and occasion an immediate advance in almost every article; but whether it would long uphold the value of labour may be doubted: many years before the termination of the last war the annual increase of crimes was ob-

* Report, p. 5.

served. If during a state of war, unparalleled in history for the resources it called into action, the demand for the products of labour aided by machinery was not sufficient to keep pace with the supply, we cannot expect much from hostilities upon a more confined scale, even if humanity would allow us to contemplate such a remedy.

If there is no prospect of any permanent improvement in the value of labour, from the probable course of events, we will proceed to examine a few authorities, as to the policy of legislative interference. Dr. Adam Smith observes: "Though anciently it was usual to rate wages, first by general laws extending over the whole kingdom, and afterwards by particular orders of justices of peace in every particular county, both these practices are gone entirely into disuse." "By the experience of above four hundred years," says Dr. Burn, "it seems time to lay aside all endeavours to bring under strict regulations what in its own nature seems incapable of minute limitation: for if all persons in the same kind of work were to receive equal wages, there would be no emulation, no room left for industry or ingenuity*."

"The wages of labour," says Mr. Colquhoun, "ought certainly to find their level in the natural course of things: and while it is one of those difficult subjects upon which it is scarcely possible to

* Wealth of Nations, vol. i. p. 226.

ground any legislative system, it is at the same time (since this class comprises nearly two thirds of the population) a matter of the utmost importance to discover a remedy for those fluctuations, arising from a variety of causes, which produce indigence not imputable to any vicious propensity or culpable conduct*.”

Mr. Pitt in his speech upon Mr. Whitbread's Labourers' Wages Bill, brought forward in 1796, introduced the following observation: “He had the satisfaction to hear the honorable gentleman acknowledge, that if the price of labour could be made to find its own level, it would be much more desirable than to assess it by arbitrary statute, which in the execution was liable to abuse on the one hand and inefficacy on the other. If the remedy succeeded according to the most sanguine expectations, it only established what would have been better effected by principle; and if it failed, on the one hand it might produce the severest oppression, and on the other, encourage the most profligate idleness and extravagance. Was it not better for the house then to consider the operation of general principles, and rely upon the effects of their unconfined exercise? Was it not wiser to reflect what remedy might be adopted, at once more general in its principles, and more comprehensive in its object, less exceptionable in its example, and less dangerous in its

* Colquhoun on Indigence, p. 14.

application? They should look to the instances where interference had shackled industry, and where the best intentions have often produced the most pernicious effects. It was indeed the most absurd bigotry in asserting the general principle, to exclude the exception: but trade, industry, and barter, would always find their own level, and be impeded by regulations which violated their natural operation, and deranged their proper effect*." Admitting that existing circumstances constitute an exception to the general rule, what reasonable expectation would there be of any lasting benefit to be derived from any legal enactments to regulate the price of labour? If the manufacturer was compelled to give advanced wages, unless the demand for his articles was equal to the supply, he would employ fewer hands: it is true that the few employed would consume more, but the number of paupers would be increased.

The Report of the Committee of the House of Commons states that "An increased demand for labour is the only means by which the wages of labour can ever be raised, and there is nothing which can increase the demand but the increase of the wealth by which labour is supported." [Page 17.]

If the Committee had recognised the improvements in our manufacturing machinery, as the cause of the diminution in the demand for manual labour,

* Mr. Pitt's Speeches, vol. ii. p. 367.

they must have observed that there can be no prospect of relief from the increase of wealth formerly supporting labour; that species of wealth may exist, and go on increasing; but as it has found a cheaper substitute for human labour, the connexion as cause and effect no longer exists. The Committee further observe, that "the effects of holding out to the labouring community, that all who require it shall be provided with work at adequate wages; is such as to lead them to form false views of the circumstances in which they are likely to be placed: as the demand for labour depends absolutely on the amount of the wealth which constitutes its support, so the rate of wages can only be adjusted by the proportion that demand bears to the supply. Now it is on the greater or less degree of nicety in which that supply is adjusted to the demand, that the happiness of the labouring classes absolutely depends*."

This is the actual state of the lower classes. But although our present arrangements may not sanction the promise of adequate wages—yet those arrangements are not immutable; and in holding out to the labourer and mechanic the expectation of employment and of fair remuneration for their work, we shall not encourage false views of the circumstances in which they *ought* to be placed. If idleness is the parent of vice, how can we expect good conduct in

* Report, p. 17.

the lower orders, when they are compelled to be idle? We may proceed in our endeavours to strengthen the religious principle; it will afford some consolation to the wretched, and prove a partial restraint upon crime; but no extensive benefit can be anticipated while we tolerate the existence of a cause admirably calculated to defeat the very object of religion. But we may be assured that the legislature of this country will not permit the moral happiness of any part of the community to depend upon circumstances distinct from individual conduct, without endeavouring to render such circumstances conducive to their comfort and well-being. The unemployed poor must now be placed in a situation where they will be removed from the misery arising from the fluctuations or continued depression in the value of labour. The aid of scientific improvements and invention we cannot relinquish, without sacrificing a considerable share of our foreign commerce; and to employ the poor in any manufactures exclusively, would serve only to transfer misery from one class of sufferers to another; as it would tend still more to saturate markets already overstocked with the products of labour, and thereby compel manufacturers to dismiss some of the hands they before employed. The only practical method yet pointed out, appears to be that of enabling the poor to create their own subsistence by means of cultivation; their support upon this principle being more

free from objections that may be urged against employments that interfere extensively with any of the existing interests of society.

It should appear that we have now less reason to complain of restraints imposed upon the press, than of a want of freedom in the human mind. Truth may be maintained with impunity; but how difficult to force conviction through party and sectarian prejudices! No sooner are any suggestions submitted to the world, than the question of their propriety is less considered than what set of opinions they belong to; and, from their supposed partiality, they are attributed to a mistaken bias, and suffered to pass by unnoticed. Those who are neither influenced by a name, nor attached to a party, would regard with indifference the strifes of political and religious contention, if it was not observed that they too often retard that melioration of mankind which the benevolent and disinterested are desirous to promote. The mode of relief I have pointed out, was first recommended by an eminent philanthropist, whose sentiments on the subject of religion were considered as affording a sufficient reason for rejecting his advice altogether. If it is the part of a good Christian to decline the co-operation of a competent individual, (because he does not embrace our opinions,) in forming political arrangements conducive to the happiness of mankind, and especially such arrangements as admit a per-

fect freedom of religious worship; then shall we be justified in dismissing Mr. Owen's proposals. But if, on the contrary, by such conduct we not only prolong the sufferings of the wretched, but violate the spirit of that religion which says "Hast thou Faith? have it to thyself before God," we shall no longer hesitate temperately to examine the details of his plan; and having separated his religious or speculative opinions from that which is of practical utility, we shall avail ourselves of the benefit of knowledge derived from his long experience, without compromising the interests of Christianity.— Why Mr. Owen should have made an attack upon Faith immediately after he had presented us with a scale agreeably to which villages of distinct sects and parties might be formed, it is difficult to imagine; unless indeed that scale was intended merely as a satire upon the folly or imbecility of mankind, or as a mirror in which they might behold to what petty differences they are accustomed to sacrifice those feelings of universal charity, without which it is declared their religion "is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Without adverting at present to Mr. Owen's more extended scheme for the ultimate improvement of mankind in general, I am fully convinced that if the public will give his plan for the relief of the parochial poor that thorough investigation which the extreme urgency of the case demands, it will

be found, in every respect, efficient for the removal of all the evils of poverty. I refer to his luminous report to the Committee of the House of Commons; where the errors of our present system are developed, and a safe and practicable remedy suggested with great perspicuity. It should, however, be understood, that none of the principles he has brought forward are altogether new; and as some of them may have been before unsuccessfully tried, we should be apt to pronounce a premature condemnation, unless the judgement is suspended until a deliberate view of the whole can be taken; for it is in their entire combination alone that the practicability of the plan consists. Judge Blackstone, in speaking of the Poor Laws, says, "Notwithstanding the pains that have been taken about them, they still remain very imperfect and inadequate to the purposes they are designed for." Is it not probable that the failure of all statesmen, in their endeavours to devise a more complete system, might be attributed to our ignorance of the first rudiments in this branch of political œconomy? If we have hitherto proceeded upon erroneous data, it follows, of course, that when right principles are first presented to our view, they appear paradoxical, and opposed to all our previous notions. When an individual, who has devoted almost his whole life to the investigation of causes from which the miseries of his fellow-creatures proceed, and has

not admitted the truth of any theory until he has confirmed it in practice, first announces to the world the result of his laborious and persevering inquiries; and if his character for veracity and extraordinary benevolence will not only bear the test of the severest scrutiny, but has elicited, even from his opponents, the highest eulogium; surely such a philanthropist is entitled to our attention at any time, but more particularly at a period when the difficulties of our domestic policy are felt with unprecedented and increasing severity.

Although Mr. Owen's plan has hitherto met with an unfavourable reception, those who are acquainted with all its details will not doubt of its ultimate adoption. I cannot conceive it possible for human ingenuity to devise any other mode of escape from the dangers that threaten society; and it is with much satisfaction I find the Committee have given proof of their approbation of the fundamental principle:—"But if labour is to be continued, it would be idle to attempt to prescribe to every parish the means which they should respectively adopt, in order to comply, as far as it be possible, with such an injunction of the law; and your Committee can only recommend all possible facility of providing employment being given, not so much with a view to the profit to be derived from it, as from the necessity of withholding from idleness the wages that should be due to industry alone. Care however

should be taken, with a view to the interests of industrious persons, that the local work to be supplied, should be such as will least sensibly interfere with existing occupations and trades. In country parishes, agriculture affords the most obvious and useful source of employment; for though the whole stock of subsistence be thereby increased, yet the cultivator of the land would be more than compensated by any diminution in the value of his produce, by the corresponding diminution of the expense of maintaining his family and labourers, and the more important reduction of the poor rate. Your Committee find, that in the county of Kent it has been thought expedient, in two instances, to carry this practice so far, as to establish parochial farms in the parishes of Benenden and Cranbrooke*."

The parochial farm of Cranbrooke, called Sessinghurst Castle farm, consists of about 500 acres, and the house accommodates nearly 100 persons; it has been in the occupation of the parish for upwards of twenty years, and it is computed that the poor rate is 7s. in the pound less than in the neighbouring parishes.

The villages of unity, and of mutual co-operation, having their basis in agriculture, differ from the farm of Cranbrooke only in their superior advantages.

If a parochial farm of 500 acres yields a profit,

* Report, p. 19. See Appendix, C.

it cannot be doubted that a farm upon a larger scale, and under proper regulations, could be managed with greater pecuniary effect.

The implements of husbandry, being made in the villages, would be had at the cost of the raw material only;—the same œconomy would also obtain in every article of consumption. — Shoes, linen, clothing, &c. under the present system are generally purchased, and money is given out of the parochial funds for the labour bestowed upon their manufacture.

In the farm-house 100 persons are lodged, of course without the means of classification, and subject to the inconveniences and unpleasant feelings attendant upon the indiscriminate mixture of many individuals in one house.

The village plan combines the œconomy of providing food and clothing in large quantities, with the facility of affording to its inhabitants the comforts of domestic privacy;—each family, occupying separate apartments, would be subject to the occasional visits of the superintendants, who would see that the rooms were kept in order, and that the children were properly treated. This however would be necessary but for a short time: every individual, gradually becoming sensible of the advantages of cleanliness, would acquire good habits, their parental affections would be strengthened; and observing the improvement their children derived from judi-

cious tuition, they would naturally feel a pleasure in sending them to the school-room at the stated hour, and in neat condition.

If this plan surpasses the farm-house system, it will be acknowledged to be superior to the common work-house, or even the Suffolk houses of industry, which do not afford healthy agricultural employment, and are liable to the same objections, in a more or less degree, in their internal arrangements, as the farm-house.

Mr. Owen, in his Report to the Committee, has given so full an account of the details of the system that I forbear entering minutely into them. I will only observe, that the interest of the capital at first expended, and the rent of the land, would be paid out of the poor-rate; and as the labour of each individual with the aid of machinery, and under proper management, yields ten times more than he can consume, nine tenths of the products, or whatever the overplus may be, would be so much profit, which would go towards the repayment of the capital and to the speedy abolition of the poor-rate.

I cannot be satisfied merely with suggesting that this plan is superior to any other mode of relief to those who are destitute of employment, since there will be no difficulty in showing that it is eminently calculated to hasten the return of that period when the rural virtues were the best preservative of good order in the lower classes of society: for although

manufactures will form a part of the establishment, there will be no necessity for any individual to work at them but for a few hours in the day; all can be instructed in the management of machinery, which requires attention rather than great skill, and from its highly improved state it will be a source of pleasant or light employment rather than of fatigue and labour.—It is not unusual to hear the fallen character of our peasantry lamented, as if the change had not been brought about by the altered circumstances in which they have been placed. In the villages want will not be known, the temptation of public-houses will be withdrawn, and all the vices arising from ignorance will give place to the morality and good conduct resulting from early religious instruction.

It has been thought that the poor, however comfortable their condition may be rendered, would be averse from any plan that placed them in continual confinement. And certainly, if such was *really* the case with regard to the villages of mutual co-operation, it might, in many instances, be an objection difficult to overcome. If you give the poor man comfortable clothing and habitation; if you give him a sufficiency of good food; if you require of him only moderate labour; if in sickness his family have the best advice and attendance; if you instruct his children in every branch of useful knowledge, and after all allow him to depart when-

ever he thinks proper,—does common society hold out any inducement for him to quit a situation of such substantial happiness?

As these new independent establishments are not likely to revert back to the old state of society, we will examine some of the more popular objections to the system, considered as a permanent community: but in so doing we shall be obliged to contrast the existing state of society with that which will be found in the villages; and without some preliminary explanation, we might be liable to the misconception of recommending a revolutionary scheme. Against this construction of my views I must here enter my protest: I disclaim all idea of interfering with any of our established institutions. As the opponents of the plan derive their chief arguments from what they conclude to be an irremediable defection in human nature, it will be necessary to show to how great an extent crime may be traced to the unfavourable circumstances influencing individuals, and which it is the interest no less than the duty of society to remove. The remedy now proposed, so far from injuring a single individual in any respect whatever, will prove highly beneficial to all. It removes to a distance that part of society which is at present an annoyance or an incumbrance to the rest; that part which endangers the security of property, and furnishes inhabitants for our prisons, and victims of punishment; and which,

if suffered to go on in its present course, will lead to the entire subversion of the social system.

When the condition of the lower classes becomes the subject of discussion, it is a practice too common with some authors, to consider them as altogether an inferior order of beings, scarcely possessing the common rights of humanity. Such persons would do well to remember the anecdote of M. Boudou. This eminent surgeon was one day sent for by the Cardinal Dubois, prime minister of France, to perform a very serious operation upon him. The Cardinal, on seeing him enter the room, said to him, "You must not expect, sir, to treat me in the same rough manner as you treat your poor miserable wretches at your hospital of the Hotel Dieu." "My Lord," replied M. Boudou with great dignity, "every one of those miserable wretches, as your Eminence is pleased to call them, is a prime minister in my eyes." Without presuming to infringe in the smallest degree upon any of the privileged orders of society, I may be allowed to maintain, in behalf of our suffering fellow-creatures, that their birthrights ought to be held as sacred as those of any of the higher ranks. The distinctions of society are the work of men's hands, but the former are the gifts of a beneficent Creator equally bestowed on all. Indeed it should appear to be the peculiar duty of those born in more fa-

voured stations, to watch over and protect the rights of the less fortunate part of mankind; to be solicitous that, as they were destitute of many advantages belonging to the other classes, they should not be abridged in the enjoyment of those blessings which it was the evident design of Providence should be common to the human race. We find, in some recent speculations upon the distresses of the times, many useful hints and partial remedies recommended by their respective authors with much hesitation, from the apprehension of encouraging marriage among the poor. To whatever inferences the ingenious theories of some political œconomists may lead, it may be safely predicted that mankind in general will not withhold their assent to the following proposition,—That the labouring classes, when willing to work, ought to be recompensed in a sufficiency of the necessaries of life for themselves and their families, and that their children should receive religious instruction. But then it is objected, that if their condition is so materially improved as to encourage early marriages, population will increase too fast for subsistence, and ultimately entail misery upon all. If such would really be the consequences of early marriages, why are the comforts of the poor alone to be sacrificed to this dreaded evil to posterity?—if restraint were necessary, surely it ought to be general. The rich and the middling class of society, in travel, in amusements,

and in their mental resources, can find other gratifications in a life of cœlibacy; and they, if any exclusively, ought to marry late. Are not the privations of the poor sufficiently numerous, but that we must also take from them the pleasures of the exercise of the social affections? If none are to marry but those who can obtain adequate wages, and the existing state of things is to continue, we may dismiss our fears of a redundancy of population, since the present race of paupers must soon be extinct. But the fundamental error of the theory of the comparative progress in the increase of subsistence and in that of population, has been so ably exposed in Mr. Purves's work "The Principles of Population and Production investigated," that no apprehension will in future be entertained on this point. Those who adopt as an axiom in political œconomy, the opinion that population has a continual tendency to press upon subsistence, refer for their examples to the various parts of animated nature, of which the numbers are confined within certain limits by the want of subsistence; but they do not appear sufficiently to distinguish between animals in general and the reasoning animal Man: some animals afford food for others, the weak yield to the strong; and man, from the superiority given him by reason, is enabled to subdue all to his use. So that the increase of population, not being checked by the interference of any other class in the animal world,

can be limited only by the utmost extent of cultivation over the whole globe. "The natural and moral constitution and government of the world are so connected, as to make up together but one scheme; and it is highly probable that the first is formed and carried on merely in subserviency to the latter, as the vegetable world is for the animal, and organized bodies for minds*." Nor is the analogy more close between man in the savage state and when highly civilised. Rude nations experience distress and misery from want, not because a sufficiency of food could not have been created, but from their ignorance of the arts of husbandry. At the present æra such are the improvements in all the arts and sciences, that each individual is enabled to produce considerably more than he can consume; so that we must reverse the proposition that population increases geometrically and food arithmetically, and admit that every new-born infant is a future promise of an increase of wealth. Agriculture and Chemistry may be regarded now as only in their infancy; and yet with the progress they have already made, it is more than probable that with proper œconomy, and by the inclosure of our waste lands, we could maintain treble our present population, without resorting to the exhaustless supply of the ocean.

* Butler's Analogy, p. 161.

SECTION II.

“What, with regard to times past, is the worst, should, for the time to come, be esteemed the best; for if you had performed your duty to the full, and yet your affairs had gone backwards, there would have been no hopes of their amendment; but as the bad posture of your affairs proceeds not from necessity, but from your own errors, there is room to hope that, when those errors are forsaken, or corrected, a great change for the better may ensue.”

DEMOSTHENES to the Athenians.

THERE have been few arguments advanced in opposition to the New View of Society, which Mr. Owen has not anticipated and refuted. But there is an imaginary barrier, which reflecting men, sincerely desirous of affording this permanent relief to the labouring classes, are apprehensive will oppose their best endeavour. As a proof of the impossibility of making all mankind rational, good, and happy, by any general system of education, it is remarked that “in families where children have experienced precisely the same treatment and instruction, their characters are found widely to differ, and consequently there must be a constitutional defect in some minds, which will effectually prevent them from becoming respectable members of society.” It will be found by the following extract, that Mr. Owen has not overlooked the variety to be found in the natural dispositions of individuals.

“Man is born with combined propensities and qualities, differing in degree and power, and in combination sufficient to create through life individuality and distinctness of person and character. But however much the power and combination of these propensities and qualities may differ in individuals at birth, they may be all so directed by subsequent circumstances, as to be made to form general characters, and those characters to be of any of the most opposite nature, to be made entirely irrational or rational.”

There can be no doubt that some will make slower progress, in moral and intellectual improvement, than others; but that there exists in the mental constitution of any individual (excepting cases of insanity) an insuperable obstacle to the practice of the greatest virtues, I cannot admit. If there is any truth in the long established position of Mr. Locke, that there are no ideas but what result from sensation and reflection, then is the character chiefly formed by the circumstances with which it is surrounded. When we observe that man partakes of that general character which prevails in the country where he is born; that he is of any religion he may have been taught; that even his manners and the lighter shades of character are regulated by the sphere in which he moves; that different countries, and different ranks in society, have each a peculiar character;—is it possible to suppose that all this does

not arise from external circumstances? The most virtuous dispositions have originated from external causes: by observing what those causes have been, and carefully applying them in the discipline of youth, they will inevitably lead to a similar result. It is not that our systems of education, though in many respects faulty, are deficient in excellent practical precepts, but that the counteracting influence of society defeats the benefit of instruction. Those objects impressed upon the mind in the course of study are effaced by others more powerful, and to which they are opposed in an intercourse with the world. Children of one family, and educated together, would subsequently display the same general character, if the external excitements of society did not elicit those bad qualities which would otherwise lie dormant. It is the different degree of power and combination in natural propensities and qualities, which renders some more obnoxious to temptation than others, and prevents that general good conduct which must prevail in a society of mutual co-operation, where every pernicious excitement is removed.

Pride, when presented to the mind abstractedly, creates repugnance; but how unconsciously are we reconciled to its various gradations in the different ranks of life! That it should so insinuate itself can be readily accounted for, since it is fostered in the nursery and in our schools; it is first introduced

under the milder character of emulation ; but even in this its most inoffensive form, it is a principle resting upon the degradation or inferiority of others, and totally at variance with Christian motives*. If equal pains were taken to instil into the minds of youth principles of benevolence ; the gratification of being enabled to perform a beneficent action, as the reward of diligence, would soon become a more powerful incentive than the desire of excelling : and thus by reiterated acts of kindness they would acquire benevolent habits, the pleasures of which would be found far too exquisite to be exchanged for any other, especially as they would then become associated with all their earliest impressions. “By accustoming ourselves to any course of action, we get an aptness to go on, a facility, readiness, and often pleasure, in it. The inclination which rendered us averse to it, grows weaker : the difficulties in it, not only the imaginary but the real ones, lessen : the reasons for it, offer themselves of course to our thoughts upon all occasions : and the least glimpse of them is sufficient to make us go on in a course of action to which we have been accustomed. And practical principles appear to grow stronger, absolutely in themselves by exercise ; as well as relatively, with regard to contrary principles : which, by being accustomed to submit, do so habitually,

* See the admirable chapter on the Desire of Human Estimation and Applause, in Mr. Wilberforce's Practical View of Christianity.

and of course. And thus a new character, in several respects, may be formed; and many habitudes of life, not given by nature, but which nature directs us to acquire*." The avaricious man, prompted at first by the estimation in which riches are held by society, perseveres in accumulating his stores long after the original motive to aggrandizement had left him;—and can we suppose that the force of habit will be less influential when devoted to the attainment of objects approved by the understanding, sanctified by religion, and interwoven with the best feelings of the heart? In men so trained, and in a society of mutual cooperation, pride, envy, avarice, and anger, with all the bad passions, would not only be placed more under the dominion of reason, but the stimulus to their exertion would no longer exist. Thus a twofold operation would be performed.

In the preventive system, the removal of temptation, and in sedulously watching the early association of ideas, consisted the chief excellence of the laws of Lycurgus; and he produced the martial and patriotic character he designed:—then why may we not expect success from the application of these principles to higher objects?

When Plato was asked by what signs a traveller might know immediately on his arrival in any city that education is neglected, he replied, "If he finds that physicians and judges are necessary."

* Butler's Analogy, part i. chap. 5.

How does it arise, that in a metropolis where education prevails more than at any former period, practitioners in law and physic are become more essentially necessary? Was the philosopher in error? or shall we not rather find that the education he had in view was one that provided for the wants both of body and mind*? not an education where youth are taught one set of principles in the academy and another in society. It is in vain to instruct children in the important duties of morality and religion, if, upon the same day they receive these instructions, they are exposed to the temptations of want and to the contagion of vicious intercourse.

Those who rank first in the order of created beings, and are endowed with superior intelligence,

* Mais supposons un beau ciel, un heureux climat, un séjour enchanteur où des paysages pittoresques et variés charment de tous côtés les regards; une habitation saine et agréable dont les portes s'ouvrent avec le jour et permettent d'aller respirer les bienfaisantes émanations du matin dans un vaste enclos, planté d'arbres, baigné par une petite rivière, d'où la vue s'étend au loin sur des prairies et des plaines cultivées, que bornent à quelque distance des coteaux en amphithéâtre, surmontés par des cimes élevées de montagnes. Dans cette habitation, si propre à inspirer les sensations les plus douces par la vue ravissante des beautés de la nature semées avec profusion autour d'elle; supposons maintenant une réunion nombreuse d'enfans, divisés en plusieurs sections de huit ou dix élèves, dont chacune a son directeur ou précepteur particulier, jeune encore et ami de l'enfance, rapproché d'elle par son âge et ses goûts: donnons à toutes ces sections éparses un chef commun, véritable père de famille, qui traite tous les élèves et leurs jeunes instituteurs comme ses propres enfans, qui les anime tous de son esprit, d'un esprit de paix, d'union et d'amour. Qu'au sein

must submit to the humiliation of learning social union from the insect tribes. Man, it is true, has, in the improvement of his intellectual faculties, loftier aims to pursue than that to which instinct directs the bee: but is the attainment of his object facilitated by a departure from those simple laws which nature has presented to his view in the œconomy of the hive? On the contrary, his struggles for subsistence, or for the gratification of imaginary wants, not only deprive him of the opportunity of cultivating his reasoning powers; but privations and misery abound, although the aggregate of food, of clothing, and of shelter, amounts to superfluity. There is no inherent depravity in human nature which a Christian education, in a society formed

de cet asyle, de voix pures et harmonieuses fassent monter, chaque matin, jusqu'au ciel leurs chants religieux ou l'hommage d'une prière innocente. Que des courses, des luttes et des jeux, succédant à cette pieuse cérémonie, fortifient les corps et servent d'assaisonnement à un repas simple et frugal. Qu'au sortir du banquet, la vie active recommence: qu'elle se trouve introduite, par la mode d'enseignement, même dans les études sérieuses qui exigent le plus d'application d'esprit. Que tous les élèves, exercés à la fois et contribuant à se former mutuellement, se développent en liberté avec le sentiment intérieur de leurs progrès et la conscience réelle de leurs forces; tous les instans sont employés avec fruit; la vie entière devient un enchainement d'occupations utiles, d'exercices agréables: toutes les relations sont embellies par la confiance et l'amitié; tous les travaux sont des plaisirs; toutes les physionomies respirent la joie et la bonheur.

Esprit de la Méthode d'Education de Pestolozzi,
par M. Marc Antoine Jullien. Tome i. p. 21.

upon the true principles of political œconomy, cannot overcome. They are our own errors alone that have impeded the amelioration of mankind; not the real but the factitious wants of society: the former can now be supplied in superabundance, and through the aid of mechanism with very moderate exertion. And as for the latter, let us hope they will all be expelled under a better system, and in the more extended practice of genuine Christianity. From the fluctuating opinions that have prevailed regarding the constitution and operations of the mind, some have been induced to question the practical utility of metaphysical pursuits:—such, however, is not the scepticism of a writer of the present day, who perhaps maintains the first rank in that department of literature. “Of the progress which may yet be made in the different branches of moral and political philosophy we may form some idea, from what has already happened in physics, since the time that Lord Bacon united, in one useful direction, the labours of those who cultivate that science. At the period when he wrote, physics was certainly in a more hopeless state than that of moral and political philosophy in the present age. A perpetual succession of chimerical theories had, till then, amused the world; and the prevailing opinion was, that the case would continue to be the same for ever. Why then should we despair of the competency of the human faculties to establish solid and

permanent systems, upon other subjects, which are of still more serious importance * ? ”

As human nature is at all times and every where the same, there must be certain principles of legislation superior to others, and of universal application: if those principles had been before distinguished, they would have been reduced to a science, and adopted by all the European nations: hitherto they have separately existed in different political systems, and in each combined with counteracting errors. In the arrangements of the “New View of Society” the rules of the Baconian philosophy are rigidly adhered to; every maxim unsupported by facts, or which cannot be verified by experience, is rejected. Following the example of that great philosopher, we perceive how undeserving is Mr. Owen of the epithet of an Utopian Politician †. To him, with a slight alteration, may we justly apply the language of the biographer of Plutarch:

“He appears to have examined every system with a calm and unprejudiced attention; to have selected what he found of use for the purposes of virtue and happiness, and to have left the rest for the portion of those whose narrowness of mind could think either science or felicity confined to any denomination of men.”

* Stewart's Elements, vol. i. p. 296.

† The word “Utopian” is here used in the common acceptance of the term: it is not, however, intended to imply that the work of the great Sir Thomas More is to be considered as altogether visionary, because some parts of his theory may not be practicable.

SECTION III.

“It may be likewise an argument of further hope, that some of the things already discovered are such as, before their discovery, did not enter into men’s minds even to suspect: so that any one would have despised them as impossibilities. For it is an usual way with mankind to form conjectures of new things, according to the example of old ones, and according to the opinions thence preconceived and entertained, which is a very fallacious manner of judging; for many particulars derived from the fountains, or origin of things, do not flow in the common channels.”

Lord BACON.

THE moral and political advantages that have been acquired in the progress of knowledge, might be expected to cure mankind of their disbelief in the probability of future improvement; that, as we have seen a spirit of persecution which could only be satiated with the blood of its victim dissipated in a more enlightened age, we might reasonably hope that a still further advancement would expel the last remains of bigotry and intolerance; and so far from a difference in religious opinion creating one uncharitable sentiment, the free and unrestrained exercise of Christian benevolence must ultimately obtain.

“One thing is certain, that the greatest of all obstacles to the improvement of the world is that prevailing belief of its improbability, which damps the exertions of so many individuals; and that in

proportion as the contrary opinion becomes general, it realizes the event which it leads us to anticipate. Surely, if any thing can have a tendency to call forth in the public service the exertions of individuals, it must be an idea of the magnitude of that work in which they are conspiring, and a belief of the permanence of those benefits which they confer on mankind, by every attempt to inform and to enlighten them. As in ancient Rome, therefore, it was regarded as the mark of a good citizen, never to despair of the fortunes of the Republic: so the good citizen of the world, whatever may be the political aspect of his own times, will never despair of the fortunes of the human race; but will act upon the conviction, that prejudice, slavery, and corruption, must gradually give way to truth, liberty, and virtue; and that in the moral world, as well as in the material, the farther our observations extend, and the longer they are continued, the more we shall perceive of order and of benevolent design in the universe*."

"With respect to this sceptical disposition, as applicable to the present state of society, it is of importance to add, that in every government, the stability and the influence of established authority must depend on the coincidence between its measures and the tide of public opinion; and that, in modern Europe, in consequence of the invention

* Stewart's Elements, vol. i. p. 272.

of printing and the liberty of the press, public opinion has acquired an ascendant in human affairs, which it never possessed in those states of antiquity from which most of our political examples are drawn. The danger, indeed, of sudden and rash innovations cannot be too strongly inculcated; and the views of those men who are too forward to promote them, cannot be reprobated with too great severity. But it is possible also to fall into the opposite extreme, and to bring upon society the very evils we are anxious to prevent, by an obstinate opposition to those gradual and necessary reformatations which the genius of the times demands. The violent revolutions which at different periods have convulsed modern Europe, have arisen, not from a spirit of innovation in sovereigns and statesmen; but from their bigoted attachment to antiquated forms, and to principles borrowed from less enlightened ages. It is this reverence for abuses which have been sanctioned by time, accompanied with an inattention to the progress of public opinion, which has in most instances blinded the rulers of mankind, till government has lost all its efficiency, and till the rage of innovation has become too general and too violent, to be satisfied with changes, which, if proposed at an earlier period, would have united in the support of established institutions, every friend to order, and to the prosperity of his country*.”

* Stewart's Elements, vol. i. p. 246.

Lord Bacon's anticipations regarding the progressive enlargement of the sciences are no less applicable to the future attainments of mankind, in the more important subjects of education and of government. His observations on that indolence of mind which acquiesces in traditionary opinion as the boundary of knowledge are deserving our notice. "For as water ascends no higher than the level of the first spring, so knowledge derived from Aristotle, will, at most, rise no higher again than the knowledge of Aristotle. And therefore, though a scholar must have faith in his master; yet a man, well instructed, must judge for himself: for learners owe to their masters only a temporary belief, and a suspension of their own judgement, till they are fully instructed; and not an absolute resignation, or perpetual captivity. Let great authors, therefore, have their due; but so as not to defraud time, which is the author of authors, and the parent of truth."

Many withhold their assistance in carrying into practice the principles of the "New View," from an apprehension that the existing state of society is a dispensation of Providence, not to be altered by human exertion. This life, they justly observe, is a probationary state, where adversity and prosperity afford a test of obedience in the exercise or neglect of the respective virtues of resignation to the divine will, and of benevolence to our fellow creatures; that wars and tumults, private animosities

and misery, have always prevailed, and are found in sacred history. Would it not become us rather to obey the commands of the Deity, than thus to ascribe to His laws the imperfections of human institutions? The same volume that contains the history of man's departure from a state of innocence, has also announced his restoration to the divine favour, through the mediation of his Redeemer, and instructed us in the conditions which can alone entitle us to this bright inheritance—"By doing the will of our Father who is in heaven."

"Then shall they beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

It would not be esteemed a mark of prudence to reject the advice of a physician, who prescribed a regimen that prevented bodily disease, because it would supersede the use of those healing medicines which a beneficent Creator has sent to our relief. Christianity not only remedies evils resulting from the most disordered state of society, but has enabled us to lay the foundation of a community, in which a recurrence of those evils may be prevented:—for, whether Mr. Owen will acknowledge it or not, he is indebted to our religion for the most valuable principles in his combination. Nor can it be objected that his plan attempts to subdue vice and to animate virtue, without the aid of religion: it is in truth the offspring

of Christianity; and unless legislators, in exercising the functions of their office, can be justified in rejecting Christian motives, or a government which is professedly a union of Church and State, is to forget its sacred duties,—such political regulations will be adopted for the destitute, as can best support the most important interests of mankind. Survey society in its present form, and how many instances do we behold of the sacrifice of right principles in compliance with its rules!

Present Society
virtually encourages

Religion enjoins

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Avarice</i> | } | | <i>Contentment</i> |
| <i>Gambling</i> | | | |
| <i>Lotteries</i> | | | |
| <i>Ebriety</i> | } | | <i>Temperance</i> |
| <i>Public houses</i> | | | |
| <i>Revenge</i> | } | | <i>Forgiveness of Injuries</i> |
| <i>Duelling</i> | | | |
| <i>Ambition</i> | } | | <i>Humility</i> |
| <i>Pride</i> | | | |
| <i>Envy</i> | | | <i>Charity</i> |
| <i>Servility</i> | | | <i>Truth</i> |
| <i>Duplicity</i> | | | <i>Candour</i> |
| <i>Selfishness</i> | | | <i>Benevolence</i> |
| <i>War</i> | | | <i>Peace.</i> |

These are but a few in the long catalogue of inconsistencies and contradictions, in which we are involved between our religious professions and the feelings naturally arising out of our present system. There is not a single virtue inculcated by religion,

the practice of which is not greatly promoted by the judicious mode of instruction and the œconomical principles of the "New View of Society." In observing the various forms which vice assumes, how obvious is the truth, that, as we descend in the scale of mental acquirement, and in the gradations of life, the enormity of crime increases; and that those deeds of barbarity which have of late so frequently stained the columns of our journals, have been perpetrated by those only who are most ignorant and destitute! The middling and higher classes would not be exempt from crimes no less atrocious, if they were not to be attributed chiefly to external causes: and until education, and the circumstances of society, (equally the province of religion to direct,) shall be made to conspire to one end, mankind at large will not, to any practical purpose, be convinced that their duty and their happiness are the same. In possession of the accumulated stores of ancient wisdom, the discoveries of modern science, and aided by the divine illuminations of the Gospel, why, it may be asked, have we hitherto failed in erecting a lasting fabric of human happiness? Must we yield to those who maintain that there is an invincible depravity in human nature, which will for ever mock the efforts of moral and political philosophy? or shall we prove that in a misapplication alone of these valuable materials will be found the source of all our perplexities? If mankind, instead

of fashioning Christianity to suit their varying purposes, had permitted it to maintain its due and paramount importance in the councils of nations, they would have perceived, that to individualize man was to devote him to almost all the vices which Christianity was sent to extirpate; the true principles of political œconomy would have been earlier discovered, and the progress of mechanical science have benefited every member of the community. "All the evils that can arise in an unsettled ill-constituted government, from the accumulation of wealth into few hands, were daily experienced in Sparta: the poor suffered from the oppression of the rich: the rich were in perpetual danger from the despair of the poor: and where laws neither restrained nor protected, dark fraud, or open and atrocious violence, were the unceasing produce of avarice, suspicion, and misery. To combat such inveterate and complicated mischief, said Lycurgus, by ordinary methods of criminal courts and penal laws, were replete with uncertainty, danger, and even cruelty, to a degree that cannot be foreseen. How much better were it, instead of arming the hand of the executioner against the effect, at once to remove the cause*!" The rich of this country, far from being the oppressors of the poor, are feelingly alive to their distresses: witness the noble monuments of benevolence in our various institutions, providing

* Mitford's History of Greece, vol. i. p. 197.

a partial relief for every species of misery; but, like Sparta, we experience all the dreadful consequences of poverty: and how much preferable will it be, if, in imitation of that state, we adopt the principle of prevention rather than that of punishment!—not by depriving the rich of their possessions, but by giving industrious habits, employment, and religious instruction to the poor. The evils complained of have arisen out of unforeseen circumstances; and as blame does not attach to any class, so is the relief without prejudice to any: it is an experiment to be made without interference with the order of society; and upon those only whose situation cannot be rendered worse, and may be greatly improved.

SECTION IV.

"Say, why was man so eminently raised
 Amid the vast creation; why ordain'd
 Through life and death to dart his piercing eye,
 With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame;
 But that the Omnipotent might send him forth,
 In sight of mortal and immortal powers,
 As on a boundless theatre, to run
 The great career of justice; to exalt
 His generous aim to all diviner deeds;
 To chase each partial purpose from his breast?"

AKENSIDE.

BESIDES the causes contributing to stability which the "New View" will possess in common with other systems of mutual co-operation, its duration, in a future age, will be secured by increasing intelligence, and by the disposition it will give, and the leisure it will afford, for scientific pursuits. It is surely a mistaken idea to suppose that none but unworthy motives will rouse into permanent action the dormant powers of the mind. The ambitious, from the conspicuous station they hold in society, and the variety of individual interests that are affected by their movements, become objects of general notice. These characters are therefore most prominent in the page of history:—but men of science, and those who are devoted to philosophical and religious in-

quiry, though far removed from public observation, are no less perseveringly active.

The following lines are no less philosophically just, than beautifully descriptive of the energies of the mind before it has been perverted by the existing attractions of society.

“ Would the forms
Of servile custom cramp her generous powers?
Would sordid policies, the barbarous growth
Of ignorance and rapine, bow her down
To tame pursuits, to indolence and fear?
Lo! she appeals to nature, to the winds
And rolling waves, the sun’s unwearied course,
The elements and seasons: all declare
For what the eternal Maker has ordain’d
The powers of man: we feel within ourselves
His energy divine: he tells the heart,
He meant, he made us to behold and love
What he beholds and loves, the general orb
Of life and being; to be great like him,
Beneficent and active.”

AKENSIDE.

Gifted with faculties to explore the secrets of nature, and surrounded by objects fitted to employ those faculties, what can be more agreeable to the apparent intentions of Providence, than that all mankind should devote a portion of their time in acquiring a knowledge of the works of the creation? Yet how few are permitted by the political order of society to engage in these legitimate pursuits! A large proportion of mankind are doomed to poverty and comparative ignorance; the higher ranks are early initiated in artificial distinctions; and the middling classes are

striving to escape from indigence, or to rival their superiors in fortune. Constituted as society at present is, individual gain must necessarily be the ruling principle of action. Hence ambition, pride, avarice, and many other moral disorders. These, being effects naturally resulting from a pre-disposing cause, are no illustration of what character human nature would exhibit, under arrangements where every inducement to the acquisition of wealth and to personal distinction would be withdrawn: but every instance that is recorded of individuals who have renounced a course in which the circumstances of society and the general conduct of mankind had propelled them, is a proof of a latent disposition in cultivated human nature to act upon nobler views, whenever it should be understood and felt that individual benefit and the good of the community were inseparably united. That self-devotion to the laws which inspired the three hundred Spartans with a resolution to die at the pass of Thermopylæ, was not a principle confined to their military discipline; it pervaded their whole conduct. The observance of moral rules was no less general. When a Spartan, upon seeing some people carried into the country in a litter, remarked, "May I never sit in any place where I cannot rise before the aged!" he expressed a sentiment as universal in Sparta as that of patriotism. So much are our minds circumscribed by localities and by early associations,

that it is with difficulty we can disconnect one idea from others with which it has been arbitrarily combined. We should smile at the thought of our greatest statesmen and generals addicting themselves to the labour of husbandry; and yet we dwell with interest upon the simplicity of character displayed by Cincinnatus, who, when waited upon by the persons deputed to give him notice of his nomination to the dictatorship, was found at his plough; and the reply of Diocletian to the Emperor Maximian, when he was solicited to reassume the reins of government: "He rejected the temptation with a smile of pity, calmly observing, that if he could show Maximian the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands at Salona, he should no longer be urged to relinquish the enjoyment of happiness for the pursuit of power*."

That neglected but important principle in the education of youth—the association of ideas—will, in future, become a principal consideration: and punishment, hitherto the concomitant of instruction, will be supplanted by kindness and every circumstance calculated to interest and lead on the infant mind. "Our daily experience may convince us, how susceptible the tender mind is of deep impressions; and what important and permanent effects are produced on the characters and the happiness of individuals, by the casual associations formed in childhood among the various ideas, feelings, and

* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. i. p. 469. 4to.

affections, with which they are habitually occupied. It is the business of education not to counteract this constitution of nature, but to give it a proper direction ; and the miserable consequences to which it leads, when under an improper regulation, only show, what an important instrument of human improvement it might be rendered in more skilful hands. If it be possible to interest the imagination and the heart in favour of error, it is, at least, no less possible to interest them in favour of truth. If it be possible to extinguish all the most generous and heroic feelings of our nature, by teaching us to connect the idea of them with those of guilt and impiety ; it is surely equally possible to cherish and strengthen them, by establishing the natural alliance between our duty and our happiness. If it be possible for the influence of fashion to veil the native deformity of vice, and to give to low and criminal indulgences the appearance of spirit, of elegance, and of gaiety ; can we doubt of the possibility of connecting, in the tender mind, these pleasing associations with pursuits that are truly worthy and honourable?—There are few men to be found, among those who have received the advantages of a liberal education, who do not retain, through life, that admiration of the heroic ages of Greece and Rome, with which the classical authors once inspired them. It is in truth a fortunate prepossession, on the whole, and one, of which I should be

sorry to counteract the influence. But are there not others of equal importance to morality and to happiness, with which the mind might, at the same period of life, be inspired? If the first conceptions, for example, which an infant formed of the Deity, and its first moral perceptions, were associated with the early impressions produced on the heart by the beauties of nature, or the charms of poetical description—those serious thoughts which are resorted to, by most men, merely as a source of consolation in adversity, and which on that very account are frequently tinged with some degree of gloom, would recur spontaneously to the mind, in its best and happiest hours; and would insensibly blend themselves with all its purest and most refined enjoyments*.”

The account which Mr. Brougham delivered in to the Committee on the education of the poor, of his visit to Mr. Fellenberg's establishment at Hofwyl, in Switzerland, contains so complete a confirmation of the happy results of a judicious regulation of the early association of ideas, and of the truth of the general principles of Mr. Owen's plan for the relief of the poor, that I trust the following extract, from that gentleman's highly interesting statement, will not be thought unconnected with our subject.

“The branch of the establishment, however,

* Stewart's Elements, vol. i. p. 40.

which is more particularly deserving of attention, and with which all the others are more or less connected, is the seminary for the poor. Mr. F. having long remarked the extreme profligacy of the lowest orders in the Swiss towns, and the habits of ignorance and vice in which their children were brought up, formed many years ago the design of attempting their reformation, upon principles equally sound and benevolent. His leading doctrine was, that to make those poor people better, it was necessary to make them more comfortable; and that this end would be best attained by forming in their earliest years habits of industry, which might contribute to their subsistence, and by joining with them a greater degree of intellectual cultivation than has ever yet been extended to the labouring classes of the community, or been imagined to be compatible with their humble pursuits. He began his experiments upon a small number of children, which he has now increased to between thirty and forty; and this may be considered the utmost limit upon a farm of so moderate an extent*. Those children were taken from the very worst description of society, the most degraded of the mendicant poor in Berne and other Swiss towns. With hardly any exception, they were sunk in the vicious and idle habits of their parents, a class of dissolute vagrants resembling the worst kind of gipsies. The com,

* About 220 acres.

plete change that has been effected in them all, is one of the most extraordinary and affecting sights that can be imagined. When I saw them, there were some who had been there for several years, and had grown up towards manhood; but the reformation in all took place during from one to two years, or a very little more, according as they were taken at an earlier or a more advanced age. The remark which I made, is that which immediately strikes all who visit Hofwyl:—the appearance of the children alone, their countenance and manner, impresses you with a conviction of their excellent dispositions. To describe all the steps of the process by which this reformation has been effected, would be impossible, as much depends upon minute circumstances, and upon the great skill and judgment of Vehrli, a young man who has devoted his life, under Mr. Fellenberg, to the superintendence of this part of the establishment, and to whose extraordinary virtue and ability its success is principally owing.

“The first principle of the system is to show the children gentleness and kindness, so as to win their affections, and always to treat them as rational creatures, cultivating their reason, and appealing to it. It is equally essential to impress upon their minds the necessity of industrious and virtuous conduct to their happiness, and the inevitable effects of the opposite behaviour, in reducing them from

the comfort in which they now live, to the state of misery from which they were rescued. As constant and even minute superintendence, at every instant of their lives, forms of course part of the system; and, as may easily be supposed, the elder boys, who have already profited by the care of the master, aid him in extending it to the new comers, who, for this purpose, are judiciously distributed among them; these are, I am aware, very general principles; and upon their judicious application to practice in each particular instance, according to the diversities of individual character, their whole virtue depends. But a somewhat more specific notion of the plan may be formed by observing, that it is never allowed for a moment to be absent from their thoughts; that manual labour in cultivating the ground is the grand and paramount care which must employ their whole lives, and upon which their very existence depends. To this every thing else is made subordinate; but with this are judiciously connected a variety of intellectual pursuits. At their hours of relaxation, their amusements have an instructive tendency; certain hours are set apart for the purposes of learning; and while at work in the fields, the conversation, without interrupting for a moment the necessary business of their lives, is always directed towards those branches of knowledge in which they are improving themselves during the intervals of labour. Beside writing and cyphering (at which

they are very expert), they apply themselves to geography and history, and to the different branches of natural history, particularly mineralogy and botany, in which they take a singular delight and are considerable proficient. The connexion of these with agriculture renders them most appropriate studies for those poor children: and as their daily labour brings them constantly into contact with the objects of those sciences, a double relish is thus afforded at once to the science and the labour. You may see one of them, every now and then, stepping aside from the furrow, where several of them have been working, to deposit a specimen, or a plant, for a little hortus siccus, or cabinet; and Mr. Fellenberg rarely goes into the field where any of them are labouring, without being called upon to decide some controversy that has arisen upon matters relating to mineralogy or botany, or the parts of chemical science which have most immediate relation to agriculture. There is one other subject which is ever present to their minds: I mean a pure and rational theology. Mr. F. is deeply imbued himself with the sense of religion, and it enters into all his schemes for the improvement of society. Regarding the state of misery in which the poorest classes live, as rather calculated (if I may use his own expression) to make them believe in the agency of a devil than of a God, his first care, upon rescuing those children from that wretchedness, is to inspire

them with the feelings of devotion which he himself warmly entertains, and which he regards as natural to the human heart, when misery has not chilled nor vice hardened it. Accordingly, the conversation as well as the habits of the poor at Hofwyl partake largely of religious influence. The evidences of design observable in the operations of nature, and the benevolent tendency of those operations in the great majority of instances, form constant topics of discourse in their studies, and during the labours of the day; and though no one has ever observed the slightest appearance of fanaticism or of superstition, (against which, in truth, the course of instruction pursued is the surest safeguard,) yet ample testimony is borne by all travellers to the prevailing piety of the place. One of these has noted an affecting instance of it:—When the harvest once required the labourers to work for an hour or two after night-fall, and the full moon rose in extraordinary beauty over the magnificent mountains that surround the plain of Hofwyl; suddenly, as if with one accord, the poor children began to chaunt a hymn which they had learnt, among many others, but in which the Supreme Being is adored as having ‘lighted up the great lamp of the night, and projected it in the firmament.’”

“That the habits of common labour,” continues Mr. Brougham, “are perfectly reconcilable with those of a contemplative and even scientific life;

and that a keen relish for the pleasures of speculation may be united with the most ordinary pursuits of the poor, seems to be proved by this experiment of Mr. Fellenberg. I am quite aware that he has only made it upon a small scale; that its application to a populous district may be difficult. Nevertheless, before we say that little can be effected in this way, we ought to consider how limited have been Mr. Fellenberg's means. The farm on which he has done so much is under 220 acres; and his income, independent of the profit he derives from the breeding of horses (in which he is very skilful), and his manufactory of husbandry implements, does not exceed five hundred a year. The extraordinary œconomy which reigns in his establishment is indeed requisite to explain the existence of such an institution; for although the academy and institute are supported by the richer pupils, these pay a very moderate sum: and the family, who are lodged and wholly supported at Hofwyl, amounts to 180 persons. These dine at six different tables, and their food though simple is extremely good.

“Before concluding this statement, I must add that Mr. Fellenberg's principal object in establishing the academy for the wealthier classes, is to teach them their duties towards the poor; and above all, to inculcate the propriety of their adopting, each in his own sphere, the system pursued with respect to the poor children at Hofwyl.”

When Mr. Brougham was there he found seven or eight German princes among the pupils, beside several sons of German nobles; and the prince and princess of Wirtemberg (now the king and queen) were expected in a few days to visit the place, with the design of prevailing on Mr. F. to make room for another young prince under their care.

Surely, after the triumphant proof afforded by Mr. Fellenberg's persevering efforts, of the practicability of combining mental dispositions and pursuits, rarely found united in common society, all doubts will be dissipated of that which it should appear almost unaccountable that any doubt should ever have been entertained—That men can at the same time be trained to the performance of necessary duties, and to the enjoyment of those pleasures which reason and religion direct them to pursue. Such wonderful goodness and harmony are displayed in all the dispensations of the Deity, that the study of nature, while it multiplies our enjoyments, generates feelings of benevolence, and renders the mind a better recipient of the truths of Christianity. That which Christianity declares we *ought* to be, a due attention to the philosophy of the mind will assure us we *can* be. Christianity and true philosophy, far from opposing, mutually reflect each other: the former teaching us how its benevolent purposes are forwarded, and exalted ideas of the Deity are acquired, by philosophical attainments;

and the latter instructing us how much, from the narrow limitation of our faculties, we stand in need of a Divine revelation; and how admirably the morality of the Gospel is adapted to the nature of man, both in his individual and social capacity.

SECTION V.

PERHAPS there is no opinion more generally received, than that of the impossibility of a society to exist, where all the members possessed an equality of property; and yet there is no opinion more decidedly contrary to experience, since every system of equality that has been known in the world, has exhibited a great superiority of individual conduct and of social happiness, whether it has been established under the Pagan, the Jewish, or the Christian religion.

In Sparta, Lycurgus introduced an equality of property. "It was not," observes Plutarch, "the principal design of Lycurgus, that his city should govern many others; but he considered its happiness, like that of a private man, as flowing from virtue and self-consistency; he therefore so ordered and disposed it, that by the freedom and sobriety of its inhabitants, and having a sufficiency within themselves, its continuance might be the more secure. Plato, Diogenes, Zeno, and other writers upon government, have taken Lycurgus for their model; and these, though they left only an idea of something excellent, have attained great praise.

Yet he who, not in idea and in words but in fact, produced a most inimitable form of government, and by showing a whole city of philosophers confounded those, who imagine that the so-much boasted strictness of a philosophic life is impracticable; —he, I say, stands in the rank of glory far before the founders of all the other Grecian states.”

The Essenes, a sect of the Jews, are thus described by Josephus: “ Yet is their course of life better than that of other men; and they entirely addict themselves to husbandry. It also deserves our admiration, how much they exceed all other men that addict themselves to virtue, and this in righteousness; and indeed to such a degree, that as it hath never appeared among other men, neither Greeks or Barbarians, no not for a little time; so hath it endured a long while among them. This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs, which will not suffer any thing to hinder them from having all things in common*.”

The early Christians are represented as having an equality of property:

“ And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”
Acts iv. 32.

* Whiston's Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews, Book VIII. chap. i. sect. 5.

A remarkable example of a society of mutual co-operation was formed by the Jesuits in South America. "About the beginning of the 17th century they obtained admission into the fertile province of Paraguay, which stretches across the southern continent of America, from the bottom of the mountains of Potosi to the confines of the Spanish and the Portuguese settlements on the banks of the river De la Plata. They found the inhabitants in a state little different from that which takes place among men when they first begin to unite together; strangers to the arts, subsisting precariously by hunting or fishing, and hardly acquainted with the first principles of subordination and government. The Jesuits set themselves to instruct and to civilize these savages. They taught them to cultivate the ground, to rear tame animals, and to build houses. They brought them to live together in villages. They trained them to arts and manufactures. They made them taste the sweets of society, and accustomed them to the blessings of security and order. These people became the subjects of their benefactors, who governed them with a tender attention, resembling that with which a father directs his children. Respected and beloved almost to adoration, a few Jesuits presided over some hundred thousand Indians. They maintained a perfect equality among all the members of the community. Each of them was obliged to labour not for himself alone, but for

the public. The produce of their fields, together with the fruits of their industry of every species, were deposited in common storehouses, from which each individual received every thing necessary for the supply of his wants. By this institution, almost all the passions which disturb the peace of society and render the members of it unhappy, were extinguished. A few magistrates, chosen by the Indians themselves, watched over the public tranquillity, and secured obedience to the law. The sanguinary punishments frequent under other governments were unknown. An admonition from a Jesuit, a slight mark of infamy, or on some singular occasion a few lashes with a whip, were sufficient to maintain good order among these innocent and happy people*."

Mr. Owen has himself published an account of a society in America called the Shakers. They form themselves into establishments consisting of from one to eight hundred individuals. "They are established upon the principle of a community of property, on the system of united labour and expenditure; the advantages are equally participated by all, without any distinction whatever. Such is the favourable opinion entertained of them, that the legislature of New York have by law exempted them from all military duty, and from any fine or tax in lieu thereof."

The following are a few extracts from "Travels

* Cruttwell's Gazetteer: article "Paraguay."

in the United States of America in the Years 1806 to 1811, by John Melish," giving an account of a society at Harmony, in Pennsylvania:—"the whole particulars of this society are extremely interesting, and may be found in the 20th number of *The Philanthropist*.

"It is impossible to convey any adequate idea of the diligent industry and perseverance of this extraordinary people. Wherever we went, we found them all activity and contentment. Here, at a situation where they could not carry the clay for bedding the dam in wheelbarrows, they were carrying it in baskets on their backs. But they have every inducement to perseverance;—they are all on an equal footing—every member is equally interested in the good of the society."

"On Sunday the society meet in their religious capacity at nine o'clock in the school-room, to examine the children, who exhibit different specimens of their performances. This ends about eleven; they meet in the church at twelve, when they go through the same exercises as those before noticed, which last about an hour and a half. They have another meeting at six o'clock in the evening; and besides the meetings on Sunday, they have a sermon two nights in the week. There is no instance of the church being neglected by those who are well and able to walk. It is their delight to attend it, and the religious and moral deportment of the whole

Society is highly praiseworthy. There are no vicious habits among them. There is not an instance of swearing and lying, or debauchery of any kind; and as to cheating, so commonly practised in civilized society, they have no temptation to it whatever. As individuals they have no use for money, and they have no fear of want.

“The temporal concerns are conducted in a very orderly manner, having superintendants in each branch, who manage them under the general direction of the Society. There are five master farmers, one master mason, one master shoemaker (who cuts out all the leather), one master tailor, and so on of the other branches. Frederick Rapp superintends the manufacturing establishment; and has the general direction, under the Society, of all the money matters and mercantile concerns. When the Society was first established here, the whole of their property, after defraying their expenses, amounted to only about 20,000 dollars; and this was soon exhausted in the payment for the land, and in supporting themselves till they could bring their industry into operation. Thus, without money and without credit, they suffered great privations; in consequence of which a number of their members shrunk from the difficulty, and retired into the State of Ohio, to provide for themselves in a separate capacity. As they required what they had put into the common stock, the Society were thrown into

some difficulty to raise it: but they got it accomplished and they have now drawn up written articles, to be signed by those who join them, calculated to prevent any inconvenience of that kind in future. By these articles, such as may choose to retire are entitled to demand all that they put into the concern by certain instalments, but no interest. Any person may join the Society; and the mode of doing so is equally simple with all the other regulations. The candidate intimates his intention, and is received on trial for one month, during which he lives at the tavern. If he is then satisfied, and chooses to conform to their principles of morality, (they have no religious test,) he is forthwith received as a member, and entitled to all the privileges of the Society. If he is rich, he deposits all his property in the common stock; if he is poor, 'he has no lack,' all his wants are supplied out of that stock. The stock of the Society we estimated as follows:

| | Dollars. |
|--|----------|
| 9000 acres of land, with improvements | 90,000 |
| Stock of provisions for one year, for | |
| 800 persons - - - - | 25,000 |
| Mills, machinery, and public buildings | 21,000 |
| Dwelling-houses - - - - | 18,000 |
| Horses, cattle, hogs and poultry - | 10,000 |
| 1000 sheep - - - - | 6,000 |
| Stock of goods, spirits, manufactures, | |
| leather, implements of husbandry, &c. | 50,000 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 220,000 |

It may be remarked that the Society purchased their land for about 20,000 dollars, so that 70,000 of the rise is upon it; but they have cleared 2,500 acres, which adds to the value of the rest; and the rise of land, in this way, is always a favourable circumstance to new settlers, who on the other hand have many privations to undergo. It has been doubted whether the Society will continue united, on which alone depends their prosperity. From the principles on which the connexion is formed, and the subjects they have in view, I am of opinion, they will not only continue united, but that they will in all probability be a model for other societies. If their union continue, their prospects are bright indeed, both for time and eternity. Here they have the mutual aid of each other, and are free from a thousand temptations to which mankind in general are subjected. Having no fear of want, they have literally no care for the morrow:—they have no use for money—‘the love of which is the root of all evil.’ They can attend to the worship of God with single hearts and undivided minds; and all the duties of life are easy, because they go hand in hand with self-interest. In health they have the fellowship of people of the like mind with themselves—in sickness, they have the advice and assistance of friends on whom they can rely with perfect confidence; of a medical man, who can have no wish but to render them a service; and of a mi-

nister of religion to pour the balm of spiritual consolation into their wounded spirits, 'without money and without price.' At death they can resign their offspring to the charge of the Society, in the full confidence of their well-being; which single circumstance disarms the grim messenger of more than half his terrors. And the purity of their life having fitted them for the enjoyment of God, they can resign their spirit into the hands of the merciful Father of Spirits;—and their bodies being consigned to the dust among the abodes of their brethren, their graves are so many memorials of their virtues."

In contemplating systems of equality, we are apt to regard them as a state of society where men of different habits and dispositions, the ignorant and the learned, are compelled to live together. This however is an erroneous idea of the "New View of Society," which does not suppose a change to be immediately effected, (for such a change would be utterly impracticable,) but rather a community of individuals who have been trained from childhood in its principles. A very slight knowledge of human nature is sufficient to convince us, that there is no urbanity or refinement, constituting the charm of the most polished societies, which cannot by the application of proper principles be given to mankind in general, united with superior mental acquirements, and grafted upon genuine benevolence.

SECTION VI.

AMONG the more urgent reasons that might be advanced in recommendation of this plan for the relief of the destitute, there is one object which would be alone sufficient to render its immediate adoption absolutely necessary;—the asylum which a few villages (exclusively devoted to that purpose) would afford to those whose loss of character has rendered them outcasts of society.

The following list of the number of persons committed to the several gaols in the cities of London and Westminster, and in the borough of Southwark, during the year 1817, is selected from the Third Report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the Police of the Metropolis.

| | | Of whom were under 20 years of age. |
|--|--------------|--|
| Tothill Fields Prison | - 2652 | - 599 |
| New Prison, Clerkenwell | 4063 | - 679 |
| House of Correction | 3667 | 125 |
| Newgate | - 2430 | - 841 |
| Giltspur Street Prison | 5973 | - 32 |
| Giltspur Street House of Correction | - 119 | - 31 |
| Horsemonger Lane, Surrey | - 1285 | - 165 |
| Bridewell | - 263 | - 57 |
| | <hr/> 20,452 | <hr/> 2529 |

Of this number it cannot be too much to presume that, including those who were acquitted, those who have suffered the punishment of imprisonment, and convicts who have returned from transportation, there will be annually (as long as the present amount of crime continues) 15,000 thrown upon the metropolis to renew their depredations, and that three-fourths of those who are committed throughout the empire are subsequently placed under similar circumstances.

“Without friends, without character, and without the means of subsistence, what are these unhappy mortals to do? they are no sooner known or suspected, than they are avoided. No person will employ them, even if they were disposed to return to the paths of honesty; unless they make use of fraud and deception, by concealing that they have been the inhabitants of a prison, or of the hulks.”
—*Colquhoun*.

It is usual for the magistrates and judges, upon dismissing individuals who have been charged with criminal offences, but who escape through some informality in the proceedings, to give them a suitable admonition, urging them to take warning from the unhappy situation into which they had brought themselves, and to pursue a different course in future. And no reflecting person who has witnessed the fidelity and feeling manner with which the judges discharge this duty, but must have lamented that

society has so long neglected to provide the means which can alone enable persons whose integrity is suspected, to follow such advice. How seldom does it occur that any individual will take into his service one who has been arraigned at the bar of a court of justice! and yet with the knowledge of this fact, we have only one institution applicable to that defect in the constitution of society, "The Refuge for the Destitute," which accommodates from seventy to eighty persons.

When it is recollected that most of the evils pointed out in the celebrated work of Mr. Buxton, on "Prison Discipline," had long before been exposed by a Howard and a Neild, and yet remained a monument of disgrace to this country, although the remedy was obvious and æconomical, easy of application, and of real benefit to society at large, we might be apt to despair of exciting the attention of the world to other evils which have been long erroneously considered as inseparable from sublunary affairs. On the other hand, it may be observed that the magnitude of our present disorders has at last roused the attention not only of the legislature, but of all classes of society; that there is an active spirit of benevolence abroad, not likely to subside until some permanent good is effected; and that the public mind is too far advanced to permit the final rejection of any plan for the amelioration of the poor, before it has undergone a complete examination.

About the period when science has brought to light such improvements in the application of mechanism as offer in a great degree a substitute for human labour, greater facilities have been discovered for improving more generally and more rapidly the intellectual faculties of man; first by the inventions of Dr. Bell and of Mr. Lancaster, and since by the labours of Pestalozzi and of Fellenberg. And although it is only by the rising generation that the full benefit of these discoveries can be experienced, yet the humane exertions of Mrs. Fry have proved that much may be accomplished for adults the most neglected and depraved. It has been reserved for the comprehensive arrangements in the "villages of mutual co-operation," to combine and reduce to practice all the recent scientific improvements in the arts of life and in our systems of education; to illustrate those important truths that have been developed in the present æra of moral and political philosophy, and which promise to dispel every exclusive view of party, sect, or country.

I cannot conclude these Remarks without observing that the Benevolent Society lately established in Holland and now in active operation, has for its object the formation of colonies in the northern provinces, upon a principle closely resembling that of Mr. Owen's plan. Prince Frederick the

King's second son is the patron. The following account of it appeared in some of the Dutch paper in the month of November.

"Lands have been purchased on the borders of the Overysse, and the necessary materials collected for building fifty-seven houses. The funds necessary for this purpose have been raised by associations of charitable individuals. With a view of extending the operation of this scheme, sub-committees are appointed in 80 different towns; and it is said that 100 committees of the same kind will soon be in activity throughout the whole extent of the northern provinces. The society already consists of 17,000 members. Twenty of the houses intended for the colony are in a state of forwardness; the ground for the remainder is marked, out and the foundations laid. The whole estate will in a few days be surrounded by a deep ditch, and they have already advanced in the necessary agricultural operation."

APPENDIX.

The following is a list of the number of persons charged with criminal offences committed to the several gaols in the cities of London and Westminster, and county of Middlesex, the borough of Southwark and county of Surrey, for each of the last seven years.

To give an instance of this power, there is machinery at work in one establishment in this country, which produces as much as the existing population of Scotland could manure, and after the mode in common practice fifty years ago, and Great Britain contains several such establishments.

M. O. W. Report to the Committee of the House of Commons.

APPENDIX.

A.

The following is a list of the number of persons charged with criminal offences, committed to the several gaols in the cities of London and Westminster, and county of Middlesex, the borough of Southwark and county of Surrey, for trial in the last seven years.

1811 — 1690

1812 — 1959

1813 — 1986

1814 — 1901

1815 — 2299

1816 — 2592

1817 — 3177

B:

“To give an instance of this power, there is machinery at work in one establishment in this country, aided by a population not exceeding 2500 souls, which produces as much as the existing population of Scotland could manufacture, after the mode in common practice fifty years ago! and Great Britain contains several such establishments!”

See Mr. Owen's Report to the Committee
of the House of Commons.

A Printing Press has lately been invented, by the use of which seven-eighths of human labour are saved.

By Machines now in very general use in the manufacture of paper, the labour of one man yields as much as that of ten upon the former mode.

Leather, Woollens, Cottons, and almost every article of wearing apparel, are now made by machinery.

C.

“Beside the production of provision, there remains to be considered the distribution.—It is in vain that provisions abound in the country, unless I be able to obtain a share of them. This reflection belongs to every individual. The plenty of provision produced, the quantity of the public stock, affords subsistence to individuals, and encouragement to the formation of families, only in proportion as it is *distributed*, that is, in proportion as these individuals are allowed to draw from it a supply of their own wants. The *distribution*, therefore, becomes of equal consequence to population with the *production*. Now, there is but one principle of distribution that can ever become universal, namely the principle of ‘exchange,’ or in other words, that every man have something to give in return for what he wants. Bounty, however it may come in aid of another principle, however it may occasionally qualify the rigour, or supply the imperfection, of an established rule of distribution, can never itself become that rule or principle; because men will not work to give the produce of their labour away. Moreover, the only equivalents that can be offered in exchange for provision are

power and *labour*. All property is *power*. What we call property in land, is the power to use it, and to exclude others from the use. Money is the representative of *power*, because it is convertible into power: the value of it consists in its faculty of procuring *power* over things and persons. But *power* which results from civil conventions (and of this kind is what we call a man's fortune or estate) is necessarily confined to a few, and is withal soon exhausted: whereas the capacity of *labour* is every man's natural possession, and composes a constant and renewing fund. The hire, therefore, or produce of personal industry, is that which the bulk of every community must bring to market, in exchange for the means of subsistence: in other words, employment must in every country be the medium of distribution, and the source of supply to individuals. But when we consider the *production* and *distribution* of provision, as distinct from, and independent of, each other; when, supposing the same quantity to be produced, we inquire in what way, or according to what rule, it may be *distributed*,—we are led to a conception of the subject not at all agreeable to truth and reality: though provision must be produced before it be distributed, yet the production depends in a great measure upon the distribution. The quantity of provision raised out of the ground, so far as the raising of it requires human art or labour, will evidently be regulated by the demand; or, in other words, the price and sale, being that which alone rewards the care, or excites the diligence, of the husbandman. But the sale of provision depends upon the number, not of those who want, but of those who have something to offer in return for what they want; not of those who would consume, but of those who can buy; that is, upon the number of those who have the fruits of some other

kind of industry to tender in exchange for what they stand in need of from the production of the soil.

“We see, therefore, the connexion between population and *employment*. Employment affects population ‘directly,’ as it affords the only medium of distribution by which individuals can obtain from the common stock a supply for the wants of their families: it affects population ‘indirectly,’ as it augments the stock itself of provision, in the only way by which the production of it can be effectually encouraged,—by furnishing purchasers. No man can purchase without an equivalent; and that equivalent, by the generality of the people, must in every country be derived from employment.”

PALEY’s Moral Philosophy, vol. ii. p. 366,

D.

Letter of Sir JOHN SINCLAIR to the Chairman of the Committee on the Poor Laws.

SIR,

THE difficulty of finding employment for the poor has necessarily attracted the attention of the public at the present moment. It was, therefore, with much pleasure I learnt, that a system had been adopted in Kent (the hiring of parochial farms and employing the poor in working them), which was attended with such success, that it might probably be advisable to extend the plan to every other district in the kingdom, where any difficulty in finding employment for the poor was experienced.

In order to be satisfied of the practicability and the utility of the system, I resolved to visit the farms of two parishes, in whose neighbourhood I happened to be, and where the plan has been tried for some years; and I now propose to lay before the public the substance of the information thus obtained.

The first farm I saw was that of Beaconhill, in the parish of Benenden, which has been occupied as a parish farm for ten years. The extent is about 86 acres; the rent 62*l.* 16*s.* but some other fields being also hired by the parish, the whole rent paid is 111*l.* 16*s.* On the farm of Beaconhill, one team of four horses is kept. Fifteen acres are in wheat, and as much in spring corn; six acres in hops. The farm is at some distance from the poor-house, and is cultivated, not as subservient to that great object, the furnishing of healthy employment to the poor, but in the style of common farming, with the view of diminishing, by means of the profit it yields, the burthen of the poor rates. It is proper, however, to remark, that till of late there was rather a scarcity of labourers than of work, in that neighbourhood; and since that circumstance has been reversed, some extra hands have been employed on the farm.

The following is an account of the net profits arising from the farm of Beaconhill, for three years, ending at Michaelmas 1816:

| | | |
|--|---|---------------|
| Profit anno 1814, carried to the credit of | } | 200 <i>l.</i> |
| the poor rates | | |
| Ditto anno 1815 | | 200 |
| Ditto anno 1816 | | 160 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | 560 <i>l.</i> |

Average 186*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*

In the parish of Cranbrook, which is situated about 50 miles from London, on the road to Tenterden, the plan of parochial farming is undertaken on a much greater scale; two farms being hired, contiguous to each other, the extent and rent of which are as follow:

| | Extent in acres. | Rent. |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Sissinghurst Castle farm, | 360 | 318/. |
| Brick-kiln ditto . . . | 139 | 130 |
| | <hr/> 499 | <hr/> 448/. |

There are on these farms, three teams, consisting of eight horses and eight working bullocks; also eight milch cows; eight fattening beasts, one hundred sheep, and hogs capable of furnishing 400 stone of pork for the use of the poor-house. This year the arable land was cultivated in the following manner:

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Wheat | 45 acres |
| Lent Corn . . . | 70 |
| Hops | 23 |
| Potatoes . . . | 4 |
| Turnips | 2 |
| Fallow | 35 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total | 179 |

About twenty acres are in permanent meadow; the rest of the land is in pasture, or in woods attached to the farm, which not only supply the house with fuel, but with poles for the hops.

Sissinghurst Castle is an old mansion-house, which furnishes accommodation capable of holding above 100 poor persons; but with that number it is rather crowded. There are now in it about 88 paupers, of which 24 are children. It is necessary to purchase some butcher-meat and malt,

but the farm supplies most of the other articles necessary for the subsistence of the people. Mr. Epps, the overseer of the poor-house, who seems to be an intelligent person, assured me, that, so far as he could judge, the plan of renting parochial farms was by far the best system to be adopted for the advantage of the poor in country parishes; the girls being taught to milk cows, and the boys to plough and drive the team, and other operations of husbandry; and that in consequence of these acquisitions, they get into service at an earlier age than would otherwise be the case: both young and old also enjoy an excellent state of health, from the pure and wholesome air they breathe, and the other advantages of a country life.

The farm of Sissinghurst has been for above 21 years in the occupation of the parish; and a new lease to that extent has been lately entered into. It is managed by a bailiff, under the direction of a committee of the neighbouring gentlemen, in whose names the farm was taken, and who are responsible for the rent.

The accounts of the farms and the general expenses of the parish are so blended together, it was impossible to obtain an accurate statement of the profit arising from the land thus occupied; but the parish officers informed me, that the poor rates in the parish of Cranbrook were only at the rate of 8s. in the pound; whilst in the neighbouring parishes they were, in several instances, 14s. or 15s., and in some parishes, at no great distance, even still higher. They had no doubt, however, that had it not been for the profits of the farm, the poor rates would have been at least 12s. in the pound. The total amount of those rates in the parish of Cranbrook amounts to 3,300l.: consequently, by the poor rates being kept down to 8s. there is a saving to the parish of 1,650l. per annum.

It may be said that, though such a plan may answer in Kent, owing to the culture of hops, which employs a number of hands, and, in particular seasons, yields great profit, yet that it may not succeed so well in other places. That culture, however, is attended with great expense, is occasionally extremely unproductive, and the profit arises from the crop being short (which was the case for the last three years), and consequently a higher price was obtained for the article. But the culture of hops can by no means be considered as essential for such establishments, and far less as a *sine qua non*; more especially if the farm were cultivated as much as possible by manual labour and in the garden style.

At a time when so many farms are likely to be unoccupied in several parts of the kingdom, and when their buildings must of course go to decay;—when such numbers of industrious labourers also complain that they can find no work, it is well worth consideration, whether the plan of parochial farms might not be undertaken in other counties besides that of Kent. This is a favourable time to try the experiment, when the rent of land is low, and the expense of stocking a farm might be accomplished by a moderate capital. The plan might be executed under the direction of an active and intelligent committee, whose time could not be more usefully or more satisfactorily employed. And it would appear, from the facts above detailed, that under such a system the expense of one half of the poor rates, that would otherwise be necessary, might be saved, and the poor furnished with a healthy and useful employment.

I am, sir,
Your very obedient servant,
JOHN SINCLAIR.

* * * In the Suffolk Report, 3d edition, p. 234, there is an account of "The Houses of Industry" erected in that district, several of which have land attached to them, to the extent of from five to forty-five acres, generally in pasture; but in one case, that of Wangford hundred, twenty-seven acres are arable. There does not seem, however, to have been any idea of renting farms for the benefit of the poor rates, or the employment of the poor.

THE END.

Houses of the Oireachtas