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AN ESSAY

UPON

THE UNION OF AGRICULTURE
AND MANUFACTURES,

AND UPON THE

ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages constitute the Introductory Essay to "An Outline of the various Social Systems and Communities which have been founded on the principle of Co-operation," and as it is thought that it may probably interest, from the more general nature of the subject, a larger class of readers than the work of which it forms a part, it has been printed separately, that its cheapness may give it an increased circulation.

Coventry, April 23, 1844.

AN ESSAY, &c.

“In the youth of a State,” says Lord Bacon, “arms do flourish; in the middle age of a State, learning; and then both of them together for a time: in the declining age of a State, mechanical arts and merchandise.” Proud and eminent as is the position of Britain at the present time, at the head of the wealth and civilization of the world, there is quite enough in the internal condition of the country to make us pause and ask whether the policy we have been pursuing for the last half century is sound, or whether the present reign of commerce and of the mechanical arts does not really point to a *declining age*? The late long-continued and widely-spread distress we know is commonly regarded as a mere temporary derangement of commerce, which will be less liable to recur according as we are willing to adopt a sound commercial policy and to give free and unfettered scope to the capital and industry of the country. Most men have their recipe, all sufficient, for our continued welfare and prosperity, and look upon our present position as only the commencement of a career of unparalleled greatness: there are those, however, who think that, even if we would maintain our position, we must change our policy, and who see

in the revelations which have been made respecting the condition of our labouring population, serious cause for alarm, if not the elements of a decline and fall.

The late distress has not been without its compensation if it has only tended to call the attention of politicians and philanthropists of all parties and opinions to the subject. Much valuable statistical information has been collected upon this 'Condition of England question,' and volumes and essays innumerable have been written upon the National Distress, its Causes and Remedies, and the inferences drawn by most of the writers may be sound as far as they go; nevertheless we fear that the remedies suggested would be but partial in their operation, producing only temporary improvement, and that twenty or thirty years hence may find us in a worse position than at present.

But Britain is omnipotent, her capital, colonies, and intelligence unbounded;—where then lies the danger? In the absence of moral and religious principle, and in the cold, dead, calculating, business-like selfishness which accompanies that intelligence, and in the condition of the working classes who constitute the great majority of the people. Take the evidence of Mr. S. Laing, jun., in his "Prize Essay." He says, "We now proceed to recapitulate briefly the result at which we have arrived in the preceding inquiry. The main fact which strikes us is the existence of a vast mass of extreme destitution and abject degradation, by the side of enormous wealth, rapid material progress, national greatness and security, and all the usual symptoms of a flourishing civilization. On examining more minutely the details furnished by recent evidence and

statistical returns, we find this destitution and degradation to be at the same time more intense and more extensive than could have been believed possible. In all our large cities and populous manufacturing districts a very large proportion of the population are living either without any certain means of subsistence, or upon wages utterly inadequate to maintain a decent existence, while among those whose earnings are sufficient to support them in respectability, thousands are reduced by intemperance, improvidence, and the vices resulting from ignorance and the absence of moral and religious principle, to the standard of the starving beggar and prostitute. This squalid mass of misery, fostered by neglect, multiplying by its own inherent tendency, and swollen by the continual influx of Irish immigrants, rural labourers in search of employment, and manufacturing operatives reduced to poverty by strikes, improvements in machinery, and vicissitudes in trade, advances continually; and, although ravaged by the typhus fever, or decimated by a frightful mortality, encroaches more and more on the boundaries of civilization, threatening to sweep away the whole fabric of society in a deluge of barbarism. Nor is the evil confined to towns; on the contrary, we find an appalling amount of pauperism in many of the rural districts, and have distinct evidence that the bulk of the agricultural population are barely able to support families, and utterly unable to provide against sickness, old age, and fluctuations in employment. Among the other classes of the labouring population we find less physical want, but too frequently gross and heathen ignorance, intemperance, improvidence, and a dangerous feeling

of exasperation against the higher classes. On the whole, we have seen reason to believe that not less than a fifth or sixth part of the total population exist in a state of destitution and want, depending, in a great measure, either on public or private charity, or on criminal resources, for a part of their support, while another numerous class are just able to maintain themselves on the brink of this gulf of pauperism, while enjoying health and strength, and in full employment, with the certainty of falling back into it with the first accident which renders their daily labour no longer a marketable commodity. * * * The labouring population, ground down in the unequal conflict between capital and labour, and demoralized alike by the neglect and by the example of the upper classes, have taken the only effectual method of revenging themselves, that of multiplying their numbers and threatening society with an increasing mass of misery and want. Distress, spreading more and more widely, is invading fresh classes, and with each recurring paroxysm of trade and period of commercial depression, is threatening to engulf those who have hitherto escaped its ravages. Society, awakening from the dreams of a new golden age to be realized by mechanical inventions, march of intellect, accumulation of capital, and sound political economy, finds itself compelled by a terrible necessity to abandon the system of *laissez-faire*, and to embark in a struggle for life or death with the elements of disorganization and ruin."

We do not think this picture can be said to be exaggerated by those who have carefully examined the

evidence upon which it is founded, and who have seen the results of the investigation of the various Parliamentary Commissioners into the condition of the people employed in certain departments of industry, and into the general sanitary condition of our working population. It is not our intention to dwell upon such well-known evidence, but to examine into the causes of this distress, and to endeavour to show the necessarily partial character of the remedies ordinarily proposed, and to which the nation is now trusting.

The population of Great Britain is about eighteen millions. The average rate of increase of the whole population is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. Taking the census of 1831, with the ordinary rate of increase added, the inhabitants may be divided into

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Occupiers of land, employing and not employing Labourers | 409,260 |
| Capitalists, Bankers, Professional, and other educated men | 246,530 |
| Employed in Retail Trade, or in Handi- craft, as Masters or Workmen . . . | 1,333,837 |
| Labourers and Operatives employed in Agriculture and Manufactures . . . | 3,135,299.* |

And again, "the returns of the Income Tax in 1812, showed in Great Britain

| | |
|--|--------------|
| 127,000 persons with an income from £50 to £200 | |
| 22,000 | 200 to 1000 |
| 3,000 | 1000 to 5000 |
| 600 | above 5000 |
| <hr/> 152,600 persons in all, possessing an income above | |

* Porter's Progress of the Nation, sec. 1, p. 53.

£50 a-year; or 600,000 souls dependent upon persons in that situation. Of these the great majority unquestionably derived their incomes from professions or trades, and not from realized property. To so small a number is the immense wealth of Britain confined. The number is now greatly increased, but probably does not exceed 300,000. Mr. Colquhoun calculates the number of persons who can live without daily labour, that is, of independent fortune, at 47,000, and their families at 234,000; or, including bankers, merchants, and others, who unite industrial profits to the returns of property, 60,000, and their families 300,000. On the other hand there are 3,440,000 heads of families, and, 16,800,000 persons living on their daily labour. The paupers, criminals, and vagrants, alone, are 1,800,000." Colquhoun, 107, 111, and Baron de Stael, 54.*

"These facts," says Mr. Alison, (from whose work on Population we have quoted the above,) "are deserving the most serious consideration. They indicate a state of society, which is, to say the least, extremely alarming, and which, in ancient times, would have been the sure forerunner of national decline."

These statements slightly differ, but they furnish

* Additional evidence of the exceedingly small number of wealthy persons at the present time is furnished by the returns of the assessed taxes, which show only 26,861 private four-wheeled carriages, 108,090 male servants, and 32,404 persons charged for armorial bearings. The returns of the national debt for 1839, show that out of 280,869 persons entitled to dividends, only 4,523 receive between £200 and £300 per annum; 2,759 receive £300 to £500; 1,337 receive £500 to £1,000; 384 receive £1,000 to £2,000; 192 receive sums exceeding £2,000.

abundant evidence that at least three-fourths of our whole population are dependent upon *wages* alone for a subsistence. Now, upon what will the condition of the great body of the people, of this numerous class who live by the wages of labour, depend? What say the Political Economists? "In the greater number of cases," says Mill,* "especially in the more improved stages of society, the labourer is one person, the owner of the capital another. The labourer has neither raw materials nor tools. These requisites are provided for him by the capitalist. For making this provision the capitalist of course expects a reward. As the commodity, which was produced by the shoemaker, when the capital was his own, belonged wholly to himself, and constituted the whole of his reward, both as labourer and capitalist, so, in this case, the commodity belongs to the labourer and capitalist together. When prepared, the commodity, or the value of it, is to be shared between them. The reward to both must be derived from the commodity, and the reward of both makes up the whole of the commodity. Instead, however, of waiting till the commodity is produced, and abiding all the delay and uncertainties of the market in which the value of it is realized, it has been found to suit much better the convenience of the labourers to receive their share in advance. The shape under which it has been most convenient for all parties that they should receive it, is that of wages. When that share of the commodity which belongs to the labourer has been all received in the shape of wages,

* Elements of Political Economy.

the commodity itself belongs to the capitalist, he having in reality, bought the share of the labourer and paid for it in advance."

What is it, however, that determines the workman's share of that which has thus become joint produce? The demand for such labour, and the supply,—i. e. the work to be done and the number of hands to do it. "Let us begin by supposing," says Mr. Mill, "that there is a certain number of capitalists, with a certain quantity of food, raw materials, and instruments, or machinery; that there is also a certain number of labourers; and that the proportion in which the commodities produced are divided between them, has fixed itself at some particular point.

"Let us next suppose, that the labourers have increased in number one-half, without any increase in the quantity of capital. There is the same quantity of the requisites for the employment of labour; that is, of food, tools, and materials, as there was before; but for every 100 labourers there are now 150. There will be fifty men, therefore, in danger of being left out of employment. To prevent their being left out of employment they have but one resource; they must endeavour to supplant those who have forestalled the employment; that is, they must offer to work for a smaller reward—wages, therefore, decline."

"If we suppose, on the other hand, that the quantity of capital has increased while the number of labourers remain the same, the effect will be reversed. The capitalists have a greater quantity than before of the means of employment, of capital in short, from which they wish to derive advantage. To derive this

advantage they must have more labourers. To obtain them, they have but one resource, to offer higher wages. But the masters by whom the labourers are now employed are in the same predicament, and will of course offer higher, to induce them to remain. This competition is unavoidable, and the necessary effect of it is a rise of wages."

"From this law, clearly understood, it is easy to trace the circumstances which, in any country, determine the condition of the great body of the people. If that condition is easy and comfortable, all that is necessary to keep it so is to make capital increase as fast as population; or on the other hand, to prevent population from increasing faster than capital. If that condition is not easy and comfortable, it can only be made so by one of two methods; either by quickening the rate at which capital increases, or retarding the rate at which population increases; augmenting, in short, the ratio which the means of employing the people bear to the number of people."

"If it were the natural tendency of capital to increase faster than population, there would be no difficulty in preserving a prosperous condition of the people. If, on the other hand, it were the natural tendency of population to increase faster than capital, the difficulty would be very great; there would be a perpetual tendency in wages to fall; the progressive fall of wages would produce a greater and a greater degree of poverty among the people, attended with its inevitable consequences, misery and vice. As poverty and its consequent misery increased, mortality would also increase. Of a numerous family born, a certain number only,

from want of the means of well-being, would be reared. By whatever proportion the population tended to increase faster than capital, such a proportion of those that were born would die: the ratio of increase in capital and population would then remain the same, and the fall of wages would proceed no farther.

“That population has a tendency to increase faster than, in most places, capital has actually increased, is proved, incontestibly, by the condition of the people in most parts of the globe. In almost all countries the condition of the great body of the people is poor and miserable. This would have been impossible if capital had increased faster than population. In that case wages must have risen, and high wages would have placed the labourer above the miseries of want.”

“This general misery of mankind is a fact which can be accounted for upon one only of two suppositions: either that there is a natural tendency in population to increase faster than capital, or that capital has, by some means, been prevented from increasing so fast as it has a tendency to increase. This, therefore, is an inquiry of the highest importance.”

It is doubtless true that competition decides the share of the labourer, i. e. his rate of wages, and so great is the tendency for the supply of labour to increase faster than the demand for it, and so fluctuating is the demand even in the most prosperous times, that in all cases in which the labourer is dependent upon wages alone, his average means of living seldom rise above the extreme point of civilized subsistence. Not only does the evidence collected in both the agricultural and manufacturing districts prove this, but also, that

the tendency is constantly to sink wages even below the point of anything that may be called civilized subsistence, and to produce the appalling results already quoted from Mr. Laing, to which we shall only add a few facts in confirmation. The weak in body or mind are unable to bear up in the struggle for mere subsistence; they give up the effort, and fall upon the country for support: thus the paupers relieved in 1842 were 1,429,356, at a cost of £4,911,498. Not only these, but the morally weak also live upon their country in another way, for there is evidence to show that our criminal and vagrant population constitute at least another million. "The following analysis of the population of Leeds, given by E. Baker, Esq., in the *Sanitary Reports*, and quoted by Mr. Laing, will furnish instructive information as to the general state of society and composition of the population of a manufacturing town:—

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Persons having sedentary occupations ... | 1,586 |
| Persons having perambulatory occupations | 967 |
| Professions | 292 |
| Merchants | 427 |
| Persons working in mines | 130 |
| General out-door labour and handicraft ... | 3,988 |
| In-door labour and handicraft | 13,455 |
| Dyers | 665 |
| In trade | 2,799 |
| Not in business | 1,905 |
| Persons under fifteen years of age without occupations | 31,056 |
| Other persons without occupations | 21,990 |
| Persons employed in manufacture | 8,363 |
| Total | 87,613 |

“ This document shows one most remarkable fact— that in the great manufacturing town of Leeds considerably more than *a third of the whole adult population* have no regular occupation. Imagine the condition of a poor family, in a large town, without regular employment. How do they exist? By occasional job-work, by sending their children to factories, or into the streets to beg, by hawking petty articles for sale, by casual charity—especially of those who are only one degree better off than themselves. With such resources can we wonder that no cellar or lodging-house is too unhealthy or disgusting to fail in finding nightly its twenty or thirty occupants? Can we wonder that pilfering and prostitution are habitually resorted to as means of eking out a wretched existence? Deficient as we are in the means of ascertaining the occupations and modes of living of the mass of our town population, there is still sufficient evidence to show that the same state of things exists in other large cities which we have seen in Leeds.”*

“ In Manchester, Dr. Kay gives nearly a similar description of a large district; and in Liverpool we have seen that at least a fifth of the whole population are distributed between the cellars and lodging-houses. In Birmingham, which is, in many respects, very superior to the average of manufacturing towns, we have seen that 374 lodging-houses are devoted to the reception of a loose population of Irish and mendicants, and that 228 houses are known as the resort of thieves,

* In 1836, a Committee of the Liverpool Corporation reported the number of criminals in that town alone to be above 30,520, and their annual earnings by crime more than £734,240.

with an average number of twelve thieves resorting daily to each house. In the metropolis, large districts, such as St. Giles's, are inhabited by a population who have no settled occupation, and who subsist by the resources above described. The total number of persons taken into custody by the Metropolitan Police in the year 1839, was 65,965, or, deducting 21,269 cases of drunkenness, 44,696, of which 14,315 were for larceny and other offences against property without violence, 3,154 prostitutes, 3,780 vagrants, and 11,370 disorderly and suspicious characters. These facts appear to establish incontestibly the result, that a large proportion of the dense masses of population crowded together in the low districts of our large towns have absolutely no regular and recognized occupations, and live, as it were, as outlaws upon society."

The following account of Glasgow may help to show that increase of trade, commonly called prosperity, will not alone remedy the evils consequent upon the competition to which the working classes are subjected. "The city of Glasgow," says Mr. Alison, vol. 2, p. 87, "exhibits so extraordinary an example, during the last fifty years, of the progress of population, opulence, and all the external symptoms of prosperity, and at the same time of the utter inadequacy of all these resources to keep pace either with the moral or spiritual wants of the people, or provide adequate funds for the alleviation of their distresses, that it is deserving of particular consideration."

"It appears from Dr. Ackland's admirable Statistics of Glasgow, that Population, Custom-House Duties, Harbour Dues, and Post Office Revenue of the City,

have stood, in the undermentioned years, as follows :—

| Years. | Population. | Custom-House Duties. | | | Harbour Dues. | | | Post Office. £. |
|----------|-------------|----------------------|----|----|---------------|-------|----|--------------------|
| | | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. | |
| 1770 .. | 31,000 | | | | 149 | 0 | 10 | ... 33,771 |
| 1801 ... | 83,769 ... | 3,124 | | | in 1812, | 3,319 | 16 | 1 ... 23,328 |
| 1831 ... | 202,426 ... | 72,053 | 17 | 4 | ... 20,296 | 18 | 5 | .. 35,642 |
| 1839 ... | 290,000 ... | 468,974 | 12 | 2 | ... 45,287 | 16 | 10 | ... 47,527 |

“ This prodigious increase is perhaps unprecedented in any other country in Europe during the same or perhaps any other period.”

“ Glasgow exhibits,” says the able and indefatigable Dr. Cowan, “ a frightful state of mortality, unequalled, perhaps, in any city in Britain. The prevalence of fever presents obstacles to the promotion of social improvement among the lower classes, and is productive of an amount of human misery credible only to those who have witnessed it.” (Cowan's Vital Statistics of Glasgow, p. 14.) The extraordinary progress of mortality, which has, as already shown, declined from one in forty-one in 1823, to one in twenty-four in 1837, while the annual average mortality in London is about one in thirty-six, and over all England one in fifty-one, affords too melancholy a confirmation of this observation. And the following is the account given of the Glasgow poor, by a very intelligent observer, Mr. Symonds, the Government Commissioner for examining into the condition of the hand-loom weavers :—“ The wynds in Glasgow comprise a fluctuating population of from 15,000 to 30,000 persons. This quarter consists of a labyrinth of lanes, out of which numberless entrances lead into small square courts, each with a dung-hill reeking in the centre. Revolting as was the outward appearance of these places, I was little

prepared for the filth and destitution within. In some of these lodging rooms, (visited at night,) we found a whole lair of human beings littered along the floor, sometimes fifteen or twenty, some clothed and some naked; men, women, and children, huddled promiscuously together. Their bed consisted of a layer of musty straw, intermixed with rags. There was generally little or no furniture in these places; the sole article of comfort was a fire. Thieving and prostitution constitute the main sources of the revenue of this population. No pains seem to be taken to purge this Augean pandemonium; this nucleus of crime, filth and pestilence, existing in the centre of the second city of the empire. These wynds constitute the St. Giles of Glasgow; but I owe an apology to the metropolitan pandemonium for the comparison. A very extensive inspection of the lowest districts of other places, both here and on the Continent, never presented anything one-half so bad, either in intensity of pestilence, physical and moral, or in extent proportioned to the population." *Arts and Artizans at Home and Abroad*, p. 116.

Again, Mr. Alison says, vol. 1, p. 290, "Of all the effects which the progress of civilization produces, there is none so deplorable as the degradation of the human character which arises from the habits of the manufacturing classes. The assemblage of large bodies of men in one place; the close confinement to which they are subjected; the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes at an early period of life; and the debasement of intellect which arises from uniformity of occupation, all conspire to degrade and corrupt mankind. Persons unacquainted with the manners of the lower orders in

the great manufacturing cities of Britain, can form no adequate conception of the habits which prevail among them. In Glasgow, at this moment, (1840,) there are 3010 public-houses among 290,000 persons included in 58,000 families; being nearly one public-house for every 20 families. The number of inhabited houses is about 30,000, so that every tenth house is appropriated to the sale of spirits; a proportion unexampled, it is believed, in any other city of the globe. This number has risen from 1600 since the year 1821, though not more than 140,000 souls have been, during the same period, added to the population. Seasons of adversity lead to no improvement in the habits of these workmen; the recurrence of prosperity brings with it the usual attendants of profligacy and intemperance. Ten or twenty thousand workmen more or less intoxicated every Saturday, and for the most of Sunday; every farthing which can be spared is too often converted into ardent spirits. The same individuals who, a year before, were reduced to pawn their last shreds of furniture to procure subsistence, recklessly throw away the surplus earnings of more prosperous times in the lowest debauchery. The warnings of religion, the dictates of prudence, the means of instruction, the lessons of adversity, are alike overwhelmed by the passion for momentary gratification. It seems the peculiar effect of such debasing employments, to render the condition of men precarious at the same time that it makes their habits irregular: to subject them at once to the most trying fluctuations of condition, and the most fatal improvidence of character."

The character of the Glasgow weavers, which once

stood deservedly high, has been sadly deteriorated. In the admirable report of the suburban Burgh of Calton, presented to the British Association by Mr. Rutherglen, a Magistrate of that Burgh, we find the following remarks:—

“From personal experience,” says the Secretary to the Glasgow Statistical Society, “as well as from the information of others intimately acquainted with the subject, the writer is able to state, that the religious, moral, and intellectual condition of the weavers was long of a very high grade; and even yet the writer is of the opinion that the elder portion of them ranks higher in these respects than any other class of tradesmen. But as poverty prevents many of them from attending public worship, and still more, from educating their children, there cannot be a doubt that their character is fast deteriorating, and that their children will be in a still more deplorable condition. There is a series of crimes, or, as they are more gently called, embezzlements, carried on both in the city of Glasgow and suburban districts, to an alarming extent, and which are attended with very baneful effects, and indeed it is impossible to form an idea of the amount of property, in pig and scrap iron, nails, brass, &c., stolen in this way. A gentleman who has had much experience in the tracing of these cases, has given it as his opinion, that at the Broomielaw, and on its way for shipment, five hundred tons of pig iron alone are pilfered; and he calculates that in the above articles upwards of four thousand pounds value passes into the hands of these delinquents yearly, without even a chance of their being punished. Another of these

class of embezzlements is that well known under the name of the *bowl weft* system, generally carried on by weavers, winders, and others employed by manufacturers, and consists of the embezzlement of cotton yarns, silks, &c., which are sold to a small class of manufacturers, who, in consequence of purchasing this material at a greatly reduced price, get up their stuffs at a cost that enables them to undersell the honest manufacturer; and indeed, in hundreds of cases he has to compete with the low-priced goods made from the material pilfered from his own warehouse, or embezzled by his own out-door workers; and it is to be regretted, that this class of *corks* should always find, even among respectable merchants, a ready market for their goods. A gentleman who employs somewhere about 2000 out-door workers, and admits that his calculation is moderate, allows one penny each man per day as his loss from this system;—it is believed from fifty thousand to sixty thousand pounds per annum would not cover the value of articles pilfered in this way within the Parliamentary bounds of this city.” (Dr. A. C. Taylor’s *Moral Economy of Large Towns.*)

This we regard as a natural consequence where men are reduced, even in a good time of trade, very nearly to the lowest rate of wages at which they can live, and in bad and fluctuating times are driven below this rate, so that they are compelled either to beg, steal, or go to the workhouse. There may be circumstances peculiar to Glasgow which in that city aggravate the naturally demoralizing tendency of poverty and misery; such as the vast accumulation of idle and dissolute persons from the Highlands and other parts of Scot-

land, and the great influx of the Irish poor: nevertheless, the statistics of other large manufacturing towns show that with only a few characteristic differences, Glasgow furnishes a fair illustration of the operation of the manufacturing system upon the condition of the great majority of the people. Its tendency, as there represented, is to the enormous accumulation of wealth among the few, and the vast increase in the numbers of the many, whom the low rate of wages keep always poor and liable to the appalling distress such as the last few years have witnessed. There is no doubt another side to the picture, and even in Glasgow might be pointed out a great number of provident, industrious operatives, whose condition is far above that of the same class in Scotland a hundred years ago; but there is reason to fear that these form the exception, and that whenever vast numbers of the working classes are crowded together in large towns—tied down for the greater part of their lives to one unintellectual employment—the majority will always be ignorant, reckless, and immoral.

Mr. Laing says “the destitution and misery, of whose extreme condition we have endeavoured to trace a faithful picture, has already swallowed up a great mass of our labouring population, and is rapidly encroaching upon a still larger mass, who are approximating more and more towards it, and whose condition is becoming every day more and more precarious. In short, with the exception of a comparatively small number of skilled labourers and artizans, there is too much reason to fear that if the causes which have operated for the last fifty, and with increased force for

the last fifteen or twenty years, be allowed to operate unchecked for a few years more, the great bulk of the labouring population of England will be reduced to a condition which leaves no alternative between a violent and bloody revolution, shattering the whole existing frame-work of society to pieces, or a permanent degradation of the population to a state of abject and heart-broken resignation to misery, which almost reduces the human being to a level with the brute."

The constant supply of labour beyond the demand is a fact requiring explanation. That "population presses upon the means of subsistence," is a common phrase with the politicians of the present day, to account for all cases of general or particular distress; and it is very true, as it is only a wise way of saying that people are starving for the want of something to eat; but by many it is intended to express the Malthusian doctrine that "there is a *natural* tendency in population to increase faster than capital, and that forcible means employed to make capital increase faster than its natural tendency, would not produce desirable effects." If all were placed in a state of physical comfort, if the natural checks upon population, of want, misery, and crime were withdrawn, numbers, it is imagined, would soon overflow beyond all power of capital to provide for them. This is founded upon the supposition that land would give less and less return to the labour and capital bestowed upon it, so that the much-increased population would necessarily be reduced to great poverty and distress, and ultimately starve. The hypothesis of Mr. Malthus is, that population has a tendency to increase in geometrical, while subsistence can only be

made to increase in arithmetical progression; but this we think has been again and again shown to be opposed to fact. Mr. Alison, in his late work on Population, says "there is no instance in the history of the world of a country being peopled to its utmost limits, or of the multiplication of the species being checked by the impossibility of extracting an increased produce from the soil;" and that "the true question on which mankind is really interested is very different: that the main point in civilized society is not what are the productive powers of nature in the soil, but what are the means that the human race has *for getting at these powers*, and rendering them available for general happiness."* In his able work he has, we think, demonstrated that "the true relation between population and subsistence is that of *cause and effect*; that the labour of man's hands is, by the eternal law of nature, adequate to much more than his own support; that this superiority of the powers of production over those of population, is a fundamental law of his existence, which never fails him in any period of his progress, and that, so far from this superiority becoming less in the later stages of society, it is constantly becoming greater, and that it is owing to that excess that the accumulation of wealth, arts, commerce, and manufactures owe their existence."†

It is calculated by Mr. Porter that in the *present*

* Vol. 2, p. 473.

† Mr. Alison calculates that the United Kingdom might be made to keep 180,000,000 human beings, and that if the whole world were only peopled in the proportion of the British Isles at the present time, it would contain 6,600,000,000 inhabitants,—at least eight times its present population.

state of British agriculture it requires the labour of nineteen families to produce 1160 quarters of all kinds of grain, i. e., each family would produce about sixty-one quarters, which would suffice for the subsistence of fifteen families. Thus one family of agriculturists could support fifteen families of manufacturers, and the power of steam and machinery, as applicable to manufactures in this country, has been computed to be equal to 600,000,000 men; one man by the aid of steam being able to do the work that it required 250 men to accomplish fifty years ago. If such be the case, we must, we think, abandon the hypothesis "that there is a *natural* tendency in population to increase faster than capital." That capital has, by some means, been prevented from increasing so fast as it has the tendency, there can be no doubt; but an inquiry into the causes which have prevented its increase does not appear so momentous at the present time as the question by what means may that which is produced be more equally divided amongst us; since we think it must be admitted that it has not been from the want of capital in the *British Isles* that the people have suffered a dearth of employment. In Great Britain wealth flows freely in all directions in which there is even the appearance of a profitable investment. The immense sums raised during the war, the subsidies granted to any country in the world that can offer good interest and reasonable security, the money lately expended on railways, are evidence of this.* If we traverse the

* Since the year 1820, upwards of £60,000,000 of British capital has been invested in foreign loans, foreign mining companies, and other joint-stock adventures. The Canada loan, at 3½

kingdom from one end to the other, we shall not find a single department of industry in which production has been impeded from the want of capital. The theories of Political Economists on this point may be true as abstract principles, that is, they would be true if certain conditions, at present impossible, really existed; but under the actual circumstances of the world, and the arrangements of commerce, a result the very reverse of what they predicate takes place. Thus they say, "that if it were the natural tendency of capital to increase faster than population, there would be no difficulty in preserving a prosperous condition of the people:" and yet the times of peace and of the greatest commercial prosperity would seem to lead, as a direct consequence, to times of great distress. Under present circumstances, when every operation of production and interchange is clogged by some natural or artificial restriction, in proportion as capital increases, the difficulty of finding a profitable investment increases also. So, with reference to the assumed constant rise of wages with the increase of capital, we know that this rise does not take place, but the tendency seems to be in an inverse order both as regards capital and labour; for with increase of capital comes increase of competition among manufacturers, and the facts would really appear to prove, not the position

per cent., was taken at £109, and the 3 per cents. have since risen to £98. Laing, jun.

In about six years 1,700 miles of railway have been completed at a cost of £54,000,000. Report of Railway Department, 1842.

The average amount of capital which pays legacy duty *in each year* exceeds £40,000,000; in 1843, in Great Britain it was £43,393,142.

which according to the Political Economists ought to be true, but that increase of capital bears the same relation to *profit* as increased numbers among the workmen to wages: so that particular countries might become filled with produce of which no one should be at liberty to make use. Thus, capital is plentiful, production is great, and the competition among manufacturers is great in proportion;—profits are necessarily low, and the manufacturer cannot purchase. The rate of interest which determines the income of the capitalist depends upon the profits of trade and is consequently low, and the capitalist, therefore, cannot purchase. The profits of the manufacturer being low, he endeavours to live by reducing still lower the wages of the artizan, with whom to purchase is still more out of the question, and thus it is that universal abundance coexists with individual want.* Moreover,

* We have perhaps not yet sufficiently considered that steam engines consume little else besides coal, and that if we could do all our work by steam we must be content to lose the home market at least; and “with the millions no longer able to live, how can the units keep living? It is too clear the nation itself is on the way to suicidal death. Shall we say then, the world has retrograded in its talent of apportioning wages to work, in late days? The world had always a talent of that sort, better or worse. Time was when the mere *handworker* needed not announce his claim to the world by Manchester Insurrections! The world, with its wealth of nations, Supply-and-Demand and such like, has of late days been terribly inattentive to that question of work and wages. We will not say, the poor world has retrograded even here: we will say rather, the world has been rushing on with such fiery animation to get work and even more work done, it has had no time to think of dividing the wages; and has merely left them to be scrambled for by the law of the stronger, law of Supply-and-Demand, law of *Laissez-faire*, and other idle laws and un-laws,—saying, in its dire haste to get the work done, That is well enough!”

“And now the world will have to pause a little, and take up

production, although great, falls far short of what it might be ; for the manufacturer only produces so long as he can do so to a profit, and profit depends upon the scarcity, not the increased quantity of an article. With the increased quantity of goods in a market profits fall ; with a still further increase comes a loss, and production of course ceases, although two-thirds of the population may be in need of such produce. Ricardo, Say, and Mill, have denied the possibility of a glut in the general market of production, on the ground that demand and supply must be co-equal and co-extensive ; for no man will produce that which he does not want himself, unless to purchase with it what he does want from others ; and this, his want, is equal

that other side of the problem, and in right earnest strive for some solution of that. For it has become pressing. What is the use of your spun shirts ? They hang there by the million unsaleable ; and here, by the million, are diligent bare backs that can get no hold of them. Shirts are useful for covering human backs ; useless otherwise, an unbearable mockery otherwise. You have fallen terribly behind with that side of the problem ! Manchester Insurrections, French Revolutions, and thousandfold phenomena, great and small, announce loudly that you must bring it forward a little again. Never till now, in the history of an Earth which to this hour nowhere refuses to grow corn if you will plough it, to yield shirts if you will spin and weave in it, did the mere manual two-handed worker, (however it might fare with other workers,) cry in vain for such 'wages' as *he* means by "fair wages," namely, food and warmth ! The Godlike could not and cannot be paid ; but the Earthly always could. Gurth, a mere swine-herd, born thrall of Cedric the Saxon, tended pigs in the wood, and did get some parings of the pork. Why, the four-footed worker has already *got* all that this two-handed one is clamouring for ! How often must I remind you ? There is not a horse in England, able and willing to work, but *has* due food and lodging ; and goes about sleek-coated, satisfied in heart." Carlyle's "Past and Present," p. 27.

to the means he brings with him to satisfy it: this is the case with every produce, therefore demand and supply are co-extensive, for every man's demand must be limited by his supply. And yet it would be very difficult to convince the manufacturers of Paisley and Glasgow, of Manchester and Leeds, that over-production is impossible: however strong the reasoning, they would think the fact still stronger. Supply and demand are undoubtedly co-extensive, if by demand be meant the mere want of commodities; but the *ability to purchase* must accompany this want, in order, to make supply and demand keep pace together. The Economists hold that supply and demand have an equal tendency to find their level with water, it being of no importance that in the operation whole towns are ruined and whole countries half-starved. We are quite willing to concede that the principle laid down by the Political Economists ought to be true,—that they are true in the abstract; but they are altogether inapplicable to our present circumstances. If the powers of production were as great in all other countries as in our own, and a plan of exchange were devised by which an increased quantity of goods in one department could always be exchanged for an increased quantity or equivalent value of commodities required by the party producing them: that is, if it were made as easy to sell as to buy; if trade were perfectly free in all countries; if all restrictions upon commercial intercourse with the whole world were removed; if railways intersected all its lands, and steam-ships traversed all its seas; if the facility of communication with all countries equalled that between our own coun-

ties:—then, perhaps, their truths might be true in practice.*

To illustrate this subject, let us suppose that in some central situation in Great Britain a general and national emporium were established, to which every one could go and exchange whatever he produced for whatever other commodity he wanted; that an equitable standard of value was agreed upon, and that goods were produced so plentifully and in such proportions that all the necessaries of life and most of the luxuries were always to be found there; in this case, it is evident that wages would always rise as capital or the means of production increased; that there could be no such thing as over-production, since every one would produce in proportion only as he stood in need of the produce of others; and that in fact, there would be no difficulty in preserving a prosperous condition of the country, so long as such a plan of exchange could be maintained. Suppose, however, that the value of goods was determined by the cost and labour bestowed in production, and that it was resolved to release a certain privileged class—the corn producers—from half the required cost and labour. This might be done in two ways; either by allowing them to bring half the

* “It is evident that in many branches of production we have outrun the *effective* demand, that is to say, the demand of consumers *able and willing* to pay a price for our commodities, which will leave fair profits and wages to the producers. We are obliged to force sales and stimulate consumption by undue cheapness, in order to get our warehouses emptied. * * * The theory of unlimited competition and production has no chance of success, unless some second Watt can invent a steam power for multiplying consumers.” Laing’s Prize Essay, p. 135.

quantity of corn for the same return in produce, or the same quantity of corn for double produce. The effect of the first method would be—if the quantity of corn had been previously apportioned to the wants of the people—that half the people must go without bread, or the whole be furnished with only half the quantity : the effect of the second method would be, that having to give a larger amount of what they brought to market in exchange for the bread which they could not dispense with, they must forego the receipt of some other articles. Let it be supposed, therefore, that they all agreed to give up stockings and shawls, the parties that furnished these articles would find on bringing them to market that they were no longer disposable commodities ; there would consequently be a glut of stockings and shawls, i. e. a large production of stockings and shawls for which there was no market ; and the parties who produced them must starve or immediately turn their hands to some other employment. Or if, instead of this special privilege to the corn producers, the labour employed in growing the corn were by any means increased, or if a bad season caused a less return to the same amount of labour ; if the grain had to be conveyed to market over bad roads and through expensive turnpikes, instead of by water or railways—the effect would be the same—there would be less corn received for the same amount of manufactures. Again, if a part of the population hitherto employed in growing corn were to change their employment for weaving cotton ; there would then be too much cotton and too little corn ; or if cotton goods were produced in the expectation of exchanging them

for certain other goods which unforeseen circumstances had prevented from arriving, there must be a quantity of cotton left on hand, and disastrous consequences would ensue to the workman. In fact, if any of the numerous channels through which it was customary to receive the vast variety of commodities required were to be blocked up, by infectious disease, or popular commotion, or the bad and unsafe state of the roads, difficulties would immediately arise, and the conditions that were at first assumed, viz., that each should receive in exchange for that which he produced an equal value of whatever he required, would not be fulfilled. If also the standard of value by which the contract for the raw material of manufacture was entered into, differed by being higher than that by which the article manufactured would be measured, the transaction would be a losing one, and enough might not, perhaps, be received in exchange to pay for the raw material and labour. Unless all were equally industrious, all equally intelligent, and all supplied with equal capital, the conditions could not be secured; for if one individual could produce in an hour what it would take another, from the want of equal industry, intelligence, or machinery, a day to produce, it would be impossible to fix a just standard of value, and consequently, derangements would be caused in the system. In fact, if such a receptacle for goods were established in this country, and put under the control of a board of trade, it is very evident that the nicest policy would be required for its management, and that even in so confined a space it would be difficult almost to an impossibility so to adjust supply and demand that there

should not constantly be too great a supply of some articles and too little of others. And yet this perfect adjustment of supply and demand is expected to take place in the widely extended market of the world, aided and directed only by the blind impulse of individual self-interest!

The above may be said feebly to represent what is actually going on in the commercial world. A market in which each person shall be able to exchange whatever he can produce for an equal value of whatever he requires; in which it shall be as easy to sell as to buy, is the abstraction which most of the economists expect will be realized by perfect freedom of trade, which, when attained, will beautifully exemplify the truth of their propositions. We are very far, however, from the realization of such a desirable state of things at present. The instances of a perfectly free exchange of one commodity with another may be said rather to form the exception than the rule. An artificial scarcity of the first necessary of life,—bread,—is created and maintained for the supposed benefit of the landed interest: the price of sugar is doubled for the sake of the West India interest: our trade with the 100 millions in India does not exceed from four to six millions annually, because the East India interest must be attended to. In fact, on all sides we are compelled to be satisfied with lessened quantities and inferior qualities for the supposed protection of individual interests. Each has his hand in his neighbour's pocket, and fancies himself so much the richer by all that he can take from thence instead of out of his own. The wheels of commerce are clogged and impeded; in every direction

we meet restrictions, monopolies, and prohibitions. It little avails us that our own powers of production increase, and we can manufacture a much larger quantity of goods with the same amount of labour, if other countries do not make equal advances; since they can only be our customers in proportion to the amount of produce that they can give us in exchange; neither would it benefit us if other nations produce largely, if either natural or artificial obstacles prevented their goods from being brought to market. The Russian and Polish peasant feeds his pigs with his corn, because it will not pay the expense of its transport over the imperfect roads of those districts to the market of consumers; and the farmer of Ohio, although the road is open, is prevented by a heavy duty from exchanging his corn for our manufactures. The power of machinery increases, 50,000 persons are added every year to London, 9,000 to Glasgow, 8,000 to Manchester, and the population increases in other parts of the country in nearly equal proportions, and we require, therefore, constantly extending markets: and yet, those that have been hitherto open to us are perpetually closing, or we are driven from them by competition. At one time our largest customer becomes bankrupt—as America in 1836 and 1839:—another goes to war; another commences manufacturing for itself what hitherto it has required from us;—another imports our machinery and competes with us in our own market. Laissez-faire is deemed the best policy, and the enormous powers of production work blindly on; but with the constant recurrence of such disturbing causes it is quite impossible that Supply and Demand can ever

adapt themselves to each other, or that Capital can increase according to its natural tendency ; and thus flow in most of the evils incident to our present condition. "In almost all countries," says Mill, "the condition of the great body of the people is poor and miserable," and we may now plainly see the cause. It is no natural limit to the power of production—for each man could produce much more than he could consume ; neither is it the want of capital to set them to work ; but the want of the power of exchanging that which they produce, for that which they require. The mass of the people are dependent entirely upon the sale of their labour, the demand for which is subject to constant checks besides its being continually superseded by machinery ; added to which the competition which is almost always going on amongst themselves for the sale of their labour, reduces their wages at times to the least rate that will enable them to subsist, and is sufficient to keep them always poor. The supply of labour, and the demand for it, determine the rate of wages, and the increase of the number of the working classes and the increasing power of machinery always cause the supply to exceed the demand. The causes that tend to raise wages are fluctuating and of short continuance, whilst those that tend to depress them are constant and unvarying. Our coal, our application of steam-power, our machinery, our enterprise and industrious habits, our insular situation, with the advantages it affords to commerce, may support our manufacturing supremacy, which, while it lasts, may create great wealth in the country, and make our merchants and manufacturers abundantly

rich ; it may also raise rents and double the income of the fund-holders ; but it does little for the great body of the people, whom it keeps so near to the starving point that a disastrous season, raising the price of agricultural produce, cuts them off as consumers of our manufactures,* and a temporary want of employment drives them to the parish as their only refuge.† So that

* A rise of 20s. per quarter in corn takes about 2s. per week from each family of five persons of the working classes, as it is a tolerably correct calculation that each person consumes—or would consume, if it were afforded—a quarter of wheat per annum. The high price of other agricultural produce will make a difference of at least 1s. 2d. per week more ; so that, in times of plenty, each family has, on the average, 3s. 2d. per week more to spend upon manufactures than in times of scarcity. To illustrate the great importance of this fact, let it be supposed that the sixteen millions comprising the families of the working classes are enabled to purchase an additional pair of stockings per annum ; this at once gives Leicester sixteen million pairs more to produce : the profit upon this additional trade is reflected upon other towns and is felt throughout the kingdom ; and so of other articles of manufacture. “ There cannot be a doubt,” says Mr. Alison, “ that fine seasons, from the cheap rate of provisions, put above thirty or forty millions a-year at the disposal of the consuming classes of society, nine-tenths at least of which is laid out in the purchase of manufactures. It may safely be affirmed, that one fine autumnal month would at once bring round the manufactures of this country, from the lowest state of depression to comparative affluence.”

† “ Owing to the operations of war and a succession of deficient harvests, the prices of almost all the articles required for the support of life were, at the beginning of this century, driven up to a distressing height, which state of things continued through the remaining period of the war, and for one or two years beyond its termination. Since then, the fall that has occurred in the prices of all the articles comprising the poor man’s expenditure has been so great, that we may fairly estimate it to be fully equal to the simultaneous fall in the price of grain, so that the sum of 9s. 9d. in 1831, would have purchased as much as 17s. would have bought in 1801. Applying this test we shall find that the weight of pauper expenditure in proportion to the population at the two periods, was as 7 in 1831 to 4 in 1801.” Porter, article “ Pauperism.”

with all our increased capital, trade, and exports, pauperism and destitution are greatly on the increase.

The history of the Cotton Trade, the staple trade of the country, furnishes some very instructive facts relative to the condition of the people and the cause of their poverty: and it may also assist us to form an opinion as to how far we may trust to any degree of extension of our trade and manufactures to remove their poverty and ameliorate their condition. We think also that it will prove beyond all controversy that a prosperous state of the labouring population is not necessarily connected with increase of capital. Before the year 1760, manufactures were in a great measure confined to the home-market; the consumption of cotton did not exceed four millions of pounds; in 1838 it exceeded 300,000,000 lbs.; in 1798 the official value of our exports (we have not the real value,) was £3,602,488; in 1836 the official value was £58,491,731, real value £24,602,912. Mr. Baines estimated the number of persons employed in the cotton trade in 1760 at 40,000; (there is no means, however, of forming a correct estimate;) the number now dependent upon the trade, Mr. McCulloch reckons to be from 1,200,000 to 1,400,000; and the annual wages paid in that department he estimates at £17,094,000. Each workman performs, or rather superintends the performance by machinery of as much work as 266 could accomplish in 1760.*

There must have been a steady increasing demand during this great extension of trade; and we are told that an increased demand ought to raise wages. Haş

* Farey's Treatise on the Steam Engine.

this been the case? Mr. Marshall states that the same quantity of work is now performed for 1s. 10d. for which 16s. were paid in 1814: the average price paid for weaving a six-quarter sixty-reed cambric, 120 picks in one inch, in 1794, was £1. 10s., in 1814 £1. 4s., in 1815 14s., and in 1834 5s. 6d.; the price of flour, meal, potatoes, butchers' meat, and rent, being very nearly the same in 1798 and in 1834. The average earnings of the hand-loom weavers, who far exceed in number the power-loom weavers, are 7s. per week.

Now, if under any circumstances connected with the present system we are warranted in expecting an improved condition of the operative, ought we not to look for it when trade thus prospers and when the increasing demand for our manufactures must increase the demand for, and consequently the value of, labour? How are we to account for the facts which show the very reverse to be the result? Simply in this way, that however great the increase in the demand, owing to the diminished price, our enormous powers of production have been still greater; our constantly increasing and improved machinery has repeatedly caused the supply to exceed the demand, and has thus subjected the trade to frequent checks; and the competition of numbers, of machinery, and of foreigners, has made any other than a low rate of wages impossible.

About the year 1800, the wages of the hand-loom weavers were very high, and looms could not be multiplied fast enough to meet the increasing demand: the power-loom factories and foreign competition soon put a stop to this state of prosperity, and are now rapidly

starving the hand-loom weavers, who having no means of changing their employment in consequence of their poverty and training, have nothing but hopeless destitution in prospect. The steam-looms in England and Scotland in 1820, were 14,150; in 1833, 100,000. The comparative productiveness of the steam or power-loom and hand-loom is shown in the following statement of a manufacturer, given in Gaskell's "Artizans and Machinery."

"A very good *hand-weaver*, twenty-five or thirty years of age, will weave *two* pieces of 9-8ths shirting per week.

"In 1823, a *steam-loom* weaver, about fifteen years of age, attending two looms, could weave *seven* similar pieces in a week.

"In 1826, a *steam-loom* weaver, about fifteen years of age, attending two looms, could weave *twelve* similar pieces in a week—some could weave *fifteen* pieces.

"In 1833, a *steam-loom* weaver, from fifteen to twenty years of age, assisted by a girl about twelve years of age, attending *four* looms, can weave eighteen similar pieces in a week—some can weave *twenty* pieces."

"From this document it appears that in 1823 an adult hand-loom weaver could produce, *at the utmost*, not *one-third* as much as a girl at steam-loom; that in 1826 he could not produce one-sixth as much; and that in 1833 he could not produce one-ninth as much. This plain and simple fact is sufficient to show the nature of the contest between human and automatic industry; the one stationary, as to capability, the other doubling or trebling its productive powers almost

yearly; and, as we think, is quite sufficient to account for the poverty of that very numerous body the handweavers, however great the demand for the article they produce. The condition of the factory operative is certainly more prosperous than that of the handloom weaver, because the employment is more constant, and some of the masters feel that the hands ought to be distinguished from the machinery. But the progress of machinery renders skilled labour less and less necessary; old men and women, boys and girls, take the place of adult, able-bodied men, and in all occupations in which skilled labour is not required, competition is always great and wages low. Human labour is the most expensive and troublesome agent in the production of manufactured articles, and the constant effort of manufacturers is to do without it: their late efforts have been very successful, and few adult workmen are now required. Dr. Ure says (*Philosophy of Manufactures*), "The masters finding, after many struggles renewed from time to time, that a reduction of wages commensurate with the fall in the price of the goods in the general market could not be effected, had recourse to an expedient which the workmen could not decently oppose, because its direct tendency was to raise or to uphold, at least, the wages of each spinner, *but to diminish the numbers necessary for the same quantity of work.* * * * The necessity of enlarging the spinning frames created by the union decrees has recently given an extraordinary stimulus to mechanical science. It is delightful to see from eight hundred to one thousand spindles of polished steel, advancing and receding in a mathematical line, each

of them whirling all the time upon its axis with equal velocity and truth, and forming threads of surprising tenuity, uniformity, and strength. In doubling the size of his mule, the owner is enabled to get rid of indifferent and restive spinners, and to become once more master of his mill, which is no small advantage. * * *

By this marvellous elongation, one spinner comes to manage a pair of mules containing from fifteen hundred to two thousand spindles, and to supersede the labour of one or two companion spinners. Meantime, mill-owners possess an abundant choice of good hands, and the power of insuring their best services, since they can replace them by others in case of negligence or incapacity. During a disastrous turmoil at Hyde, Staley Bridge, and the adjoining factory townships, several of the capitalists, afraid of their business being driven to France, Belgium, and the United States, had recourse to the celebrated machinists, Messrs. Sharp, Roberts, and Co., Manchester, requesting them to direct the inventive talents of their partner, Mr. Roberts, to the construction of a *self-acting* mule. To the delight of the mill-owners, who ceased not to stimulate his exertions by frequent visitations, he produced in the course of a few months, a machine apparently instinct with the thought, feeling, and tact of the experienced workman, which, even in its infancy, displayed a new principle of regulation, ready in its mature state to fulfil the functions of a finished spinner. Thus the *Iron Man*, as the operatives fitly call it, sprung out of the hands of our modern Prometheus at the bidding of Minerva—a creation destined to restore order among the industrious classes, and to

confirm to Great Britain the empire of art. Several months ago (Dec. 1834,) the machine was in operation in upwards of sixty mills, working between 300,000 and 400,000 spindles."

"Since this time," continues Mr. Gaskell, "the self-actor—the *Iron Man*—has been rapidly introducing into general use, as it is essentially necessary from the closeness of competition amongst manufacturers that they should stand on equal terms in point of productiveness: hence any improvement of great capabilities must be generally adopted, otherwise those working with *self-actors* would undersell those working with the common mules."

"In this single instance we have exhibited the natural and inevitable tendency of mechanical improvement to destroy human labour. Spinning machines, when first introduced by Highs, Ray, and Arkwright, at once destroyed domestic spinning: the *Iron Man* of Roberts will as surely destroy the factory spinner. It is utterly ridiculous to say that the extension of the trade will or can absorb the discharged hands—it is impossible. Whether they will consent to be expatriated by such of their brethren as continue to be employed we know not, but we conceive the progress of *automata* will cause them to be dismissed too rapidly; for, be it remembered, it is not in this department only that these wonderful mechanical adaptations are taking place,—every process is alike passing from the hand to machines. Two-thirds, at least, of the spinners employed will be dismissed by the improvements we have just spoken of; and these improvements, striking as they are, are but the germs

of others still more perfectly automatic. The same series of improvements are in operation in the other branches of textile manufactures with precisely the same results, and were it possible to find data, it would unquestionably appear that, notwithstanding the extension of these, a diminution is rapidly taking place in the number of hands employed."

When machinery can be so readily made to take the place of human labour, it is impossible that labour can ever be greatly in demand. But there had been Foreign Competition as well as Home Competition to contend with. The superiority of our machinery gave us a great advantage in the spinning department, and unmanufactured yarns have formed a very considerable item in our exports. This yarn is made up by the foreign manufacturer and brought into direct competition with our own manufactures, and our weaver is thus obliged to take the same wages as the foreign weaver, who, from numerous causes, can live upon less. Thus the yarn consumed in our exported manufactures, spun entirely by power, amounted in 1833 (see Burn's "Commercial Glance,") to 76,246,339 lbs., and the unmanufactured yarn sent abroad with them amounted to 67,990,822 lbs. "Thus we perceive that machinery," says Mr. Gaskell, "in the first place, destroyed domestic spinning; in the second, it has opened up an immense export trade in yarn; and, in the third, it condemns the domestic weaver to clothe the whole world, whilst he himself is working fourteen hours a-day in rags and poverty." "Nonfactory processes of art," says Dr. Ure, "which can be condensed into a single frame, or machine moveable by hand,

come within the reach of operatives in every adjacent country, and will have their profits reduced ere long to the *minimum* consistent with the employment of capital in it, and their wages brought down to the scale of those in the cheapest or meanest living country. The stocking trade is a painful illustration of this fact. No manufacturer in this country can afford to make stockings unless he can get labour at as low a rate as in Germany; because a German stockinger may easily have as good a stocking-frame, and work it as well, as an English frame-knitter. In the market of the world, therefore, Great Britain has here no advantage by its machinery and capital over other countries, where the materials of the fabrics can be purchased at nearly the same price. The same reasoning may be applied to the bobbin-net trade, in so far as it is carried on by hand-machines. The wages now paid for this most ingenious fabric are deplorably low, in consequence of the competition of the Continental handicraftsman, who is content to live in the poorest manner."

No more need be said as to the cause of "the condition of the great body of the people in most parts of the world being poor and miserable." Capital, or the means of employing the people, may increase faster than population, and yet a prosperous condition of the people cannot be preserved: demand may be constantly extending, and yet wages shall not rise: and we think it very doubtful whether prosperity or even a decent livelihood can ever be the lot of the operative who depends solely on the wages of his labour, so long as supply and demand are left blindly to adapt themselves to each other, as is now the case in the market

of the world. But connected with so extensive a trade, consequent upon our manufacturing supremacy, there must be advantage somewhere. It certainly has brought immense wealth to the country;—it has made a great many *cotton lords*;—it has employed a vast number of people; and it has enabled the poor man's wife to purchase a printed calico gown for 2s. 6d. But has the advantage to the capitalist been sufficient to compensate for the small degree of benefit to the operative? We think not: for though during the extension of the trade and in times of periodical prosperity, great wealth has been accumulated in the hands of the few, competition, which determines the rate of profits as well as of wages, invariably ruins the smaller manufacturers in seasons of depression, and leaves the field to the minority, i. e. to the large capitalists. Thus, according to M'Culloch, in 1814 the cost price of a piece of calico was £1. 3s. 10½d., the selling price in the Manchester market, £1. 4s. 7d.; profit 8½d. per piece: in 1829 the cost was 5s. 11d., selling price 5s. 8d., loss 3d.: in 1830, 1832, there was a loss; in 1833, cost 5s. 10½d.; selling price 6s. 2d.; profit 3½d.; and we have no doubt that subsequent years have made the profit almost invisible. In 1786, yarn No. 100 sold for 38s., in 1832 for 2s. 11d. In 1814 the official value of our exports of cotton were £17,655,378, and the declared value £20,033,132. In 1837 the official value was £51,111,842, the declared value £20,588,082. We thus exported in 1837, three times the quantity of goods, as indicated by the official value, for the same return, for the same amount in money as in 1814. In fact 36½ millions were given for nothing.

No possible benefit connected with our large export trade in this department could have accrued to the country at large from all our vast improvements in machinery and increased powers of production, the absolute return made to it being only the same in the latter year as in the former. No doubt there is considerable satisfaction in the knowledge that our manufacturing skill has aided to clothe the naked all over the world, without greatly over-tasking them in return. But it is obvious that if the workmen have reaped no benefit from our augmented powers of production, it is not because the masters have monopolized all the advantage to themselves, as many of the former suppose. The great extent to which our exports have increased without any corresponding increase in our imports, is a circumstance which leads to the consideration of a feature in the commercial world,—a new feature it may be called—to which much of the distress that lately prevailed, may be traced: we allude to the system of carrying on a large business for a small return, which has been becoming more and more prevalent for the last fifteen or twenty years. Twenty years ago the system pursued was to make a profit of 5s., for instance, upon one piece of goods; now the system is to make 1s. profit per piece, or the same profit on five pieces; doing five times the business for the same profit. This is an alteration in the mode of conducting business which leads to most important results. Its obvious tendency is to over-production and to the accumulation of all the trade of the country in the hands of a few large capitalists. The competition which has thus reduced profits, inevitably tends

to keep them down; which, so long as general confidence prevails and markets can be extended, and a large return can be made, is undoubtedly an advantage to the public; and no less to the capitalist, manufacturer or merchant; but very slight causes are sufficient to reduce the small profit to none, and the no-profit to a loss. The system itself, with our constantly increasing powers of production, has always a tendency to bring round periods in which all the known channels for the disposal of our goods shall be blocked up with our stock: thus we experience alternately times of progress and retrogression, of prosperity and distress. During our upward movement demand is always a little in advance of supply; consequently the operatives have tolerably regular employment, and the manufacturers and the merchants are realizing profits, though small: all, therefore, are consumers, and with increased prosperity, all are increased consumers; so that every operative is well employed, every mill and loom is at work, speculation abounds, and production is thus, at last, forced even beyond the additional demand created by the greatly increased consumption. At this point the slightest cause originating either in our Home or Foreign Trade—in an action, for instance, on the currency on the part of the Bank of England and of the Provincial Banks,—is sufficient to produce a reaction and bring about the retrograde state, in which supply always more or less exceeds demand. At the height of our prosperity our productive powers are at their utmost stretch, and a lessened demand even in one or two departments is sufficient frequently to produce a commercial crisis. In 1837

eight millions less of our manufactures were required for the American market than in 1836 : at least half of this falling off was in cotton goods. A lessened demand to so great an extent would give a complete command of the market to the buyers : profits always small would be turned into no-profits, or losses. The power of consumption would immediately be very much diminished amongst the numerous body connected with this branch of trade, and all those various trades which have hitherto depended upon them as customers must have a large quantity of goods thrown upon *their* markets ; consequently supply will then exceed demand. These places or trades influence others until the same effect takes place throughout the country. The first check or disturbance in trade is sometimes only sufficient to decrease profits, and an effort is then made by manufacturers to compensate themselves by an increased return and by lowering wages. This necessarily leads to loss, as it makes the supply still further exceed the demand, and at the same time diminishes the power of consumption on the part of the operative. In our retrograde or downward progress the powers of consumption are always lessening ; workmen are discharged ; the great manufacturers swallow up all the little ones, and every one ceases producing because every one ceases consuming. When we have arrived at this state, demand again gets the start of supply, and so long as it maintains it, our prosperity continues. It is seldom that commercial distress is so widely extended and so long in duration as in the late crisis ; but in that case the distress, although probably not originated, was prolonged and greatly aggravated by

year after year of scarcity, consequent upon bad seasons and restrictive corn laws, and also by the scarcity of money arising from its having been sent out of the country in large sums to pay for grain. In a system of trade like ours, with a large proportion of our population dependent solely upon wages, and our manufacturers and merchants all striving to make large returns at a small profit, and whose prosperity, therefore, depends upon demand being always kept equal to, if not in advance of supply, a law producing an artificial scarcity of food and doubling its price in bad seasons, must always decrease so largely the demand for manufactures as to bring with each season of scarcity a commercial crisis, and the downward state of things which seldom stops short of great and widely-spread distress. We do not mean to assert that these advancing and retrograding states of trade alternate in precisely the methodical, regular order described: there may be frequent checks and partial disturbances of particular branches of trade; but that we have prosperous times, and times of adversity, more or less severe, occurring at almost regular intervals, all who are acquainted with the trade and commerce of the country will admit. We continue to advance until the supply greatly exceeds the demand;—then we retrograde, the demand becoming less and less, the distress greater and greater, until production is greatly checked, the markets are cleared, and demand is again in advance of supply. It must be very evident that joint-stock banks have greatly tended to increase our difficulties by delaying the period at which, in the natural course of things, a healthy state of trade and prosperity would

recommence. Very large sums of money have been advanced by these banks to parties possessed of no capital and who could offer no real security ; and fictitious capital has thus been set up to compete with real, until enormous sums have been lost, not only by the holders of shares in the banks, but by the capitalists whom these men of straw for years have been underselling. It is a singular fact,—but it is a fact,—that the parties who have supported these banks have in many cases been the very men who have suffered most from this competition of fictitious with real capital ; they have positively afforded the accommodation which for years has been recklessly used to depreciate their own goods,—to ruin their own trade.

We have thus endeavoured to delineate some of the broad features of the manufacturing system, upon which the welfare of the country, by the policy of the last century and a half, has been made to depend, and it must be evident that any permanent improvement in the condition of the country must be effected, not merely by the removal of those temporary or partial causes which helped to produce the late distress, but by the improvement or alteration of the system itself. We have spoken only of commerce and manufactures, because to attempt to disunite the agricultural from the manufacturing interest is absurd. The agriculturists could no more do without the manufacturers than a man in trade could carry on a profitable business without any customers. Who are the great consumers of their produce, and where does the agricultural interest most thrive, but in the vicinity of great cities? England used to export rather than

require to import food, and rents have doubled within the last half century. It is a well-known fact that in 1842 prices fell, not from the increased quantity of produce, but from the want of consumers; from the want of power, owing to the long-continued distress, on the part of the great body of the people to purchase even food. The falling off in the Customs and Excise in one quarter of the same year was £1,300,000,—after the rate of more than £5,000,000 a-year. We shall conclude this part of the subject by quoting a passage from Alison,* which is deserving of considerable attention. “It has been the well-known policy of Great Britain for the last century and a-half to encourage, by every means in its power, the manufacturing industry of the people, and this policy ably and steadily pursued, and accompanied by the advantages of our coal, insular situation, and free constitution, have produced the immense results, over which, in one view, we have reason to exult, and in another, to lament. It is utterly impossible that this unparalleled growth of our manufacturing industry can co-exist with the firm foundation of public prosperity. Its obvious tendency is to create immense wealth in one part of the population and increase numbers in another; to coin gold for the master manufacturer and multiply children in his cotton mills; to exhibit a flattering increase in the exports and imports of the empire, and an augmentation as appalling in its paupers, its depravity, and its crimes.”

PROPOSED REMEDIES. It is ordinarily much easier to point out evils and even to indicate their causes than to suggest the remedies. We are all agreed that

* “Principles of Population,” vol. 1, p. 519.

there are evils, but public opinion is at present very much divided as regards both causes and remedies, and perhaps most parties err more from taking a partial or confined view, than from that view being absolutely mistaken. Machinery is the cause,—says one; it is Over-production and Over-trading,—says another; it is Corn Laws and the want of Free Trade; it is the Currency and Joint-Stock Banks; it is Class Legislation; it is the deficiency of Education and Religious Instruction, and the improvident habits of the working classes,—say others: and probably all are right. Of the two extreme political parties into which the country is divided, one, looking only to the evils above detailed and the ill effects consequent upon the great accumulation of people in large cities, and the bulk of the population being solely dependent on wages, ascribes all the mischief to the manufacturing system—to the extension of commerce and the mechanical arts. England, they say, would thrive better as an agricultural country, without her manufactures and great towns, if they are to produce the frightful evils we see existing in her Manchesters and Glasgows. The other party ascribes the evil to the want of power to carry out the system already in operation. One party looks to the land as our great refuge,* regards

* Let us endeavour to occupy our own waste lands. Millions of acres are still unreclaimed, both in Great Britain and Ireland. *Stop the gambling speculations of our manufactures,* and drain off the surplus population from our towns into the country. Let landlords plant colonies on their commons and bogs and mountains; plant them under their own eye, upon right principles of colonization, in organic bodies, with powers of self-government; with social privileges; with the germs of village institutions—especially with that first principle of social life and order

our large towns as excrescences, and would return to the domestic system : the other sees safety and prosperity only in the extension of the manufacturing system, in making Britain the workshop of the world—the wholesale warehouse of nations. One lays the blame on machinery, over-production, redundant population, and strenuously advocates “protection to native industry,” and “independence of foreigners:” the other calls for the destruction of all monopolies and prohibitions and for non-interference with labour, leaving wages and the hours of work to adjust themselves solely by the law of supply and demand.

To us there seems much truth on either side, and we look for remedies to the evils consequent upon our present position rather in the blending and carrying out the views of both parties than in the adoption of the exclusive policy of either.* With respect to “pro-

an efficient ecclesiastical establishment in the centre. *Restore something of the feudal spirit into our tenure of land.* Raze, if you like, to the ground, half an overgrown metropolis, and all the idle, gossiping, gaping watering-places, where those men who ought to be each in their own parishes, ruling their estates as the representatives of the great estate, the monarchy of the realm, are frittering away time, and money, and dignity, and intellect, in frivolous dissipations.” *Quarterly Review for Sept., 1840.*

* On this account we rejoice that the line of party seems less broadly marked now than formerly ; that our most enlightened men and real philanthropists regard measures more than men ; the amount of real practical good propounded rather than party opposition. Still, with the multitude, with the ignorant and bigotted population of our country towns, party spirit never raged stronger, or was more to be deplored. We are quite aware of what may be said in favour of party, and that a *stick* which has no strength in itself is strong when tied up in a bundle. But of what avail is this strength, when, as in the old fable of the Knights and the Shield, it only serves to enable the combatants to maintain

tection to native industry," there cannot be a doubt that Adam Smith is right in affirming that the "home trade of every country is worth all the foreign trade put together," and that Mr. Laing, jun., truly says that "the operative who forms part of the great machine of manufacturing production, needs to be protected against the effects of inordinate competition, as much as the villain or serf of the middle ages needed protection against the inroads of the Hun and Tartar." But protection, and independence of foreign markets, may both be secured to the operative, together with the most perfect freedom of trade. The union of the domestic and manufacturing systems is quite compatible, and would effect all that is contended for by both parties. Unite the operative again to the soil, and his own labour, applied to husbandry, will supply him with all the first necessaries of life, will protect him from undue competition and make him independent of foreigners; whilst the *surplus labour* of himself and his family employed in manufactures will yield him every advan-

their ground without casting a glance on the other side of the question? Each stick reads its party paper or magazine, studiously passes over everything on the opposite side and exaggerates everything on its own; blindly follows each party move, piously believes every one to be knave or fool who thinks differently, and drums out any one of its own side who should be *eccentric* enough to think for himself, or who should presume to admit that there is the slightest shadow of truth in aught that is ever advanced by the opposite party. It is amusing to observe the importance that some of the very poorest and rottenest of these sticks will assume, trusting to the strength of the bundle in which they have been tied; and this is one of the great evils of party strength, that it is constantly placing men "full only of sound and fury, signifying nothing," in situations for which individually they are totally unfit.

tage which he can possibly enjoy from foreign trade. Trade,—the only system that can be healthy and safe—is “the mutual relief of wants by the exchange of *superfluities*.”

FREE TRADE. We shall proceed to the examination of measures more in detail, and shall commence with the remedy to which public opinion at the present time appears to be most generally directed, and the application of which is probably the most pressing, viz., Free Trade. “All protection,” says Adam Smith, “is robbing some one else,” and if all the people in a country agree to rob one another and to about an equal amount, it comes to very nearly the same thing in the end; but if they attempt to carry out the system in other countries which have not entered into the compact, the latter of course object to it. If all parties in this country agree that 20s. worth of their produce shall sell for 25s.—that is to say, if all are protected, it is the same thing so long as their trade is confined to this country, because all give as much as they receive; but the foreigner is no party to this compact, and will not therefore agree to give 25 per cent. more for goods than they are worth, and our merchants thus find that they are losers by the protective system. Protection means, that we are to pay a higher price for the article than it can be purchased for abroad, and if it be a necessary of life or an article otherwise indispensable to the manufacturer, its increased price must raise the price of other goods, which are consequently sent to the foreign markets under a disadvantage, compared with similar goods from other countries. So long as a population is dependent upon the home trade alone,

and all are equally protected, the system is fair and may work well, but immediately a portion of the population become dependent upon foreigners, this protection is no longer just. Now such is the case with this country; it is dependent upon foreign trade to an extent that renders it altogether impossible to return to the old system and to reliance alone upon the home trade. We annually export £50,000,000, and 800,000 of our operatives are probably supported solely by this export trade; it is manifestly impossible now, without an alteration of the whole system, that increased consumption can take place at home to that amount, and that such an additional body of labourers can find employment. We have therefore, no choice: the policy pursued for the last half century having brought us to this position, *we cannot recede, we must advance*, and all impediments to our progress must be gradually removed. Not only is there a necessity for retaining the markets already open to us, but for constantly extending them in proportion to our enormously increasing powers of production, and to the additional numbers of our population. Our commercial difficulties have principally arisen from the inability to make demand co-extensive with supply; from the want of markets in which to exchange our produce for the commodities we require. Every obstacle that impedes our free commercial intercourse with the whole world, and every restriction that tends to place us at a disadvantage by raising the price of our goods in foreign markets, must be removed. The advantages we possess in great capital, superior skill, industry, and improved machinery, have hitherto sustained us in our compe-

tition for the markets of the world, but it is evident from the present severe and long-continued distress that they can do so no longer, and that our manufacturers and workpeople require to be placed upon an equal footing with those of other countries with respect to the cheapness of food and lodging and of everything that enters into the cost of production. They can no longer afford to pay nearly double price for their bread and meat and beer and tea and sugar, for the benefit of particular interests: we must each relinquish the protective laws in our own favour, and we shall probably find that we gain as much from the abolition of other monopolies as we ever did from the maintenance of our own, with this additional advantage, that our produce not having an artificially high price will be as readily exchangeable abroad as at home.

The greatest of all monopolies and the one pressing most upon the industry of the country is the one in corn. Science, industry, and the necessity for constant effort have reduced the price in the present century of almost all manufactured articles at least one-half, yet the price of all kinds of agricultural produce has continued the same, and during the last five years has been even higher than in 1798. According to M'Culloch rents have risen fifty per cent. during the last half century, but we have to give double the amount of manufactures for the same amount of bread. Protection to the agriculturists has been attended with the same evil results which have invariably followed from protection to all other interests. It has retained a system of high money rents for the apparent benefit of the landlords, but to the manifest injury of the

tenant. It has preserved all the old methods of cultivation, all the old implements and machinery; for the cultivator has trusted to it rather than to science and skill and capital and enterprise. A more ignorant and bigotted class of men than our farmers generally ten years ago can scarcely be conceived: late events and the irresistible influence of the schoolmaster upon a new generation have worked a slight improvement, but still the farmer and the manufacturer would seem to belong to different ages. Competition would have rendered it necessary for farmers to bestir themselves long before this, and to improve themselves and their lands in self-defence. The principal benefits that may be expected to arise from the repeal of the corn laws are the introduction of an improved system of agriculture and a comparative steadiness in price. The present system of renting, which competition with other countries would be the means of destroying, has hitherto effectually paralysed the British farmer as to any efforts he might make towards the improvement of his land. The landlord grants no lease, that he may avail himself of the high price of wheat so frequently produced by the operation of the corn laws. The present mode of letting throws all risk of seasons upon the tenant, and the landlords have enabled the tenant to get rid of it by throwing it all upon the manufacturers. The share of the landlord ought, however, to bear some proportion to the produce, as it does in almost all countries in Europe. As an illustration of the present mode of letting, let it be supposed that the produce per acre in a plentiful season of wheat is eight bags, and that this is divided between

landlord and tenant in equal proportions of four bags each, as rent and profit: but supposing the next year's yield to be only five bags per acre, the landlord continues to take as rent four bags, and leaves only one bag to the tenant. Free trade in corn must change this. The Scotch Lothian farmers have already given us a slight specimen of what may be effected under an improved system. They obtain long leases, the rent regulated, we believe, by the price of grain: this renders it worth their while to lay out considerable capital upon the land, and their superior mode of cultivating it has trebled, and even quadrupled, the produce, and made them the most thriving set of men in Scotland. The average produce of the arable land in England is under $3\frac{1}{2}$ quarters per acre, that of Scotland is, we believe, about five quarters per English acre: but it is probable that the improvements in Scotch cultivation fall far short of those which may and will be effected when science, chemistry and the mechanics shall be applied to agriculture as it has been to manufactures. We are only just beginning to appreciate the different value of certain manures and dressings in rotation to various soils, and our farmers are only just beginning to discover that science and learning may work a change for the better even upon plough-shares and pruning-hooks.

If the Royal Agricultural Society would employ some clever practical engineering architect to combine in one model homestead all the improvements in farm-buildings that could be found throughout the civilized world, and to construct models of all the most approved implements, and would take a farm upon which the

homestead might be placed, and these implements used and the ground be cultivated upon the most improved and scientific principles; such a farm might become a normal school which would confer more benefit upon the agricultural interest than the repeal of the corn laws could ever do it injury. Improved modes of cultivation would necessarily absorb a great deal of capital which now floods the manufacturing districts, leading so frequently to over-production and increasing competition; it would also—although such is not the case at present in Scotland—ultimately employ more labour, and thus raise the condition of the labourers. It is so certain that by better management the produce of the land may be readily doubled and even trebled, that there seems no reason to apprehend that the agriculturists will ultimately be losers by the repeal of the corn laws. The consumption of the produce upon the spot, gives so great an advantage to the home cultivator that he has not much to fear from foreign competition, and even should we become, as our population increases, large importers of grain, yet the land need not be the less productive on that account, or the less profitable, if the population be in a prosperous condition. What the agriculturist has most to fear is ruin to his best customers, the manufacturers.

Besides the stimulus to agricultural improvement, another great benefit that would result from the repeal of the corn laws, is steadiness of price. It is well known the mischief that ensues to the manufacturing interest from the sudden rise in the first necessary of

life; and to widen extensively the range from which our supplies are drawn must have the effect of steadying the market and of preventing it ever reaching the high prices which are sometimes the consequence of the present restrictive law. High prices, however, might still be obtained, as they are of two kinds; the one arising from scarcity of one particular article; the other, from great abundance of all other articles. High price of the first kind impoverishes; the latter is compatible with great prosperity; the first kind it has hitherto been the sole aim of the agriculturists to secure; the second alone will really conduce to their interest. We do not enter into the questions of the expediency of a fixed duty or of total repeal; of compensation to parties holding long leases; of peculiar burdens upon land which capital employed in trade has not to bear; these are matters of detail which, however they may be decided, affect not the broad question of a corn tax or no corn tax. But the repeal of the corn laws, although a great step forwards, still is but a step towards Free Trade. Before the principles of Free Trade can be carried out, our whole system of taxation must be altered, as restrictions upon commerce are now necessary to raise a revenue. Indirect taxation must give place to direct taxation; which latter is to the majority of persons the most unpalatable mode possible of defraying the expenses of the State: it would really seem as if a man would prefer that a state of things should be retained in which the impediments to commerce prevented his realizing more than £500 per annum, provided only £50 of it went in indirect taxation, than that he should make a clear

£1000 and have to pay £100 in the shape of a property, or any other direct tax; although in the latter case he would be a gainer of £450 per annum. No impost would appear to be more just than a property or income tax, which should clear away all duties for the purposes of revenue, all vexatious impediments to trade; thus enabling all to prosper, and charging them with governmental expenses only in proportion to their prosperity. Direct taxation may be attended by great difficulties, but they are but trifling in comparison to those which it would remove.

But to carry out the principles of Free Trade does not depend upon Great Britain alone, or even upon this country and one or two others, but upon the world at large. Other nations must be brought to act upon the same liberal policy as ourselves, and to relinquish their protective and prohibitive systems: it is of no use for us to take off taxes, if they put them on;—for us to abolish the import duties on grain, if they impose export duties. Every effort must therefore be made to open commercial treaties upon a system of real reciprocity: not to engage to admit the silks and wines of France if they will admit ours; but to take their silks and wines if they will take our linens and cottons; and with every nation to exchange those manufactures in which we so greatly excel, for their natural produce which we require. It is evident that no profitable trade can be maintained with other countries unless the increase in their powers of production keep pace with that of our own; for in exchange for our commodities they can give us only what they possess, be the quantity large or small. It is not by increased exports,

but by increased imports, that the prosperity of a nation is enhanced; it is not what goes out of a country, but what comes into it, that makes it rich. And thus Great Britain, so far as its foreign trade is concerned, has for the last thirty years taxed its skill and industry in vain; it has multiplied its powers of production only to give a larger quantity to foreigners for the same return. We have seen that three times the amount of cotton goods was exported in 1837 than in 1814, for only the same return, and so with our general export trade. In 1815 the official value of goods sent abroad was £42,875,996, real or declared value £51,603,028; in 1841, official value £102,705,572, real value £51,406,430: thus what we received from other nations in return for our exports in 1840, was rather less than in 1815, although we gave them 60 millions more. It is evident that if their powers of production had increased as much as our own, and the exchange had been a fair one, we should have received in 1840 as much as we gave, viz., 102 millions instead of 51. In this way—in a wasteful foreign trade—have the resources of the country been squandered; and this is a cause sufficient to account for the general poverty of our working classes, and for the fact, that increased demand has invariably increased the numbers, but never the wages of the operatives. It also teaches the important lesson that the road to national prosperity is not through the depression and impoverishment of other countries, but that by promoting their welfare we the more effectually secure our own; that if we assist them to become rich, the more of our goods they can afford to purchase, and the cheaper they can afford to

sell. Science and machinery may multiply the products of the earth and manufactures to any extent, with impunity, if, owing to the prosperity of other nations, we can always find a market for them and an equivalent return. In order, therefore, to obtain the full benefit of Freedom of Trade, or even to reap the advantages expected by the public and predicted by Political Economists, it is necessary that the whole world advance with us ; for before the increased powers of production in our own department can be of any avail to our benefit, equal improvements must be made in the production of whatever we require in exchange. We have in Great Britain steam power and improved machinery, the means of quick communication by land and water, abundance of capital, business habits and great industry on the part of the people, comparative freedom of trade and intercourse, a steady constitutional Government, exemption from military service, and from disturbance by war ; all which advantages tend to cheapen production ; but before we can depend upon the exchange of our produce with that of other countries, such advantages must be extended to them. It may be very long before we can hope to see the privileges enjoyed even by Great Britain common to all other nations with whom we have commercial intercourse, but until such is the case, the prosperity resulting from Free Trade can neither be complete nor permanent. The advancing and retrograding states must continue. The causes of the immediate distress may be removed, but as soon as the productive powers of Great Britain again outstrip those of other countries, and supply

exceeds demand, the distress will recur. As the facility of intercourse between nations becomes greater, and the "Restrictive System" which now clogs every operation of production and interchange gives place to a system of Free Trade, there is no doubt that the demand for British manufactures will greatly increase, until each trade may rival the cotton trade in extent, in capital, and in the number of persons dependent upon it. We see no reason, however, to expect that the history of the extension of trade generally should, uncombined with other circumstances, differ from the history already given of the extension of the cotton trade. Rapid improvements in machinery gave to that department as great advantages as can possibly be given to the general industry of the country by any approach that we shall be enabled to make for very many years towards real freedom of trade. Our woollen, and linen, and silk, our hardware, earthenware, and glass trades, may all be greatly extended, and we may have lords of each department, as we have now cotton lords, and Manchesters and Glasgows may be created in every county; the value of the land may rise as it has done in Lancashire, and the whole world may be united by the iron bond of self-interest; yet, for all this, we see no reason to expect that the fluctuations to which trade has been always liable, will be less. On the contrary, we shall probably have eight or ten millions where we now have one, dependent, not upon their own industry and good conduct, but upon the industry and good conduct of all the nations of the earth upon whom they rely for custom. The checks to demand in so large a market and in the present low

state of civilization, joined to the constantly progressing powers of machinery, would tend to keep the great body of the people, even should there be no corn laws, and bread should be half its present price, as near upon the starving point as they are now ; and there is reason to fear that the distress to which we should still be periodically subject would be great in proportion to the increased number dependent upon wages. Thus increased Freedom of Trade may effectually relieve a temporary depression by adding to the numbers of our customers, by opening fresh markets, and so finding employment for our people, who otherwise must starve ; but it must not be overrated in importance as a remedial measure, nor the fact be overlooked that it would still leave us liable to a return of the evil.

LAND ALLOTMENTS. The great evil of the manufacturing system is to create a large population solely dependant upon the wages of labour, and liable to all the vicissitudes which the fluctuating demand for that labour entails. Greater freedom and consequent extension of trade may greatly increase the demand for labour, but if our view of its effects be correct, it will not materially improve the condition of the operative. It may augment the numbers of his class, but it will leave him in circumstances much the same as in 1835 and 1836. This is not a state of things for a great nation to rest contented with. With all the enormous tax-paying power of Great Britain, capital, and manufacturing supremacy, she might well afford to exchange her social position for that of countries which she now looks down upon. " If," says Laing, " instead of

800,000 or a million of persons employed in manufacturing for the foreign market, we had eight millions depending upon a demand which every petty political misunderstanding among the European powers might obstruct, would this be, morally or politically, an advantageous position? Would it be wise policy to call into existence a labouring population equal to that now supported by the consumpt of their labour in the home market, to be depending entirely upon the still more precarious foreign market?"* What has taken place since 1836 is still painfully imprinted upon our minds; the enormous loss of capital, the distress, the starvation;—"In the several trades of the wool-stapler and the manufacturer and dealer of woollen cloths in the Leeds district, it is undeniable that the liabilities of bankrupts and insolvents do not fall short of £1,500,000, on which the average dividend has certainly not exceeded 5s. in the pound. The difference, or £1,125,000, is a dead loss to the trade. * * *

In addition to the enormous reduction in the virtual wages and the purchasing powers of the operative classes, it has been calculated that the total amount of money wages paid to the operatives engaged in the cotton manufacture throughout the kingdom is £7,000,000 less per annum than it was five years ago."† Consequently, all through the manufacturing districts we hear of 1000 families here and 5,000 families there, whose weekly subsistence varies from 9d. to 1s. 2d. per head. The time may be rapidly

* "Notes of a Traveller," p. 288.

† Report of the Statistical Committee appointed by the Anti-Corn Law Conference.

approaching when it will be too late to look for Remedies. A commercial crisis such as the one from which we are but just emerging, may again overwhelm us when we have a greatly increased population; and then, probably, to our own destruction and to the destruction of the best institutions of the country. Mr. Alison is quite right in saying "that it is utterly impossible that this unparalleled growth of our manufacturing industry can co-exist with the firm foundation of public prosperity." But if we clearly understand the evil, and determine to provide against it; if we do not go blindly forward in the course hitherto pursued, but take steps to amend that part of our policy from the effects of which the danger may be expected, there will be ample time to do so, during the period of prosperity which will immediately ensue on the clearing away of selfish monopolies, the taxes that press upon industry, and other obstructions to trade. Now what is the condition of our neighbours;—I do not mean of America, which is a young State—but of our Continental neighbours, who are at about the same period of growth as ourselves? The survey may perhaps furnish a lesson. "The whole number of proprietors who live on the fruits of the soil in Great Britain and Ireland at this moment, notwithstanding the prodigious increase of wealth, probably does not amount to 300,000; while above 3,000,000 heads of families, or 15,000,000 of persons dependent on their labour, subsist on wages alone,"* while the composition of the French population is as follows:—

* Alison's History of Europe, vol. 1, p. 57.

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| “Agricultural proprietors and their families | 13,059,000 |
| Proprietors not agricultural and their families | 710,000 |
| Proprietors partly living on wages, and their families | 710,000 |
| Total proprietors | <u>14,479,000</u> |
| Agricultural labourers living on wages, and their families | 4,941,000 |
| Industrial labourers living on wages, and their families | 9,579,000 |
| | <u>14,520,000</u> |

“In other words, the class of proprietors in France is *more numerous* than that which subsists on wages; while in England it is only a *sixtieth* part of their amount.”*

Mr. Alison, although, with many other eminent Political Economists, prognosticating ultimate evil from such a state of things in France, yet remarks, “It is impossible to travel through Switzerland, Tyrol, Norway, Sweden, Biscay, and other parts of Europe, where the peasantry are proprietors of the land they cultivate, without being convinced of the great effect of such a state of things in ameliorating the condition of the lower orders, and promoting the development of those habits of comfort and artificial wants which form the true regulator of the principle of increase. The aspect of France since the Revolution, when compared with what it was before that event, abundantly

* Alison on Population, vol. 2, p. 48.

proves that its labouring poor have experienced the benefit of this change, and that if it had not been brought about by injustice, its fruits would have been highly beneficial.”*

Mr. Laing, in speaking of the opinions of Political Economists upon the social condition of France, says, “They set out in their speculations, with a false axiom. They admit that a certainty of subsistence—food, fuel, clothing, and lodging, being all comprehended under this term, subsistence—is the first and greatest good in the physical condition of an individual or of a society; and they assume it as an axiom, that those parts of a social body, those individuals or classes, who are employed in producing articles of general use or desire among men,—to put the case in the strongest light, say blacksmiths, tailors, shoemakers, and such classes as produce articles which every individual in the community requires and uses—are as near to this first and greatest good of a certain subsistence by their work, as those immediately employed in its production by husbandry. Now this may be true, where husbandry is a manufacture, as with us in Britain, for producing by hired labourers the greatest quantity possible of grain, meat, and other products out of the soil, to be exchanged against the products of other branches of industry. It may be true that the hired labourers of the manufacturer of corn from land are no nearer to a certainty of subsistence than the hired labourers of the manufacturer of cloth or leather. But it is not true, where husbandry is followed as in France,

* Alison's History of Europe, vol. 1, p. 342.

and in the countries divided among a small proprietary, for the sake of subsisting the husbandman himself, the actual labourer on the land, as its first object; and where the exchanging its products for other articles, even of general use and necessity, is but a secondary object. A man will not give up his needful food, fuel, clothing, or lodging, to gratify even his real and most pressing wants of iron-work, leather-work, or cloth-work. His surplus only will be applied to acquiring those secondary necessaries of life: and those who live by making them are, consequently, far from being so near to that first good in social condition, a certain subsistence, as he is. But if two-thirds of the population of a country be in the situation of this individual, who has his certain subsistence out of his own surplus for his own needful food, fuel, clothing, and lodging, I take that to be a good state of society, a better arrangement of the social structure, than where needful subsistence is not certain to the great majority of its numbers. It carries, moreover, within itself, a check upon over-population and the consequent deterioration of the social condition, and which is totally wanting in the other social system. In even the most useful and necessary arts and manufactures, the demand for labourers is not a seen, known, steady, and appreciable demand; but it is so in husbandry under this social construction. The labour to be done, the subsistence that labour will produce out of his portion of land, are seen and known elements in a man's calculation upon his means of subsistence. Can his square of land, or can it not, subsist a family? Can he marry, or not? are questions which every man can

answer without delay, doubt, or speculation. It is the depending on chance, where judgment has nothing clearly set before it, that causes reckless, improvident marriages in the lower, as in the higher classes, and produces among us the evils of over-population; and chance necessarily enters into every man's calculations, when certainty is removed altogether, as it is where certain subsistence is, by our distribution of property, the lot of but a small portion, instead of about two-thirds of the people."*

"The German League comprehends above twenty-six millions of people; and if we only look at the numbers and at the extent and fertility of the soil they occupy, they should be buyers in their home market of manufacturing industry, one would suppose, as extensively at least as our British twenty-four millions. But here we see the immense difference produced by a different social economy. These twenty-six millions consume less of each other's industry, employ less, buy less, sell less, than four millions of our population. In our social system every man buys all he uses, and sells all he produces; there is a perpetual exchange of industry for industry. A home-spun and home-woven shirt, jacket, and trowsers, would certainly not be found with us upon the body of one labouring man in forty thousand. All he wears, all he eats, all he drinks, must be produced for him by the industry of others, and bought by the price of his own industry. The very

* Confirmatory of Mr. Laing's opinion with respect to such a state of things furnishing a check upon population, is Dupin's statement "that the population of Prussia is now doubling itself in 26 years, Britain in 42, Austria in 69, Russia in 66, France in 105 years."

bread of our labourers in husbandry is often bought at the manufacturer's shop. In Germany the economy of society is directly the reverse ; not one labouring man, farmer, or tradesman pretty high up even in the middle class of the small towns, uses in clothing, food, furniture, what is not produced at home by his own family. In the centre even of German manufacturing industry in the provinces on the Rhine, you will not see among twenty labouring people the value of twenty shillings altogether in clothing articles not produced at home by the application of their own time, labour, and industry. They are not badly clothed, but on the contrary, as well, if not better, than our own labourers—in very good shirts, good jackets, trowsers, stockings, shoes, and caps ; but all home-made, or at the utmost, village-made—not made by a class of manufacturers doing no other work, and bought with the wearer's money. These are not consumers for whose demands the operative labours, and the master manufacturer and mechanic invent, calculate, and combine. Tobacco, coffee, sugar, wine and spirits, cotton yarns for home weaving, and dye stuffs for home-made cloth, take a large proportion of what these twenty-six millions of people have to expend in foreign articles. It is little, comparatively, they have to expend, because much of their time and labour is applied to the direct production and manufacturing of what they use ; much, a great deal more than with us, goes in eating, drinking, social enjoyment, and in fuel preparing, and such small household work in which there are no earnings or reproduction ; and above all, much of the workman's means of earning, much of his time, labour, and pro-

ductiveness, is taken by the Government, in the shape of military and other duties, from the working man. The small proprietors occupying and living upon the land have no surplus earnings to lay out in products of manufacturing industry. Having the rude necessities of life very much within themselves, they are not forced into the market by any necessity; and being bred in the rough simplicity of the common soldier's life at the age when a man's tastes and habits are forming, they have no very refined indulgences or tastes to gratify, no habits or usages of a mode of living requiring the aid of much manufacturing industry. It is more difficult, perhaps, to bring a nation to consume, than to produce.* And again, "On the Continent every family, even in towns not inconsiderable, manufactures for itself,—buys little or nothing, compared with families of the same class in England. The Metayer family has its own raw material of clothing, viz., flax, hemp, wool, hides, raised by itself; has house-room and time—idle time in winter—to work them up, not indeed into very fine, but into very wearable stuff, by their own and their domestics' work; and no amount of capital thrown into their hands as the price of their corn could change those habits of a population which are almost produced by, or at least very closely connected with, their climate, husbandry, mode of existence, and whole social economy. The whole agricultural population, if not manufacturing in some way,—spinning, weaving, making household goods, working in iron, wood, or cloth, for their own use, during the

* Notes of a Traveller, p. 142.

winter months, would be totally idle all the winter half-year. It is a saving of time with us to buy all,—make nothing at home. It would be a waste of time on the Continent not to make at home all that can be made.”* Such, with differences rather in their favour, is also the social condition of Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Tuscany, Venice, and such was the condition once in England, but it has been exchanged for the superior benefits, as some think, of the manufacturing system. Laing says, “In England, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, as now in Germany, every family in the middle or lower classes was employed in spinning, weaving, manufacturing for itself, baking, brewing, pickling, preserving, for its own consumption. It has taken three centuries to bring the British population to that social economy in which every man exchanges industry for industry, and a vast home market exists for all production. It may be doubted, however much England has gained in national or individual wealth, whether her population has gained in well-being and social happiness by the change. Her operative manufacturing population called into existence by it, although only one-fifth of their numbers are supposed to be employed in supplying the foreign market, are plunged sufficiently often into the greatest distress, by the ordinary vicissitudes of the home market, to make reflecting men pause, and ask if this be prosperity? If national wealth, or the power of a State in its financial means; if the individual enjoyment of the luxuries and gratifications which this

* Notes of a Traveller, p. 286.

wealth bestows on one rich class, be worth the amount of human misery and vice accompanying it?"

We need not, however, go back to Elizabeth's time; the great changes that have taken place in our system have mostly occurred since 1790. At that time manufactures were chiefly confined to the home market: the labouring population derived their principal subsistence from the soil, by their own labour applied to it. Spinning-wheels and hand-looms were in every cottage, and their cloths, sheets, linen, were ordinarily of their own manufacture. Mr. M'Culloch and other writers represent the working classes as being the principal gainers by the improvements in manufacturing that have since taken place; but they appear to have lost in one direction almost as much as they have gained in another, and we regard the operative abroad as in a sounder and safer social position than our own. Both conditions, however, have their advantages. We have Infant Schools and National Schools, and Mechanics' Institutions; we have a penny-post, newspapers, and facilities for travelling; singing and literature for the million, and many of our operatives are, in consequence, highly intelligent. Many are, also, well lodged and well clothed; for a week's wages of an industrious family in good times, will furnish as much clothing as a whole winter's home-manufacture in 1760. But on the other hand, they are crowded together in large cities, and kept to twelve and fourteen hours per day incessant labour at a dull, monotonous employment; and the effects of such confinement, and the want of proper house-room, are felt in the degradation of both their physical and moral condition. The late

“ Report on the Sanitary Condition of the great Towns,” gives us painful revelations on this subject. Take, for instance, the rate of mortality among the poor of great cities, as compared with the class above them. In the town of Leeds the average age of the gentry was 44 ; of the operatives, 19 : in Liverpool, of the gentry, 35 ; of the labourers, &c., 15. This dense population in unhealthy situations in towns is a most fertile source of disease, and children inherit the weakened constitution, the infirmities of both body and mind of their parents, until nature takes the remedy into her own hands ; for Sir A. Carlisle says, that where the father and mother are town-bred, the family ends with the third generation. The wretched physical condition of the poor in great cities and their crowded condition, necessarily induce a very low moral state ; added to which, the joint effect of the want of country air and exercise and of solid food, is the predominance of the nervous system at the expense of the muscular energies, which begets mental disorder and the necessity for constant excitement, found generally at the gin and beer shops, and leading, with the precarious nature of their employment, to the improvidence which characterises so many of the class. This degeneration of the great body of our manufacturing operatives has now proceeded very far, and for that, among other things, we must seek a remedy. The foreign operative, although inferior in position to our English workman in many respects, has this advantage over him, that he is not solely dependent upon the sale of his labour for a livelihood, but has the means of using his labour to furnish himself with everything necessary to his

physical well-being. His labour will always supply him with the necessaries of life, often with its comforts, and even a surplus to exchange for foreign luxuries. There is no doubt that he is in want of many things which our operatives possess, but he is not subject to the same fluctuations of income, and can therefore calculate better his own resources, and there is little question but that upon the whole he is a more contented and happy being. The result of the circumstances in which he is placed, upon his constitution, is just the reverse of the case with our operative, viz., physical predominance over the mental constitution. Now if we could unite the two states or conditions, one would so correct the other, that we should have all the advantages of both without the evils which each engenders separately. This union is the grand Remedy to which we would principally point as best calculated for the amendment of the present system. Our labourers and artizans have been divorced from the soil and made solely dependent upon the sale of their labour, the demand for which is dependent upon fluctuating causes, and will therefore frequently not furnish them with the necessaries of life. So far we would return to the old system, that we would put them back upon the land. Let their own labour, applied to agriculture, supply them with the first necessaries of life, and the sale of surplus manufactures supply them with luxuries and foreign and colonial produce. Let us endeavour to unite the advantages which the rapid progress of civilization and improved machinery have already brought to the operative, with the advantages of country residence and the health

of mind and body derivable from agricultural labour. Machinery is daily displacing the adult operative, and his labour will soon become useless, as too expensive a material to work up into manufactures: let him therefore, be employed in the garden cultivation of the land, to supply his family with the necessaries of life, and let only his own surplus time and that of his family be employed in watching power-looms to furnish comforts and luxuries. Agriculture and manufactures never ought to have been divorced. Employment *solely* in the one department, injures the mind; in the other the body. There is not now, if there ever has been, the necessity for it. Machinery has been invented, and can be invented, to do all for which skilled labour is required. When a nation becomes a nation of manufacturers and dependent upon other nations for its agricultural produce, it gives up more than it can ever receive in return, viz., the health and strength of body acquired from out-door labour. If the people of the Continental States, during the six months they are obliged to work in-doors, were to abandon their primitive mode of manufacturing, and by the aid of a factory in each district, were to make use of steam and our improved machinery, might not their condition be prosperous in the extreme? For, the same amount of labour they now employ might produce a large surplus to exchange for every foreign article required; whereas, almost all that they can now purchase after supplying themselves with the needful allowance of their own manufactures, is tobacco, tea, coffee, and sugar. If our own population, now dependent upon wages alone, could be supplied with allotments

of land, either by purchase or upon lease, so that by a spade cultivation their labour should always furnish the first necessaries of life, they would then have something to fall back upon during the fluctuations to which our trade is, and always must be, liable. Secure of the means of supporting life, and of making it not only endurable but pleasant, they would have less to fear from the closing of this or that market, from this monetary crisis, or that war. In order to make the great extension of our foreign trade, implied in the Free Trade principle, *safe*, and to the ultimate interest of the majority, all,—whether by this means or any other that can be suggested,—should be made *independent of foreign markets*, so far as the first *necessaries* of life are concerned.

To the thorough Free-trader this scheme may appear to be a retrograde one and perfectly chimerical. To carry it out immediately, to the extent contemplated, may be impossible and undesirable, and we would wish rather to point to it as an object towards which our policy should be directed for the future. To the master manufacturer, who wishes always to keep the supply of labour above the demand, and by that means to keep the operatives wholly dependent on him—greater slaves to the necessity of living than any we have lately emancipated in the West Indies—the plan may appear objectionable altogether, as interfering with the supply of labour, and consequently with our manufacturing supremacy. We do not anticipate, however, that the effect would be to raise the price of labour; because, having other means of subsistence, the operative could afford to sell his manufacturing skill for

less ; and if it tended in any degree to check production—the tendency being constantly to over-production—it would be beneficial. But even should the objection be admissible, we think with Mr. Laing, that “there may be a greater national good than the cheapness, excellence, and extension of a manufacture. The wealth of a nation, that is, of its State or Government, may depend much upon productive labour well applied, and upon great accumulations of manufacturing capital to apply it ; the happy condition and well-being of a people seem to depend more on the wide distribution of employment over the face of a country by small but numerous masses of capital.”* There are greater facilities for the practical application of this scheme, than would appear to those who have not given much attention to the subject. The land in cultivation in Great Britain is estimated at 33,792,450 acres ; and the whole extent of surface at 51,000,000 acres. Of the 17,000,000 acres not under cultivation, it is more than probable that one-half is waste and unenclosed, but still of an improveable and cultivatable nature, if the poor were given a sufficient interest in it. Spade husbandry soon turns a waste into a garden. With a very little extension of the present machinery, this waste land might be placed at the disposal of the poor, and they might become proprietors upon easy terms. It would certainly be a perversion of the usual order of things,—all the enclosures hitherto having been for the use of the rich, and the allotments having been in proportion to the assessments ;—truly, “to him that

* Residence in Norway, p. 299.

hath, hath been given ; but from him that hath not, hath been taken even that he hath." But let us begin to consult the interests of the poor, and we shall find it the more enlightened kind of self-interest in the end. We do not recommend waste lands only as applicable to this purpose : none can afford to pay better rent for land in small allotments than the poor. For the last twelve years there has been in existence a society, called The Labourer's Friend Society, the object of which has been to disseminate information on the advantages of allotments of land to the labouring classes. The Branch Societies have been very numerous and their operations extensive enough to prove the feasibility of the plan, and the beneficial results to the labouring poor have justified the benevolent anticipations of the originators. We beg to refer the reader to the "Labourer's Friend Magazine," published by the Society at 20, Exeter Hall. The operations of the Society have hitherto been confined almost exclusively to the agricultural districts, where 100,000 allotments have been given, varying, according to the wants of the family, from 1 rood, or $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre, to $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres. "The Society recommends the letting to the labourer, so much land only as he can cultivate with the aid of his family during his leisure time ; consequently not sufficient to make him a small farmer, or in any way independent of his regular labour." The Society has lately, since the spring of 1840, made the experiment in the manufacturing districts. Their agent has established thirty-two Branch Societies in the Midland Counties, with the stated object of obtaining healthful and remunerative employment for the leisure hours of

the operative classes in the cultivation of allotments of land, as cottage gardens, containing a rood or 1210 square yards, to be cultivated by manual labour alone, which, under good management, will supply poor families with vegetables all the year, and enable them to feed a pig, so that they may at least have a partial dependence for their subsistence from this source of their industry, when unable to work, through sickness, or a temporary suspension of employment, in consequence of a depression in trade. "About 600 acres, in 2,400 allotments, have already been let; the artizans manifest great eagerness to avail themselves of the privilege, and I have been told by several men with large families that they should have been lost entirely during the late depression, if it had not been for small gardens in their possession, much less than a rood. The good, physically and morally, is incalculable, that would result to our manufacturing operative if he could turn out in the morning or evening—when he ordinarily goes to the gin or beer shop—to an hour or two's labour at his garden. The Municipal and Parish Authorities could render such societies much assistance, should they be so disposed. By 59 Geo. 3, cap. 12, The Churchwardens and Overseers with the consent of the Vestry may take into their hands any land belonging to the parish, or purchase, hire, or take on lease any land within or near the parish not exceeding fifty acres, and employ in the cultivation thereof on account of the parish any persons they are by *law* directed to set to work and may pay reasonable wages to such poor persons as shall not be supported by the parish. And by 1 and 2

William 4, c. 42, The Churchwardens with the consent of the Lord of the Manor in writing and with the consent of the major part in value of the persons having right of common signified under their hands and seals, may enclose not exceeding *fifty* acres of any common or waste land lying in or near the parish, and cultivate the same for the benefit of such parish and its poor. Or may let any part to any poor and industrious inhabitant to be cultivated on his own account. This power is also extended to the Guardians of the Poor of any parishes or places incorporated under 22 Geo. 3, c. 83, or under any local Act, and to the Overseers of all Townships, Villages, and places, having separate Overseers and maintaining their poor separately.”*

Around many of our great towns there are large quantities of waste and lammas land—i. e. land on which the Freemen have a right of herbage for part of the year,—comparatively useless to the poor in its present state, and a great injury to the town generally. Now if Churchwardens, Overseers, and Guardians of the Poor would exercise the power they possess accord-

* This power, however, at present is seriously limited, for by the Act of 6th and 7th Wm. 4th, cap. 115, sec. 55, entitled “An Act for facilitating the Inclosure of Open and Arable Fields in England and Wales,” it is provided that nothing therein contained should authorize the enclosure of any open or common meadow or pasture lands or fields within ten miles of London, or of any open or common meadow or pasture lands or fields situate within one mile of any town of 5000 inhabitants, or within one mile and a half of any town of 15,000 inhabitants, or within two miles of any city or town of 30,000 inhabitants, or within two miles and a half of any city or town of 70,000 inhabitants, or within three miles of any city or town of 100,000 inhabitants; the number of such inhabitants to be ascertained by the last census, and the distance to be measured from the Town Hall.

ing to the above Act, and would take land and re-let it to the Labourers' Friend Society for the use of the poor, to be under-let and managed according to its laws and regulations, the labourers and artizans throughout the country might very soon each be in possession of an allotment. Government might also assist the Labourers' Friend Society by extending its power over waste lands and authorizing it, under certain restrictions, to give or sell such allotments to the poor; thus furnishing them with the strongest of all interests in its cultivation, viz., the right of a proprietor.*

* We may mention our own town as one amongst many others, the capabilities of which are very great for carrying out such a plan. Immediately surrounding the town are about 1000 acres of Lammas Land, which, with the consent of the Freemen, who are, for the most part, operatives, might be made several, or belonging to individuals instead of to the community. The share of the Freemen, or the value of their right, has been variously estimated at one-third or one-fourth; in either case it would be sufficient to purchase 250 acres, or 1000 allotments of a rood each; or if 150 acres only were purchased, cottages with shops for hand-loom might be built upon 100 allotments, upon the most approved plan with respect to construction, draining, and ventilation; and together with the allotments might be let at about the moderate rate of £10 per annum, and one pound per annum for garden alone, where there was no cottage. Thus 100 families of our town-bred operatives might be transferred to a healthy and pleasant country residence in exchange for the crowded and unwholesome, ill-ventilated and ill-drained places they now inhabit; and 500 more might have allotments of a rood each; or, if it were found to work better at the commencement, 1000 might have one-eighth of an acre each, which would be as much as they could manage economically without neglecting their ordinary employment. The income of this property would be £1500 annually, which might be spent in the support of aged and infirm Freemen, in Education, or as was otherwise thought desirable. There are few of the Freemen who, at present, derive any benefit from these Lammas Lands, the

Again, the factory system must extend itself; as it is impossible that hand-loom weaving can much longer contend against the power-loom, which has now been proved to be applicable to silk as well as cotton. Let our steam factories be uniformly built in the open country, as is now very generally done in Lancashire, and let cottages for the artizans be also built in an airy situation, around the factory, with land attached to each. Most of the evils attendant upon the extension of the factory system might thus be avoided, and a high state of external prosperity and internal order, intelligence,

benefit, as I understand, being confined to 300 persons out of 3000, entitled to equal privileges. The case of this town is merely brought forward as an illustration of what might be done immediately in this direction to improve the physical circumstances of the working population throughout the country. Of course, the allotment system, as now practised, can only be regarded as a very limited approach towards the policy advocated. The Labourers' Friend Society does not advise the allotment, under ordinary circumstances, of more than a rood of land, i. e. one-fourth of an acre to each member; whereas one acre to each family is the least that can be efficient towards the object we have contemplated. It may, however, be objected, and with reason, that there are many large manufacturing towns to which the allotment system is not applicable, the land in the immediate neighbourhood being either at too high a rent or too far distant for such purposes. Under such circumstances the Society contemplate building cottages upon sufficient land for gardens out of the town. The Drainage of Buildings Bill, founded on the Report of the House of Commons on the Health of the poorer classes in large towns, brought forward by the Whig Ministry, and which is one of the best measures for improving the condition of the people ever brought forward by any party, would very much facilitate the object. In Liverpool there are upwards of 7,800 inhabited cellars, occupied by upwards of 39,000 persons; in Manchester there are 18,300 persons in cellars: let these be dug up and put into houses, and let an equal number be transferred to cottages with gardens in the country.

and morality be introduced. The present frequent practice of parents living by the labour of their children, their own labour having become comparatively useless, alone gives rise to every species of disorder and insubordination. Of 220,134 persons employed in cotton factories, only 58,053 were males above 18 years of age; the labour falling principally upon children and females: and in the other branches of manufactures the disproportion of adult male labour is still less. Thus out of 424,209 operatives employed in the five most important branches of manufacture,—cotton, wool, worsted, flax, and silk, only 96,752 were males above 18; 130,218 were females above 18; and 114,603, females below 18.* Employment must be found for the male adults, forty or fifty thousand of whom, trained from early childhood to factory labour, are yearly turned adrift, and whom machinery every day tends more and more to supplant. Let this employment be principally upon the land, and the father of his family may still be its head, and enabled to supply its members with the necessaries and comforts of life, without its being essential to their subsistence or England's supremacy that his daughters under 18 and young children should work twelve hours per day at the mill. We may then perhaps discover that our national existence does not depend upon our selling manufactured cotton at a farthing per ell cheaper than any other people. As Carlyle says, "a most narrow stand for a free nation to base itself on—a stand which, with all the corn-law abrogations conceivable, I do

* Factory Commissioners' Report, 1841.

not think will be capable of enduring." The factories at Lowell, in the State of Massachusetts, United States, are worked principally by the daughters of farmers in the surrounding States, of the age of from 17 to 24, and they exhibit a high state of prosperity, morality, and intelligence. Our own Greggs, Strutts, and Ashworths, have also set a noble example of what may be done towards improving the condition of the factory operatives under their charge. In the ameliorated condition of their workpeople the manufacturers will find their own interest, and they will never have reason to regret any degree of pains and attention directed towards the increase of their physical comforts and the improvement of their minds. The strength and welfare of a State is best based upon a contented and happy peasantry: the condition of our own labouring classes would indicate that notwithstanding our apparent prosperity, we have still much to fear. We have made mention chiefly of the manufacturing poor, not because we are not aware that the condition of the agricultural poor is little, if any, more prosperous, but because we consider that our proposed remedies are equally applicable to the amelioration of the condition of all who are dependent upon wages: an extension of trade, the removal of taxes from those articles which the poor man most requires, and the putting them on property and income; the restoration of him again to the soil from which he has been withdrawn, very much to his own detriment, by our manufacturing system, may do much to improve the circumstances of our operatives; but legislative protection from undue competition with machinery and

their own increasing numbers, will require, no doubt, also to be afforded them.*

* We hail the late discussion upon the Ten Hours Bill in Parliament as the harbinger of brighter days for England—it contained an evident admission that something must be done for the working classes,—that Laissez-faire had been tried and found wanting—it contained the elements of a higher tone of moral feeling than the worldly, practical, selfish spirit of British legislation has hitherto admitted. Our Millocrats were told that what was morally wrong could never be practically right or expedient; that British supremacy could never be maintained by laws opposed to the laws of God. There can be little doubt that the feeling of shortening the hours of labour is a right one. Our enormous productive powers are, if fully worked, equal to supplying another planet besides our own; and the constant tendency, with our present available markets, is not only to over-production, but also to leave hands unemployed; and the ultimate effect of shortening the hours of labour can only be to employ workpeople who otherwise would be left destitute of occupation altogether. We can scarcely apprehend its having any serious effect upon our power of competing with foreigners, when we look to the official and declared value of our exports, already quoted, and the greatly reduced price of such exports as compared one year with another. We believe that it is *home* competition rather than foreign that reduces the profits of manufacturers and lowers the rate of wages. The present state of the ribbon trade in Coventry, although not exactly a case in point, may tend to illustrate this:—The trade of Coventry is principally in ribbons, and for several years past, although there has been a yearly increasing demand for ribbons, yet from production exceeding even the increased demand, there has been little or no profit among manufacturers, and a great cry-out against the times. A new trade sprung up in the place—the trimming and fringe trade,—which suddenly took away a great many hands, usually employed in making ribbons; this, of course, reduced the production in ribbons, and all the manufacturers as suddenly found themselves in a comparatively prosperous state. But what say the opponents to a “Ten Hours Bill?” Why, that an interference with the hours of labour must lower the wages of all the operatives engaged in foreign trade, or throw them out of employment altogether. Thus, Colonel Torrens, in his letter to Lord Ashley, says that “England possesses no superiority over the United States of North America as regards the advantages, whe-

COLONIZATION AND EMIGRATION. Immediately connected with the close union of the labourer to the land at home, is his having easy access to the land in our colonies. Nothing depresses the Americans; their gambling speculations in currency and

ther natural or acquired, by which the efficacy of industry is increased,—that America is our most important market,—that instead of receiving our fabrics duty free, it charges a duty of forty per cent. upon them, and consequently, to retain that market, our operatives must work equal time and for half the wages. If, therefore, the hours of labour are shortened, wages must fall; and if wages are already at a minimum, we must lose the market altogether.” Again—“Last year France imposed an additional duty upon British yarn, and the manufacturer, in order to retain possession of the French market, was compelled to reduce the price of the article. France now meets the reduction of price by a further increase of duty. This will impose upon the manufacturer, if he would maintain possession of the French market, another reduction of price; and the inevitable consequence of this must be a decline of wages. And what is the remedy you propose for averting this evil? A compulsory diminution of the hours of labour,—a legislative enactment for diminishing the quantity of work the operative may execute. You co-operate with the Government of France in pulling down the greatness of England.” Alas for England, if her greatness is really dependent upon such a policy! Carlyle may well call it “a narrow stand for a free nation to base itself upon.” The same authority says, “The causes are already in full and resistless operation, which will render it impossible for the British manufacturer to retain possession of the German market, except upon the condition of a progressive reduction of wages in England.” And, “Under the Compromise Act, and previous to the recent modification of the American tariff, the impost duties were to be limited to twenty per cent.—these duties have now been enormously increased, and it is the avowed design of the Whig party in the Union to adopt the protective system to such an extent as to give the American manufacturer a monopoly in the home market.” So also we are told that “all the great commercial countries in the world have adopted the policy of forcing domestic manufactures, by imposing high import duties upon foreign fabrics,—and a large and increasing proportion of the po-

manufactures throw them for a time; but, like the giant of old, from their contact with the earth they rise with renewed vigour. The tide of emigration flows farther and farther west; a broader and broader line is marked each year with the civilizing hand of

pulation of the kingdom is dependent on the demand of foreign markets for the means of subsistence." Now what are the legitimate inferences from these facts? According to Colonel Torrens, women and children must now work 12 hours a day to enable us to keep the foreign markets, and of course, therefore, if America raises her duty to fifty per cent., wages must be lowered one-fifth; or if wages are at a minimum, or as low as the operative can live, women and children must work a fifth more time,—and so on, as foreign countries continue to carry out the policy they have resolved upon, of excluding our goods, our operatives must continue to take less wages and work more hours, we must employ children under ten years, we must work them half the night, as we did before the *law interfered with the hours of labour*, and we must take in Sunday;—this would be a notable expedient, and it would at once give us a great advantage over the foreigner; for, as Colonel Torrens justly says, "Must not British goods, when imported into a foreign country, be sold to the consumer at the same price at which the similar goods of that country are sold to the consumer? And is it not self-evident that if British goods, upon entering the market of a foreign country, are charged with a duty of twenty, or thirty, or forty per cent., the British operative cannot receive an amount of wages equal to the amount of wages obtained by the operative of that country, unless he can produce in a day, or a week, a quantity of goods, greater by twenty, or thirty, or forty per cent. than the quantity produced in a day or a week by his foreign competitor?" Again we say, alas for British greatness! it certainly will require, if dependent upon such a policy, no co-operation of Lord Ashley with the Government of France to help to pull it down. Had we not better all of us, with Colonel Torrens, begin to look for some other road out of our difficulties, than in over-tasking our manufacturing population in competing with foreigners who are protected by import duties varying from 20 to 100 per cent.? Even the wilds of Australia and Canada are better than that.

man, as competition and necessity oblige multitudes to seek in the waste new modes of subsistence. With the generality of minds, it seems to be too much overlooked that the resources of the British empire are not limited to Great Britain and Ireland; that those isles, with their twenty-six millions of inhabitants, constitute only the heart of the empire, giving vitality to its remotest extremities; and that the East and West Indies, New South Wales, New Zealand, and a large part of the North American Continent, are as much Britain as the British Isles, and as much under the protection of Britain's Queen. The vulgar, but too common prejudice, that people are expatriated who go out to our Colonies,—that is,—who go from one part of the empire to the other—should be dispelled as speedily as possible, by practical measures for giving unity to the empire. We have the command of the sea; the high roads are therefore open to us. Every possible facility and inducement should be afforded for the transfer of capital from where it gluts the market to where it might itself create a new market; and capital should be supplied, at the cost of the State, with that which alone can make it available in a new country, viz., labour. At the cost of the State also roads should be made and bridges built; and *an army to conquer the wilderness* may prove as efficient towards our protection from internal causes of disorganization and decay, as our regular standing army has been for our protection against external aggression. War could scarcely bring greater trouble than the late long-continued distress to our manufacturing districts, and in the well-being of our

colonists will be found much of the future strength and prosperity of the kingdom. The free trade principle, that each country should furnish that for which *nature* has best qualified it, and which costs, therefore, in that country the least labour in production, is sound in the abstract; but it so happens that most of the staple manufactures can, at certain stages of a nation's progress, be produced as well in one country as another; and thus among the many disturbing causes likely to affect the staple trade of this country, that arising from the competition of other countries of the same age and in the same stage of civilization as ourselves, will most probably not be the least formidable. And notwithstanding our present advantages, foreign competitors will have one element of success which we have not, viz., the cheap rate at which they can purchase labour, owing to the continental operative having, in most cases, the land to fall back upon, and thus being able to afford to sell his labour to the manufacturer for nearly six months in each year, for almost nothing. It will be the safest policy, therefore, for this country to direct its efforts to the formation of new States from its own surplus population, which must remain chiefly agricultural for a long period of time; which will supply us with customers for our manufactures when the nations of Europe have not only learned to fill their own markets, but to compete with us in every other. These new countries will constitute our home market; and even should they become independent States, still we shall retain the tie of kindred and of language, of taste and sympathy.

The Government has of late given considerable

attention to the subjects of Colonization and Emigration, and such attention will be more and more required as machinery more and more displaces the adult labourer. The attempt to make "England the workshop of the world" is not our highest policy, and we think it will be found that although a rude kind of plenty and prosperity is consistent with agricultural industry, permanent prosperity is unattainable from manufacturing industry *alone*, and that it can only be *based*, however high the superstructure may afterwards be raised, upon employment upon land. We do not hold it to be consistent with a nation's prosperity that the manufacturing population should greatly exceed what the land is capable of supporting, that the country should be filled with Manchesters and Glasgows: we would rather see the people taken to the agricultural produce than the agricultural produce brought to them. In advocating, as we have done previously, the repeal of the corn laws, it is not so much in the expectation that we shall become large importers, as that the competition with foreign States will introduce improved modes of culture and increased produce at home. The physical and moral deterioration of a large part of our working population appears to us to admit of no remedies disconnected with agricultural employment and country residence.

Upon other questions intimately connected with the improvement of our political system, such as Currency, Poor Laws, and Education, we shall confine ourselves to a single remark on each. It would seem that the periodical distress, which forms a part of our present system, always originates, or is greatly

aggravated by an action upon the currency. Bank-paper is payable in gold, and gold has a marketable value independent of currency ; and if there is an undue issue of paper, which generally occurs, not only to meet the demand of legitimate trade, but also of the speculation always accompanying increasing prosperity, the market value of gold is raised above its standard value, or its value as coin, and it is consequently drawn from the bank and melted. To prevent this, the bank suddenly decreases its issues and raises its discounts, at the same time that the gold disappears ; thus money becomes proportionally scarce and goods cheap, and then follow want of profits and immense losses, and the commencement of the downward progress previously described. It has been proposed as a remedy for this, that there should be a Government bank of issue ; that the price of gold, iron, or other metals or articles of commerce which have the least tendency to fluctuate, should be fixed at the time when the country is in one of its most healthy periods of prosperity, and the workpeople all tolerably well employed ; that the price of these metals should regulate the issues ; and that in order to keep this price fixed, the issues should decrease when it falls, and increase when it rises. As the powers of production in all departments of industry increase, money should increase proportionally : gold on this account may be an improper medium of exchange.

Any system of Poor Laws cannot be regarded in the light of a remedy, but only as a necessary palliation of an evil fearfully on the increase, and which, although indispensable, has, in its very nature, a tendency still farther to increase the evil. It is a

disease superadded in order to counteract another disease, but which itself makes fearful ravages on the constitution and renders a return to the healthy state still more impracticable. A gradual degeneration of the species must be consequent upon the condition of our working classes: there is a great mortality amongst this class, but such is the sickly and imperfect state of many that are reared, that a greater and greater deterioration of each generation is inevitable; and it is these naturally defective portions of the community who increase our rates and fill our workhouses:—workhouses as they are called,—but they who inhabit them have either never been capable of, or are past work. Take the evidence of one of our most enlightened physicians:—"I lately," he says, "accompanied a friend of mine over a well-conducted union workhouse in an agricultural district. The persons whom I saw there were of two kinds; aged and helpless men who had toiled, as they do in most countries, with the certain prospect of pauperism before them all their lives long; and younger men, who appeared to be deficient in intellect. Of the women, several also were old and helpless: a few were young, and of these, several, I am inclined to think more than half, were idiotic. There were nurseries for the boys and girls. In the nurseries I was shocked with the spectacle of little laughing idiots, the children of idiotic mothers; but in the older children, with a few exceptions so striking that one felt surprised to see them there, the children presented coarse features; their heads were singularly low and broad, as if they had a broad shallow brain; and in several instances

the upper dimensions of the brain were so evidently defective, that no one could help observing it. Every physiologist, nay, every ordinary observer, would say, of such a shaped head, that it was associated with very small intellectual power; and the figure of the head, taken with the faculties and expression of the face, was too manifestly such as every observer would say prophesied ill for the future character of the individual. Great care might possibly do much; but when you consider these evils of birth, and the unavoidable privations and neglect to which these human beings must be exposed as they grow up, the *awful* consideration presents itself that they are predoomed, from childhood,—from birth—before birth—to ignorance or helplessness, or to crime; to the lowest toil—to want—to premature death—or to puerism in age.”

“As in the agricultural workhouse, we find the human brain brought to a very low state of development, and the faculties of the mind very limited, so in the manufacturing workhouse we find the results of causes of degeneracy acting on a population whose faculties are kept in greater activity, but whose bodies are deteriorated, and whose offspring are prone to every evil that belongs to an imperfect structure of every tissue of the body, and to the imperfect action of the organs which circulate the blood, or which elaborate the chyle, or which should renew and retain the perpetual waste; so that, even in them the brain cannot long continue healthy and efficient. If the children in the agricultural workhouse were taken out and brought up ever so carefully, I believe that a very small proportion of them would exhibit a capacity of much men-

tal improvement. If the children in the manufacturing workhouse were separated, and brought up in families where every article of diet and regimen was very carefully attended to, many of them would be found incapable of continued life beyond a few years. They might escape some of the worst forms of disease which now carry them off in infancy, but a considerable portion would eventually perish of some form or other of tuberculous disease—consumption—or disease of the mesenteric glands. With these, then, it must be seen how limited must be the effects of the best physical and moral education that could be devised, even if it could be at once and in every case applied. And so long as these classes remain in this state, disease and premature death, and many moral evils which disfigure life, *must* be perpetuated. Of both these classes of the poor a proportion will still live to be thirty or forty, and become, unhappily, the parents of children who will inherit their infirmities of mind and body, and their tendencies to disease; until, by the gradual augmentation of the evil, successive families are extinguished.’

We have seen that there are in England nearly a million and a half of paupers, and a million more of our population who live by crime; and amongst this class and the lowest of our factory population an attempt was made in the Factory Bill of last Session to make some kind of education compulsory; but this was decried as an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject. How long such *liberty of the subject* will be safe, is a problem for those to solve whose doctrine is “laissez-faire,” and who would confine the functions of Government solely to our

protection. It must be very evident that the voluntary system can never reach this class ; the public would never provide schools, and the children would never be sent to them if it did ; and any kind of education that may be introduced amongst them must be compulsory. The attempt at a compromise, although favourably received by the heads of both our great parties from a knowledge of its necessity, was violently opposed by the Dissenters ; and we may have to feel that the success of their opposition was a national misfortune. Our rail-roads, our penny-post, our free constitution, our printing-press, cannot but spread intelligence among a numerous portion of our population, and perhaps do more to educate than the more laboured systems of our Continental neighbours, and will certainly be always sufficient to afford full protection to liberty of conscience : but there is still a very large class left whom Governmental measures and a National System of Education only can reach. We do not fear a lack of intelligence,—what we have reason to fear is that the mere intellectual education should outstrip the education of the physical and moral powers, and that there should be a constantly increasing tendency amongst our poor towards that most mischievous of all unions—intelligence and vice—a knowledge of political rights without a corresponding knowledge of duties. A well-devised national scheme of education may do much as an amelioration, but would be quite ineffective as a remedy ; for it is impossible to “*engraft virtue on physical misery.*”

ORGANIZATION OF INDUSTRY. The conclusion at which we are compelled to arrive, after this short view of our present social system and its capabilities of improvement, is, that such a system, even in its most reformed and perfect state, can only produce similar results to those we have witnessed, differing, not in kind, but in degree. There may be an extension of commerce until each trade may be a cotton-trade, each small town a Manchester; and yet the social magnet will be charged as before, plus and minus; at one pole, immense wealth to the few; at the other, increased numbers and poverty. During our short periods of prosperity we may roll our stone up-hill, but only to recoil upon us when, with much labour, it has reached the summit. It is true that by the present system we have doubled our population in the space of 50 years, more than doubled our wealth and national resources, and raised an intelligent and powerful middle class; but in the condition of the masses we find evidence of that decline which, as Lord Bacon says, invariably accompanies the predominance of commerce and the mechanical arts. Our paupers are a million and a half, and our criminals a million. If all the measures proposed for the amendment of the present system were carried out to their full extent, they could effect but little towards raising the condition of the great majority. By a union of agricultural and manufacturing employments and wiser sanitary regulations we might perhaps prevent the farther deterioration of the race, and prevent wages from falling below the starving point; and by Free Trade and extension of our markets we might find employment for our in-

creasing numbers, and for those artizans who must otherwise stand idle in the labour market. The Continental writers have long been aware that no more favourable results can be effected by our present policy, and perhaps we may class it amongst our brightest grounds for hope that some of our own most enlightened writers and philanthropists—men who have the public ear—are endeavouring to make their countrymen sensible of it too. In Thomas Carlyle's phraseology, "All this mammon-gospel of supply-and-demand, competition, laissez-faire, and devil take the hindmost, begins to be one of the shabbiest gospels ever preached on earth; or altogether the shabbiest. * * * Were the corn laws ended to-morrow, there is nothing yet ended, there is only room made for all manner of things beginning. The corn laws gone and trade made free, it is as good as certain this paralysis of industry will pass away. We shall have another period of commercial enterprise, of victory, and prosperity; during which, it is likely, much money will again be made, and all the people may, by the extant methods, still for a space of years, be kept alive, and physically fed. The strangling band of Famine will be loosened from our necks; we shall have room again to breathe, time to bethink ourselves, to repent and consider! A precious and thrice-precious span of years; wherein to struggle as for life in repairing our foul ways; in alleviating, instructing, regulating our people; seeking, as for life, that something like spiritual food be imparted them, some real governance and guidance be provided them. It will be a priceless time. For our new period or paroxysm of commercial prosperity will and can,

on the old methods of 'Competition and devil take the hindmost,' prove but a paroxysm: a new paroxysm,—likely enough, if we do not use it better, to be our *last*. In this, of itself, is no salvation. If our trade in twenty years 'flourishing' as never trade flourished, could double itself; yet then also, by the old laissez-faire method, our population is doubled: we shall then be as we are, only twice as many of us, twice and ten times as unmanageable."* The author of the Atlas Prize Essay is fully sensible of the evil, if not equally so of the remedy. He observes, "The result to which Political Economists have arrived is, that the true solution of the problem of national wealth is to be found in the systematic application of the principle of laissez-faire: in other words, of leaving things to adjust themselves by the free unimpeded operation of the individual self-interest involved. All interference on the part of legislative or public opinion, and especially all considerations formed on moral considerations, is stigmatized as erroneous. Thus, for complaints of industry and commerce, political economy has but one specific—absence of restraint, unlimited freedom of competition. For the still more important question of wages, it has the same answer." From these conclusions he entirely dissents; he says, that "the ruinous spirit of unlimited competition, if allowed to operate unchecked, will clearly always end in reducing profits and wages to a *minimum*, and deluging all the markets of the world with articles at a price which gives neither a return to the capitalist nor a subsistence to the ope-

* "Past and Present," p. 250.

native." And again, "Experience has shown, with a force of demonstration that renders argument superfluous, that something far more than *leaving things to themselves* is required to meet the evils that threaten society, and that most of the conclusions which have been taught by political economy, with a pedantic parade and scientific certainty, are either totally false, or, if true, true only under certain conditions and limitations. * * * The more enlightened economists have, indeed, themselves come to see, that even on their own principles the mere absolute amount of wealth in a nation signifies little compared with the more important question of its *distribution*."

To those who have carefully considered what may be effected by order and combination, the whole world of work seems at present an enormous chaos of powers working blindly on, undirected to any general object by unity of purpose,—a mighty lottery-wheel which casts up wealth for the few and crushes the million,—and our English notion of freedom perpetuates the chaotic state, by making it the grand desideratum for each individual to have perfect liberty to pursue unmolested the course which self-interest alone marks out. The time is come, however, when light must, of necessity, be introduced into the system, and each atom must be made to move and act in harmony with the whole. We can no longer "do what we like with our own," but must be content to take our places as members of the human family, as parts of an organized system, arranged so as best to promote the interests of all. We talk of liberty, while the multitudes are slaves to work and want; we must give up such liberty,

which means chance, that we may possess the only real liberty dependent upon law. Each man as he comes into the world must be shown his place and his work, and not left to find it, or starve. "All human interests, combined human endeavours, and social growths in this world, have at a certain stage of their development, required organizing; and Work, the grandest of human interests, does now require it."*

It is clearly demonstrable that one man can produce more than he can consume; if then we have the means of setting him to work, why should any starve? The labour of one agriculturist can support fifteen manufacturers, even with the present imperfect modes of cultivation; and fifteen manufacturers can produce, by the aid of machinery, as much as 4,500 could in 1760, when each man's labour was sufficient for his own support; supposing, therefore, these sixteen families to be in possession of land and capital, and at liberty to exchange with each other the fruits of their labour, what could possibly prevent their having all things requisite for their comfortable subsistence? For the sake of illustration let us imagine a village in which, keeping the same proportion, the labour of ten agriculturists supported 150 manufacturers and artizans, consisting of tailors, shoemakers, builders, carpenters, weavers, &c., and all such whose trades are indispensable to a community, in the proportion required to meet the wants of all, and that they supplied themselves by the interchange of each others industry. There would be no great difficulty in settling the proportion of

* Carlyle's "Past and Present," p. 363.

each kind of labour required. The number of agriculturists being ten, let there be ten persons to each of ten other leading departments—clothes, shoes, &c. This number would doubtless be sufficient to supply all comforts and necessaries to the village, and there would be then fifty left for other sundry employments and to manufacture articles to exchange for foreign produce and luxuries. Supposing each to do his part, it would be easy to maintain a prosperous state of things in a village so situated, supply and demand having once been apportioned to each other. One labourer, by what he *produced*, and what he *wanted*, would necessarily be the means of *employing*, and *maintaining* another labourer; and if the population of the village doubled or trebled, or increased to any extent, so long as the due proportion between employments continued, the labour of one man would continue to call that of another into profitable operation. Of course this presupposes—as we think we are perfectly justified in presupposing, considering the previous calculations with respect to the powers of production—that there be capital enough to set the increased numbers to work, and land enough to employ the required proportion of agriculturists. Let us next suppose, continuing our illustrations of a village and the same number of inhabitants, that by an improvement in machinery double the number of shoes or coats could be made at the same cost of time or labour; each person in the village might then either wear two coats or two pairs of shoes where he only wore one before, or else five persons out of each department might be added to the fifty, and the foreign produce and luxuries in the

village be thus increased, additional wants or caprices gratified, or more leisure afforded to the operatives, and all that would be essential to keep the whole population profitably employed would be the proper proportionment of the numbers engaged in the different departments of industry. Such an adjustment of supply and demand would not be difficult; but the industrial system of the village might soon be thrown into confusion, if with increased powers of machinery, parties were allowed to go on producing more than the community required, or if a greater number than necessary should insist upon working in one department and neglecting production in another.

This is an imaginary picture, merely given as an explanation of the meaning of "Organization," and representing the lowest kind of association; a co-operation far more perfect is contended for by those who advocate this kind of reform. It is evident that the error of our present system lies in its defective and false organization, and that the reform required is neither political or administrative, but social. We become so accustomed to the form of society under which we live, that its institutions, laws, and customs, are a second nature to us, and we never suspect that the evils that surround us and against which we are struggling, are inherent in the very frame-work of our social system. This social system, which appears to us natural, unchangeable, and perfect, is nevertheless built upon the predominance of individual self-interest, and is therefore totally out of harmony with the very laws of our being; for Providence has so built us that we cannot be happy if our fellow-creatures are mise-

serable, and what we require is a skilful combination of all the powers we possess for the general good;— a family should consist not of a man's own household merely, but of as many as are necessary to produce and consume everything that the highest wants of that family require. The objects proposed by such an association are *harmony of means, unity of purpose,* and what can never be acquired under the present system, *justice in distribution.* To production only have we hitherto attended, and we are now beginning to be aware that distribution is equally important.

Under the present system the great body of the people must be always poor and miserable, the advantages of civilization being dispensed only to a favoured few; whereas prosperity consists in the well-being of the majority.

Under the present system the demand for labour, upon which the prosperity of the majority depends, can never be co-extensive with supply in the general market of the world; competition, therefore, for the sale of labour, will determine its price, and not what that labour can and does produce.

Under the present system also, machinery must always work rather against, than for, the operative, as it has a constant tendency to lower the value of labour and take from the great body of consumers their powers of consumption: the saving of labour thus becoming a disadvantage rather than a blessing to the community.*

* This last is a circumstance that economists of all parties feel great difficulty in reconciling with the continuance of prosperity under the present system. "If," says Gaskell, "the 150,000 spinners of the present day superintend the production of as much

These difficulties can only be met and overcome by an alteration of the system, by a skilful combination of the enormous powers of production at our command,—by associative industry,—by communities of equal interests,—by joint-stock companies for the equal distribution and consumption of all that life requires. Unity in production would be found no less beneficial than unity in all other purposes. If each individual was required to forward his own letter, we fear our corre-

yarn as would have required the labour of 40,000,000 men a century ago, what is to prevent 1000 doing that which is now done by 150,000? Not only is there nothing to prevent it, but it will actually be done, if no great convulsion overturn the present system. If one power-loom is six times as effective as a hand-loom, why should not the power-loom be doubled in capability in ten years? These things are yet in their infancy. The introduction of steam-power, of automatic labour, of power-looms, are events of the present generation; and there is not a fabric but will shortly be transplanted from the hand to steam." And again, "The time, indeed, appears rapidly approaching, when the people, emphatically so called, and which have hitherto been considered the sinews of a nation's strength, will be even worse than useless; when the manufactories will be filled with machinery, impelled by steam, so admirably constructed as to perform nearly all the processes required in them; and when land will be tilled by the same means. Neither are these visionary anticipations; and these include but a fraction of the mighty alterations to which the next century will give birth. Well, then, may the question be asked—What is to be done? Great calamities must be suffered. No extensive transition of this nature can be operated without immense present sacrifices; but upon what class, or what division of property or industry, these must be more especially inflicted, it is impossible clearly to indicate. Much should be done—and done vigorously and resolutely. Like other great revolutions in the social arrangement of kingdoms, it is to be feared that an explosion will be permitted to take place, undirected by the guiding hand of any patriotic and sagacious spirit, that its fragments will be again huddled together in hurry and confusion, and finally have to undergo a series of painful gradations, before society can regain a healthy and permanent tone." *Artizans and Machinery*, p. 332.

spondence would necessarily be very limited ; but by the aid of Unity and Organization a penny will take a letter to any part of the kingdom, and leave a profit upon the transaction. If the stupendous undertaking of the London and Birmingham Railway had been accomplished by means of each proprietor through whose land it passed, completing his part of the line, according to his own ability and caprice, instead of by one directory, assisted by the highest talent the country afforded, the line thus formed would bear about the same relation to the present line, as the result of the present individualized efforts towards production bear to the perfect whole which a skilful organization of such powers would create. With the country divided into families or groups of from two to three thousand people, comprising all trades and professions, united for such objects, assisted by the highest intelligence and science, almost all the evils that necessarily form a part of the old system, could be obviated. The basis of such societies would always be upon land, equal to the subsistence of all the members, and agricultural and manufacturing industry might again be joined together and at much greater advantage than formerly. Labour and capital would be reunited, and the labourer not obliged to sell his share of the joint produce, in consequence of the competition of his fellows, for less than its value ; and if by the aid of machinery he produced three or three hundred times as much as before, he would be a sharer in the increase. Demand and supply would be co-extensive ; for the produce of each would be taken to a common store and left for the general benefit, or exchanged for what was required, and when the store-houses were

full, the members might rest till they required replenishing. Machinery would be a benefit to all, for every saving of labour would release so much time that might be then employed in higher pursuits. Everything required by the community would be produced on the spot, so far as was practicable, and the surplus only exchanged for foreign or colonial produce. Under such circumstances, political economy would really be to the State what domestic economy is to the family.*

* We must not be understood as advocating any *sudden* changes; we are illustrating only the principle upon which future reforms must be based, and not attempting to determine in what way that principle can be best reduced to practice. We are quite aware that organic machinery—the machinery of the social system—cannot, like inorganic, be stopped to be repaired; it must be set to rights while in full motion, and therefore all changes that can safely be made in it must be almost imperceptible, and on this account we have dwelt long upon the improvement of the old system, since that must be kept going while a new and better one is constructing. Still the question is pressing, and it will become more and more pressing, what is to be done with our labouring population? What can Government do? The solution we think will not be difficult when the country is convinced that Labour, to give it a soul and intelligence, must be organized. With the example of the Army and Post Office before us, we need not despair or think it *impossible*, if difficult, that an Army of Industry should be enlisted, drilled, and made to march against all impediments in the way of physical and moral well-being, however low in the social scale such a soldier may be originally found. Suppose as a first step we should have real workhouses in each district, (our present workhouses are mere asylums for the imbecile,) under the direction of a central board and proper officers, which should be self-supporting in their character, that is, producing everything within their own boundary, and consuming only their own produce, upon the principle of the village before mentioned, whose supply and demand having been once properly apportioned to each, one man, by what he *produced* and what he *wanted*, should always be the means of *employing* and *maintaining* some other man. Government might enlist parties for such Industrial establishments, as they do now soldiers for the army, taking care that the capabilities of each person enlisted should be quite equal to producing

It is not our intention here to dwell upon the incalculable moral advantages consequent upon such a system. The political economy of the Social Reformers has been advocated in connexion with various ethical creeds. The Shakers have carried it into practice in America, and are rich; it has been advocated in England by Mr. J. M. Morgan, in connection with the Church of England and High Church dignities; and it has been rendered extremely unpopular from its union with what are considered to be the anti-religious tenets of Robert Owen. In France the system is based on Christianity; its advocates are to be found among the first in rank and intelligence, and the disciples of the late Charles Fourier now constitute a numerous and influential body on the Continent. Upon their system "all industry will become a public function, and there will be a social revenue before there will be an industrial revenue. Forming at first one common mass of riches produced by the combined aid of the members, afterwards to be divided among them ac-

more than he consumed. When enlisted, each person would of course be expected, like our soldiers, to give up his liberty for a certain term of years, and to be at the complete disposal of Government. One man employed in agriculture can support fifteen others, and he must be a most ordinary workman who cannot in all departments of industry produce more than he can consume;—there is no doubt, therefore, that such institutions, imperfect as they must be, might not only be self-supporting, but might soon repay the capital originally employed in their establishment, and that too quite consistently with a state of comfort and freedom from care at present unknown among even our highest class of operatives. Such an army, *well officered*, would be invincible against want and misery, and vice and immorality—"No working world, any more than a fighting world, can be led on without a noble Chivalry of Work, and laws and fixed rules which follow out of that,—far nobler than any mere chivalry of fighting was." Past and Present, p. 365.

ording to the part each has had in the production." Such an alteration in the form of society has been hitherto considered as visionary and Utopian, so far as regards its application to the present age, although it is not denied that society, in a much more advanced stage, may perhaps take such a form. Experience only can determine how far the time is ripe for the commencement of the trial. Under the existing system there seems little reason to hope that the great mass of the people can be raised much above their present state of animalism, in which the whole of life is spent in struggling for the means of living; in which the nobler faculties of the soul lie for ever dormant and undeveloped, and the unbalanced propensities extinguish all healthy action of the moral feelings. Of the class above, the greater number are connected with the trade and commerce of the country; and who so connected has not felt or seen the degrading influence on the character? In the competition for gain, for commercial station and advantage, almost all traces of the highest qualities of man are lost; the whole views are contracted within one narrow circle, the world of business. He whose whole soul is given to money-getting, who has no generous and enlarged sympathies for his fellow mortals to divert his attention from his one object, is the man likely to be the most prosperous. "In Britain," says one of our most intelligent moralists, "that individual is fitted to be most successful in the career of wealth and its attendant advantages who possesses vigorous health, industrious habits, great selfishness, a powerful intellect, and just so much of the moral feeling as to serve for the profitable direction

of his animal powers. This combination of endowments would render self-aggrandizement and worldly-minded prudence the leading motive of his actions; would furnish intellect sufficient to give them effect and morality adequate to restrain them from abuses, or from defeating their own gratification. A person so constituted would feel his faculties to be in harmony with his external condition; he has no lofty aspirations after either goodness or enjoyment which he cannot realize; he is pleased to dedicate his undivided energies to the active business of life, and he is generally successful. He acquires wealth and distinction, stands high in the estimation of society, transmits comfort and abundance to his family, and dies in a good old age." Those who see in man higher and nobler powers and aspirations, which await more genial circumstances for their development, cannot but regard the plans of the Social Reformers, and the new state of society they would introduce, with *interest* and with *hope*; others go still further and affirm, with T. Carlyle, that "with our present system of individual mammonism, and government by *laissez-faire*, this nation cannot *live*. And if in the priceless interim, some new life and healing be not found, there is no second respite to be counted on. The shadow on the dial advances henceforth without pausing. What Government can do? This that they call 'Organization of Labour,' is, if well understood, the problem of the whole future, for all who would in future pretend to govern men."

