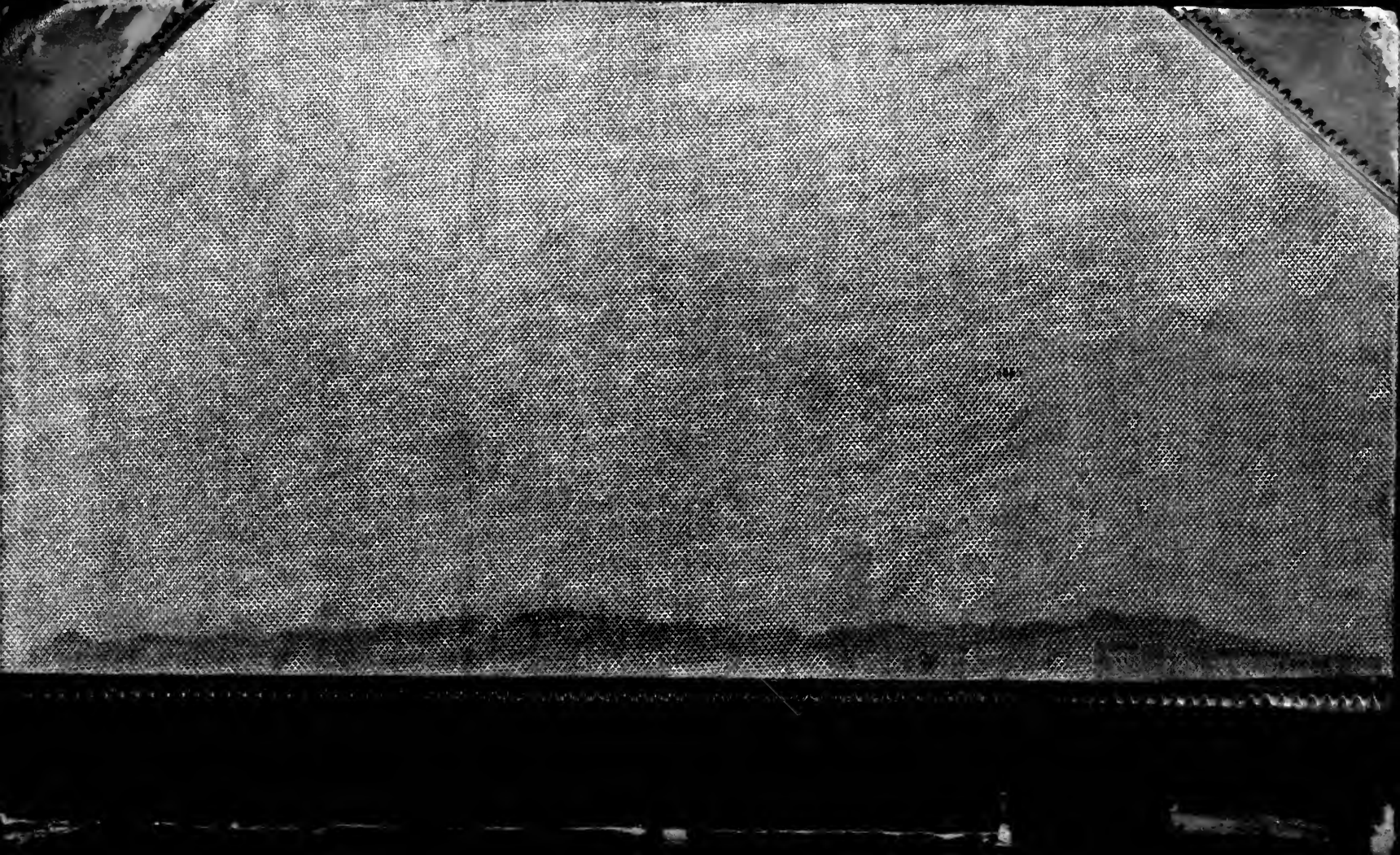

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VOLUME FIFTEENTH.

GLASGOW:

WILLIAM COLLINS, SOUTH FREDERICK ST.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.

ON THE

CHRISTIAN AND ECONOMIC

POLITY OF A NATION,

MORE ESPECIALLY WITH REFERENCE TO ITS LARGE TOWNS.

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

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THE

RIGHT CHRISTIAN AND CIVIC ECONOMY

FOR

A NATION,

WITH A MORE SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS

LARGE TOWNS.

CHAPTER XI.

On the Bearing which a right Civic Economy has upon Pauperism.

It will be seen, from the last chapter, that we hold the securities for the relief of indigence, which have been provided by nature, to be greatly better than those artificial securities for the same object, which have been provided by legislation; and that the latter have done mischief, because, instead of aiding, they have enfeebled the former. This matter should have been confided to the spontaneous operation of such sympathy and such principle as are to be found in society, among the individuals who compose it. And when the question is put to us, what is the best system of public management for alimenting the poor, we reply, that the question would come in a more intelligible

form, were it asked, which of these systems is the least pernicious; or which of them is the least fitted to hinder or to disturb the operations of the natural system. We, in fact, hold every public management of this concern to have been deleterious; and think that pauperism, according to the definition we have already given of it, should not be regulated, but destroyed. Still, however, this cannot be done instantaneously; and one expedient may be better than another, for committing the cause of poverty back again to those charities of private life, from which it has been so unwisely wrested—and, by that same intermeddling spirit too, which has cramped the free energies and operations of commerce. The home trade of benevolence has been sorely thwarted and deranged by the impolitic bounties, and the artificial channels, and the unnatural encouragements, and all the other forcing and factitious processes, that a well-meaning Government has devised for the management of a concern which should have been left to itself, and to those principles of its own, that would, if alike unhelped and undisturbed, have wrought out a far better result than we have now the misfortune to behold, and in a state of maturity almost big for immediate explosion. We should have deemed it better, that there had been no organ of administration, either in a town or parish, for the supplies of indigence; and that kindness and compassion had been left to work at will, or at random, among its families. Yet, one way may be assigned that is preferable to another, for retracing the deviation which has been made

from the right state of matters; and even although the movement should stop at a point short of the total abolition of public charity, yet, still if there be a conducting of this treatment from a more to a less pernicious system, an important gain shall have been effected to the interests of humanity.

The public charity of Scotland is less pernicious than that of England, only because less wide in its deviation from nature, and less hostile to the operation of those natural principles, that prompt both to the cares of self-preservation, and to the exercise of the social and relative humanities of life. It is not because positively more efficacious of good to the poor, that we give it the preference; but because negatively, it is more innocent of any violation to those sympathies and sobrieties of conduct, which form the best guarantees for a population against the sufferings of extreme want. The philanthropists of England are looking to the wrong quarter—when, convinced of the superiority of our system, they try to discover it in the constitution of our courts of supply, or in the working and mechanism of that apparatus, which they regard as so skilfully adapted for the best, and fittest, and most satisfying distribution of relief among the destitute. When they read of the population of a Scottish parish upheld in all the expenses of their pauperism, for the sum of twenty pounds yearly, and that in many a parish of England the pauperism of an equal population costs fifteen hundred pounds, they naturally ask by what strenuousness of management it is, or by what

sagacious accommodation of means to an end, that a thing so marvellous can be accomplished. The truth is, that the administrators for the poor in the Scottish parish, are not distinctly conscious of any great strenuousness or sagacity in the business. The achievement is not due to any management of theirs, but purely to the manageable nature of the subject, which is a population whose habits and whose hopes are accommodated to a state of matters where a compulsory provision for the poor is unknown. The problem, in fact, would have been resolved in a natural way, had they not meddled with it; and, by the slight deviation they have made from this way, they have only given themselves a little work in trying to bring about the adjustment again. It is by the tremendous deviation of the English parish from the way of nature, that they have so embarrassed the problem, and landed themselves in difficulties which appear quite inextricable.

Between what is peculiarly the English, and what is peculiarly the Scottish style of pauperism, there is a number of parishes in the latter country, in a sort of intermediate or transition state from the one to the other. It is well known, that throughout the majority of Scotland, the fund for the relief of poverty is altogether gratuitous, being chiefly upheld by weekly voluntary collections at the church door, or by the interest of accumulated stock, that has been formed out of the savings or the bequests of former generations. This fund is generally administered by the Kirk-Session, consisting of the minister of the parish and his elders; and altoge-

ther the annual sum, thus expended, bears a very moderate proportion, indeed, to the number of inhabitants in the parish. We are greatly within the limits of safety when we say, that throughout all the parishes where this mode of supporting the poor is strictly adhered to, the average expense of pauperism does not exceed forty pounds a-year, for each thousand of the population. In some of the parishes, indeed, the relief is quite nominal—not amounting to five pounds a-year, for each thousand. And there is one very palpable and instructive exhibition, that is furnished out of the variety which thus obtains in different parts of Scotland—and that is, that where there is a similarity of habits and pursuits, and the same standard of enjoyment among the peasantry, there is not sensibly more of unalleviated wretchedness in those parishes where the relief is so very insignificant, than in those where a compulsory provision for the poor is now begun to be acted upon; and where they are making rapid approximations towards the ample distributions, and the profuse expenditure of England.

In England, it is well known, the money that is expended on their poor, is not given, but levied. It is raised by the authority of law; and the sum thus assessed upon each parish, admits of being increased with the growing exigencies of the people, from whatever cause these exigencies may have arisen. As the sure result of such an economy, the pauperism of England has swollen out to its present alarming dimensions; and, in many instances, the expenditure of its parishes bears the

proportion of a hundred to one with the expenditure of those parishes in Scotland, which are equally populous, but which still remain under the system of gratuitous administration.

Now, in most of the border parishes of Scotland, as well as in many of its large towns, there is the conjunction of these two methods. There is a fund raised by voluntary contribution at the church doors; and, to help out the supposed deficiencies of this, there is, moreover, a fund raised by legal assessment. We can thus, in Great Britain, have the advantage of beholding pauperism in all its stages, from the embryo of its first rudiments in a northern parish, through the successive steps of its progress as we travel southward—till we arrive at parishes where the property is nearly overborne, by the weight of an imposition that is unknown in other countries; and where, in several instances, the property has been reduced to utter worthlessness, and so been abandoned. We can, at the same time, the better judge, from this varied exhibition, of the effect of pauperism on the comfort and character of those, for whose welfare it was primarily instituted.

We scruple not to affirm, that we feel it to be a desirable, and hold it to be altogether a practicable thing, to conduct a parish, of most heavy and inveterate pauperism, back again to that state in which pauperism is unknown; and under which it shall be found, that there is more of comfort, and less of complaining, than before, among all its families,—the gradual drying up of the artificial source, out of which relief at present flows, being followed

up by such a gradual re-opening of those natural and original sources that we have already pointed to, as will more than repair all the apprehended evils that could ensue from the legal or compulsory provision for the poor being done away. But, instead of attempting to describe the whole of this transition at once, let us only at present point out the way in which a certain part of it may be easily accomplished. Instead of setting forth from the higher extreme, and traversing the entire scale of pauperism, down to the lower extreme thereof—let us take our departure from a point that is yet considerably short of the higher extreme, and travel downwards to a point that is yet also short of the lower extreme, or of the utter negation of all pauperism. We shall not be able to overtake any part of such a journey, without the guidance of such principles as belong essentially to the entire problem—nor can we make even but a partial retracing movement, without, perhaps, gathering such experience on the road, as may serve to light and prepare us for traversing the whole length of it. It is on this account, that the method of conducting a Scottish parish, which has admitted the compulsory principle into its administrations for the poor, back again to that purely gratuitous system, out of which it had emerged, should not be regarded with indifference by the philanthropists of England. It is, perhaps, better that the subject should first be presented in this more elementary and manageable form ; and that a case of comparative simplicity should be offered for solution, before we look to a case of more appalling complexity and

magnitude. It is like learning to creep before we walk, and submitting to a gradual process of scholarship, ere we shall venture to contend with the depths and intricacies of the subject. In describing part of a journey, we may meet with intimations and finger-posts, by which we shall be instructed and qualified for the whole of it. And, therefore, do we hold it better to explain the retracing movements which have been proposed for Scotland, or are now practising there, ere we proceed to discuss the specialities that obtain in the pauperism of England.

And it will be found to stamp a general importance on our present explanation, if it shall be made to appear, that the best civic economy which can be instituted, for the purpose of re-committing one of our transition parishes to that purely gratuitous system from which it has departed, is also the best for conducting an English parish to the same point, so soon as such a motion shall be made competent by the legislature ; and even until that period shall arrive, that it is the best economy which can be devised for improving the administration, and mitigating the weight of an oppressive and long established pauperism.

Let us begin, then, with the alterations which appear indispensable in the civic economy of our great Scottish towns, in regard to their pauperism, in order that their present mixed or transition system be reduced to that voluntary system of contributions at the church doors, which obtains throughout the majority of our country parishes.

The great fault in the administration of city

pauperism, is, that it is brought too much under one general superintendance. The whole sum that is raised by assessment for the whole town, is made to emanate through the organ of one general body of management. In some cases, the weekly collections, which still continue, in all the large towns of Scotland, to be received at the church door, are made to merge into the fund that is raised by the poor's rates, where it comes under the control and distribution of one and the same body of administrators. In other cases, the collections of the several parish churches are kept apart from the money that is raised by assessment, but still are thrown into one common fund, and placed at the disposal of another body, distinct from the former, but still having as wide a superintendance, in that they stand related as a whole to a whole — that is, in having cognizance over all the town, and in having to treat with applications from every part of it. We are aware that these bodies are variously constituted in different places; and that, just like the sets of our Scottish burghs, they have almost each of them its own speciality, and its own modifications. But in scarcely any of those towns which consist of more than one or two parishes, is there a pure independent parochial administration for each of them; but they all draw on a common fund, and stand subordinated to a common management. It is not necessary, save for the purposes of illustration, to advert to the peculiar constitution of the town pauperism in different places, when the object is to expose the mischief of one general property which attaches to each of them.

At the same time, it should be recollected, that every parish is shared into small manageable districts—each of which has an elder of the church attached to it. It is most frequently his office to verify and recommend the cases of application for relief; and often, though not always, it is through him, personally, that the relief is conveyed to the applicant. When the ecclesiastical and the legal funds are kept asunder, and assigned to distinct managements, he generally is the bearer of the application for relief to both, but more often the bearer of the relief back again from the former, than from the latter, of these funds. It sometimes also happens, that, instead of carrying up directly the case of an application from his district to the administrators of either of these funds, he carries it up to his own separate Session, where it is considered, and if admitted, it goes through them to one or other of the fountain heads, along with all the cases that have been similarly approven, and is backed by the authority of the whole parochial Session to which he belongs. The separate Sessions thus obtain a general monthly sum for their poor from the higher body of management, to which they are subordinated; and this sum, parcelled out among the different members, brings them into contact with their respective paupers, who call on their elder for the relief that has been awarded to them.

Now, one evil consequence of thus uniting all the parishes of a town under the authority of one general board, is, that it brings out to greater ostensibility the whole economy of pauperism, and throws an air of greater magnificence and power

over its administrations. This has a far more seducing effect on the popular imagination than is generally conceived. The business and expenditure of five thousand a-year for the whole town, have in them more of visible circumstance and parade, than would the separate expenditures of as many hundreds in each of its ten parishes. Pauperism would become less noxious, simply by throwing it into such a form as might make it less noticeable. For that relaxation of economy, and of the relative duties which follows in the train of pauperism, is not in the proportion of what pauperism yields, but of what it is expected to yield; and therefore is it of so much importance, that it be not set before the eye of the people in such characters of promise or of power, as might deceive them into large and visionary expectations. The humble doings of a Kirk-Session will not so mislead the families from dependence on their own natural and proper capabilities, as when the whole pauperism of the place is gathered into one reservoir, and made to blaze on the public view, from the lofty apex of a great and conspicuous institution. And it were well, not merely for the purpose of moderating and restraining the sanguine arithmetic of our native poor, that the before undivided pauperism should be parcelled out into smaller and less observable jurisdictions; but this would also have the happy effect of slackening the importation of poor from abroad. It is not by the actual produce of a public charity, but by the report and the semblance of it, that we are to estimate its effect, in drawing to its neighbourhood

those expectant families, who are barely able to subsist during the period that is required to establish a legal residence and claim; thus, bringing the most injurious competition, not merely on the charity itself, but overstocking the market with labourers, and so causing a hurtful depression on the general comfort of our operative population.

But, secondly: the more wide the field of superintendance is, the greater must be the moral distance between the administrators of the charity and its recipients. A separate and independent agency for each parish, are in likelier circumstances for a frequent intercourse and acquaintanceship with the people of their own peculiar charge, than are the members and office-bearers of a great municipal institution for the poor of a whole city. In the proportion that such a management is generalised, do the opposite parties of it recede, and become more unknowing and more unknown, the one to the other. The dispensers of relief, oppressed by the weight and multiplicity of applications, and secretly conscious, at the same time, of their inability to discern aright into the merit and necessity of each of them,—are apt to take refuge either in an indiscriminate facility, which will refuse nothing, or in an indiscriminate resistance which will suffer nothing but clamours and importunities to overbear it. And, on the other hand, the claimants for relief, whom the minute inquiries of a parochial agent could easily have repressed, or his mild representations, and, perhaps, friendly attentions, could easily have satisfied—they feel no such delicacies towards the members of a stately and ele-

vated board, before whom they have preferred their stout demand, and, in safety from whose prying and patient inspection, they can make the hardy asseveration both of their necessities and of their rights. No power of scrutiny or of guardianship, can make compensation for this disadvantage. No multiplication whatever of agents and office-bearers, on the part of the great city establishment, can raise the barrier of such an effectual vigilance against unworthy applications, as is simply provided by the ecclesiastical police of a parish, whose *espionage* is the fruit of fair and frequent intercourse with the families, and can carry no jealousies or heart-burnings along with it. The sure consequence of those intimate and repeated minglings which take place between the people of a parish, and its deacons or elders, is, that a growing shame on the one side will prevent many applications which would else have been made, and that a growing command on the other, over all the details and difficulties of humble life, will lead to the easy disposal of many more applications, which would else have been acceded to. There may, in fact, be such a close approximation to the poor, on the part of local overseers, as will bring within their view those natural and antecedent capabilities for their relief and sustenance, that ought, we think, to have superseded the ministrations of pauperism altogether. By urging the applicant to spirit and strenuousness in his own cause, or by remonstrating with those of his own kindred, or by the statement of his case to neighbours, or, finally, if he thought it worthy of such an exertion, by

interesting a wealthy visitor in his behalf—may the Christian friend of his manageable district, easily bring down a sufficiency for all its wants, from those fountains of supply which were long at work ere pauperism was invented, and will again put forth their activity after pauperism is destroyed. But these fountains are too deep and internal for the observation of legal or general overseers; nor could they bring them to act, though they would, on the chaos of interminable and widely scattered applications that come before them. In these circumstances, they have no other resource than to meet them legally, which is tantamount, in the vast majority of instances, to meeting them combatively,—and then, other feelings come to actuate the parties than those which prompt, on the one side, to a compassionate dispensation, and on the other side, to a humble entreaty, or a grateful acceptance. It is thus, that a ministration, which ought to have been the sweetener and the cement of society, now threatens to explode it into fragments: And, sure result of every additional expenditure through the channels of an artificial pauperism, do we behold the rich more desperate of doing effectual good, and the poor more dissatisfied with all that is done than before.

But might not the full benefit of a parochial agency be combined, with the general superintendance and the ample revenue of a large city institution? In all our transition parishes, indeed, do not the dispensers of the public charity avail themselves of the information, and often act on the express certificates of the elders? Was not the

Town Hospital of Glasgow, whence all the money raised by assessment is distributed, in the habit of being guided by the recommendations of those very men, to whom we ascribe such facilities for the right treatment of all the cases that might offer from among the families? Ere they found their way to the general body of management, they had to pass through the local, or ecclesiastical agents, of their respective parishes. And the same of the General Session in Glasgow, which was more an exchequer than any thing else, whence money was sent out for the supply of the separate Sessions, which, meanwhile, were at liberty, both by their individual members and in their meetings, to treat with their applicants just as they would have done, had they been thoroughly independent of each other. Admitting the first objection to this complex economy to be valid, it is not in general seen how the second is equally so; as the examination and approval of the different cases may still lie with the different Sessions, very much in the same way as if each Session had been left to square its own expenditure with its own separate and peculiar resources.

It is of importance plainly and fully to meet these questions, for they apply to the actual state of pauperism in nearly all the large towns of Scotland. There is either a general fund made up of what is levied by assessment, and what is collected at the church doors, placed under one management; or these funds are kept distinct the one from the other, and placed under two separate managements, both of which are alike, however, in that

they have the same range of superintendance over all the families of all the parishes. The Town Hospital of Glasgow is a reservoir for the whole produce of the assessment, and out of which the supplies were made to emanate, alike, on the cases of pauperism which they admitted to relief from the town at large. And the General Session, till lately, was the reservoir for all the weekly collections that were received throughout the different churches, —which were thrown into one fund, and brought under the disposal of this body, and then distributed at their judgment, not among the individual poor, but among the separate Sessions—and to these Sessions belonged the immediate cognizance of all the cases that were relieved from this source in their respective parishes. Now the question is, what will be gained by the reduction of this general management into local and completely independent managements? The good of this change would be obvious enough, if the General Session had been charged with the examination of all the particular cases of pauperism, and now devolved this work on the separate Sessions of the separate parishes. But this, in fact, was the very business of the parochial Sessions under the old system. And the General Session was little more than a depository where the collections were all lodged, and out of which they were again issued to the parochial Sessions, after due regard being had to the comparative necessities of each of them. By the change in question, each Session is permitted to retain its own collections, and to make its own uncontrolled disbursements out of them. How

does this, it may be asked, improve the administration? It vests no new facilities of examination over the cases of particular applicants—for this is what each Session and each elder of that Session could have carried to as great a degree of strictness, and could have conducted as advantageously under the full influence of all their previous acquaintanceship among their people, before the change, as it is in their power to do after it.

This brings us to the third objection against the system of a general superintendance over the pauperism of all the parishes, and of a general fund, out of which each shall draw for its own expenditure. We have already, in our first objection, spoken to the mischievous effect which an economy so big and so imposing had upon the expectants of charity; and we have now to state its mischievous effect on the administrators of charity. The imagination of a mighty and inexhaustible fund is not more sure to excite the appetite, and so to relax the frugal and providential habits of its receivers, than it is sure to relax the vigilance of its dispensers. To leave to each Session the right of sitting in judgment over the cases of its own parochial applicants, after having wrested from it its own peculiar revenue, and then to deal forth upon it from a joint stock, such supplies of money as it may require for its expenditure, is the most likely arrangement that could have been devised for establishing in each parish a most lax, and careless, and improvident administration. For first, it slackens the interest which each Session would otherwise have taken in the amount of its own income. It will

care far less for the prosperity of an income which is sent upwards to a General Session, and there merges into a common fund for behoof of the whole city, than it would have cared had the income remained its own, and been appropriated to the exclusive behoof of its own peculiar territory. There will be no such pains to stimulate the weekly collection of any one parish, on the part of its minister and elders, when the good of it is in a great measure unfelt or lost sight of, by its being buried in the common fund of ten parishes, and reflected back upon themselves only in a small fraction of income, which they partake along with the rest at the monthly distribution—as when the whole is lodged in their own depository, and entered upon their own books, and applied to their own distinct and independent purposes.—But secondly, and what is of more importance still, the complex and general system complained of, slackens the interest which each Session would otherwise have taken in the strenuousness of its own management, and the strict economy of its own expenditure. If we wish to see, in the business of a Kirk-Session, somewhat of the same alertness and quicksightedness, and patient attention, wherewith an individual in private life looks after the business of his private affairs, we must throw it upon its own resources, and so leave it to square its own outgoings by its own incomings. It is not in human nature that any one corporation can be so tender of the funds of another, as it would be of its own—nor is there a more effectual method of encouraging, in one set of administrators, a facility in the admission of new

cases, than to place with another set of administrators the fund for supplying them. Under the local and independent system of pauperism in a great town, the competition among the parishes would be, which shall best square its own separate expenditure by its own separate resources. Under the general system the competition is in the opposite way—which shall draw most from the common stock, for enabling it smoothly to get over the expenses of its own smooth and indolent management. The effect is unavoidable. A Kirk-Session will be at no pains to augment that local revenue which it is not permitted to appropriate—and it will be at as little pains to husband that general revenue in which it has only a small fractional concern, and out of which, also, its allowances are drawn. It is thus that languor, and listlessness, and easy indifference, will characterise all those separate managements, under which the new cases that are admitted in the first instance, will pour every month, with most pernicious facility, into the domain of pauperism; and against this the scrutinies of every year that take place under the general management, will be found to raise a most vain and impotent barrier.

Such a constitution for ten parishes, has the like pernicious influence on the affairs of their pauperism, as it would have, if adopted by ten individuals for the conduct of their ordinary business. It is conceivable, that each might be left all the year round, to the details both of his own separate counting-house, and of his own family expenditure —only, that he had to throw all his profits into a

common stock, and to draw therefrom such sums as he required, for the maintenance of his establishment. It must be quite obvious, how much an arrangement of this sort, would slacken both the labours of the counting-house, and the economics of the family—and that no yearly review by a committee of the whole number, could prevent such an effect. Not one of them, it is to be feared, would be so careful and industrious in trade, when, instead of realising his own individual gains, he was only to share them with others, over whose operations in the meantime, he had little or no control. And neither could we feel so secure of his frugality at home, when, instead of drawing from his own peculiar repositories, he drew from the treasury of a general concern. The competition between individuals so unwisely assorted together, would be, who should labour least in the duties, and who should spend most of the produce of this ill-devised scheme of partnership. But ill-devised as it would be, it just exemplifies the system of a General Session for the whole town, with the Sessions of the various parishes subordinated to its control. It is by the resolution of this complex mechanism into its separate parts—it is by isolating and individualising each of the parishes—it is by vesting it with a sovereignty over its own income, and leaving it to the burden of its own expenditure—that you give an impulse to each Kirk-Session similar to that which presides over the economy of private life, where each man appropriates his own gains, and pays his own charges; and where, in consequence of so doing,

he is both far more diligent in his professional calling, and far more frugal in his household and personal expenses, than he would have been under such an artificial combination, as we are now attempting to expose.

Our desire that the general system of management for the poor, shall be superseded by the independent local system, is not so much founded on the impulse it would give towards the augmentation of the revenue in each parish, as on the vigilance and care that it would be sure to introduce into the administration of that revenue. It would work both of these effects; but we would be disguising our own views of the truth and philosophy of this whole subject, did we rate the former of these effects as of any importance at all, when compared with the latter of them. We affirm, that a great revenue for public charity is not called for in any parish; but if public charity in some shape or other, is to be perpetuated amongst us, all we hold necessary is, that it be placed under the guardianship of men, who shall feel themselves under the necessity of being prudent, and considerate, and wary, in the dispensation of it. It is because the general system releases them from this feeling, and the local or parochial system brings it forth again into practical operation, that we are so anxious for the abolition of the one, and the substitution of the other in its place: And let the income be what it may, we have no fear, under this improved management, of each distinct population being upheld on their own capabilities, in greater comfort and inde-

pendence than before, and that too in the very poorest of the parishes.

And, it is not by leaving the poor to a greater weight of endurance, that such an effect is anticipated. By shutting up the modern avenue to relief, they are simply conducted to those good old ways, from which, for a season, they have been allured; but which, so long as the nature of humanity remains unaltered, they will still find, in every way, as open, and as abundant of kindly and refreshing pasture as before. The closing of that artificial source, out of which the supplies of indigence have emanated for years, would be sensibly felt in any parish, were it not instantaneously followed up by a re-action on the natural sources; and did not the withdrawment of what wont to flow upon them from one quarter, find an immediate compensation from other quarters, which were in danger of becoming obsolete, by the unnatural direction that has long been imprest on the ministrations of charity. The truth is, however, that there is not a parish in Scotland so far gone in pauperism, but that all which it yet yields could be safely withheld from the population; and a slight addition to their industry, and thrift, and relative duty, and neighbourly kindness, would greatly more than overbalance any imaginary loss, which, it might be feared, would be sustained by the cause of humanity. To all sense there would be as little, and in positive reality, there would be less of unrelieved want under the reformed order of things, than before it,—and the whole amount of the change, were a population somewhat more

exempted from distress, and somewhat more prosperous in its general economics, with the mighty advantage of a more healthful moral regimen, from the impulse and free play that had been restored to the sobrieties and the sympathies of our nature.

But this need not remain a mere theoretical anticipation—nor will it be enough to satisfy the public, that it is announced in the oracular phraseology of one, who may be rendering to the picture of his own sanguine imagination, that homage which is only due to truth, in one of her living fulfilments, or, in one of her actual exhibitions. This matter admits of being brought to the test of experiment; and the demand of all practical men is for facts, rather than for principles. And yet, in affirming principles, one may be only affirming such truths as are strictly experimental. The urgency of the law of self-preservation, is an experimental truth; and the certainty wherewith this law will operate to the revival of a certain measure of economy, on the removal of those temptations which had served to relax it, is another; and the great strength of relative attachments, is another; and the dread of all that disgrace which would be incurred by the unnatural abandonment of those parents or kindred, to whom pauperism no longer holds out an asylum, is another; and the force of mutual sympathy among neighbours, is another; and the greater alacrity of that spontaneous kindness which is felt by the rich towards the poor, when the irritation of legal claims, and legal exactions, does not extinguish it, is another: And, on the

strength of all these known and oft ascertained principles of our nature, may it be not rashly conjectured, but most rationally inferred, that when pauperism is swept away, there will be a breaking forth of relief upon the destitute, from certain other outlets which pauperism had stopt, or, at least, the effusion of which, pauperism had stinted. Still, however, it were far more satisfactory that the thing be tried, than that the thing be argued; and of vastly greater authority than any speculation however ingenious, upon universal principles of our nature however sound, would we hold the specific result of any experiment that may have been made on a specific territory.

It is on this account that we feel disposed to estimate at so high a value the experience of Glasgow; nor are we aware of any given space on the whole domain at least of Scottish pauperism, where a touchstone so delicate and decisive of the question could possibly be applied—and we are most confidently persuaded, that if the progress of this city towards the English system could possibly be arrested, then it may also be arrested with equal or greater facility in any parish of Scotland —judging that to be indeed an *experimentum crucis*, which is made with such materials as an exclusively manufacturing population, and at such a time too as that of the greatest adversity which the trade of the place had ever to sustain in the history of its many fluctuations. But it will be necessary to premise a short general account of the method in which its pauperism wont to be administered.

Each parish is divided into districts called proportions, over which an elder is appointed; whose business it is to receive from the people belonging to it, and who are induced to become paupers, their first applications for public relief. The fund which principally arises from the free-will offerings that are collected weekly at the church doors of the different parishes, is kept distinct from the fund that arises out of the legal assessments; so that when any application was made to the elder from his district, he had to judge whether the case was of so light a nature, as that it could be met and provided for out of the first and smallest of these funds; or whether it was a case of such magnitude as justified the immediate transmission of it to the administration of the second fund. It so happens, that excepting on rare occasions, the primary applications for relief, are brought upon the fund raised by collections, and therefore comes in the first instance, under the cognizance and control of the Kirk-Session of that parish, out of which the applications have arisen. So that generally at the first stage in the history of a pauper, he stands connected with the Kirk-Session to which he belongs, and is enrolled as one of their paupers, at the monthly allowance of from two to five shillings.

It is here, however, proper to remark, that the different Kirk-Sessions did not retain their own proper collections, for a fund out of which they might issue their own proper disbursements; but that all the collections were thrown into one mass, subject to the control of a body of administrators,

named the GENERAL SESSION, and made up of all the members of all the separate Sessions of the city. From this reservoir, thus fed by weekly parochial contributions, there issued back again such monthly supplies upon each subordinate Session, as the General Session judged to be requisite, on such regard being had, as they were disposed to give to the number and necessities of those poor that were actually on the roll of each parish. So that, in as far as the administration of the voluntary fund for charity was concerned, it was conducted according to a system that had all the vices which we have already tried to enumerate, and the mischief of which was scarcely alleviated, by the occasional scrutinies that were made under the authority of the General Session, for the purpose of purifying and reducing the rolls of all that pauperism, which lay within the scope of their jurisdiction.

But we have already stated, that even in the first instance, some cases occurred of more aggravated necessity and distress, than a Kirk-Session felt itself able for, or would venture to undertake. These were transmitted direct to the TOWN HOSPITAL, a body vested with the administration of the compulsory fund, raised by legal assessment, throughout the city, for the purpose of supplementing that revenue which is gathered at the church door, and which, with a few trifling additions from other sources, constitutes the sole public aliment of the poor, in the great majority of our Scottish parishes. There were only, however, a small number who found their way to the Town Hospital, without

taking their middle passage to it by the Kirk-Session ; so that the main host of that pauperism which made good its entry on the compulsory fund, came not directly and at once from the population, but through those parochial bodies of administration for the voluntary fund, whose cases, as they either multiplied in number, or became more aggravated in kind, were transferred from their own rolls to those of this other institution. This transference took place when the largest sum awarded by the Session was deemed not sufficient for the pauper, who, as he became older, and more necessitous, was recommended for admittance on their ampler fund, to the weekly committee of the Town Hospital. So that each Session might have been regarded as having two doors—one of them a door of admittance from the population who stand at the margin of pauperism; and another of them, a door of egress to the Town Hospital, through which the occupiers of the outer court made their way to the inner temple. The Sessions, in fact, were the feeders or conductors by which the Town Hospital received its pauperism, that after lingering a while on this path of conveyance, was impelled onward to the farther extremity, and was at length thrust into the bosom of the wealthier institution, by the pressure that constantly accumulated behind it.

It will be seen at once, how much this economy of things tended to relax still more all the Sessional administrations of the city ; and with what facility the stream of pauperism would be admitted at the one end, where so ready and abundant a discharge

was provided for it at the other. We know not how it was possible to devise a more likely arrangement for lulling the vigilance of those who stood at the outposts of pauperism—and that, too, at a point where their firm and strenuous guardianship was of greatest importance; even at the point where the first demonstrations towards public charity were made on the part of the people, and where their incipient tendencies to this new state, if judiciously, while tenderly dealt with, might have been so easily repressed. To station one body of men at the entrance of pauperism, and burden them only with the lighter expenses of its outset, from which they have the sure prospect of being relieved by another body of men, who stand charged both with the trouble and expense of its full and finished maturity—there could scarcely have been set a-going a more mischievous process of acceleration towards all the miseries and corruptions which are attendant on the overgrown charity of England. In some recent years, the pauperism of Glasgow has about trebled the amount of what it stood at in 1803.

The great thing wanted, in these circumstances, was to make full restitution to a Kirk-Session of those elements which are indispensable to the prosperity of every other management, and both to the spirit and success wherewith it is conducted —to assign to it an undivided task, and furnish it with independent means for its thorough accomplishment—to throw upon it the whole responsibility of acquitting itself of its own proper business, on the strength of its own proper resources—and,

for this purpose, to cut it off by a conclusive act of separation, from all those bodies, a connexion with which had made it alike indifferent either to the matter of its own revenue, which it felt no interest to augment, or to the matter of its own expenditure, which it felt no interest to economise. To disjoin it from the Town Hospital, all that seemed necessary was to shut the door of egress, by which its pauperism had been in the habit of finding vent to that institution, and to make the door of ingress from the general population, the only place of public repair, not merely for the lighter, but for the more urgent and aggravated cases of distress that occurred among its families. To disjoin it from the General Session, all that seemed necessary, was a permission to it from that body, to retain its own proper collections, and to have one unmixed and unfettered control over the distribution of them. It appeared likely that in this way a healthful impulse might be given both to the congregation who furnished the Sessional revenue, and to the agency who expended it—that the latter more particularly thrown upon their own means, and their own management, would have the greatest possible excitement for suiting the one to the other—that in this way the initial movements towards pauperism would meet with the requisite vigilance, and have to undergo the most strict and attentive examinations. And, though this might seem to lay a great additional burden of superintendance on each Session; yet, was there reason to believe, that under such a system the labour of management would eventually be reduced with

them all; for, in proportion to the pains bestowed on each new application, was it hoped, that the number of them would be greatly diminished, by the very knowledge, on the part of the population, of the now more searching ordeal through which they had to pass. There would besides, be a mighty alleviation to the fatigues of office, by the very simplification of its attentions, and duties; and by the release that would ensue from the attendance which was required of each elder, on those more general bodies wherewith his own parochial Session was joined and complicated, into a most unwieldy system of operations. It had really all the feeling of emancipation, to break loose from the control, and the controversy, and the inextricable confusion, which attached to such a piece of ponderous and overgrown mechanism, to retire from it into one's own snug and separate corner, whereon he could draw near to the subjects of his own petty administration, and bestow upon them an attention and a care, from which he was no longer distracted by those generalities that had before bewildered him—to have the degradation incurred by the abridgment of that territory on which the minister and his elders shared in authority and importance with the great city corporation, most amply made up by the charm of that newly felt liberty, wherewith they might now preside over all the details of their own little concern, and wield an unfettered sovereignty within the bounds of their own limited but now thoroughly independent jurisdiction.

But we ought not to animadvert on the errors of an old system, without remarking how very little

the fault of them, or the absurdity of them, are chargeable on any living individuals. The General Session of Glasgow, like the similar bodies of management for the poor, in other great towns, was originally the parochial Session of its one parish, and was simply continued in the existence of its authority after the division and multiplication of parishes. It did not originate in any scheme of combination, and is more the vestige of a former state of things, than a recent economy that has been framed and adapted to our actual circumstances. Its utter unsuitableness to another state of things than that which obtained at the time of its institution, bears in it no reflection upon the sagacity either of our present or any former race of public administrators. The maladjustment that there is between an old institution, and a new state, is the fruit not of mismanagement, but of history, the events of which no wisdom could have foreseen, and no authority could or ought to have counteracted. That should not be branded as an ill-devised scheme, which may at the first have been founded in wisdom; and has been perpetuated down to the present times, not by the folly, but merely by the *vis inertiæ* of succeeding generations. In the conduct of the public men of Glasgow, respecting its pauperism, there is no room for criticism, but much for admiration and gratitude. The mighty obstacle in the way of every civic reformation, is the adhesiveness of our civic rulers to that trodden walk of officiality, on which, as if by the force and certainty of mechanism, they feel a most obstinate tendency

to persevere—and there is no disturbance more painful, no dread more sore and sensitive, than that which is excited in their bosoms, by schemes and systems of innovation. And therefore was it the more fortunate, that, with a management full of incoherence, and ready to sink under the load of its own unwieldiness, there should, at the same time, have been such an unexampled largeness and liberality of spirit among its administrators, and an openness to the lights of generalisation, that is rarely to be met, associated with the detail and the tenacious habit of practitioners.

We should not have dwelt at such length on the old constitution of pauperism in Glasgow, had it not exemplified the most essential vices which still attach to almost all the great towns of Scotland. We are not aware of any such town, consisting of more than one parish, where there is an independent fund, and an independent management, for each of the parishes. They are generally implicated, though in various ways, the one with the other; and there are even instances, where, instead of being landed unawares into such an arrangement, by the increase and multiplication of parishes, the merging of the separate and local jurisdictions into one comprehensive of them all, has been deliberately entered upon, for the purpose of giving greater weight and efficiency to the administration. It has been thought that the wisdom, and the vigilance, and the strenuousness, would have been augmented, by this extension and complication of the mechanism. But this, at least, is one department of human experience, where the maxim has been found

not to apply, that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. We have already, however, sufficiently expounded our reasons for thinking, that, in every instance, this process of generalisation ought to be retraced; that both an independent revenue, and an independent control should be restored to each of the parishes: And, we are most thoroughly persuaded, that with no other revenue, than that which is obtained by weekly collections at the church doors, and no other superintendance than that which may be severally and distinctly exercised by each of the Kirk-Sessions, it were a most practicable achievement to bring the whole pauperism of our large towns under a most strictly parochial economy, in the course of a few years; and thus to re-establish, even in those places which are most deeply and virulently affected by the example of our sister country, the old gratuitous system of public charity, which obtained at one time universally in Scotland.

And, for this purpose, it is not necessary to withdraw, or in any way to meddle with the allowance of any existing pauper. He may be upheld in his present aliment; and that, too, under the present economy, which may be allowed to subsist in all its wonted relationships to the pauperism that is already framed, until that pauperism shall be swept away by death. Should, for example, so many of the poor have been admitted on the fund raised by assessment, and placed under a peculiar administration of its own, as in Glasgow—these poor may be left untouched, and suffered to receive of that fund just as before. It is only necessary that no

new cases be henceforth admitted upon it, in order, by the dying away of the old cases, to operate a sure, though gradual, relief on this compulsory provision, which thus, in a few years, might be done away with altogether. Meanwhile, each parish should be left to its own treatment of its own new applicants, and that, on its own proper resources. Or, if, instead of a fund by assessment vested in a separate body of management, this and other charitable funds are united into one, and brought under the control and cognizance of one court, as a General Session, or a body made up of representatives from the various corporations of the place, there were still a way of meeting, by a temporary arrangement, all who are already taken on as paupers, so as that they shall be alimented as formerly; while each parish, released from all foreign jurisdiction, could give its unfettered care and attention to the new applications. Thus, the united fund that is distributed over the whole city, will, of course, send forth its largest proportions to the poorest parishes. And the sum presently expended on the pauperism of such a parish, may very greatly exceed the sum collected at its church doors. Now, the way to accommodate this matter, were for the managers of the united fund to allocate to that parish as many of its poor as were equivalent to its collections—and after they had resigned these poor, and the collections along with them, they would find themselves just as able as before, with their remaining fund, for the remaining poor that were still left upon their hands, of whom, however, by the operation of death, they would speedily

be relieved altogether. Again, it is conceivable of one of the richer parishes, that the expense of its poor may fall short of its collections, in which case, the managers of the united fund might retain as much of the surplus as would enable them to aliment that excess of poor which had been devolved upon them from the poorer parishes. As these poor die, however, there will always less of this surplus be required, which, when disengaged, ought to remain with the richer parish from which it had emanated. We are quite aware of a tendency and a temptation here to connect the rich parish permanently with the poor one—to keep up a stream of communication between the wealth that is in the one, and the necessities which are conceived to be in the other. And for this purpose, there must be kept up an organ of transmission, or court, to direct and sit in judgment over this generalising and equalising process; or, in other words, a superintendance still, over the pauperism of the whole city. There is no obstacle in the way of reformation, which we more dread, than the imagination that there is, of a justice and an expediency in taxing the wealthier departments of the town for the pauperism of the whole—or, which is tantamount to this, in drawing the excess of the larger collections to those parishes, where the demand for relief is more urgent, and the collections smaller. This may be necessary till the whole of that existing pauperism, which has been accumulated under the present system, shall be seen to its termination. But, most assuredly, it is not necessary that it shall be perpetuated after this. There is not a district

of the town, however poor, the economy of which will not be more prosperous in all the branches of it, by having all its public charity placed under an internal management of its own, and thrown upon the resources which are inherent to itself, than by having its Sessional revenue fed and amplified from a foreign quarter. This is a system which ought to expire with the expiration of all the cases that have been admitted under it; for, if upheld or revived in any shape whatever, it will re-land the parishes in all the evils of a lax administration, on the part of the managers, and a rapacious expectancy on the part of the people. This is a matter which can easily be brought to the test of experience. Let the poorest city parish in Scotland be taken up as it at present stands—let its present collection be compared with the present expense of its pauperism—let it be relieved of the whole excess of its poor by the existing management, and be thrown on its own resources, with just such a number of paupers as can be maintained in their present allowances, on the proper and peculiar revenue of the Kirk-Session to which they belong, —let the elders go forth upon their tasks with this simple change in their feeling, that they have now an expenditure to preside over which they must suit to that free and separate income that has been left in their hands,—and, though a little more of strenuousness may be required at the outset, than they had wont to bestow on the duties of their office, yet will they be sure to find, that pauperism is a bugbear, which shrinks and vanishes almost into nothing, before the touch of a stricter inquiry,

and a closer personal intercourse with the families. They will find, that by every new approach which they make to the subjects of their care and guardianship, the capabilities of the people themselves rise upon their observation; and that every utterance which has been made about the stimulating and the re-opening of the natural sources for the relief of indigence, in proportion to the closing of the artificial source, is the effusion not of fancy, but of experience. The task may look a little formidable to them at its commencement. But they may be assured of the facility and the pleasure in which it will at length terminate—and that clamour, and urgency, and discontent, will subside among the poor, just according as they are less allured from the expedients of Nature and Providence for their relief, by the glare and the magnitude of city institutions. Along with the humbleness, there will also soon be the felt kindliness of a parochial economy, after the heartless generalities of the present system have been all broken up and dissipated —and, baiting a few outcries of turbulence or menace, which would have been far more frequent and more acrimonious under the old economy than the new, will every Kirk-Session, that enters fearlessly upon the undertaking, speedily make its way to the result of a parish better served, and better satisfied than ever.

And, the more to encourage and to open the way for such an enterprise as this, it were well, at the outset, to hold out more favourable terms to the poorer of our city parishes. It were no great addition to the burden of the general management,

if, in the case of a parish where the collection is small, and which is at the same time among the most heavily laden of any with its existing pauperism, the whole of this pauperism was lifted away from the parochial management, and the collection were freely and altogether given up to it. This were only the surrender or the loss of the collection on the part of the general body of management, which might be made up, for the first year, by a small addition to the assessment; and which, at all events, would most amply be atoned for in a very short time, by the dying away of old cases, without the substitution of any new cases whatever in their place. Meanwhile, the Kirk-Session, left to an unfettered control over its small but independent revenue, and having no other pauperism to meet with, but that which shall be formed and admitted by itself, would feel themselves incited to the uttermost patience and industry, and diligent plying of all their expedients in the treatment of the new applications. To begin with, in fact, they would have a revenue without an expenditure, and their weekly collections would, for a time, outstrip the gradual monthly additions which they made to their new pauperism. The extent to which that time might be prolonged, would depend on the stimulus which they gave to the liberality of the congregation, and still more on the stimulus they would receive themselves, to a careful and considerate administration. There is not a Session so poor of income, as not, under such an economy, to accumulate a little stock, in the first instance,—but, let it ever be recollected, that the final success,

in all cases, would be mainly due, not to the means, but to the management. With both together, there is not a parish so sunk in helplessness, that might not be upheld in public charity on the strength of its own proper and inherent capabilities. And this, without harshness; without a tithe of those asperities and heart-burnings among the people, which are the sure attendants on a profuse dispensation; without the aspect at all of that repulsive disdain which frowns on the city multitude, from the great city institution. This is one of the precious fruits of locality, and of a local administration. Its nearer and more frequent mingling with the families, would both reveal the natural sources which exist in every community, for the relief of indigence; and would further act upon those sources so powerfully, though silently, as to admit, without violence, of the great artificial source being nearly dried up altogether. The sure result, at all events, would be a far blander and more pacific society; and with greatly less of public and apparent distribution among the poor, would there, at the same time, be greatly less of complaining on our streets than before.

It will be perceived, that nothing can be more smooth, and more successive, than the retracing process, which is here recommended. There is no violence done to any existing pauper. There is no sudden overthrow of any old general institution, which simply dies its natural death with the dying out of the old cases. There is no oppressive or overwhelming load placed upon any of the local institutions, which, however humble be its means,

is left to treat with the new cases alone, and will, therefore, have a very humble expenditure to begin with. The pauperism that has been accumulated under a corrupt system, surely but silently melts away under the operation of mortality. And all that we have said of pauperism being an unnecessary and artificial excrescence upon the body politic, obtains its experimental fulfilment in the fact, that every city parish, disengaged from the former economy of matters, and thrown on its own proper resources, however scanty, will weather the whole demand that is made for public charity, up to the full weight and maximum of the new applications.

And, yet though the process be a very sure, it will be found that it is a very short one. In Scotland, we should think, that the average for a generation of pauperism, will not exceed five years. In that period, the old generation will have well nigh disappeared, and have been replaced in the full magnitude which need ever be attained by the new generation. The bulky and overgrown parent, that wont to scare and burden the whole city—and that, both from its size and its expensive habits of indulgence, will be succeeded by a few small, docile, and manageable children. The old general institution, relieved altogether of its charge, will cease its heavy assessments for a maintenance that ever craved, and was never satisfied: And, each member of the subdivided management into which it has been rendered, will have its own separate task, and with means inconceivably less than its wonted proportion, will be at no loss for its own separate achievement. And we again affirm, that

under the new *regime*, moderate of income as it is, its administrators will see far less of penury, and feel far less of pressure, than they ever did under the old one.

It is thus, that in a very few years, all the transition parishes of Scotland, may be conducted back again to that purely gratuitous system from which some of them have been receding and widening their distance, for several generations. It is well, that the method of collection on the Sundays, has not been totally abandoned in any of these parishes: for this furnishes a distinct object to which the retracing operation may be made to point, and whither, with no great strenuousness of attention, on the part of the parochial administrators, it may be made very shortly to arrive. It is true, that since the introduction of assessments into the country parishes, there has been a very natural decline of the collection at the church doors. But small as it is from this cause, it would revive again under any arrangement that pointed to the abolition of a poor's rate. But we again repeat, that the success of such an experiment depends not on the sufficiency of the positive means, but on the certainty wherewith the people may be made to accommodate their habits of demand and expectation, to any new system of pauperism that may be instituted, provided that it is introduced gradually, and without violence. In the transition parishes of the country, the collection is generally thrown into a common fund, with the money raised by assessment; and the whole is placed under the joint management of the Heritors and Kirk-Session. The retracing

process, in such a case, is very obvious. Let the Kirk-Session be vested with the sole management of the gratuitous fund, in which it will be the wisdom of the Heritors not to interfere with them. Let all the existing cases of pauperism, at the outset of the proposed reformation, be laid upon the compulsory fund, and seen out without any difference in their relation, or in the rate of their allowance, from what would have obtained under the old system. Let the Session undertake the new cases alone, with the money raised from the free-will offerings at the church doors, which offerings they may stimulate or not as they shall see cause. Let them give their heart and their energy to the enterprise, and a very few years will find the parish totally relieved of assessments, by the dying away of the old pauperism; and the revenue of the Session, as drawn from purely Scottish sources, will be quite competent to the expenses of the new pauperism.

Even though the experiment should at length fail—though in two or three years it should be found, that the collection is overtaken and outstript by the new applications—it has one very strong recommendation which many other experiments have no claim to. There will have been no loss incurred by it. Matters will not be in a worse, but to a moral certainty, will be in a better situation than they were at the commencement of the undertaking. There can be no doubt, that, as the effect of the proposed arrangement, more care and caution will be expended on the new admissions than before; and that thus the influx of all the

recent pauperism will be more restrained than it would otherwise have been. The old pauperism, in the hands of the old administrators, will melt away at a faster rate than the new pauperism in the hands of the Kirk-Session will be accumulated; and even though the Kirk-Session should at length be overpowered by this accumulation, and have to give in as before to the necessity of recurring again upon the fund by assessment, they will meet that fund lightened upon the whole by the period of their separation, and refreshed by the breathing time which it has gotten for the new draughts and demands that may be made upon it. We have no apprehension ourselves of any such necessity; but it ought certainly to encourage the trial of what has been suggested, that even, on the worst supposition, and though the trial should ultimately misgive, the result will, at all events, be perfectly innocent, and, on the whole, be in some degree advantageous.

But we have no hesitation as to the final success of the experiment; and it is thus that we meet the imputations of wild and theoretical, which have been so clamorously lifted up against the enemies of pauperism. We know not how a more close, and pertinent, and altogether satisfactory proof can be attained of the truth of any principles whatever, than that which is so patently and directly accessible on the question before us. The affirmation is, that if the people of a parish are not lured away from their own proper and original expedients for the relief of human suffering, by the pomp, and parade, and pretension, of a great public charity—

there will be less of complaint, and less, too, of distress in that parish, than when such a charity is flashed upon their notice, and so the eye and disposition of the people are turned towards it. We know not how a way more effectual can possibly be devised for reaching the evidence by which to try the soundness of this affirmation, than simply to dissociate a city parish from all those magnificent generalities of the place wherewith it stood related formerly, and thus to cause its administration for the relief of the poor shrink into the dimensions of a humble and separate parochial economy. Let it not be burdened with the liquidation of the old pauperism, but let it be tasked with the management of the new. When a Kirk-Session has thus had the spring and the stimulus of its own independence restored to it, let it be abandoned to its own specific treatment of all the specific applications. We do not ask it to blink or to evade, but openly to face all the complaints, and all the claims, which are preferred against it,—not to go forth upon this new charge steeled against the looks and the language of supplication, but giving a courteous reception to every proposal, patiently to inquire, and kindly and Christianly to dispose of it. There is only one expedient, the use of which, on every principle of equity and fair self-defence, must be conceded to them. They should be protected against the influx of poor from other parishes; and, if there be no law of residence mutually applicable to the various districts of the same city, then it is quite imperative on the Session that is disengaged from the rest, not to outstrip, in liberality of allow-

ance, the practice which obtains under that prior and general management from which it has separated: else there would be an overwhelming importation of paupers from the contiguous places. It is enough surely for the vindication of its treatment, if it can make out, in every specific instance, that the applicant has been as generously dealt with, as any other in like circumstances, and *whose case has been as well sifted and ascertained*, would have been in any other department of the town. With this single proviso, let a detached and emancipated Kirk-Session go forth upon its task—and let it spare no labour on the requisite investigations, and let it ply all the right expedients of prevention, the application of which is more for the interest of the claimant than for the interest of the charitable fund—let it examine not merely into his own proper and personal capabilities, but let it urge, and remonstrate, and negotiate with his relatives and friends, and lay down upon himself the lessons of economy and good conduct,—in a word, let it knock at the gate of all those natural fountains of supply which we have so often insisted on, as being far more kindly and productive than is the artificial fountain of pauperism, which it were well for the population could it be conclusively sealed and shut up altogether,—let every attempt, by moral suasion, and the influence of a growing acquaintanceship with the families, be made on the better and more effective sources for the relief of want, ere the Session shall open its own door, and send forth supplies from its own store-house, on the cases that have been submitted to it; and it

will be found, as the result of all this management, prosecuted in the mere style of nature and common sense, that the people will at once become both more moderate in their demands, and, on the whole, more satisfied with the new administration under which they have been placed. We are really not aware how this question can be brought more closely and decisively to the test of experiment, than by a body of men thus laying their immediate hand upon it; and, surely, it were only equitable to wait the trial and the failure of such an experiment, ere the adversaries of pauperism shall be denounced either as unpractised or as unfeeling spectators.

CHAPTER XII.

On the Present State and Future Prospects of Pauperism in Glasgow.

It will be seen, from the exposition that has been already given of the state of pauperism in Glasgow, that, previous to the breaking up of its old economy, each distinct parish had its sessional poor, who were maintained out of the share that was adjudged for their support by the General Session; and it had its more advanced or hospital poor, who had, either in the shape of inmates or of out-pensioners, been transferred to the fund raised by assessment. The expense of the hospital poor greatly exceeded that of the sessional, in as much as the revenue of the former institution

greatly exceeded that of the latter,—the sum raised by assessment being once so high as twelve thousand pounds a-year, whereas the annual collections at the church doors, seldom or never reached two thousand pounds. When the parish of St John's was founded in September, 1819, the cost of the sessional poor within its limits, was only two hundred and twenty-five pounds, yearly, though its population amounted then to upwards of ten thousand; and, after the deduction which has been made from it by the still more recent parish of St James', amounts now to upwards of eight thousand, which is something more than a tenth part of the population of the whole city. In respect of wealth, too, we should hold it to be considerably beneath the general average of the inhabitants of Glasgow; consisting, as it does, almost exclusively, of an operative population. So that had it remained under the general system for the other parishes, its Session could not have been charged with glaring mismanagement, should it have been found, at the end of a period of years, that the expense of the whole poor of St John's amounted to a tenth part of the sessional and hospital revenue for the whole city—adding, of course, to the money that went directly for the personal subsistence of the paupers, the money that was necessarily expended in the service and various offices of the two general institutions. In other words, under the average and ordinary style of management for one tenth of the population of Glasgow, in the average circumstances of that population, the whole expense of its pauperism

should be from twelve to fourteen hundred pounds, yearly.

The experience of a few former years in another parish of Glasgow, warranted the anticipation of an annual collection at the church door of St John's, of about four hundred pounds. By detaching this parish, then, from the General Session, there was a surrender made on the part of that body, of the whole difference between the sessional revenue of St John's, and its sessional expense, which amounted, at the commencement, to only two hundred and twenty-five pounds, yearly. It is true, that this surrender would ultimately be felt by the Town Hospital, on which institution the burden of all the deficiencies, of all the parishes, was laid. But, then, the compensation held out for this surrender, to the Town Hospital, was, that it should be relieved from the burden of all the future pauperism, which else would have flowed into it from the parish of St John's. The door of egress from the Session of that parish to the Town Hospital, was forthwith and conclusively to be shut—while the door of ingress to the Session from the parochial population, was to be opened more widely than before, by its being made the only place of admittance both for the lighter and the more aggravated cases of necessity that might occur. Still it was a generous compliance on the part both of the General Session, and of the Town Hospital, thus to forego the immediate good of a hundred and seventy-five pounds, and this for the distant, eventual, and, as yet, precarious good, of one-tenth of the territory

of Glasgow being finally reclaimed from the dominion of its general pauperism. It was true, that this surplus of £175, was all that the Kirk-Session of St John's had to count upon, for extending the allowance of its paupers, at that state of their advancing necessity, when they wont, under the old system, to be transferred to the Town Hospital; and it may be thought to have been a little adventurous, perhaps, on the side of one of the parties in this negotiation, to have undertaken, on a revenue of four hundred pounds, to meet all the expenses of a concern, which, under another system of administration, might easily have absorbed, at least, three times that sum, yearly. But, on the other hand, there was still an uncertainty that hung over the issue of this untried speculation; and, therefore, the utmost credit is due to the other parties in this negotiation, for the facility wherewith they acceded to the parish of St John's, a favourite and much desired arrangement.

In the following brief statement of the operations which took place under this arrangement, it were of importance, that the reader should separate what properly and essentially belongs to the matter of pauperism, from that which, though connected with the details of its management, was in no way indispensable to the success that has attended them,—else he might be led to regard it as a far more ponderous and impracticable business than it really is, and, therefore, not so readily imitable in other parishes.

Of this collateral description, we hold to be the

institution of Deacons. This was adopted in the parish of St John's, not so much for a civil as for an ecclesiastical purpose—more for the sake of disjoining the elders from pauperism, than for the right administration of pauperism itself. The truth is, that it could not be distinctly foreseen, at the commencement, what would be the requisite degree of vigilance and examination under the new system; and, therefore, was it deemed of importance, that the elders, whose office was more of a spiritual character, should be relieved from the labour and the invidiousness that might have attached to the strict treatment of all the new applications for public charity. As the matter has turned out, however, it is now decisively ascertained, that pauperism, under an independent parochial regime, is a thing so easily managed, and so easily reducible, that an order of deacons, however to be desired on other grounds, is not indispensable to the specific object for which they are appointed. We certainly prefer that elders should be protected from any violation, however slight, on the strictly ecclesiastical character which belongs to them; and one of the sorest mischiefs that attached to the old system in Glasgow, was the grievous mutilation inflicted upon this character, by this body of men being so implicated with the concerns of an overgrown and rapidly accelerating pauperism. On the setting up of a separate parochial system, it will be found, that this evil is greatly mitigated. For our own parts, we hold the utter extirpation of what is evil, to be a better thing than its mitigation—and, therefore, while

pauperism, in its very humblest degrees, is to be perpetuated, we count it desirable, that in each parish there should be an order of deacons. Others, however, may not attach the same value to this consideration; and, therefore, for the purpose of distinguishing things which are really distinct, do we affirm, that for the one design of conducting a transition parish back again to the pure and gratuitous system of Scottish pauperism, an order of deacons is not indispensable.

There was another circumstance connected with the pauperism of St John's, that had also more of an accessory or fortuitous character, than any essential relationship with the success of its administration. This was the institution of an evening church service, on the Sabbaths, for the accommodation of parishioners. Neither is this of essential imitation by other parishes—the purpose of such an arrangement being purely ecclesiastical. But the reason why it is here introduced, is, that it enables us more distinctly to mark the operation of the new system, in the two great branches into which it is resolvible. The first branch consists of the sessional paupers, that had already been admitted, anterior to the commencement of our proceedings, and whose annual expense, as already stated, amounted to two hundred and twenty-five pounds. These the elders retained under their management, and to meet the charges of which, they had the produce of the weekly offerings of the day or general congregation, assigned to them. The second branch consists of the new applicants for parochial relief, the consideration and treatment

of whose cases, were devolved upon the deacons, and who, meanwhile, were put in trust and keeping of the evening collections, or the free-will offerings of the parochial congregation. This arrangement does not materially affect the process, but it serves to throw a clearer and more discriminative light upon it; and leads us to ascertain, first, in how far a Town Hospital, or a compulsory fund, is called for, to provide for the advancing necessity of those who have previously been admitted on the lists of pauperism—and, secondly, in how far a very large collection at the church doors, or the accumulation of a sessional capital from this source, is called for, to provide for the eventual demands that may, for aught that was previously known, have been thickened and multiplied to a degree that was quite overwhelming, in consequence of the number and urgency of new applications.

The charge upon the elders' fund, it will be seen, was liable to an increase from one source, and to a diminution from another. The expense of the pauperism laid upon this fund at the outset, was two hundred and twenty five-pounds, yearly. But, on the one hand, the state of many of the paupers would become more necessitous, as they grew older and more infirm, and, but for the new arrangement, they would have been transferred to the larger allowances of the Town Hospital,—and as that communication was now shut, the extension of the allowances devolved upon the Session. On the other hand, there was a relief upon the fund from the death of paupers; and the uncertainty, at the commencement of their proceedings, was, whether

the extended allowances by the Session, in lieu of the Town Hospital allowances, would be more or less than compensated by the gradual disappearance of the existing cases from death. The anticipation was, that, at the first, the increase of expense from the one quarter, would prevail over the diminution of expense from the other; but, that, after a short temporary rise of demand upon their revenue, there behoved to be a very rapid subsidency by death. Meanwhile, it was thought, that could the evening collection be found to meet, for a time, the new applications, the day collection might, at length, be relieved, even of all the pressure which originally lay upon it,—in which case, it might either be accumulated for the purpose of meeting the burden of the new cases, when they became too heavy for the deacon's fund; or be applied to any other legitimate purpose that stood connected with the good of the parish. It is remarkable, that the charge on the elders' fund, did experience the slight increase of a few pounds, sterling, during the first year of their separate and independent administration; but, that, now,* as was to be expected, the cause of diminution by death, largely and rapidly prevails over the cause of increase by extended allowances. This was soon to be looked for in the course of nature—as, generally speaking, in Scotland pauperism implies considerable age—so that a generation of pauperism passes rapidly away. The expense of the Session, for the maintenance of those original cases that were devolved

* Written in 1822.

upon them, in September, 1819,—an expense that is defrayed from the offerings of the day congregation, is now considerably less than it was at the commencement, and is in a course of rapid diminution.

But the far most interesting branch of this whole process, and that on which the success of the attempt most essentially hinged, was the treatment of the new cases to be admitted on the evening collection, after they had undergone the requisite examination by its distinct administrators. The fund placed at their disposal, was not one-fifth of the fund assigned to the elders for their operations, —being contributed by a much poorer congregation. But, then, at the outset, at least, of their proceedings, they had little, or more properly, nothing to do. They had no previous stock of already formed pauperism to begin with—their only business being to meet, with the means intrusted to them, all the future applications. It will, therefore, be seen, how gradually and successively the burden of their management and expenditure, behoved to grow upon them—and that, even scanty as the evening collection was, a little capital might accumulate in their hands during the earlier period of their administration: And the uncertainty, that time alone could resolve, was, how long it might take ere the expense of the new cases equalled the humble revenue that was confided to them, and ere the capital was consumed, and ere the necessity arrived of calling in the aid of the day collection, to make head against the accumulation of new applicants. The question could only be

decided by experience; and the result has, indeed, been most satisfactory. At the end of two years and a half, the evening collection is still more than equal to the maintenance of the new cases; and the small capital that has been formed from this source alone, is still upon the increase; and, judging by the rate of application from the commencement, during a season, too, of singular adversity, there is a most warrantable confidence, that the deacons' fund will be found equal to the full weight of cases, the maximum of which will be attained when the period of an average generation of pauperism is completed. And, should the evening or parochial collection be actually found to weather the lapse of the old and the coming on of the new generation, then will the Session, relieved, in a few years, by death, of all the existing pauperism of 1819, have the fund, constituted by the general or day congregation, transferable to any other philanthropic purpose, that might be deemed most conducive to the good of the labouring classes in the parish; and the gratifying spectacle will be exhibited, of all the parochial pauperism upheld by the parochial offerings on the Sabbath evening, —Or, in other words, a large and, almost, entirely plebeian district of the town, defraying all the expenses of its own pauperism, on the strength of its own unaided capabilities.

A result so gratifying has certainly exceeded our own anticipations. We have never thought, that public charity, for the relief of indigence, was at all called for by the state and economy of social life—or, that, the artificial mechanism of a legal

and compulsory provision for the poor, had ever any other effect than that of deranging the better mechanism of nature. But we did not think, that a population would have conformed so speedily to the right system, after that the poison and perversion of the wrong system had been so long diffused among them—or, that, when the great external reservoir was shut, out of which the main stream of pauperism wont to emanate, they would have found such an immediate compensation, by their immediate recourse to those fountains of supply, which exist within themselves, and lie embosomed among their own families, and their own neighbourhood. But so it is,—and that, without any other peculiarity of management on our part, than a careful, and considerate, and, we trust, humane examination of every new claim that is preferred upon us. The success of this enterprise, in fact, is not so much the doing of the agency, as it is of the people themselves—and it hinges not so much on the number of applications repressed by the one party, as on the greatly superior number of applications that are forborne or withheld by the other party. We do not drive back the people; but the people keep back themselves—and that, simply because there is none of the glare or magnificence of a great city management to deceive their imaginations, and allure them from their own natural shifts and resources; and because they are further aware, that should they step forward, they will be met by men, who can give them an intelligent as well as a civil reception; who are thoroughly prepared for appreciating the merits of every ap-

plication, and, at the same time, firmly determined to try every right expedient of prevention, ere the humiliating descent to pauperism shall be taken by any family within the limits of their superintendance. The very frankness with which this is announced, is liked by the people; and let there be but an easy and a frequent mingling between the managers and the subjects of their administration, and there will be no difficulty in establishing a community of sentiment between them; the very tone of hostility towards pauperism that is manifested by the former, being positively caught and sympathized with by the latter, who, though of humblest rank in society, can, when rightly treated, display a nobility of heart, that makes them the best coadjutors in this undertaking. The parochial agency, in fact, have had little more to do than to hold out a face of intelligence to the people, on the subject of their necessities; and this has been followed up by an instantaneous slackening of the parochial demand. There is not one of them, who will not attest, that, the trouble and management of his assigned district, fall marvellously short of his first anticipations. The truth is, that there is not one application for five, that there wont to be under the old system. It is unfair to deceive a population,—and a population are vastly too generous to like one the worse for coming to an open and decisive understanding with them. Our object is not to devise for the people new expedients of relief, but as much as in us lies, to keep them closely at their own expedients—not to perform more than in other parishes, but to promise less—

not to strike out any additional sources, from which to send forth an abundant administration upon human necessity; but, wherever it is possible, to commit it back again to those pre-existent sources, from which it ought never to have been tempted away, in quest of a remedy that lay more nearly and comfortably within its reach. We have no new way, by which to maintain the poor. We have only abandoned that old way, which so grievously misled them. And when the people are not misled, they do not move. If they are not previously set agog, they give little or no disturbance. If they are not seduced from their own capabilities, they silently abide by them—and every act of friendly intercourse on the part of any observant philanthropist, with the lower orders, will serve to satisfy him the more, how much our distance from the people has kept us in entire delusion regarding them; and led us, more particularly, to underrate both their own sufficiency for their own subsistence, and the noble spirit by which they are already actuated, or, which, under a right system of attentions, can most speedily be infused into them. This has been the whole drift of our experience. To make it universal, the principle of locality has only to be connected with pauperism, and to be carried downwards by a minute enough process of subdivision, and to be freed of all those obstructions, which lie in the way of its close and unfettered application. The problem of pauperism is resolved simply on the removal of certain disturbing forces, which ought never to have been put into operation. To arrive at it, we have not to

do what is undone, but to undo what is done. To break up the general management of a great city, and substitute small and separate managements in its place, is an important step of this process. And, we repeat it, that it operates not so much by a positive good influence emanating from the new machinery that is thus formed, as by the withdrawment of the positive bad influence, which emanated from the old machinery. The credit of a prosperous result, is not so due to the manner in which the agents of the new system conduct themselves under it, as to the manner in which the people, of their own accord, conduct themselves under it. And let it always be understood, that the efficacy of a near, and vigilant, and local superintendance, operating independently, and within itself, and left to its own means, and its own management, does not lie so much in the resistance which it actually puts forth against advances which are actually made, as in the powerful, and almost immediate tendency of such an arrangement, to beget a general quiescence among the families of that territory over which it operates.

And, to prove that there is nought whatever of peculiar might or mystery, in our transactions, beyond the reach of most ordinary imitation, it may be right to state the very plain steps and inquiries, which take place, when any applicants come forward. This, perhaps, will be most effectually done, by simply transcribing the method of proceeding that was adopted, and has been persevered in from the commencement of our operations.

"When one applies for admittance, through his

deacon, upon our funds, the first thing to be inquired into is, if there be any kind of work that he can yet do, so as either to keep him altogether off, or, as to make a partial allowance serve for his necessities. The second, what his relations and friends are willing to do for them. The third, whether he is a hearer in any dissenting place of worship, and whether its Session will contribute to his relief. And, if, after these previous inquiries, it be found, that further relief is necessary, then there must be a strict ascertainment of his term of residence in Glasgow, and whether he be yet on the funds of the Town Hospital, or is obtaining relief from any other parish.

"If, upon all these points being ascertained, the deacon of the proportion where he resides, still conceives him an object for our assistance, he will inquire whether a small temporary aid will meet the occasion, and state this to the first ordinary meeting. But, if instead of this, he conceives him a fit subject for a regular allowance, he will receive the assistance of another deacon to complete and confirm his inquiries, by the next ordinary meeting thereafter,—at which time, the applicant, if they still think him a fit object, is brought before us, and received upon the fund at such a rate of allowance as, upon all the circumstances of the case, the meeting of deacons shall judge proper."

Of course, pending these examinations, the deacon is empowered to grant the same sort of discretionary aid, that is customary in the other parishes.

On the strength of these simple regulations, and

in virtue, too, of our separate and independent constitution—such is the stimulus that has been given, on the one hand, to our parochial management, and such are the wholesome restraints, on the other hand, that have been laid on the parochial demand, as have enabled us to economise our recent pauperism, at least, ten-fold beyond what we either could or would have done under the general and complex system, from which we count it our privilege to have been so totally disengaged. With our small but separate revenue, we have more of the feeling of sufficiency, than when the door was open for us to all the wider and wealthier charities of the place: And if the principle be admitted, that as much good is done by a provision for human want, through the stimulated economy of individuals or the stimulated kindness of those whose duty it is to relieve it—then are we persuaded, that, small as our dispensations are, we have as well served and as well satisfied a parish, as any other that can be referred to in the city.

The thing of greatest importance in this statement is, that the success of the enterprise does not at all hang by the magnitude of the collection. It is not upon the strength of the means, but upon the strength of the management, that the expense of one of the poorest of our city parishes has been transferred, from the fund raised by assessment, to the fund raised by the free-will offerings at the church door. There is nothing, it must at once be perceived by the attentive reader, that ought to deter the imitation of other parishes, in the oft-alleged superiority of that revenue which lies at

the disposal of the Kirk-Session of St John's. It is not, let it be well remarked, by that revenue, that the most essential step of this much contested problem has been overcome. The only alimentary use to which the day collection has been put, is in upholding the sessional pauperism that had been previously formed, and was actually found, at the commencement of this operation; and this it has done so effectually, that a great yearly surplus over the yearly expenditure, and a surplus too which must rapidly increase, is left in the hands of the Kirk-Session. But the whole amount of any existing pauperism soon passes away; and by far the most interesting question relates to the present management, and the future probable amount of the new pauperism wherewith it shall be replaced. Now it ought, most demonstrably, to prove how little essential a great revenue is to the object of meeting and of managing this pauperism, when it is made known that all the new applications have been satisfactorily disposed of for two years and a half, under the administration of the deacons, whose alone ordinary fund consists of the evening collection, the annual amount of which does not exceed eighty pounds sterling. We have no doubt, that on this humble revenue alone, the new applications will continue to be met, till the whole pauperism accumulated under the old system, shall have died away. Then will the parish of St John's be simply and purely in the condition of a Scottish country parish, with the whole expense of its pauperism defrayed, not by the offerings of wealthy day-hearers from all parts of the city, but by the

humble offerings of an evening congregation that consists chiefly of parishioners, and of those in the labouring classes of society.

We fondly hope then, that one great difficulty which is often conjured up in opposition to this undertaking will, henceforth, be conclusively done away—*viz.* that the means of the parish of St John's are so exceedingly ample as to place its process, for the extinction of pauperism, beyond the reach of imitation by the other parishes. Another, which has been frequently alleged, is that the management must be so very strenuous, as that the labour of it will only be submitted to by men who act under the impulse of novelty, or who feel their responsibility and honour involved in the success of what many have stigmatized as a wild and irrational speculation. We are quite sure that there is not a deacon belonging to the parish who could not depone, from his own experience, to the utter futility of this imagination. They all, without exception, find to be true what we have already affirmed, that the problem for the extermination of pauperism, is not resolved by any forthgoing of unexampled wisdom or activity on their part, but by a ready accommodation, on the part of the people, to a new system of things, in which they have willingly, and almost without a murmur, acquiesced. The task may look insuperable in the gross, but its obstacles all vanish in the detail. When the territory is once split into its several portions, and assigned to the several agents, each of them is sure to find, that the whole time and trouble of the requisite inquiries fall marvellously short of his

first anticipations. We deny not that upon each particular application, more of care may be expended than under the lax and complicated administration of other days; but this is amply compensated by a great and immediate reduction in the number of these applications—so, in fact, as almost to reduce into a sinecure that office, which when regarded from a distance, had been magnified into one of mighty and almost insurmountable labour. We are the more solicitous to do away this objection, for we too should decry every plan to the uttermost, as bearing upon it the character of Utopianism, that could not be accomplished by every-day instruments, operating on every-day materials. Any exemplification, however imposing, if gotten up by such extraordinary means, and such extraordinary management, as to distance all imitation, were but a useless and unsubstantial parade—the treacherous glare and splendour of a meteoric flash that soon passed away; instead of radiance from such calm and enduring light as might diffuse itself throughout all the abodes, and be mingled with all the doings of humanity.

And, as we are now engaged in treating with the scepticism of our many antagonists, let us here recur to another evasion, by which they have tried to dispose of the undoubted success of the parochial experiment in St John's. This success has been repeatedly ascribed to the efflux of the poor from the parish of St John's, on the other parishes of Glasgow; as if they were glad to escape from the parsimonious administration that had been esta-

blished there, to those quarters of the city, where the stream of public charity flowed as kindly and as abundantly as before. But neither is this a true solution of the phenomenon in question. There is nought of which the whole agency in St John's are more desirous, than the establishment of the same barrier of mutual protection, among the parishes within the royalty, that is raised by the law of residence between the parishes of Scotland in general. They are quite sure that they would be gainers by such an internal arrangement among the parishes of Glasgow, and would be most willingly responsible for the maintenance of all who had gotten a legal residence within their own territory, could they be alike defended from the inroads of the poor, or of the paupers that belong to other parts of the city. The truth is, that on the first year of the reformed pauperism in St John's, the importation of paupers from the city into that parish, just doubled the exportation of paupers from the parish into the city; and ever since, the balance has been greatly to our disadvantage. It is further understood, that when part of the parish was sliced off and incorporated with the new parish of St James', several of the poorer families left the district that had been thus alienated, and retired within the present limits of the parish of St John's. Such are the facts, whatever difficulty may be conceived to attend the explanation of them. And it may, perhaps, help our comprehension of it, if we reflect that judgment and firmness need only to be tempered with civility, in order to make them virtues of great and popular estimation—that the connivance which

yields to the unfair or extravagant demands of the poor, has really not the same charm to their feelings as the courtesy which does them honour—that the lower orders of society can bear to be dealt with rationally, if they be, at the same time, dealt with frankly, and ingenuously, and openly—that, when the cause of human indigence is thrown on the co-operation of their own efforts, and their own sympathies in its behalf, it is then placed in the very best hands for the mitigation of all its sufferings—and that a very slight impulse, given to the general heart of any assembled population, will greatly more than compensate for the deprivations which ensue, when the pomp and the circumstance of all visible charity have, at length, been done away.

But the thought will recur again, that the people cannot be served under such an arrangement, and therefore cannot be satisfied—that suffering and starvation must be the necessary accompaniments of an abridged pauperism—that one must bring a cold heart, as well as a cold understanding, to this sort of administration—that a certain unrelenting hardness of temperament, on the part of those who preside over it, is altogether indispensable to its success—and that, when the success is at length obtained, it must have been at the expense of pained, and aggrieved, and neglected humanity.

Coldness, and cruelty, and hardihood, are the inseparable associates of legal charity, and it is under the weight of its oppressive influences that all the opposite characteristics of our nature—its ten-

derness, and gentleness, and compassion, have been so grievously overborne. These, however, are ready to burst forth again in all their old and native efflorescence, on the moment that this heavy incumbrance is cleared away from the soil of humanity. It is indeed strange, that the advocates of pauperism should have so reproached its enemies for all those stern qualities of the heart, wherewith it is the direct tendency of their own system to steel the bosoms of its hard and hackneyed administrators; or, because the latter have affirmed that the cause of indigence may safely be confided to those spontaneous sympathies which Nature has implanted, and which Christianity fosters in the bosom of man, they should therefore have been charged by the former with a conspiracy to damp and to disparage these sympathies—with an attempt to eradicate those very principles on which they repose so much of their dependence, and to the power of which, and the importance of which, they have rendered the award of a most high and honourable testimony.

The difference between the administration of a great public revenue for indigence, and the administration of a small one, seems to be this. The dispensers of the former are not naturally or necessarily led to bethink themselves of any other way by which a case of poverty can be disposed of, than simply by the application of the means wherewith they are intrusted. And as these means, under a system of assessment, admit of being augmented indefinitely they are apt to conceive that there is an adequacy in them to all the demands of all the

want that can be ascertained. At any rate, they seldom reckon on any other way of providing for human need, than by the positive discharge of legal aliment thereupon. So that their only, or, at least, their chief business in the intercourse they have with the applicants, is simply to ratify or to dismiss their claim, on the investigation they have made into their palpable resources, upon the one hand, compared with their palpable exigencies, upon the other. In the whole of this process, there is much of the coldness and formality of a court of law; and the very magnitude of the concern, along with the unavoidable distance at which the members of such an elevated board stand from those who venture to approach it, serves to infuse still more of this character into all the large and general managements of pauperism. All is precise, and rigorous, and stately; or, if any human feeling be admitted, it is not the warmth of kindness, but the heat of irritation. The repeated experience of imposition; and the consciousness of inability thoroughly to protect themselves from the recurrence of it; and the sensation of a growing pressure, against which no other counteractive is known, or even put into operation, than that of a stern, or a suspicious treatment, which only calls forth a more resolute assertion, on the part of the aggressors upon public charity—these are what have instilled a certain acerbity into all its ministrations. So that, with the thousands that are scattered over that multitude which the great city institution hath drawn around it, there is not one softening moral influence which is thereby carried abroad amongst

them—no exhibition of tenderness upon the one hand, and no gratitude, that can only be awakened by the perception of such tenderness, upon the other—no heart-felt obligation among those whose plea hath been sustained; while among those who are non-suited, may be heard the curses of disappointment, the half-suppressed murmurs of deep and sullen indignation.

It is least of all from a quarter like this, that the administrators of a small parish revenue ought to be charged, with any defect of sensibility in the work that they have undertaken. The very circumstance of having adventured themselves upon it with a revenue that is small, proves a confidence in the other resources that nature has provided for the alleviation of human want; and it is in the act of stimulating these resources, or of pointing the way to them, that they get into close and kindly approximation with the humblest of the families. There is not a more cheering experience that has met us on our way, than the perfect rationality of the lower orders, when rationally and respectfully dealt with; and the pliancy wherewith they defer to a remonstrance that is urged with civility, and, at the same time, has the force and the weight of its own moral justness to recommend it. It is the more minute, and free, and familiar intercourse which takes place between a population and their parochial office-bearers—it is this which throws a sort of domestic atmosphere around the doings of a sessional administration. The scantiness of its means, it may be alleged, will necessarily reduce the elder or the deacon to his shifts, in the manage-

ment of his district. And so it does. But they are the very shifts by which the business of human charity is transferred to its right principles; and, after this is accomplished, there is both more of genuine satisfaction among the poor, and more of genuine sympathy among all those whose duty it is to succour or to uphold them. The whole of our delightful experience on this matter has gone to assure us, of the cheapness and the facility wherewith the substitution may be completed of a natural for an artificial charity. And, let it never be forgotten, that the main springs of this natural charity are all to be found among the population themselves; and, that by dint of persuasion and of friendly intercourse, they are easily led to re-open them. That all who are able, should charge themselves with the maintenance of their aged relatives —that to the uttermost, a man's own hands should minister to his own necessities, and those who are with him—that every exorbitant demand on the liberality of others, is an injurious encroachment on the fund that is destined for the relief of real and unquestionable misery—that the poor who are moderate in their applications, or who forbear them altogether, are the best friends of all those who are poorer than themselves—that no inferiority of station, therefore, exempts from the virtue of beneficence; and that the humble contributions of time, and service, and such little as they can spare, by the lower orders, form by far the most important offerings that can be rendered to the cause of charity—that pauperism is the last and the worst expedient to which they can betake themselves,

and which ought never to be tried but in cases of extreme urgency, and when all the previous resources have been exhausted*—Let any philanthropist go forth among the people, and having earned their confidence, let him fill his mouth with such arguments as these; and he will never find them to be an unwilling or an impracticable auditory. To charge such a regimen as this with coldness and hardihood, and remoteness from all sympathy with human feeling, is a gross paralogism on all truth and all nature. It is true, that under its influence, the expenses of public charity may lessen every year—yet so far from this being any indication of extinct tenderness, or frozen sensibilities in the midst of us, it may serve most authentically to mark the growth of all those better habits, and of all those neighbourly regards, which ensure to every parochial family the greatest comfort and the greatest contentment, that in the present state of humanity, are attainable.

We have now breathed in both these elements —that of a parish, whose supplies for the poor were enforced by stout legality; and that of a parish where this way of it has been totally superseded by the gratuitous system: and, certainly, our feeling is, that the air in which we now move, is of a softer and more benignant quality than before. Nor is it difficult to comprehend why, in this new state of things, many asperities ought to have subsided. When a people are more thrown upon

* If those previous resources were brought rightly to bear on every case of human suffering, they would anticipate the operations of pauperism altogether.

themselves, they soon find, that as it were by *expression*, they draw additionally more out of their own proper resources, than they ever drew from public charity—so as to be positively in circumstances of greater comfort and sufficiency than ever. But more important still: Whatever of intercourse there is between the rich and the poor under this reformed economy, is purified of all that soreness and bitterness which attach to the ministrations of charity, so long as the imagination of a right is made to adhere to it. There no longer remaineth this freezing ingredient, either to chill the sympathies of the one party, or the gratitude of the other. And, on the whole, there is nothing more certain, than that when compulsory pauperism is abolished in any parish, and the interest it would provide for is left to the operation of spontaneous charity, then does the tone of this little commonwealth become less harsh and less refractory than it was—a kindlier spirit is felt throughout; and it soon becomes palpable as day, under which of the two systems it is that we have the more humanized, and under which of them it is, that we have the more hard-favoured population.*

* It was by an unlooked-for coincidence, that while engaged in the preparation of this Chapter, the Author had to make his appearance at the bar of the General Assembly, which is the supreme Ecclesiastical Court in Scotland; and had there to advocate his measures for the reformation of the Pauperism of St John's. He has since published the Speech which was delivered on that occasion; and by a long appendix to it, has relieved himself of much of that matter, which, perhaps, would have been of too local and ephemeral a character for a more general work. There, the reader will find a few of those more minute and specific instances of parochial management, which may serve, perhaps, to appease the humanity that had been before offended, by the imagination of a

The parish of St John's is no longer solitary in regard of its pauperism. The Outer-Kirk parish

certain cold-blooded severity in the system, that went to explode all public charity. To that list of instances, we shall just subjoin one more, for the purpose of correcting another imagination that lies in the opposite extreme from the one adverted to in the text.

We have heard it insinuated, then, by another and distinct class of sceptics from the former, that we have hitherto succeeded in our experiment not by the harshness of our treatment, but by its excessive kindness and liberality. The suspicion is, that there may be a sort of secret or underhand juggle on the part of our agents—as if we appeased by stealth the clamours of our else dissatisfied population, and bribed their acquiescence in an economy, to the success and establishment of which, we have so strongly committed ourselves. Here, too, our antagonists are just as wide of the truth, as in all their other attempts to explain away the undoubted prosperity of this much questioned and much resisted enterprise. There can be no doubt, that the abolition of legal charity would be instantly followed up by the growth and the more busily extended operation of private and personal charity; and this so far from being an argument against the abolition, is one of the best and most effective considerations in its favour. But most assuredly, the far promptest and most productive sympathy that were then called into action, would be the mutual sympathy of neighbours and residenters among the population themselves; and, we should deem this of tenfold greater importance to the poor, than the whole amount of benefaction or of aid that can be rendered to them, either by the kindness of their parochial office-bearers, or by the influx of liberality from without.

With regard to our own agents, in particular, it so happens, that there is a very great variety in the stations of life which they themselves occupy. Some of them, we are proud to say, have nought but personal worth and wisdom to qualify them for the charge which they have kindly undertaken. We do not hold the wealth of our office-bearers, to be at all indispensable to the prosperous management even of the poorest districts in the parish; and, if we are sensible of any difference between those proportions* where relief might be conveyed to the indigent in this way, and those other proportions where there can be none, we would say, that upon the whole, the latter are in the more quiescent and satisfied state of the two; and that whatever outbreakings of rapacity, or of undue expectation have occurred, come chiefly, as was to be anticipated, from the former.

Yet we cannot, therefore, say, that it is the part of an elder or deacon, if he have of this world's goods, to shut his bowels of

* The Glasgow name for the districts placed under the charge of elders.

of Glasgow has also made its conclusive separation from the Town Hospital; and it did so, on more

compassion against any actual case of necessity that comes before him. This were his duty as a Christian man in any condition of life; and there is nought surely in his assumption of a Christian office, nor is there ought in his peculiar relationship with those who have their geographical position upon his assigned territory, that should reverse his obligations, or lay an arrest on the spontaneous flow of his liberalities towards them. It is his part, precisely as it is that of others, to do good unto all as he has opportunity—and should the opportunity be more patent and of more frequent reiteration within the district of his superintendance than beyond it, this, of course, decides the question for him, as to the place and the people, to whom his private beneficence will take its most abundant and natural direction. Let human sympathy come as oft as it may into contact with human suffering, and let what will come out of it. To qualify a man for this peculiar charge, it is surely not necessary to put violence upon his faculties or his feelings; to lay his heart under some process of artificial congelation; or to bear down the workings of his own free inclination towards any act of kindness or liberality among the families of his population, that with the same converse, and the same observation, he would have been prompted to among other families. But if not necessary to thwart his benevolent propensities by laying an interdict upon them, neither is it necessary to urge them onward by any artificial stimulant whatever. Let a philanthropist but assume several hundreds of a contiguous population, and let him move amongst them daily, if he will, not however in the ostensible character of an almoner, but of a friend—and he will not, in the prosecution of his labours, meet with more of solicitation, because of their temporal wants, than he will know clearly and Christianly how to dispose of. And should he be of circumstances to do good and to communicate, in his own person, still he will not find that he stands either in an unmanageable or in a ruinously expensive relationship towards them. He may have to describe an initial period of simplicity and alarm upon his own part, and, perhaps, of occasional exaggeration upon theirs. But after that he has been fairly disciplined into a sound experience upon the subject, and the matter has been reduced under his hands to its just and rational dimensions, then will he find how true is the exclamation of Hannah More, "O how cheap is charity, O how expensive is vanity!"

Now, if an individual could thus stay the importunities of a whole district, this of itself were argument enough of such capabilities among the people themselves, as marked pauperism to be a thing uncalled for. All that he could ever do on the uttermost

generous terms, and at a bolder adventure, than characterized the outset of the enterprise in St

stretch of his liberality, were so mere a bagatelle to the subsistence of his many families, as to form in itself no substitute at all for the provisions of a legal charity; and if, therefore, he without inconvenience, or even so much as the feeling of a sacrifice, could succeed in maintaining the quiescence of a population amounting to several hundreds; this of itself were the most strong and palpable evidence of all such provision being superfluous. The truth is, that any personal contribution of his to the necessities of his district, bears so insignificant a proportion to its extent, that in as far as the *materiel* of his benevolence is concerned, it makes no sensible difference whether it shall be rendered or withheld. And the only thing that stamps an importance on his benefactions, is the moral influence that attends them—the demonstration it holds forth of his good-will to the people among whom he expatiates—and, more particularly, the excitement that it gives to the play and the fermentation of their own sympathies. The anecdote that follows, we give merely as a plain example of this, and as proving how readily the people themselves may become the most effectual instruments of their own mutual comfort, and of their own independence.

A young man who had lodged several years with a family of the parish, took ill of consumption. His means were speedily exhausted; and the people with whom he lived, who had been kind and liberal to their uttermost, could not be expected to charge themselves with the whole burden of his maintenance. The Town Hospital, in virtue of our subsisting arrangement, was not open to receive him; but he had himself expressed a longing preference to be with his relatives in the country, who were at the distance of more than 100 miles, and were not able to transport him in that careful and sheltered way, which the state of his health had made so requisite. In these circumstances, the deacon certainly did give his best attention to the peculiar exigencies of the case; and, among other things, made interest with the proprietor of a stage-coach, to allow him an inside berth for the fare of an outside passenger. Such easy services in behalf of a sufferer as these, are never lost on that little neighbourhood of sympathy and observation by which he is surrounded: And, accordingly, in the present instance, neighbours did lend their most willing co-operation to this labour of love: and a subscription had only to be headed, and set a-going amongst themselves; and, while the sum that was thus raised formed by far the most precious contribution to the necessities of the case, it also carried the gratifying evidence along with it, of the power that lies in a little leaven of well-timed charity—how leavening

John's.* For there was no excess of its sessional revenue over its sessional expenditure. The expense of poor that were upon it at the time of its disruption from the old system, was about equal to its collections; and yet, without any surplus, did it simply withdraw itself from the wealthier institution, and undertake both to send no more paupers there, and to meet, upon its own resources, all the new cases that offered from their own population. In defect of all present pecuniary means for such an achievement, it first instituted a scrutiny of the existing poor upon its roll; and then stimulated the weekly collection by the announcement of their new system from the pulpit; and, last of all, re-

the entire mass, and working its own quality throughout all the members of it, it can thus enlist upon its side the alacrity and the spare means of a whole population. It was not by the importation of money from without, but by the healthful operation of motives and principles within that the difficulty was provided for. A parochial agent may be in humble circumstances: but there are other tokens by which good-will is manifested than the giving of silver and gold. Such as he has he may give—his advice—the aid of his time and trouble—and on the strength of these, he will earn such a moral ascendancy as shall stimulate like processes for like emergencies, and call forth those powerful and harmonized efforts which form an equivalent defence against all the extremities to which our species are liable. It is thus, that a man of sense and of character may fearlessly take upon himself the superintendance of a lot of population; and that, without a farthing to bestow upon their necessities, but on the strength of their inward capabilities alone, either rightly directed, or even left to their undisturbed operation. Unless, by a blight on the face of nature, or some peculiar and extraordinary visitation, not one instance of starvation will ever occur amongst them. The thing in the even and ordinary course of human life is morally impossible. And while this ought not to set aside among the rich, that ancient law of sympathy, which is coeval with nature, and re-echoed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, throughout all its pages, it ought certainly to set aside the provisions of a modern and artificial pauperism.

* This enterprise was at length desisted from.

solved on a most strict and careful inquiry into the claims and circumstances of all future applicants. Its experience was in striking harmony with that of the Kirk-Session of St John's in one particular. There took place a sudden diminution in the number of applications. We should not like to be too minute, or too prying of inspection into the concerns of others: But it is not too much to say in the general, that, by our latest information, they were going on most prosperously, and most hopefully; and we feel confident, that by the dying away of the old cases belonging to that parish, which are on the funds of the Town Hospital, and by the arrest that has been laid on the influx of all new cases to that institution, there will another large department of Glasgow be speedily cleared of all its compulsory pauperism.*

The General Session has now ceased altogether from its charge of the weekly collections at the church-doors of any of the parishes in Glasgow. Each Kirk-Session retains its own—and those of them that need to have the expenses of their pauperism supplemented by foreign aid, stand connected simply and exclusively with the Town Hospital. The complexity of the old mechanism is in so far reduced, as that the combination of the parishes, one with another, in all the matters of ordinary administration for the poor, is now broken up. And things are certainly more manageable than before, for the work of ulterior reformation —in that each parish may, without thwarting or opposition from its neighbours, negotiate its own

* This anticipation was frustrated.

separate and peculiar arrangement with the Town Hospital.

There are ten parishes in Glasgow. Two of them, St John's and the Outer Kirk, have reached, or are in certain progress, toward the ultimate condition of parishes that are under a strict gratuitous economy. To be delivered of the assessment, it is necessary that the remaining eight parishes should be reduced to this condition also. It so happened of three of these, viz. the North West, St George's, and St James', that the expense of their sessional poor was beneath the amount of their weekly collections—so that, on the dissolution of the General Session, they found themselves all at once in fair circumstances for separating from the Town Hospital, and each attempting its own pauperism single-handed. And, accordingly, they have partially, or rather almost totally begun their own independent expenditure on their own independent resources. There is still, we understand, a remainder of occasional aid, that more by the force of habit than of necessity, they still continue to receive from the Town Hospital. But, with this exception, and an exception that could well be dispensed with, they take the whole of their new pauperism upon their own funds: And having now ceased the transmission of their cases to the fund by assessment, they have only to wait the disappearance of their Hospital pauperism by death, when they too shall arrive at the desired landing-place.*

And here would we urge it on the Kirk-Sessions

* All these anticipations have been defeated, and for reasons which will be explained in the next Volume.

of these three parishes, how desirable it were, that they acted on the principles of a total and conclusive separation from the Town Hospital; that they ceased from every sort of intromission with it; and swept away even the last vestiges of dependence, by which the need or importance of such an institution could at all be recognized. It were greatly better, if in as far as their poor too are concerned, the faintest shadow of argument for a compulsory provision were utterly done away. Pity it were, that for the sake of a few rare and trifling extraordinaries, the whole burden of which they could most easily take upon themselves, they should forfeit that place of entire and absolute independence, which they are so well entitled to occupy, and so abundantly able to maintain. In the present style of their operations, they are laying no material burden on the fund by assessment; and why keep up even so much as a nominal obligation to it, or offer any sort of quit-rent acknowledgment at all, to a superiority that ought now to be cast off, and suffered to fall into utter and irrecoverable desuetude? Were it a mere question of complimentary deference to the Town Hospital, this might willingly be rendered. But it ought never to be forgotten, that any accession, however trivial, to the need of its services, bears along with it an accession to the need of its existence. It is because of this, that the acceptance even of the slightest boon from that institution is greatly to be deprecated. The homage may be insignificant—but it is not innocent—because it will be magnified into an arrangement for the continuance of a system

that ought to be razed from the foundation. Pauperism will never be brought under a right economy, till all that is legal and compulsory in its administrations, shall be not regulated, but destroyed. At all events, with these three parishes, there do exist, in their present means, and with but one step more, in their recent change of management, the capabilities of their own entire independence—in which, should they persevere for a very few years, then, by the operation of death on their present hospital cases, should we behold half the domain of Glasgow altogether cleared of its compulsory pauperism.

But there still remain five parishes, which though not now connected with each other by the intermedium of a General Session, are still connected each by its own separate tie of dependence and obligation with the Town Hospital. The expenses of their sessional poor, at the resolution of the old system into its separate parts, went beyond their receipts by collection; and each of the Sessions has this difference made good to it by distinct supplies of money from that institution. And besides this, the transference of paupers goes on, as formerly, from the Sessional to the Hospital lists; so that there still remain five open ducts of conveyance from about one half of Glasgow to the fund by assessment. The truth is, that without some such initial arrangement as we have all along recommended, the present state of matters was quite unavoidable. None of these Sessions had the means to defray the allowances, even of the existing paupers upon their roll—and far less was

it to be expected, that they would undertake each the burden of its whole new pauperism, without the conveyance of its future excesses to the Town Hospital. They were already labouring under the weight of a present excess; and without a special act of accommodation on the part of the Town Hospital, towards each of the parishes so circumstanced, their emancipation from compulsory pauperism appears to be impracticable.

Were these parishes barely relieved by the Town Hospital of the overplus of their sessional poor—were so many made to pass into the state of its out-pensioners, and so many left on each Session, as should just, with their present allowances, absorb the whole of its own proper revenue, we think that even on this arrangement, there is not one of them which could not, with the buoyancy of their new felt and conscious independence, so stimulate its means upon the one hand, and its management upon the other, as to weather the demands of its new pauperism, aye and until its old pauperism, by the operation of mortality, had all been swept away. But we should be inclined to grant a more favourable outset—to pass still more of their sessional paupers into the lists of the Town Hospital, and perhaps, in some instances, to relieve them of the whole weight of their existing pauperism. At all events, we should rather, for the sake of their encouragement, that they started with an excess of revenue above their present expenditure—but with the full understanding, that to their treatment of all the future applications, we looked for the conclusive deliverance of the Town Hospital from

the influx of all new pauperism. We again affirm our unqualified confidence in their success; and that nothing is wanting but the consent of the proper parties to these arrangements, for the extirpation of compulsory pauperism from the whole of Glasgow.

The vices of such a system as that under which they are now acting, we have already endeavoured to expose. Nothing can be worse, than to place the management of pauperism with one set of administrators, and the finding of ways and means for the expense of it with another. They, more especially, who stand at that place where the first movement is made by the population towards public charity, should be under every possible excitement to a close investigation; and, above all, to a diligent use of those various expedients of prevention, by which the application may either be stayed or be postponed. Now this is the very place that is occupied by the members of Kirk-Sessions in Glasgow—and a more effectual method could not be devised of opening the widest possible door for the influx of new cases, than to charge a Kirk-Session with the primary examinations of pauperism, and to lay the ultimate expense of it on another institution. In these circumstances, it is not only a most conceivable, but a most likely thing, that, disunited though the Town Hospital should be from the charge of five of the city parishes, there will no sensible relief be felt, because of an almost instantaneous compensation in the augmented expense of the remaining five that adhere to them. The disease which had been cleared away from one half of the domain, might,

and from the pure operation of the faulty economy alone, gather to such increased virulence in the remaining half, as to perpetuate an unalleviated and, perhaps, growing burden upon the community —and cause the ignorant and unthinking to wonder, why pauperism should be at once so reduced in its geographical dimensions, and so unreduced in its demands on the still assessed and heavy laden citizens.

Even, though one-half of Glasgow should, by the adoption of the parochial system, free itself of all dependence on the Town Hospital, yet let the other half remain on its present footing with that institution, and nothing more likely than that the assessment over the whole city, shall not only maintain its present amount, but shall press forward as urgently to its own increase as ever. All will depend on the practical administration of it. Should those who are in the management feel the impulse of a rival spirit with the emancipated parishes, they may certainly, by dint of strenuousness, and of determined endeavour, keep down, and even reduce their expenditure. But, on the other hand, it is equally possible, that by a very slight relaxation of care and vigilance on their part, the demand may be just as overbearing from that fragment of the population wherewith they shall then have to do, as formerly from the whole mass. In affirming this, we do not charge the office-bearers of a compulsory pauperism, either with incapacity, or with any defect of conscientious regard to the public interest. The charge that we prefer is not against them, but against the arrangements of that economy, where-

with it is their misfortune, and not their fault, that they are implicated. They must, in fact, have more of care and of principle, than are to be looked for in average humanity, should they be able to make head against the disadvantages of their most awkward and ill-assorted system. The falling away of two or more parishes from their superintendance, will, doubtless, be a relief to them in the mean time. But nothing is more natural, than that the very feeling of relief should induce a certain, though almost insensible remissness of practice, and a consequent facility in the admittance of new cases from that part of the territory which is still attached to them. The very men who would make a stand and an effort to prevent any addition to the burden of the community, might not feel just so intense a desirousness for the purpose of lightening the burden beneath that degree to which the community are already habituated. And from the moment, that they let down, though by ever so little, the defences of caution, and watchfulness, and strict investigation, from that moment they will let in additional pauperism. They may soon draw around them, from their remaining parishes, such a force and vehemency of new applications, as shall keep up, in its former magnitude, the whole business of their administration; and then the wonted pressure of demand from without, shall be in its old state of equilibrium, with the wonted re-action of prompt and vigorous resistance from within.

Should this be the actual result of the late changes that have taken place in Glasgow—should a few of its parishes have wrought back their way

to the gratuitous system, and the rest be still found as burdensome as formerly were all the parishes put together, we cannot think of a more impressive exhibition of the truth of our whole argument. To every considerate beholder, it must carry a demonstration along with it of the efficiency of the parochial administration on the one hand, and of the ruinous, and irrepressible, and altogether indefinite mischief that lies in a general and compulsory system, upon the other. It will prove, that wherever the principle of legal charity is acted upon, there is in it a creative power of evil, which can be kept under by no device of management, and be restrained by no limitation of territory—a virus that will scarcely admit of being mitigated, and from which society can never be delivered, but by its total extirpation.

Yet such is the blind impetuosity wherewith every suggestion for the reformation of existing abuses is liable to be opposed—such is the sensitive, instead of the rational style of that hostility, through which the course of improvement has frequently to force its way—so resolute often are the prejudice and the pre-determination that urge on the unreflecting cry of its adversaries, that it were no astonishment to us, though a phenomenon so palpably decisive of the tendency of assessments, as that of their continued increase on a curtailed territory, should have an altogether contrary interpretation given to it; and it be even appealed to as an argument for recurrence to the old system, that in spite of all the abridgments which have been made upon it, the public burden is still unlightened,

and no relief hath come out of the boasted innovations.

It is not he who is most versant in the detail, and drudgery, and penmanship of an old system—it is not he who is most qualified to pronounce on the merits or demerits of a new. All familiar though he be with the records, and the documentary informations of office, he may still be an utter stranger to the alone competent arena for the determination of this controversy. The experience of a mere practitioner in some of the inner departments of a poor's house, is totally dissimilar from the experience of a diligent observer on the hearts, and habits, and household economy of the poor—and it were well if this distinction was more adverted to by those who are loudest in their demand for practical wisdom, and in their outcry against the rash and confident anticipations of theory. It is not the man who has wildered all his days among the bye-tracts of error, it is not of him that you would most readily inquire the highway to truth; and his very familiarity with the windings and ambiguities of that labyrinth in which he long has been involved, forms in our mind a presumption against any deliverance of his on the question at issue. It is on this account, however, that a tenfold homage is due to him, who, though nurtured from the infancy of his public life among institutions that are wrong, has nevertheless, by the pure force of a vigorous home-bred sagacity, seized upon and readily apprehended that which is right. This is not wisdom aided by the lights of a local or personal experience—but, much higher exhibition, it

is wisdom forcing her way through the besetting obstacles wherewith she was encompassed; and evolving herself into the clear region of day, through all the intricacies of a mechanism, that only serves to cloud and to confuse the apprehensions of ordinary men. This has been finely exemplified by the civil and municipal functionaries of Glasgow —and, on closing our narrative of the present state and future prospects of pauperism in that city, we gladly offer the meed of our acknowledgments to men, without whose prompt and intelligent concurrence, there might never have been opened the only practicable avenue to reformation.

The Barony of Glasgow is one of its suburb parishes, and has now a population of more than fifty thousand. There is something very instructive in the history of its pauperism. The assessment was first resorted to in 1810—much against the advice and opinion of those who were most versant in the details of the administration for the poor, antecedently to that period. We know not on the one hand, how to quote a more decisive experience against the wisdom of a compulsory provision, even for a large and wholly manufacturing population, than by appealing to the fact, that till 1810, the expenditure of this parish, the most populous in Scotland, seldom exceeded £600 annually—proving, that for the legal system of relief, there exists no natural and permanent necessity, in any circumstances whatever—though, after it is once adopted, there will arise, in all circumstances, an artificial necessity of its own creating, which

will furnish the advocates of pauperism with a ready argument for its continuance. And we know not, on the other hand, a more striking evidence of the effect of an enlarged public charity, to multiply its cases, and enlarge the boundaries of its own operation, than that after 1810, the expenditure became about five times greater than before, in the short space of seven years. We would put the question to those among the heritors of the Barony, who were most in earnest for the establishment of a poor's rate, if they are sensible of having made the slightest progress towards the fulfilment of their benevolent anticipations—Can they say, that the poor are at all better off, under the present regime, than before?—or, that they have landed their parish in a better economy than that from which they have so recently departed? It is still time for them to retrace their movement—and not, most assuredly, for the sake of their property, but for the sake of what is far more valuable, the comfort and character of a numerous population, would we like to see their promptitude and vigour embarked on what some might denounce as a cause of selfishness, but which, in the most emphatic sense of the term, is indeed a cause of true philanthropy and patriotism.

The following occurs to us as the proper steps for the retracing movement that we now have suggested. Let the church, and each of the three chapels of ease, be permitted to retain their own collections; and let each have a defined locality annexed to it, within which it shall be the business of the respective office-bearers to meet all the de-

mands of the new pauperism. There behoved to be, at first, a slight extension of the assessment, for the old pauperism, in order to make up for this surrender of the church and chapel collections. But for this there would be a speedy compensation in the death of the existing paupers—for, meanwhile, from the districts that had been assigned to the new managements, there would be no additional cases transmitted to the compulsory fund. And we repeat, that it will be due not to the want of means, but to the want of management, if the collections, at these various places of worship, be not found adequate to all the fair demands of their respective territories.

But even after the present system is broken up thus far, the separate managements would still be too unwieldy.* These could gradually be relieved

* Some years ago, Dr Mitchell of Anderston, a most estimable and highly respectable minister of the United Secession, offered to undertake the pauperism of a locality in the Barony parish, with the collections at his chapel, on an equitable condition of relief, from the assessment, to the members of his congregation. If this offer were repeated, and followed up by similar offers, in other quarters of the parish, it might be the germ of a very important reformation. Should the dissenting ministers in large towns, consent to assume a locality, they would find, most assuredly, nothing oppressive in the management of its new pauperism. For the small part of their collections, that they should find it necessary to expend, they would soon obtain compensation, in the relief of their wealthier hearers, from the assessment that is now levied upon them. And we should look, in time, for a compensation still more gratifying. The office-bearers of each dissenting chapel, would, under this arrangement, be exposed to frequent calls of intercourse with the population of their assigned districts—and their right of entrance and inquiry, would soon come to be recognized throughout all the families—and many are the expedients and facilities that might thus occur, for carrying the lessons of Christianity amongst them—and the ministers of our Secession would instantly be translated into the full benefit

by the erection of additional chapels, a measure that might be advocated on higher grounds than the advantage of a reduced and rectified pauperism. Yet we should rejoice, if on this latter impulse only, men of wealth and influence could be prevailed upon to lend their aid to a cause, that has better considerations to recommend it, than even its subserviency to the best of all civic reformations.

and influence of locality—and they might earn in consequence a rich moral and spiritual harvest, wherewith to uphold and recruit their various congregations. And so little jealousy do we entertain of this progress, that we should rejoice in it as a precursor to those liberal and enlightened views, which have been promulgated by the venerable pastor of the Barony. The day is perhaps coming, when localities primarily assumed by Presbyterian ministers of the Dissent, for the reduction of pauperism, may, at length, be transformed into parishes; and, they retaining their own style of patronage, and tolerating us in ours, may, at length, with the only important difference betwixt us thus compromised, consent to sit down beside us, under the canopy of our national establishment.

But, if such be the repulsion between the zealots of the establishment on the one hand, and the zealots of dissenterism on the other, that any entire coalition of the parties is nauseous to both, and even the first step of the approximation that we have now recommended, is not likely to be entered upon—then, as the latter are so insensible to the charm and power of locality, it is peculiarly incumbent on the former, who remain in sole possession of this mighty instrument, to turn it to all the advantages of which it is susceptible. The extinction of pauperism is only one of those advantages and blessings, to the achievement of which the present apparatus of our church establishment is very nearly commensurate, but which would be prodigiously accelerated by the multiplication of chapels, or the subdivision of parishes.

CHAPTER XIII.

On the Difficulties and Evils which adhere even to the Best Condition of Scottish Pauperism.

The Gorbals of Glasgow forms the other of its suburb parishes. Its inhabitants amount to upwards of twenty-two thousand, whose occupations are wholly of a mercantile and manufacturing character. Unlike to the Barony, it has no landed wealth whence it might derive those supplies for the relief of indigence, which many deem to be indispensable among families that are subject to all the vicissitudes attendant upon trade. This, then, in the eyes of many, were the likeliest of parishes for a compulsory pauperism, and a rapidly growing assessment—and did there really exist any natural necessity for such a provision, one should think that of all other places, it was here where the necessity would be most urgently and imperiously felt, and where a poor's rate would be most unavoidable. But if, instead of this, the Gorbals shall be found to have kept the simple parochial economy that was bequeathed to us from our ancestors, and to have flourished under it—this might well lead us to suspect, whether after all, a system of public and legalised charity, be essential to the well-being of any population.

This parish never has admitted an assessment*—and the whole of its sessional expenditure for the

* Written in 1821. Assessments have since been introduced.

poor, is defrayed from a revenue of about £400 annually. So little, in fact, has the circumstance of its being an exclusively manufacturing parish, brought along with it the necessity for a poor's rate, that its expenditure is fully as limited as in many of the most retired and wholly agricultural parishes of the north. It does not amount to £25 a-year for each thousand of the population—and yet, on the general blush and aspect of this industrious community, may it be confidently affirmed, that it not only offers to our notice an aggregate of families, in every way as well-conditioned, and as exempt from the rigours of extreme wretchedness, as are those of the assessed city to which it is contiguous; but that it will bear, in this respect, a comparison with the most heavily assessed towns, in any of the great manufacturing districts of England. There must be a mockery in the magnificence of those public charities, which have not to all appearance bettered the circumstances, or advanced the comforts of the people among whom they are instituted, beyond those of a people where they are utterly unknown. And, when we look to such a parish as the Gorbals, still an unimpaired monument of the olden time, though in full exposure to all those failures and fluctuations of commerce, which form the chief argument on the side of modern pauperism—the conclusion is irresistible, that had there been enough of wisdom in the other towns and parishes of Scotland for withstanding the first introduction of a poor's rate among them, there would have been as little of unreached and unrelieved poverty in each as there is at this moment; and the

charity of good will, unaided by the charity of compulsion, would have sufficed, at least as well as now both do together, for all the wants and sufferings of our land.

It may be thought by some a little gratuitous to affirm, at a glance, that the lower orders of unassessed Gorbals are in circumstances of as great comfort and sufficiency, as are those of the assessed Barony, and of the still more heavily assessed Glasgow. But on this subject there was a very interesting numerical exhibition afforded in the year 1817, a year of such low trade and miserable wages, that it was deemed necessary to raise an extraordinary subscription, of more than £16,000, for the relief of our operative population, both in the city and suburb parishes. The population of Gorbals is greatly inferior to either that of Barony or of Glasgow—being somewhat beneath one-half of the former, and one-third of the latter. But the whole relief awarded to it, by the committee, did not come to one-third of the relief granted to the Barony, nor to one-seventh of that granted to Glasgow. So that, in the judgment of practical men, sitting in examination over the number and urgency of all the applications that actually came before them, the distress of the Gorbals, in the season of a great common calamity, was far short of that of the other two portions of the manufacturing community that were alike involved in it. And, if we are to estimate the relative degrees of sufficiency in ordinary times, by the inverse degrees of suffering in a time of extraordinary depression, there is room to believe, that the establishment of

a compulsory provision has not only not advanced the condition of the labouring classes, but has positively aggravated the hardships to which they are liable. It has, in fact, unsettled their habits of economy and foresight; and, cruellest of all impositions, has misled them, by lying promises, from the only true source of a people's comfort and independence.

But before we leave the instance of Gorbals, we must advert to one observable peculiarity in the administration of its pauperism. It is well known, that in Glasgow, the elders, generally speaking, live at a considerable distance from their respective proportions—so as to have but a very slight acquaintance, and but very rare and occasional intercourse with the families. In Gorbals it is not so. It has been the practice there, when a vacancy occurs in the eldership, to seek for a successor among the inhabitants of the local district that falls to be provided. It is true, that this arrangement is liable to be disturbed to a certain extent, by changes of residence. But still upon the whole, the sessional affairs of the parish have the benefit of being conducted by a residing agency, where many of the members have their own dwelling-places within the territory of their own special superintendance. Now, were there any urgent and indispensable call for a large charitable revenue to a large population, or any glaring maladjustment between so small a public expenditure, on the one hand, and so vast a multitude of artisans and labourers on the other, as we find in the parish of Gorbals—then the best thing for its sessional ad-

ministrators would be to live at the greatest possible distance from their respective territories—that so they might evade the force and vehemence of the many applications with which they might be otherwise encompassed. It must be a puzzling phenomenon to all who strenuously advocate the cause of pauperism, that in the Gorbals we should behold a parish with upwards of twenty thousand people served, and, on the whole, satisfied, by a public expenditure of about £400 a-year. Now, were a result so marvellous in their eyes brought about by any dexterous or unfair juggle, surely the right policy for the operators thereof would be to retreat as far as they could from all converse, and observation, and criticism on the part of the common people—and we should behold the elders of this parish, each skulking in distance and concealment from the clamour of unappeased families, and the remonstrance and outcry of their sympathizing neighbourhood. Instead of which, they place themselves fearlessly down in the very midst of all these possibilities; and on their slender means do they brave an encounter with all the real or imagined poverty that is around them; and surely if there were an outrageous shortcoming, on their part, from the fair and honest claims of the vicinity in which they dwelt, they could not have the toleration, and much less the esteem that we doubt not they enjoy. It is a truly instructive exhibition, to witness the solicitude of the able and experienced minister of that parish, for elders who shall have their personal occupancy each within the limits of that district which is assigned to him as the field

of his labours. Did he feel burdened by the inadequacy of his parochial means to his parochial necessities, it would be his policy to have elders as much beyond the reach of his population as possible, rather than to have them placed at the distance of a walk of five minutes from one and all of the families. It would be his interest, that the administrators of this humble revenue never could be found, rather than be found, as they now are, at all times; because they generally live upon the domain of their own jurisdiction, and mingle hourly and familiarly with the people of their own charge. So to station these parochial office-bearers, each within his own portion of the mass of parochial pauperism, is one of the closest and most satisfying applications that can well be made of the touchstone of experience to this question. There can be no blinking of the question with such a treatment of it. And the thing that has been proved, or rather the thing that has been found in consequence, is, that the way of bringing pauperism down to its right dimensions, is to face, and not to flee from it—that, instead of starving it by unmanfully running away, the better method of reducing it is by proximity and thorough investigation, to probe it to the uttermost—that the nearer you come to it, it dwindles the more into insignificance before you—that it grows into real magnitude by the distance of its administrators, as well as grows into a still greater apparent magnitude, when seen through the medium of distance by beholders—but, that from thence it may, by personal approximation and intercourse, be followed back

again into the nonentity from which it never would have sprung, had it not been conjured up by the wand of legislation.

Wherever there is jugglery between two parties, there is disguise with the one or the other of them —and disguise is certainly favoured by the mutual distance at which they stand. When the parochial office-bearers and the poor, mingle so intimately together, as in Gorbals, and a cheap administration is the result of it, we infer that this is all which is genuinely required by the real state and exigencies of the population. But when they stand more widely apart the one from the other, as in Glasgow, and a profuse or expensive administration comes out of it, we should say of this, that it was partly owing to a delusion between the parties, because of their intervening distance. So that, instead of inferring from the moderate expenditure of Gorbals, that any juggle has been practised there on those who apply for public charity, we should rather infer, from the profuse expenditure of Glasgow, that a juggle is in daily practice and operation there, on those who dispense it.

Now we think that by the retracing process, which in our former chapters we have so often explained,* there is not an assessed parish in Scotland which does not admit of being conducted back again to that state from which the Gorbals never has departed. And yet, it ought not to be concealed that there are evils and difficulties even in the very best condition of Scottish pauperism. It has done

* See Chap. xi.

less mischief than the pauperism of England, only because less outrageous in its deviation from the system of a free charity, prompted by nature, and stimulated as much as it may by the spirit of Christianity. But there is still a taint and a mischief belonging to it, which it would be well to expose—and that, both in justice to the real truth and philosophy of the subject, and also for the sake of our southern neighbours, many of whom have been misled into an unqualified veneration for the economy of our Scottish parishes. We do conceive that the overgrown pauperism of England is reducible; but we think that a still better landing-place might be provided for it, than even our own parochial administration. It is good in every reformation to point well from the very outset: And if such a movement of reformation, on the part of England, shall ever be attempted, it were certainly right that the best of possible directions should be given to it; and, instead of a change from the more to the less imperfect, it were desirable that the line of regress from its present system should be so drawn, as to terminate in that system which is most accordant with the universal and abiding principles of our nature. We are aware of many in England, who would rejoice in a translation from their own corrupt and oppressive method of public charity, to the comparatively light expenditure of the North. But if any translation is to be adventured on, and the hazards of a great revolution in our domestic policy are to be encountered at any rate, then the purely rectilinear path of sound principle had rather be chosen, than another path, however slightly

divergent it may be from the former one.* It is on this account that we should like to estimate the precise amount of our own error, and our own divergency. It may both serve as a land-mark by which to guide our future suggestions on the pauperism of England; and, by its tendency to expose, and perhaps to remedy the evils of our own peculiar system, may form an appropriate close to our observations upon Scottish pauperism.

We hold it then to be an evil, attendant even on the very humblest of our sessional administrations, that still their efficiency, for the relief of indigence, is so apt to be overrated. There is a great defect of arithmetic in the popular mind. It is the creature of imagination and habit; and easily imposed upon by the glare of publicity, does it often award a delusive power and importance to the objects of its contemplation. It is thus, that even a Kirk-Session, stands in loftier guise to the eye of parishioners, than is at all warranted by the might or the magnitude of its operations. There is about it an air of promise and of pretension, that is greatly beyond its power—nor is it easy to unmask this imposture, or, exposing the actual dimensions of our public charity, to convince our population of the real insignificance which belongs to it.

Now, this of itself is a serious mischief. The disturbance which an artificial process of charity gives to the natural processes, is not in proportion

* That we do not vindicate Scottish pauperism as being in itself a good, but merely indulge it as being the less of two evils, must be apparent from the whole of Chapter X. and the introduction to Chap. XI.

to the quantity of relief that is administered thereby, but in proportion to the quantity of relief that is counted upon. The relaxation of economy, on the part of an expectant upon public charity, is in the accurate ratio of the hope that is felt, and not of the hope that is realised. It is enough for the purpose of a vitiating influence among a population, to set up a visible appearance of distribution in the midst of them, with even an undefined chance of its being made, on given emergencies, to bear upon one or other of the families. It is no satisfying answer to this, that the produce of our parochial charity is but small—for the anticipation, in almost all cases, greatly outstrips the experience—and thus, to a certain degree, are the people lured away from self-dependence—the only solid basis on which their prosperity can be reared. And more than this—the delusion to which we now advert, is not confined to the poor. They, whose duty it is to succour them, fully participate therein—and the existence of a court of supply has often appeased those personal sensibilities, which would have been ten times more available to the cause of charity. Neighbours feel, to a certain extent, disburdened of their obligation, because of the perceived calls and inquiries that have been instituted by a Kirk-Session upon a distressed household—and of the periodical allowance, however meagre, which they understand to be rendered to it. Both the hand of industry, and the hand of private benevolence, are slackened by the presence of this meddling intruder, on the natural habits and sympathies of men: and if we think that the lower classes of

society in England are worse conditioned than they else would have been because of their poor rates —we do truly and conscientiously think, that the collections of Scotland might, though in but a fractional degree, work a degradation both on the comfort and character of the peasantry of our land.

It is cruel first to raise a hope, and then to disappoint it—and there are two expedients by which this cruelty might be done away. The first and most obvious expedient, were to meet the hope by a liberality more adequate to the high pitch at which it is entertained. This has been attempted in England—and we venture to affirm, as the consequence of it, a tenfold amount of unappeased rapacity, and of rancorous dissatisfaction, and of all that distress which arises where the expectation has greatly overshot the fulfilment. The second expedient were utterly to extinguish the hope, by the total abolition of public charity for the relief of indigence. This has not been attempted in Scotland—and there are reasons, both of a prudential and of an absolute character, why we should deem the attempt to be not advisable. But, meanwhile, if the sessional charity of Scotland is to be kept up, it is but honesty to proclaim its utter insignificance in the hearing of all the people. They should be taught that in trusting to it, they only trust to a lying mockery. The way to neutralise the mischief of our parochial dispensations, is by a frank and open exposure of their utter worthlessness—for we know not how a more grievous injury can be done to the poor, than by holding out such a semblance of aid to them as might either reduce,

by ever so little, their own economy, or deaden, by ever so little, the sympathy of their fellows. A full feeling of responsibility to the demands of human want and human suffering should be kept alive among the families of every neighbourhood—and for this purpose ought it to be a matter of broad understanding and notoriety, that there is positively nothing done by any of our Kirk-Sessions which should supersede the care of individuals for themselves or their keepership one for another. The elder who effectually teaches this lesson in his district, does more for the substantial relief of its needy, than by any multiplication whatever of public allowances—and even without one farthing to bestow, may thus be the instrument of a great alleviation to the ills and hardships of poverty. It is a downright fraud upon our population, to keep up the forms of a great public distribution, without letting them know that the fruits of it are so rare and scanty, as to be wholly undeserving of all notice or regard from them. The understanding should go abroad over a whole parish, that none are relieved from their duties. Each Kirk-Session ought to make full demonstration of its own impotency—and better far, that its functions as a public almoner were forthwith to cease, than that in the slightest degree, it should either lull the vigilance of self-preservation, or seduce kinsfolk and neighbours from that post of benevolent guardianship which they else would occupy.

It may startle some of our countrymen to be told, that the sessional charity of Scotland may be deleterious, and certainly is not indispensable to

the well-being, or to the right economy of any of its parishes. The English reader has much greater reason to be startled by the affirmation, that his parish, of a thousand people, with its expenditure for the year of fifteen hundred pounds, might have its public charity reduced to twenty pounds a year, and with infinitely less of clamour and disaffection among its families than there is at this moment. Now, if a parish could survive the shock of a revolution so marvellous, what is the mighty explosion or overthrow that would ensue, if the last remaining fragments of the system were made to disappear? If an English parish could be reduced to the condition of a Scotch one, in respect of its pauperism, then it were but adding one little step more to a wide and gigantic transition, should the Scottish pauperism be altogether swept away. And, when we wonder at the prejudice and incredulity of the South, as to the competency of the former achievement, let it not be forgotten, that this is fully overmatched by the incredulity of our own countrymen, when they protest against the latter achievement as wholly impracticable.

We are unable to comprehend on what principle a charitable expenditure of less than £500 a year, can be deemed essential to the good economy of a parish, with more than 20,000 people—or how the abolition of such an expenditure, would inflict a great and permanent derangement on the state of such a community. A very slight impulse indeed, on the popular feeling and popular habits, would fully balance the loss of so paltry a ministration. And the change in question, would, of itself, create

such an impulse. We believe that a most wholesome reaction would ensue on the cessation of all public charity; and that private charity, then emancipated from delusion, would come forth with a tenfold blessing upon the poor of our land.

In the great majority of our Scottish parishes, all which the administrators of the public charity profess to do, is to "give in aid." They do not hold themselves responsible for the entire subsistence of any of their paupers; they presume in the general, on other resources, without inquiring specifically either into the nature or the amount of them. It says much for the truth of our whole speculation, that in this presumption they are almost never disappointed; and that whether in the kindness of relatives, or the sympathy of neighbours, or the many undefinable shifts and capabilities of the pauper himself, there do cast up to him the items of a maintenance. It is instructive to perceive how small a proportion the monthly allowance of a Kirk-Session must often bear to the whole support of an individual, who yet has no other visible means that can be specified: and the only inference to be made from this is, that the public charity of Scotland has not yet superseded those better operations of care and kindness among families, on which we think that the whole of human indigence might be fearlessly devolved. All that a Kirk-Session generally does is to come forth with a minute and insignificant fraction, as its offering to the cause: and still the question remains, Whether in so doing it does not abridge the supply that cometh from other quarters, more

than it supplements them. We feel no doubt in our minds, that upon the whole, it does so—that there is a state, and a circumstance, and a form about the proceedings of this body, calculated to magnify the hope of its expectants, and of their friends, greatly beyond its power to meet or to gratify the appetite which it may have kindled—that, had it not been for its own little contribution, the whole present aliment of almost all its pensioners, would have been overpassed by the free and undiluted benevolence of nature, more powerfully aided, as it then must have been, by that economy which even the humble pauperism of Scotland has somewhat relaxed, and by that duteous attention among friends and kinsfolk, which it has somewhat superseded. We do not believe that the whole sessional charity of Scotland, in those parishes where assessments are unknown, renders more than a fifth part to the maintenance of all its enrolled paupers. The remaining four-fifths are yielded from other sources, which, if not disturbed, and somewhat enfeebled by the sight of an imposing apparatus of relief, would have more than made good the deficiency which now is not permitted to be thus overtaken. And therefore do we think, that without that show of charity which is held forth by the parochial system of Scotland, but which is not substantiated, the peasantry of our land would, on the strength of their own unseduced habits, have exhibited an aspect of greater comfort, and been in a still higher condition than they now occupy.

But, save for a great purpose, an innovating

hand should not be stretched forth against the institutions and the established practices of a country—and, therefore, would we not plead for the abolition of our Scottish pauperism. We think that its comparatively harmless character entitles it to this toleration; nay, that it is susceptible of such improvements, in the administration of it, as to make it altogether innocent, if not salutary. There is even a way, that we shall explain presently, by which it might be made the organ of unquestionable benefit to the population, and especially in great towns, might be turned to the direct object of elevating both the morality and the scholarship of our land. Yet, however adapted to the good of a country where it has long been established, this is no reason why it should be introduced, with all its peculiarities, into a country where it is still unknown: nor does it follow, that because unwise to put down the existing economy of our Scottish parishes, it should therefore be held forth as a faultless model, or proposed as the best substitute for the present pauperism of England.

We have already said that the first evil of Scottish pauperism was that which attached to all public charity,—its liableness to be over-rated. It is not enough to say that experience will correct this evil. There is a want of arithmetic among the poor, in virtue of which a monthly half-crown, or a quarterly half-guinea sounds far more magnificently in their hearing than either a penny, or three halfpence a day. The daily meal that is sent by a kind neighbour dwindles into a thing of nought when compared with the wholesale allow-

ance which issues either from the city Board or the parochial vestry; and the neighbour himself feels relieved of the obligation that lies upon him, by a spectacle which deceives him as much as it does the object of his sympathy. Rather than this, it were well that the cause of human want should be thrown, an unprotected orphan, on the random charities by which it is every-where encompassed. But if this may not be, let all such public charity as ours be preceded by the herald of its insignificance. Let each elder make open demonstration of its nullity to the people under his charge; and that, both to keep alive, as far as may be, the self-dependence of the poor, and to keep alive, among all who have aught to give, an unabated sympathy with the needs and the sufferings of our species.

When accompanied by such a corrective as this, the parochial charity of Scotland may be disarmed of all its mischief, and even be transformed into an instrument for raising and purifying still more the economic habits of her people. It brings the lowest of them into frequent and familiar converse with men, so far elevated above the common mass of society, as to have been intrusted with the duties of an office that is both sacred in its nature, and implies a certain superintendance over the concerns and the character of families. Let him who fills this office be at once both worthy and enlightened; and by every act of intercourse may he bring a distinct good even upon the secondary habits of the population. Even an application for sessional relief might be so improved, and so turned by him. He might evince to their satisfaction the arithmetic

of its worthlessness. He might remonstrate with them on the folly of making so great and humiliating a descent, for so paltry a compensation. He might go round with this argument among all the relatives, and draw from them a liberality and an aid that would put parish charity to shame, and bring it down to its right place in the popular estimation. Such an elder as this may at once heighten the delicacies of the poor, and quicken the sympathies of the beneficent in his district; and the blessing that he might thus confer upon the families, can only be equalled by the mischief that would ensue, were he to share with them in the delusion, that the charity of a Kirk-Session was the grand specific for human want, and make use of it accordingly. If the blind lead the blind, there will be unavoidable degradation. But when, instead of this, the whole truth and principle of the matter are completely unfolded; and the fair and friendly conference is often entered upon; and the duty is fearlessly pointed out, both that the poor man ought to economise, and that friends and relatives ought to feel for him,—then it is wonderful how soon a kind and common understanding may come to be established between the elder who so expatiates over his territory, and the people who occupy it. Every thing can be made of them when they are dealt with frankly and rationally. No truth needs to be kept up from them, and there is nothing to fear from the announcement, in their hearing, of whatever has its own sense, and its own moral justness to recommend it. And, more particularly, let the revenue of the Session be only

made to take a sound direction—let it be appropriated to some object that is at once popular and salutary—let it be allocated to the endowment of schools, or to a full provision for the unforeseen impotency, whether of body or of mind, wherewith Nature marks off a given number of unfortunates, in every neighbourhood, for the unqualified tenderness of all their fellows—let it be made palpable as day, that every one whom the hand of Providence hath smitten with blindness, or derangement, or some such special infirmity as hath made him through life the child of helplessness, is cherished and upheld to the uttermost—and let the elder be enabled to go forth among his people with the argument, that by the forbearance of their demands, they allow a more copious descent of liberality on families more abject than their own; and we despair not, at length, of a full concurrence, on their part, in that system by which indigence is left to the compassions of private benevolence, and unforeknown impotency alone is left to the care of benevolent institutions.

But there is another evil of more recent origin in Scottish pauperism, and which is a serious obstacle in the way of a good practical understanding between the managers of a parish and its population—and that is, the imagination of a legal right which a poor man has to subsistence from the hands of the Kirk-Session. This is a new spirit among our countrymen; but it is growing apace in all those districts where assessments have been introduced, and the effect is just what may have been anticipated. There is not one of those princi-

ples in our nature, which if left to their own unfettered operation, would have wrought the best and the kindliest distribution of relief, that this hard and heterogeneous legality does not counteract. For it gives a tenfold edge to the rapacity of expectants—and it arms, with a kind of defensive jealousy and rigour, the hearts of the administrators against them—and it displaces from what would else have been a business of charity, all the feelings, and all the characteristics of charity—and it associates the complacency of justice, and of a conscious right, with that neglect, on the part of relatives and neighbours, of which they would have otherwise been ashamed—and so, the elder who goes forth upon his territory, the conceived object of responsibility and of prosecution for all the distress that may be found in it, is not in such circumstances for a pleasing and a prosperous management, as if, delivered from the obligations of Law, he went forth on the footing of spontaneous philanthropy. In the one way of it, friends are apt to do little, that they may leave the largest possible space for the attentions of the elder. In the other way of it, a very small attention from the elder would be so seconded by the charity of popular benevolence, that however large the space he might leave to be filled up, it were sure to be overtaken. An elder with the legal means of a Kirk-Session in his hand, but at the same time, under the weight of its legal obligations, is not in so fit a condition for being the benefactor of his district, as if, without either the means or the obligations that now attach to his office, he went with nought

but the visits, and the inquiries, and the recommendations of Christian kindness among its families. The people make common cause against the man on whom they fancy that the needy have a claim; and they make common cause with the man from whom the needy obtain a sympathy and an aid that are altogether gratuitous. The pauperism of Scotland has done somewhat to thwart the operation of this principle; and we think that it has locked up more of private benevolence through the land, than it has replaced by its own distributions.

It is on this account that we have often looked both with admiration and envy to the method of public charity that obtains among many of our Scottish dissenters. The produce of their weekly collections, or at least part of it, is often distributed among the poor of their own congregations, and who, at the same time, sustain a character that makes them admissible to Christian ordinances. There is nought of legality whatever in this administration, and much, we are persuaded, of the precious feeling both of sympathy and gratitude still adheres to it. We should deem it a mighty improvement in our pauperism, were this practice tolerated by our courts of Law in the congregations of the establishment; and were a Kirk-Session held to acquit itself of all its obligations to the poor, by simply alimenting those poor who were the members of its own church. We should have no fear, under this arrangement of things, for the outfield population, who, in many of our country parishes, bear no sensible proportion to the whole, though,

in great towns, they form the vast majority of our lower orders. Yet such is our confidence in those native forces of sympathy and of self-preservation, that we have so oft insisted on, as to believe of our general poor that a surer comfort and sufficiency would accrue to them, were they dissevered from sessional relief altogether. Not that we recommend the abolition of our present territorial superintendance by elders, whose office it is to render the attentions, and to exemplify the virtues of Christianity among the people of their assigned charge. But sure we are, that even as the benefactors of the poor, they would be translated into tenfold efficiency did they cease to be the objects of any legal demand or legal expectation; and they would speedily demonstrate, both by the more quiescent state of their districts, and the actually better economy which obtained among their families, that neither a public fund by assessment, nor a public fund by collections for the relief of indigence, was indispensable, or even added to the well-being of any population.

It is conceivable of some one parochial domain in Scotland, that within its limits the law of pauperism had ceased to be in force—that the people there had been thrown beyond the pale, or the fancied protection of this law—that, unlike to the consecrated ground on which no debtor could be legally apprehended, it was a kind of outcast or proscribed territory on which no poor man could legally demand one morsel of aliment to keep him from famishing. Let it comprise some thousands of our operative and city population, and be with-

out more of recognition from the upper classes of society, than the ordinary apparatus of a church, and a minister, and an eldership would naturally attach to it. We affirm, from all that we have seen or learned of the internal structure of every such community, that its ecclesiastical office-bearers are in better circumstances for upholding a well-served, and a well-satisfied parish, without the law of pauperism, than with that law. Every movement of benevolence that was made by them to a poor family, would call out a tenfold power of co-operation from the surrounding observers. The effect of such an arrangement on the hopes, and habits, and sympathies of the people, would just be less of actual necessity among them; and that necessity, when it did occur, more promptly and abundantly met by a busier operation of internal charity than before. It would thus become clear as day, that Law had acted as a drag on the liberalities of our nature; and that, on the removal of this drag, these liberalities had found their own surer and speedier way among the families of the destitute. Law has wrought a twofold mischief. It has both whetted the appetency for relief, and stinted the supplies of it. The abolition of the law of pauperism would curtail this misery at both ends. That the starvation of a single individual would ever arise from such a state of things, we affirm to be a moral impossibility; but, as a certain result of it, would we at length be landed in a more peaceful and prosperous community than before.

Were such an experiment tried, and did such a result come out of it, it would be held by many as

decisive of the truth of our speculation. But, on a little reflection, they will perceive, that the experiments which have actually been made, though not so striking, are still more decisive. In truth, the state of every unassessed parish in Scotland may be regarded as a distinct evidence against the need of any public charity for indigence. The whole expenditure, in many of them, does not amount to twenty pounds sterling, in the year, for each thousand of the population—a mere show of relief, that might well have been dispensed with, as more fitted to impede the charity of nature than to supplement it; and that a parish should be upheld under such an economy, is proof in itself, that it could have been as well, if not better upholden, without any artificial economy at all. The result of a well-satisfied parish is not in consequence of the sessional revenue, but in spite of it; and this holds eminently true both of Gorbals, and of the retracing parishes in Glasgow, where the management is conducted under the heavy disadvantage of a population tinctured, in some degree, with the legal imaginations of England. It were an easier management far, to have both the revenue of the one party, and the right of the other, utterly swept away; and sure we are, that with such an arrangement, there would be less than now of actual and unrelieved want in our parishes. In a word, our sessional apparatus, with all the hopes and desires that it carries in its train, is to be regarded, not in the light of a facility, but of an obstruction; and that we have succeeded therewith, in warding off a compulsory provision, is a more impressive de-

monstration still of the native capability which there is among a people to supersede pauperism, than if, without one farthing of public expenditure, we had arrived at the same result with a people that urged no claim, and felt no expectation.

We are quite aware, at the same time, of the strength of our Scottish predilections on the side of a Sabbath offering. The removal of the plates from the church-doors would be felt as a sore desecration, both by many of our priests, and by many of our people. And, deeming as we do, that it is in the power of a good administration, very much to neutralise the mischief that is inherent in this as in all other public charity; and that, even with certain precautions which we are to enter upon, it is convertible into an instrument of great positive benefit to all our parishes, we, among others, should regret the abolition of it. What has been found so innocent in practice might well be tolerated in a country where it has been long established, even notwithstanding its unsoundness in principle. So that were it the only question, What is best to be done with pauperism in Scotland?—we should incline to its remaining as it is, in all those parishes where assessments are unknown: and only setting up an impassable barrier between the gratuitous and the compulsory systems of public charity, we should restrain its perpetual tendency to merge, as it has done throughout our border counties, into English pauperism. And we should be further satisfied that in those latter parishes, by the methods which we have already explained, the minister and elders were to take

their direction back again to the good old way of their forefathers. But though it were wrong to offer pain or disturbance to the old and confirmed associations of one country, that is no reason why, in another country, free from these associations, there should be the blind unvarying adoption of a system that is at all exceptionable; or that, on the question, What is best to be done with the pauperism of England? any deliverance should be given that is not conformable, at all points, to the sound and universal principles of our nature.

But ere we pass on to this momentous and interesting part of our argument, let us advert to a few of those leading principles, on which, we hold it a practicable thing, to perfect the administration of our Scottish pauperism.

And, first, we think that a great moral good would ensue, and without violence done to humanity, were the Kirk-Session forthwith to put a negative on all those demands that have their direct and visible origin in profligacy of character. We allude more particularly to the cases of illegitimate children, and of runaway parents. It should ever rank among those decent proprieties of an ecclesiastical court, which can, on no account, be infringed, that it shall do nothing which might extend a countenance, or give a security to wickedness. In the case of exposed infants, a necessity may be laid upon it. But sure we are, that generally, and without outrage to any of our sympathies, the criminal parties may be safely left to the whole weight of a visitation that is at once the consequence and the corrective of their own

transgression. We know not a more pitiable condition than that of a female who is at once degraded and deserted; but many are the reasons why it should be altogether devolved on the secret and unobserved pity which it is so well fitted to inspire. And we know not a more striking exhibition of the power of those sympathies, that we have so often quoted as being adequate, in themselves, to all the emergencies of human suffering, than the unfailing aid, and service, and supply, wherewith even the child-bed of guilt is sure to be surrounded. It is a better state of things when, instead of the loud and impudent demand that is sometimes lifted upon such occasions, the sufferer is left to a dependence upon her own kinsfolk, and neighbours, and to the strong moral corrective that lies in their very kindness towards her. We think, that if every instance of a necessity which has been thus created, were understood to lie without the pale of the sessional administration, and to be solely a draught on the liberalities of the benevolent, we both think that these liberalities would guarantee a subsistence to all who were concerned, and that, at the same time, in a more intense popular odium, there would arise a defensive barrier against that licentiousness which the institutions of our sister country have done so much to foster and to patronise. It must shed a grievous blight over the delicacies of a land, when the shameless prostitute is invested with a right, because of the very misdeeds which ought to have humbled and abashed her—when she can plead her own disgrace as the argument for being listened to, and, on the strength

of it, compel the jurisdictions of the country to do homage to her claim—when crime is thus made the passport to legal privileges, and the native unloveliness of vice is somewhat glossed and overborne, by the public recognition which has been thus so unwisely extended to it.

In the case of a family that has been abandoned by its regardless and unnatural father, and where there is no suspected collusion between the parents, there is pity unmingled with reproach to the helpless sufferers. And our whole experience assures us, that this pity would be available to a far larger, and more important aid, than is rendered, on such occasions, by any of the public charities in Scotland. The interference of the Kirk-Session has the effect of contracting the supplies within the limits of its own rigid allowance; and better even for the members of the deserted household, that they had been suffered, each to merge into such an asylum of protection and kindness as the neighbourhood would have spontaneously afforded. But better still—there would, under such a regimen as this, be fewer instances of abandonment. The man who, without remorse, could leave his offspring to the charge of a public body, and a burden on a public fund, would need to have still more of the desperado in his heart, ere he could leave them at random to the care of his old familiars in society. To the honour of our nature, there is a moral certainty in this latter case, that there will be no starvation; but the sympathy of individuals will not be so often put to the trial of such a runaway experiment, as would the care and responsibility of

a Kirk-Session. And better, surely, that such an occurrence as this should be placed in the list of those casualties for which no legal provision has been made, than that any thing in the institutions of our country should tend to slacken or to supersede the ties of relationship. In a community that had not been thrown into derangement by pauperism, the desertion of a family would be as rare and appalling a visitation, as the destruction of their all by fire; and, like it too, would call forth as prompt and productive a sympathy from neighbours, while the indignation felt by all at the calamitous event, in which all had been made to take an interest, would strengthen the popular habit the more on the side of all the relative and family obligations.

It might appear to many a harsh and unfeeling suggestion, thus to withdraw the hand of public charity either from illegitimate or deserted children. We are satisfied that both human crime and human suffering would be greatly abridged by it—that, in the first instance, a much smaller number of these unfortunates would fall to be provided for—and that, in the second instance, there would come forth, from some quarter or other, an actual sustenance to all. Such is the result which we would most confidently anticipate, and it would most strikingly demonstrate the alertness of individual benevolence, when no artificial economy stood in its way.

But, secondly, if that indigence which is the effect of crime might be confined to the charities of private life, we may be very sure that the indigence

which is not associated with crime will be largely and liberally met by these charities. In the absence of all legal provision there would be greatly less of this indigence, and greatly more of this liberality ; but as there does exist a legal provision, then is it the part of him who is intrusted with the dispensation of it, so to manage, as that the one shall be prevented, and the other shall be promoted to the uttermost. For this purpose he should ever ply the lesson among his people, that the charity of a Kirk-Session is the last resort which should come in the train of every other lawful expedient—that it is the duty of all to ward off the necessity of this humiliation from the poor brother who is just standing upon the verge of it —that, in this cause, it is the duty of the applicant himself to put forth all his powers of economy and labour, and the duty of his relatives to minister to his need, and the duty of his neighbours to interpose, and, if possible, to save him from the parish : and lest the minister or the elder who so expatiates should appear to be one of those who would lay burdens on the shoulders of other men, which he himself will not touch with one of his fingers, it is his duty to exemplify all that he thus strenuously recommends. It is not known at how cheap a rate the demand from whole thousands of a city population could thus be disposed of, or how soon, by this culture of honesty and frankness, their families could be weaned from all desire, and all dependence upon public charity.

And we have only to add, on this part of the subject, that while such a state of things would

naturally, and of itself, bring on a far closer interchange of kindness between the higher and lower classes, this, however desirable for its own sake, is not indispensable for the sake of filling up the vacancies that might be created by the withdrawments of public charity. It is the unquestionable duty, and ought, at all times, to be the delight of the rich, fairly to meet with poverty, and to investigate and to bestow. One of our chief arguments for re-committing the business of alms to a natural economy, is, that the wealthy and the poor would thereby come more frequently into contact, and that would be made to issue upon the destitute, from the play of human feelings, which is now extorted without good-will on the one side, or gratitude on the other, by the authority of human law. It were an incalculable good, if, in this way, the breath of a milder and happier spirit could be infused into society: But, arithmetically, it is not true, that the free-will offerings of the rich are essential as a succedaneum to the allowances of pauperism—or, that, unless the former to some given extent, can surely be reckoned upon, the latter must, to a certain extent, continue to be upholden. The practical result that would come out from the cessation of all public charity, were, in the first instance, a very great abridgment of expectation or demand on the part of the applicants—and, secondly, while the personal attentions and liberalities of the rich would be multiplied in consequence, on those poor, who shall be with us always; yet, confident we are, that even in the most plebeian of our city parishes, these poor

would, in the stimulated kindness of relatives and neighbours, meet with far their most effectual redress, and by far their fittest and readiest compensation.

But, thirdly, there is a class of necessities in the relief of which public charity is not at all deleterious, and which she might safely be left to single out and to support, both as liberally and as ostensibly as she may. We allude to all those varieties, whether of mental or of bodily disease, for which it is a wise and salutary thing to rear a public institution. We hold it neither wise nor salutary to have any such asylum for the impotency that springeth from age; for this is not an unforeseen exigency, but one, that, in the vast majority of instances, could have been provided for by the care of the individual. And neither is it an exigency that is destitute of all resource in the claims and obligations of nature, for what more express, or more clearly imperative, than the duty of children? A systematic provision for age in any land, is tantamount to a systematic hostility against its virtues, both of prudence and of natural piety. But there are other infirmities and other visitations, to which our nature is liable, and a provision for which stands clearly apart from all that is exceptionable. We refer not to those current household diseases, which are incidental, on the average, to every family, but to those more special inflictions of distress, by which in one or more of its members, a family is sometimes set apart and signalized. A child who is blind, or speechless, or sunk in helpless idiotism, puts into this condition, the family

to which it belongs. No mischief whatever can accrue from every such case being fully met and provided for—and it were the best vindication of a Kirk-Session, for the spareness of its allowances, on all those occasions where the idle might work, or kinsfolk might interpose, that it gives succour to the uttermost of its means, in all those fatalities of nature, which no prudence could avert, and which being not chargeable as a fault, ought neither to be chargeable as an expense, on any poor and struggling family.

It may be at once seen, wherein lies the distinction between the necessities of signal and irremediable disease, and those merely of general indigence. A provision, however conspicuous, for the former, will not add one instance of distress more to the already existing catalogue. A provision for the latter, if regular and proclaimed, will furthermore be counted on—and so be sure to multiply its own objects, to create, in fact, more of general want than it supplies. To qualify for the first kind of relief, one must be blind, or deaf, or lunatic, or maimed, which no man is wilfully—so that this walk of charity can be overtaken, and without any corrupt influence on those who are sustained by it. To qualify for the second kind of relief, one has only to be poor, which many become wilfully, and always too in numbers which exceed the promise and the power of public charity to uphold them—so that this walk can not only never be overtaken, but, by every step of advancement upon it, it stretches forth to a more hopeless distance than before, and is also more crowded with the thriftless, and the

beggarly, and the immoral. The former cases are put into our hand by nature in a certain definite amount—and she has farther, established in the human constitution such a recoil from pain, or from the extinction of any of the senses, as to form a sure guarantee against the multiplication of them. The latter cases are put into our hands by man, and his native love of indolence or dissipation becomes a spontaneous and most productive fountain of poverty, in every land where public charity has interposed to disarm it of its terrors. It is thus, that while pauperism has most egregiously failed to provide an asylum, in which to harbour all the indigence of a country, there is no such impossibility in the attempt to harbour derangement, or special impotency and disease. The one enterprise must ever fall short of its design, and, at the same time, carry a moral deterioration in its train. The other may fulfil its design to the uttermost, and without the alloy of a single evil that either patriot or economist can fear.

The doings of our Saviour in the world, after he entered on his career as a minister, had in them much of the eclat of public charity. Had he put his miraculous power of feeding into full operation, it would have thrown the people loose from all regular habits, and spread riot and disorder over the face of the land. But there was no such drawback to his miraculous power of healing. And we think it both marks the profoundness of his wisdom, and might serve to guide the institutions and the schemes of philanthropy, that while we read of but two occasions on which he multi-

plied loaves for a people who had been overtaken with hunger, and one on which he refused the miracle to a people who crowded about him for the purpose of being fed, he laid no limitation whatever on his supernatural faculties, when they followed him for the purpose of being cured. But it is recorded of him again and again, that when the halt, and the withered, and the blind, and the impotent, and those afflicted with divers diseases, were brought unto him, he looked to them, and he had compassion on them, and he healed them all.

This then is one safe and salutary absorbent for the revenue of a Kirk-Session. The dumb and the blind, and the insane of a parish, may be freely alimented therewith, to the great relief of those few families who have thus been specially afflicted. Such a destination of the fund could excite no beggarly spirit in other families, which, wanting the peculiar claim, would feel that they had no part or interest in the peculiar compassion. There is vast comfort in every walk of philanthropy, where a distinct and definite good is to be accomplished, and whereof, at a certain given expense, we are sure to reach the consummation. Now, this is a comfort attendant on that separate direction of the poor's money which we have now recommended—but the main advantage that we should count upon, is its wholesome effect on the general administration and state of pauperism. The more systematically and ostensibly that the parochial managers proceeded on the distinction between special impotency and general indigence, the more, at length, would the applicants on the latter plea,

give way to the applicants on the former. The manifest superiority of the first claim to the second, would go at once to the hearts of the people; and mere indigence would be taught, that in the moderation of her demands, there was a high service of humanity rendered to still more abject helplessness than her own. The Sabbath offering might gradually come to be regarded as a sort of consecrated treasure, set apart for those whom Providence had set apart from the rest of the species. Nor would indigence suffer from this rejection of her claims by public charity. She would only be thrown back on the better resources that await her in the amenities and kindnesses of private life. And it is thus that a great positive good might be rendered out of the parochial administration, to one class of sufferers, while both the delicacies of the general poor, and the sympathies of that individual benevolence on which all their wants might safely be devolved, would be fully upholden.

We are quite confident that such a direction of the sessional means, if steadily persevered in, would at length carry the acquiescence both of the popular habits and the popular approbation. And if followed out, it might lead, and more especially in city parishes, to a most beneficial economy. There would be no harm in stimulating the liberality of a congregation for the support of a parish surgeon, who might be at the free command of the families. There would be no harm in thus supporting a dispensary for good medicines, or in purchasing an indefinite right of admittance to an hospital for disease. We specify these objects chiefly in order

to demonstrate, how, without taking down the apparatus of Scottish pauperism, it might still be made subservient to blessings of a very high and unquestionable character, and without any of that injurious taint which ordinary pauperism is seen to bring along with it, on the spirit and independence of a population.

There are many other absorbents which might be devised for the surplus of the sessional income, that would be salutary as well as safe—and thus all public charity might in time be diverted away from the relief of mere indigence. We should count, as the effect of this, on a great abatement of all the sufferings of poverty, because, instead of being thereby abandoned, it would only be transferred to the guardianship of a far better and more effective humanity. And we should have pleasure in stimulating the liberality of a congregation, when turned to a purpose that did not hazard the moral deterioration of the people. There is something ticklish and questionable in every dispensation under which a public distribution of alms is held out to the necessitous—and the perpetual tendency of our Scottish to pass at length into English pauperism, as has been abundantly manifested, both in our large towns and border parishes, is in itself a proof that somewhat of that unsoundness may be detected in the former, which has come forth so palpably upon the latter. To make the practice of the one country a model for the other, would be to commit back again the pauperism of England to that whence it might germinate anew, and so add one failure more to the many experiments which

have been devised for its reformation. And yet the parochial charity of our land need not be extirpated. It is in the power of a wise and wholesome administration, to impress upon it a high moral subserviency—to turn it, for example, to the endowment of schools, or the establishment of parish libraries, or the rearing of chapels for an unprovided population; who, by one and the same process, could have their moral wants supplied, and be weaned from all that sordid dependence on charity, by which their physical wants have not been abridged, but rather aggravated, both in their frequency and in their soreness.

CHAPTER XIV.

On the likeliest Means for the Abolition of Pauperism in England.

It might be thought, that, as a preliminary to our views of English pauperism, we should again expound those principles of our nature on which we mainly rest the solution of this much-agitated problem; and in virtue of which, we deem it not only safe, but salutary, to do away all legal charity for the relief of indigence. But this is a topic on which we, by this time, have amplified enough in the course of our argument;* nor could we again recur to it, without laying upon our reader the

* See Chap. x. Vol. xiv. pp. 399—411.

burden and the annoyance of a reiteration, into which we fear that our anxiety for the clearest possible elucidation has already too often betrayed us.

But we not only forbear a recapitulation of those principles on which we rely for the eventual cure of English pauperism; we shall, furthermore, be studious of the utmost possible brevity in our narrative of facts, when adverting to the present and the actual condition of it. More particularly, shall we abstain from the unnecessary multiplication of instances, in proof of such affirmations as are abundantly certain, and familiar to all who take any interest in the subject. This is a question on which we feel that we are addressing a conscious public, who need not to be awakened as to the existence of the evil, or made more intelligent than they already are, as to its leading modifications. It were a vain and idle parade to come forth with a copious induction of parishes, with a view to demonstrate the reality of any practice, or the flagrancy of any abuse, that is of undisputed notoriety in all parishes. There are many occasions on which there is a sort of common and recognized ground between the author and his readers—when much may be affirmed without proof, on the one side, because instantly responded to by a prior and independent knowledge, upon the other. It is of no use to overload with evidence, where there is already a settled and experimental conviction. This supersedes much of that detail on which it had else been necessary to enter; but with this reservation, that there are many facts so replete with inference, or in them-

selves, so characteristic, that, by a minute and circumstantial exhibition of them, we take the most effectual method both to prove and to picture forth the evils of the system, and the process by which it may be rectified.

And it is not the heavy expense of it* that we hold to be the main evil of English pauperism. We should reckon it a cheap purchase, if, for the annual six or eight millions of poor rate, we could secure thereby the comfort and character of the English population. But we desire the abolition of legal charity, because we honestly believe, that it has abridged the one, and most wofully deteriorated the other. Under its misplaced and officious care, the poor man has ceased to care for himself, and relatives have ceased to care for each other; and thus the best arrangements of Nature and Providence for the moral discipline of society, have been most grievously frustrated. Life is no longer a school, where, by the fear and foresight of want, man might be chastened into sobriety—or, where he might be touched into sympathy by that helplessness of kinsfolk and neighbours, which but for the thwarting interference of law, he would have spontaneously provided for. The man stands released from the office of being his own protector, or the protector of his own household—and this has rifled him of all those virtues which are best fitted to guard and dignify his condition. That pauperism, the object of which was to emancipate

* The whole money expended for the maintenance of the poor in England and Wales, on the year ending 25th March, 1821, was £6,958,445 2s.

him from distress, has failed in this, and only emancipated him from duty. An utter recklessness of habit, with the profligacy, and the mutual abandonment of parents and children, to which it leads, threatens a speedy dissolution to the social and domestic economy of England. And instead of working any kindly amalgamation between the higher and lower classes of the land, the whole effect of the system is to create a tremendous chasm between them, across which the two parties look to each other with all the fierceness and suspicion of natural enemies—the former feeling, as if preyed upon by a rapacity that is altogether interminable; the latter feeling as if stinted of their rights by men whose hands nothing but legal necessity will unlock, and whose hearts are devoid of tenderness.

This is not the doing of Nature, nor could it have so turned out, had not Nature been put into a state of violence. So soon as the violence is removed, Nature will return to her own processes —and a parish in England will then exhibit, what many of the parishes in Scotland do at this moment, a population where there is neither dissatisfaction nor unrelieved want, and yet, with little of public charity. All that is required, is simply to do away that artificial stress which the hand of legislation has laid upon the body politic—and a healthful state of things will come of itself, barely on those disturbing forces being withdrawn, wherewith the law of pauperism has deranged the condition of English society. It is just as if some diseased excrescence had gathered upon the human frame, that stood connected with the use of

some palatable but pernicious liquor, to which the patient was addicted. All that the physician has to do in this case, is to interdict the liquor, when without further care or guardianship on his part, the excrescence will subside; and from the *vis medicatrix* alone, that is inherent in the patient's constitution, will health be restored to him. It is even so with that disease which pauperism has brought on the community of England. It is a disease originally formed, and still alimented by the law which gives access to a compulsory provision—and precisely so soon as that access is barred, there is a *vis medicatrix* that will then be free to operate, and which, without any anxious guardianship on the part of politicians or statesmen, will, of itself, bring round a better and happier state of the commonwealth. There might an unnecessary shock be given by too sudden a change of regimen. There might be an inconvenient rapidity of transition, which had as well be avoided, by wise and wary management. This consideration affects the question of policy as to the most advisable mode of carrying the cure into effect. But it does not affect the question of principle, either as to the cause of the disease, or as to the certainty of a good and wholesome result when that cause is done away. It is very true, that by a summary abolition of the law of pauperism, a sore mischief may be inflicted upon society—and yet it may be equally true, both that the alone remedy for the present distempered state of the lower orders, lies in the abolition of this law, and also, that there do exist, throughout the mass of

English society, the ingredients or component principles of such a *vis medicatrix*, as would greatly alleviate the present wretchedness, and more than replace all those dispensations of legal charity which would then have terminated.

And surely it cannot be questioned, that all those principles of our Nature, which taken together, make out the *vis medicatrix*, are just as firmly seated, and would in fit and favourable circumstances, be of as unfailing operation in England, as in any other country on the face of the earth. There is much, no doubt, in its present system of legal charity, to counteract and disguise them. Yet even under this pressure, they are still to be detected in manifest operation. And they only need to be delivered from that artificial weight wherewith they now are overborne, in order that they may break forth, and be prolific of a most abundant compensation to families, when the supplies of pauperism are withdrawn from them.

For first, what malignant charm can there be in the air or in the geography of England, which should lead us to conceive of its people, that they are exempt from that most urgent principle of our nature —the law of self-preservation. There is certainly much in its public charity, that is fitted to traverse this law. Yet still, and in the face of this counteraction, manifold traces are to be found, even among the labouring classes, of a prudent and prospective regard to their own interests. These it is the undisputed tendency of pauperism to extinguish; and, therefore, any remainder of a prudential habit which may yet be observable, form so much the

more decisive proof, that Englishmen are originally and constitutionally alike unto their other brethren of the species in this great characteristic of humanity. And, accordingly, in spite of their pauperism, and of its efficacy to lull them into a careless improvidence, do we find that the prudential virtues, even of the lower orders, are enfeebled only, and not destroyed. The Saving Banks, and Benefit Societies, which are to be met with in almost every district of the kingdom, are strong ostensible indications of a right and reflecting selfishness, which, if only kept on the alert, and unseduced from its own objects, by the promise and the allurement of public charity, would do more for the comfort of our peasantry than all the offerings of parochial and private benevolence put together. There is nought that would more revive or re-invigorate the impulse to accumulation than the abolition of the law of pauperism. Saving Banks would be multiplied ;* and this, though the most palpable, would

* It must be admitted, however, that there is something delusive in the returns made by Saving Banks, and that they may lead us to infer a much greater degree of an economic habit among the people than actually obtains. A very large proportion indeed of the deposits is made by household servants, and by contributors in easy circumstances. It were most desirable, that operatives could find their way in greater numbers to these institutions. Could they merely afford to slacken their work in a season of depressed wages, or to cease from working altogether, the overstocked markets would be far more speedily cleared away, and the remuneration for labour would again come back to its wonted or natural level.

The operation of public charity, in lessening the deposits, must be quite obvious. The following anecdote illustrates this. To prove it is not necessary. A poor woman at Clapham, near London, whose daughter had begun to put into the Saving Bank, said to her, " Why, how foolish you are ! It is all a contrivance of the rich to save their own pockets. You had much better

not be the only fruit of that sure and speedy resurrection that should then take place of an econo-

enjoy your own money, and when you want, they will take care of you." The daughter *did* withdraw from the Saving Bank. My friend Mr Dealtry, who is rector of the parish, and from whom I obtained this information, adds, that the woman's remark did not apply so directly to the poor rates, as to a charitable fund, which was first raised by contribution, and then distributed in charity. But the principle is the same.

There is, perhaps, no parochial history in England that more demonstrates the inefficacy of poor rates, or that would better demonstrate the efficacy of an economic habit among the people themselves, than that of Darlaston, in Staffordshire. Its population in 1821, was 5585; and of its thousand and eighty families, one thousand and sixty were employed in trade, handicraft and manufactures. Comprehending only about 800 acres of land, it has almost no agricultural resources. So that the rate falls almost entirely on those householders who are not paupers themselves. The chief occupation of the people was mining, and the filing of gun locks, which latter employment failed them at the termination of the war. The distress began to be felt in 1816, at which time the poor rate amounted to £2086 15s. 7d. It was now, that the resources of a compulsory provision arrived at its limit—for the continued occupation of the land would have ceased to be an object, had the holders of property been compelled to provide for the whole emergency. All would have been swallowed up had the distress continued; and the householders who were liable to the rate, would, on a farther augmentation of it, have done what is often done in the heavily assessed parishes of England—they would have made their escape to a residence in some near parishes, that were less burdened. So that the grand legal expedient of England, was, in this instance, tried to the uttermost, and its shortcomings had just to be made up by methods that would be far more productive, as well as far less needful, were there no poor rate, and no law of charity whatever. Mr Lowe, the humane and enlightened rector of this parish, succeeded, by great exertion, in raising the sum of £1278 14s. 8d. from the benevolent, in various parts of the country; besides which, there was the sum of £1157 10s. contributed by a society that was formed, we believe, in London, to provide for the extra distress of that period. In all there was distributed among the poor in 1816–17, the sum of £4523 3s. The parish workhouse was quite filled with them. Its rooms were littered down for the reception of as many as could be squeezed together. Some were employed at work upon the roads—and in the distributions that took place of soup, and potatoes, and herrings, the gates

mic habit among the people. There would, in the privacies of domestic life, be other effects be-

were literally borne off their hinges, by the pressure of the starving multitude. At length, after an interval of months, there was a return of demand for work. One American trade sprung up for another that had failed. A large East India order gave a great impulse on the occasion, and the idle hands were gradually absorbed into other employments.

Now it would appear from this narrative first, that the poor rate did not supersede the need of application to the benevolent, of whom, we may be assured, that on the abolition of legal charity, they would be still more prompt, and with ampler means too, on every case of emergency. But, secondly, and what is far more interesting, there is every reason to believe, that the total distress without a poor rate, would fall short in its amount of the surplus distress with a poor rate. The truth is, and to this we have the distinct testimony of Mr Lowe, that it lay within the means of the people in good times, to have saved as much as would have weathered the whole distress. The prosperity of the place, was, in one respect, the ruin of it—and there is every reason to apprehend that the dissipation and improvidence which our public charities do so much to foster, make the same people who are insolent in the season of affluence, proportionably wretched and abject in the season of adversity. Mr Lowe, whose judicious insight into all that can affect the economic condition of his people, is only equalled by his unwearied labours for their spiritual well-being, writes thus: "That previous savings might have enabled our manufacturing poor to meet the distress of 1816–17, I feel confident, from many who have been thus carried through it, and risen above it, who, a few years before, were in no better, nay, even in worse circumstances than others, who were completely overwhelmed by it. For example, our present overseer is actually administering relief, even in the workhouse, to some once in better circumstances, but less provident than himself. On this account, I have been anxious to make my people acquainted with the benefits of Saving Banks, against which so strong a prejudice prevails, especially among their masters, that I have to travel more than ten miles with the little I can induce them to deposit there. And I much fear, it will not be until they have been some time established in the *midst* of us, that any extensive good will be done by them."

What an antagonist is a poor rate to this philanthropic scheme for the comfort and independence of the lower orders! We shall attempt, in a future chapter, to point out its depressing effect on the wages of labour, and the opposite effect of an acquired capital among workmen, permanently to elevate their

yond the reach of sight or of computation. A thousand shifts and salutary practices would come

condition, by upholding the remuneration of industry at a higher, or, at least, more uniform level. We believe, that this result is not only viewed without dismay, but would be hailed by our more enlightened masters and capitalists, as a state of things most favourable to the interests of both parties. The jealousy which the latter have of Saving Banks, is rare and occasional, and very much confined to manufacturers of low education, and limited capitals. It is to be hoped that, among these conflicts and varieties of sentiment, the working classes will, at length, attain to a clear discernment of the truth; and come to understand that they who advocate the overthrow of legal charity, and the fearless commitment of human indigence to the resources and the sympathies of individuals, are indeed their best friends.

I may here add, that in the accounts which I obtained of various Saving Banks, by inquiring on the spot, I found that the habit of depositing was more with servants, and people in easy circumstances, than with labourers; in Worcester, Gloucester, Clapham, St Giles, and St George in London, Bury St Edmunds, and Sheffield—that there were also very few deposits by the latter in Westham, Essex; or in Playford, Suffolk; or in Acton; or in Turvey, Bedfordshire; or in Bedlington, Northumberland—and that the most cheering statements on this subject were made at Portsmouth, Gosport, Spitalfields, Whitechapel in London, Coggeshall in Essex, Nottingham, Hull, and Leeds.

This, we admit, to be a very limited induction; yet a sound experimental impression may be arrived at on this subject, from the average of a few cases, taken at random, in distant parts of the country, and from neighbourhoods which exhibit the widest possible dissimilarity in the pursuits and circumstances of the people.

My friend Mr Hale, of Spitalfields, who is well known in parliament for his vigilant and sagacious observation of the habits of the poor, has frequently affirmed, of those who have once been paupers, and been restored again to a state of sufficiency, in better times, that they almost never deposit in a Saving Bank.

We are apt to be carried away by too magnificent a conception of the good that has been done through the Saving Banks, when we read of the very large sums that have been deposited. In Worcester, for example, the total amount of deposits in June, 1822, during the four preceding years, was £84,279 8s. 4½d.; but then the number of depositors was only 2184, and of these there were not many mechanics, but principally servants, minors, and those of small limited capital.

Still, however, it cannot be doubted, that when a process for

in place of the dispensations of pauperism. There would soon be a visible abatement in the profli-

the extinction of its pauperism shall have been instituted in any parish, a Saving Bank might, under a right influence and management, become a highly popular institution. We do not think, that such a process should be attempted any where at the first, without a security for the present rights of all existing paupers, and a very full concurrence on the part of those householders who are not paupers, in an application to parliament against the legal necessity of providing for new cases. Now we cannot imagine the concurrence of a large majority, without a very sincere and zealous disposition in some, to do their uttermost in promoting every expedient by which the virtues and resources of the people might be rendered available to their protection from all the evils which are apprehended to accrue on the abolition of pauperism. And there is many a manageable parish in England, where one or two influential men could give a decided impulse in favour of a Provident Bank, operating as they would, in a community where the very general consent that had been obtained for their deliverance from a poor rate, would be the best pledge of a very general co-operation in behalf of an institution that was meant to supply its place. The consciousness of the people, too, that all right to a public or parochial aliment, was now surrendered, would be a powerful auxiliary on the side of all that tended to help or to husband their own independent means. And while we should look in the general for a wholesome effect on the habit and expenditure of families, we should also expect a greatly more prevalent direction of labourers to the Parish Saving Bank, as one of the most striking and sensible manifestations of the good that is to be effected by the rescinding of the law of pauperism.

The parish of Ruthwell lies a very few miles from the English border, and its population of 1285, consist chiefly of husbandmen and the servants of husbandmen, with a few country artificers. There the inducement to economy is unimpaired by poor rates, and all the demands of indigence are met by an expenditure of forty-three pounds a-year; a sum made up of free-will offerings at the church door, and small donations from non-resident proprietors. Its minister, the Rev. Henry Duncan, who is the patriotic inventor of Saving Banks, has fully exemplified, in his own neighbourhood, the efficacy of these institutions. In the Ruthwell Parish Bank the amount deposited is a fair experiment of the habit and capability of the lower orders; for it is by them chiefly, if not altogether, that the deposits are made. The total amount, on the first of June, 1821, was £1927 8s. 11d., and the number of depositors, at that period, was 134. It were

gacy of the land;* and, if there be any truth or steadfastness in Nature, there can be no question

questioning the identity of our nature all over the globe, to doubt the possibility of a similar exhibition in any parish of like condition and circumstances in England; and if a process could be devised for the gradual deliverance of such a parish from poor rates, there can be no doubt that, by a single individual of ascendant influence, the doings of the parochial vestry might be altogether replaced by the doings of a parochial bank. This were possible, though not, we think, indispensable; for, apart from every public and institutional organ, we do believe, that by the private and unseen effect of a repealed pauperism on the habit of families, the parish would be in a more soundly economic condition than before.

* We hold it of great importance, in estimating the probabilities of any eventual reformation among the people, to distinguish between the virtues of direct principle, and the virtues of necessity. The former require a change of character: the latter may only require a change of circumstances. To bring about the one, there must either be a process of conversion which is rare, or a process of education which is gradual. The other may be wrought almost instantaneously by the pure force of a legal enactment. It is thus that we feel disposed to meet the objection which is often urged against the reformation of English pauperism, as if the inveteracy of English habits, and their total dissimilarity to the habits and character of the peasantry in Scotland, formed an insuperable barrier in the way of all amendment. There are many such habits that may be regarded as the immediate fruit of external circumstances, and that would quickly and necessarily give way when the circumstances were altered; and these are altogether distinct from other habits that essentially depend on the moral or the religious principles of our nature.

In the former class of habits, I should reckon all those to which we are prompted at the first, and in which we are led to persevere afterwards by the urgent dictates of self-preservation. It is thus that, with the decline of pauperism, there would be an instantaneous growth of sobriety; and we are further confident of a very great abatement in that species of profligacy which has deluged the parishes of England with illegitimate children. There is nought which more strikes and appals the traveller who is employed in a moral or philanthropic survey of our land, than not the gradual, but really instant transition which takes place in regard to this habit, when he passes out from the unassessed parishes of Scotland. The mischief done by the allowances of pauperism, is not merely that they hold out to crime a refuge from destitution, but that they, in a certain measure, shield it from disgrace.

that, if legal charity were put an end to, this would at length be followed up by a better suc-

A family visitation, that would otherwise be felt as an overwhelming calamity by all its members, falls lightly upon their feelings; and one of the greatest external securities to female virtue is demolished, when the culprit, protected by law from the need of bringing a bane and a burden upon her relatives, is thus protected from that which would give its keenest edge of bitterness to their execrations. There can be no doubt that, if you withdraw the epidemic bounty which is thus granted to vice, you would at least restrain its epidemic overgrowth, which is now so manifest throughout the parishes of England—that you would enlist the selfishness of parents on the side of the purity of their own offspring. The instant that it was felt to be more oppressive, would it also be felt more odious: and, as an early effect of the proposed reformation, should we witness both a keener popular indignation against the betrayer of innocence, and a more vigilant guardianship among families. As it is, you have thwarted the moral and beneficent designs of nature—you have expunged the distinction that it renders to virtue, because you have obliterated the shame and the stigma affixed by it to vice—you have annulled the sanctions by which it guards the line of demarcation between them.

Accordingly, in all parts of England, the shameless and abandoned profligacy of the lower orders is most deplorable. It is, perhaps, not saying too much to say, that the expense for illegitimate children forms about a tenth part of the whole expense of English pauperism. We do not deduct, however, the sums recovered from the fathers, our object not being to exhibit the pecuniary burden that is incurred, but, what is far more serious, the fearful relaxation of principle which it implies. Looking over the accounts that are before us at random, we find one year's expense of Sheffield, for this head of disbursements alone, to have been £1388 3s. 10d.; for Leeds, £1062 12s. 3d.; for Bedford, £141 2s.; for St Mary's, Nottingham, £1043 14s. 2d.; for St Mary le Bone, £2865 5s.; for Hulme, £83 17s. 0d.; for Stockport, £764 5s. 6d.; for Manchester, £3378 5s. ½d.; for Salford, £761 7s. 2d.; for Liverpool, £2536 6s. 4d. But it may serve still more accurately to mark the dissolution of morals, that we present the number of such cases in certain parishes. In the parish of Stroud, Gloucestershire, whose population is 7097, there now reside sixty-seven mothers of illegitimate children, who are of an age, or in circumstances, to be still chargeable on a Poor Rate. In the In parish of St Cuthbert, Wells, with a population of 3024, there are eighteen such mothers. In St Mary's Within, Carlisle, a population of 9592, and twenty-eight mothers. In the parish of St Cuthbert's Within, of Carlisle, there is a popula-

cedaneum, in the improved habit and management of families.

tion of 5884, and also twenty-eight mothers of illegitimate children now on the parish. In Horsley, Gloucestershire, there is a population of 3565, and, at present, twenty-nine illegitimate children regularly provided for. In St Mary le Bone, the number of these children on the parish, is four hundred and sixty. But it were endless to enumerate examples: and, perhaps, the far most impressive evidence that could be given of the woful deterioration which the Poor Laws of England are now working on the character of its people, is to be gathered, not from the general statements of a political arithmetic on the subject, but from the individual displays that are afforded either in parish vestries, or in the domestic habitations of the peasantry; the unblushing avowals of women, and their insolent demands, and the triumph of an imaginary right over all the tremors and delicacies of remorse which may be witnessed at the one; and, in the other, the connivance of parents, and sisters, and natural guardians, at a prostitution now rendered creditable, because so legalized as, at least, to be rendered lucrative. Instances do occur, of females who have so many illegitimate children as to derive a competency from the positive allowance given for them by the parish.

There is a sensitive alarm sometimes expressed lest, on the abolition of legal charity, there should be no diminution of crime; while the unnatural mothers, deprived of their accustomed resource, might be tempted to relieve themselves by some dreadful perpetration. It might serve to quell this apprehension, and to prove how nature hath provided so well for all such emergencies, as that she might safely be let alone, to consider the following plain but instructive narrative, from the parish of Gratney, contiguous to England, and only separated from it by a small stream. The Rev. Mr Morgan, its minister, writes me, that "to females who bring illegitimate children into the world we give nothing. They are left entirely to their own resources. It is, however, a remarkable fact, that children of this description with us are more tenderly brought up, better educated, and, of course, more respectable, and more useful members of society, than illegitimates on the other side of the Sark, who, in a great many instances, are brought up solely at the expense of their parishes."

This comparison of parishes lying together in a state of juxtaposition, and differing only in regimen, proves with what fearlessness a natural economy might be attempted; not, we admit, in reference to cases which already exist, but certainly in reference to all new cases and new applications The simple understanding that, in future, there was to be no legal allowance for illegitimate children in a parish, would lay an instantaneous check on the pro-

But, secondly, the law of relative affection, in a natural state of things, we should imagine to be just of as powerful operation in England as in any other country of the world. We do not see how this can be denied, without mysticism. It cannot well be proved; for it worketh in secret, and does not flash on the public eye through the medium of philanthropic institutions. But it may very safely, we think, be presumed of this home principle, that when once free from disturbance it will settle as deeply, and spread as diffusively through the families of England, as it is found, on an average, to do through the species at large. It is unfortunate for the character of its people, that the fruits of this universal instinct are not so conspicuous as are its aberrations. To meet with the former, we must explore the habitations of private life, and become familiar with their inmates. The latter are blazoned forth in the records of crime, or have a place in the registrations of parochial charity. The advertisements which daily meet our eye, of runaway husbands, or abandoned children, and

fligate habits of its people. The action of shame, and prudential feeling, and fear from displeased, because now injured and oppressed relatives, would be restored to its proper degree of intensity —would be surely followed up by a diminution of the crime; and, as to any appalling consequences that might be pictured forth on the event of crime breaking through all these restraints, for this too nature has so wisely and delicately balanced all the principles of the human constitution, that it is greatly better to trust her than to thwart and interfere with her: she hath provided, in the very affection of the guilty mother for her hapless child, a stronger guarantee for its safety and its interest, than is provided by the expedients of law. This is forcibly illustrated by the state of matters at Gratney, and might help to convince our statesmen how much of the wisdom of legislation lies in letting matters alone.

those cases of aged parents who have been consigned, by their own offspring, to the cheerless atmosphere of a poor's house, mark not the genuine developments of nature in England, but those cruel deviations from it, to which its mistaken policy has given rise. There can be no doubt, that after this policy is reversed, nature will recover its supremacy. Those affections which guarantee a mutual aid in behalf of kinsfolk, in every country of Europe, will again flow here in their wonted currency. The spectacle of venerable grandsires, at the fireside of our cottage families, will become as frequent and familiar in this as in other lands: and a man's own children will be to him the best pledges, that the evening of his days shall be spent under a roof of kindlier protection than any prison-house of charity can afford. Let pauperism be done away, and it will be nobly followed up by a resurrection of the domestic virtues. The national crime will disappear with the national temptation; and England, when delivered therefrom, will prove herself to be as tender and true to nature, as any other member of the great human family.*

* We have not met with a testimony more universal throughout the whole of England, than that which relates to the perfect unconcern wherewith the nearest kinsfolk abandon each other to a poor's house. In most parishes, there is a great preference on the part of paupers for a place on the out-pension list, though it be only a partial maintenance which is afforded, to an entire support within the walls of the workhouse. I was informed, however, at Bury, in Lancashire, that some very old out-pensioners, who had been admitted as inmates with the families of their own children, often preferred the workhouse, because, on purpose to get altogether quit of them, their children made them uncomfortable. This is very much of a piece with the general depositions that are to be had every where on the subject. We have

And, thirdly, who can doubt, from the known generosity of the English character, that nought

seen whole columns of Manchester, and other provincial newspapers, filled with advertisements of runaway fathers, and runaway husbands, in which they are described with all the particularity that is employed for the discovery of felons, and outlaws, and deserters from the army. And yet we are not to infer from this an utter negation of all the relative feelings, on the part of these desperadoes. They know that their wives and children will not be permitted to starve—and in by far the greater number of instances, had this been the alternative, they would have remained at home. They do not leave them destitute, for they leave them in possession of a right to subsistence. The affection which they have to their own kindred is still a rooted principle in their bosoms; and what might appear, at the first view, an act of unnatural cruelty, is often an act of collusion and good understanding between the fugitives and their families. The very prosecution by children, for a legal aliment in behalf of their aged parents, instead of being an unnatural surrender of duty on their part, is often urged forward by the same filial regard that would prompt them to the defence or prosecution of any other legal interest which belonged to them. So that however unkindly the influence of pauperism is on the duties and affections of relationship, there is nothing exhibited in England which can lead us to deny to its people the same instinctive virtues that are to be found throughout the other tribes and communities of our species—and we may be well assured of as good a constitutional basis there, as in any country of the world, on which all the charities of home, all the sympathies of blood and of kindred, might be reared.

We have already said, that the virtues of principle require to be nurtured by a slow process of education, while the virtues of necessity are of as immediate growth as is the necessity itself. Now this property of immediateness is not confined to those habits which are imperiously demanded by the urgencies of self-preservation. It is true, that a man who would not be lectured into an abstinence from intoxication, though subjected to the discipline of moral and religious advice for many years, might be starved into an abstinence from intoxication in a single day. And it is conceivable, that were a piece of money given to him, by which he might either purchase the bread for which he was famishing, or the liquor to which his propensity, in an ordinary state, is altogether ravenous and uncontrollable, he might deny himself the latter, by an act of preference that led him to the former. But it is just as conceivable that he would make the very same sacrifice in behalf of his infant child in the agonies of hunger before his eyes. The truth is, that it might be as painful to the indi-

but scope and opportunity are wanting, in order to evince both the force and the fruitfulness of that sympathy which neighbours in humble life have for each other. That this is greatly less apparent in England than in other countries, is altogether due to its establishments of legal charity. We are

vidual to deny a strong instinctive affection, as to deny a bodily appetite. And we have no hesitation in affirming our belief, that under a law not for the dismissal of existing paupers, but for the non-admissal of new ones, the habit of kindness among relatives would grow in England, with the growing necessity for its exercise; and that much of what should else be squandered in carelessness, or low dissipation, would have the wholesome direction of a virtue impressed upon it.

It is but fair to add, that in Gloucester we met with one testimony to the care and guardianship that relatives, even in humble life, continued to exert for each other, a still stronger in Portsmouth, and a slight one in Turvey, Bedfordshire. Mr Hale, who is so singularly versant in the habitudes of workmen, vouches for two distinct classes, with equally distinct characters, and affirms, that he knows a number of instances, where the children of those who have never become paupers, will make a conscience of upholding their parents; and thus confer on them the most gratifying reward of their independence. "I have known," he writes, "very many instances, (among my own workmen and others) of the children of those who have never been paupers, making conscience of supporting their parents in old age—they will even submit to many hard and severe privations, (much more so than paupers will submit to) to maintain their resolution and their promises, that their parents never shall become paupers." On the other hand, it often happens, that even when parents are living under the same roof with their children, there is no community of aid or of interest betwixt them. Mr Ranken, from Bocking, in Essex, writes, that "it is very frequent for young people to live under the same roof with aged parents, and leave them to be wholly provided for by the parish, while they are fully employed, and at good wages; although, until they have been able to provide for themselves, they, in common with the whole family, have been receiving parochial assistance. Such is the want of proper feeling, that the parents, as soon as the children have attained the age of manhood, in but few instances, under any difficulties, think of assisting them more; nor do the children, after they have been emancipated from their fathers, pay attention to the wants and difficulties of their aged parents."

not to expect so prompt and sensitive a humanity among individuals in those parishes, where the cares and the offices of humanity have been devolved on a public administration. Nor will acquaintances be much more ready to stretch forth a helping hand to him who can present a claim of poverty at a court of supply, than to him who can present a claim of property at the bank, where a treasure of his own is deposited. Yet even as it is, that beautiful law of our nature, whereby a busy, spontaneous, and internal operation is upheld throughout every aggregate of human beings, is only weakened in England, by the operation of the poor rate, and not destroyed. Like the law of relative affection, it is not capable of being verified from the records or the registers of a general and combined philanthropy—and can only be witnessed to its full extent, by those who are thoroughly conversant with the habits of the poor, and have had much of close and frequent observation among the intimacies of plebeian fellowship. There is not one topic on which the higher orders of England have so crude and unfurnished an apprehension, as on the power and alertness of mutual sympathy among the working classes. This, in some measure, arises from its being in part stifled throughout the whole of their land, because in part superseded by their public and parochial institutions. But still it may be abundantly recognized. We have heard it more particularly affirmed, of those who have no legal right in the town or parish of their residence, yet who rather choose to remain, than be removed to the place of their settle-

ment. These form a pretty numerous class in large towns; and, among the other virtues of industry and carefulness, and good management, which are ascribed to them in a superior degree, have we also heard of their mutual liberality as one striking characteristic which belongs to them. There can be no doubt, that this would break forth again throughout the mass of English society, on the abolition of pauperism; and that by the revival of a great popular virtue, all the evils which are now apprehended of a great consequent distress among the people, would be completely done away.*

* I was so fortunate as to meet with a very good illustration of the principle affirmed in the text, in the very region of pauperism. I first learned of it at the house of Mr Gurney, in Westham, Essex, who, in conjunction with his sister, Mrs Fry, is so honourably signalized by his benevolent attention to the comfort of prisoners. He has politely answered my further inquiries on the subject, in the following words: "In our workhouse we have found it needful to order deprivations, as a punishment for its refractory inmates; and, amongst others, we have ordered that such females should be debarred the use of tea, which they much value. It has been continually so ordered, but it has always been reported as wholly nugatory, as the companions of such cannot see their neighbours without it, during their own enjoyment, and have always, in consequence, shared their small pittance with the delinquent. I use the expression of 'small pittance,' because we *so* distribute what we look upon as a comfort, and not a necessary of life. The same may, with nearly equal truth, be related in respect of the *men*, in their allowance of meat."

It is likely enough, however, that a spirit of hostility to the discipline of the workhouse, might be as active a principle here, as sympathy with those on whom the deprivation had been laid. But no man familiar with humble life, can at all question the strength of that mutual sympathy which obtains among the members of it; in whom it operates with all the power of a constitutional feeling, and is not dependent on a slow process of culture. There is no doubt, that it is in readiness for immediate service, on the abolition of pauperism, though it may lie dormant, so long as the imagination lasts, that under the provisions and the cares of a legal charity, it is wholly uncalled for. It is by

But this disposition of the lower orders to befriend each other, were of little avail, in this question, without the power. There must be a *materiel* as well as a *morale*, to constitute them those effective almoners, who shall come in place of that legalized charity which we plead the extirpation of. On this point too, there is a world of incredulity to be met with;* and it is difficult to find

no means extinct. It is only in a state of imprisonment; superseded, for the time, into a sort of inaction, rather than stifled into utter and irrecoverable annihilation. It is not dead, but sleepeth; and the repeal of the law of pauperism would effectually awaken it. The charity of nature would recover her old vigilance and activity, on the removal of that artificial charity which has so long kept her in abeyance. Next, perhaps, to the pain of hunger, is the pain of witnessing its agonies in another: and this, of itself, is a sure and sufficient guarantee for the dispensations of legal charity being replaced by timelier and better dispensations. There is not a neighbourhood where the horrors of extreme want would not be anticipated; and with all the promptitude of any other virtue of necessity, would the instinctive compassion of our nature spring up at the moment, with the occasion of its exercise. We believe, that even though the present allowances of pauperism were to be suddenly withdrawn, there would, to meet the instant distress, be a breaking forth upon it of our compassionate feelings, with somewhat of the force and recoil of elasticity; and much more are we confident, that were a simple interdict laid on its future allowances, the consequent rate of unrelieved want that might arise, from one year to another, would be met by a corresponding rate of perennial and unremitting supply, from the then liberated sympathies of our nature.

* As a specimen of this incredulity, we offer an extract from the interesting work of Mr Davison on the Poor Laws.

"It is not fit that the poor should subscribe for the relief of one another. Pecuniary charity is not their duty; it is out of their province. Their own real wants forbid the exercise of it; and they have not the feeling which such a sacrifice requires. In no way are they made for it. And to try to make them generous, when they have more necessary, and more attainable virtues to acquire, is to misplace the attention we bestow upon them. Benefit Societies, among the lower classes of the poor, are vicious on this account. These Societies profess to offer a mutual guarantee against the calamities and contingencies of life, as well as

acceptance for that arithmetic which demonstrates the might and the efficacy of those humble offerings, which so amply compensate, by their number, for the smallness of each individually. The penny associations which have been instituted for objects of Christian beneficence, afford us a lesson as to the power and productiveness of littles. Even the sums deposited with Saving Banks and Benefit Societies point to the same conclusion. But perhaps the most impressive, though melancholy proof that can be given of a capability in humble life, greatly beyond all that is commonly imagined, may be gathered from the vast sums

its more extraordinary wants, out of a property too small to be exposed to the risk of other men's fortunes. The poor man's endeavours can hardly extend any further than his family. His capacity of feeling and exertion fills his little circle; more is too much for him."

A full arithmetical refutation of these statements is perhaps unattainable. The produce of those plebeian associations which have been instituted for religious objects, gives only a faint and distant approximation to it. There is a busy, though unseen circulation of aid, and sympathy, and service going on throughout every vicinity where an aggregate of human beings is to be found. Its amount is great, because made up of offerings, which, though small, are manifold—of rills, which, though each of them scanty, are innumerable, and constantly flowing. We are aware that pauperism has laid a freezing arrest on this beautiful economy of nature: yet, even where she has wrought the greatest mischief, she has still been unable to effect a total congelation. And many are the poorest districts, in the most crowded cities of our land, where yet more is rendered to human suffering by the internal operation of charity within themselves, than by all the liberalities which are imported from abroad. We do not at present contend, however, for any thing being done to call forth their subscriptions; but we do contend for nothing being done which shall deaden or reduce their sympathies. These, in fact, amid all the parade and speculation of a more ostensible philanthropy, form their best securities against the miseries of extreme indigence. Their means are greatly underrated; and their feelings and virtues still more ungenerously so.

which are annually expended in those houses of public entertainment, that are only frequented by people of the labouring classes in society. We are most thoroughly aware, that the abolition of pauperism in England will never act by an instantaneous charm on the moral habits of her peasantry. But, however slow it is that the virtues of principle come forth to their full and practical establishment in a land, yet this is not true of the virtues of necessity; for these latter do arise promptly and powerfully, to meet every new occasion that has been created for their exercise. There is no legislative enactment called for to compel such an attendance on funerals, as to secure that all the dead shall be buried; but at the expense often of much time and convenience, we find this habit to be sustained, as the established decency of every neighbourhood. That any who die should be permitted to remain without burial, would not be felt as a more intolerable nuisance, than that any who live should be permitted to starve without food. There would just be as painful a revolt against the one spectacle as the other; and without the artificial regulations of law, men would have found their way in England, just as they have done in all the other countries of the world, to the sure defence of every neighbourhood against a catastrophe so horrible. Were the law of pauperism suspended in any parish or county of England, a greater liberality, both among neighbours and kinsfolk, would instantly spring up as a kind of epidemic virtue there: just as we fear that a cold-blooded indifference to the comfort even of nearest

relatives, might now be charged as the epidemic vice of England, in reference to the other nations of the world. But this is altogether a forced and unnatural appearance; and, were the causes of it removed, it is not to be doubted that England, on the strength of her people's native generosity, would nobly redeem the imputation that has been cast upon her.

The fourth and last counteractive against the evils that might be apprehended to ensue on the abolition of pauperism, is the freer and larger sympathy which would then be exercised by the rich in behalf of the poor. This we have placed last in the order of enumeration, because we deem it least in the order of importance. This, however, is a comparative estimate, on the soundness of which there might be the utmost diversity of opinion, while there can only be one as to the blasting effect of legal charity, on the warm and genial kindliness of nature. The door of the heart will ever remain shut against the loudest assaults of a legal or litigious applicant, while to the gentlest knock, from one who implores, but does not challenge, it will be sure to open. We have almost everywhere in England heard the farmers stigmatized as the most heard-hearted of men; and never, on the north of the Tweed, have we met with such a charge against them. But when once our farmers have become the administrators of a large compulsory poor rate in their parishes, then Nature, true to herself, in all quarters of the globe, will work the very callousness of feeling amongst us, that she is said to have done amongst our

neighbours in the south. And yet, in spite of her freezing, artificial system, how manifold are the liberalities of England! Even under her present bondage to a perverse and unfortunate policy, what an earnest does she give of those still nobler liberalities that might be confidently looked for, after that policy had been done away! How exhaustless are her devices and her doings for the good of our species! and how prolific in all sorts and schemes of a benevolence which, it would appear, that the poor rate has not wholly superseded. There are subscriptions and philanthropic societies innumerable. There is not a parish of any great note or population in England without them; and they prove how surely we may count on a kind and copious descent of liberality, over all those places from which the dispensations of pauperism shall be withdrawn.*

* It were quite endless to enumerate the local benevolent associations that have been formed in the various parishes of England, and which are in constant operation, such as Lying-in, and Dorcas, and Destitute Sick, and Stranger's Friend Societies, and many other institutions of the sort, which at once demonstrate the inefficacy of legal charity, and the readiness of spontaneous charity to suit itself to all the varieties of human wretchedness. Another proof of the same two positions, is the toleration of a sort of secret and underhand begging in many parishes, and the affirmative answer, given almost everywhere, to the question, whether, after all, there is not much of private benevolence resorted to by the poor, and actually discharged upon them by the rich. So that when the inquiry is made, How is it possible that we can do in Scotland without a poor rate? the obvious reply is, that we do without a poor rate, just by those very expedients wherewith in England they meet all that want and distress which, even with a poor rate, they are not able to overtake; and which surplus of unprovided want is, in all probability, as great as the whole would have been, had no poor rate ever been instituted.

It has been imagined by many, that a poor rate is particularly

There are two inferences which may fairly be drawn from this contemplation. First, it would

called for in those manufacturing towns where the people are so exposed to ebbs and alternations in their circumstances. We may afterwards try to demonstrate, in the course of a separate argument, on the relation that subsists between pauperism and the wages of labour, that the poor rate aggravates all the inequalities to which a manufacturing population are exposed. But, meanwhile, it is instructive to perceive, that so far from a poor rate being a sufficient remedy against vicissitudes of this sort, there never occurs a season of distressed trade, and reduced wages, when the heavily assessed towns of England have not recourse to the very shifts that are practised in other places, for meeting the adversity of the times, and when the symptoms of distress are not, in every way, as flagrant and appalling as they are any where in Scotland. In the calamitous winter of 1816–17, subscriptions were resorted to all over England—and soup kitchens were kept in busy operation—and urgent appeals were made to individual benevolence—and, in a word, as much of helplessness, under their ordinary regimen for the poor, and as much the need of a supplemental and extraordinary effort, were felt in the very centre of pauperism, as in those towns of Scotland where the compulsory method had scarcely begun to be acted on, or was altogether unknown. To quote examples were altogether superfluous. The thing was about universal in great towns, and very general even in populous villages. So that, in reference to the fluctuations of trade, pauperism has been also tried and found wanting; and that country which has tasted longest of its dispensations is, in seasons of commercial embarrassment, also put upon its shifts, and is on a perfect level with other countries, as to its distresses and its temporary plans.

Now it must be quite obvious, that though the necessity should be as great for an additional effort, in such a season of extraordinary distress, yet that the ordinary burdens of pauperism must affect very sensibly both the means and the disposition of those on whom the effort and the sacrifices are laid. But the worst circumstance attendant on these extraordinary subscriptions, is that they leave behind them a permanent addition of ordinary pauperism. In places where there is no legal charity, they may leave no permanent depravation of habit behind them. After the last shilling is expended, the people are all remitted back again to their wonted independence; and not till the recurrence of a similar visitation, do they look for the supplies of charity from abroad. But the uniform experience of places where there is a compulsory provision is, that in every instance of a subscription made for the people, in bad times, there are so many thereby inured to the habit of

appear that England has not, by her expedient of a poor rate, overtaken the whole field of human wretchedness. There is a mighty surplus of unrelieved want which remains to be provided for; and the charity of law has fallen so far short of her undertaking, as to have left the same ample scope for the charity of love, that we behold in other countries where pauperism is unknown. This, if any thing would, might open the eyes of our statesmen to the utter insufficiency of a legal provision; and might demonstrate to their satisfaction, that let pauperism stretch forth her allowances, and widen her occupancy as she may, there will constantly, over and above the whole extent of her operations, be as interminable an out-field as before for the duties and the services of a gratuitous philanthropy. The question is thus forced upon us, What service has been rendered to humanity by the poor rate? It has obtained for England no discharge from the calls of a benevolence, which might even have had a lighter task to perform, had no such economy been instituted.

receiving, and who thus find a readier way to the supplies of ordinary pauperism; and that there cometh thence a distinct accession on the poor rate, from which even the return of prosperous times never has the effect of altogether relieving them. So that nothing can be more unsuitably assorted the one with the other, than occasional subscriptions for seasons of extraordinary distress, and a regular pauperism at all seasons. Wanting the latter, the former might with greater safety be raised more frequently and more abundantly, and so as to meet the varying circumstances of the people: or, in other words, let there be no regular pauperism in a manufacturing town, and fewer obstacles would exist to that peculiar method which is generally resorted to, for meeting those vicissitudes in the condition of the working classes, to which it is peculiarly liable.

But, secondly, the task would not only have been lighter, but there would have been greater ability and greater alacrity for the performance of it. It is unnecessary to expatiate on a topic so obvious, as that without a poor rate the means of benevolence would have been less exhausted. But what is of more importance, its motives would have been greatly more animating. As it is, benevolence meets with much to damp and to discourage her; and, more especially, in a certain hardness and unthankfulness among its objects, which it is the direct tendency of the reigning system to engender. That the good will of the one party be kept in vigorous play, it would require to be met by the gratitude of the other—but how often is this utterly put to flight among the people, by the shrewd imagination, that all which is done for them by the rich, is only done to lessen the burden of the poor rate—or, in other words, that what is rendered in the shape of kindness to them, is only to relieve themselves from the weight of their own legal obligations. This whole business of charity never will be put on its natural foundation, till the heterogeneous ingredient of right be altogether detached from it—till a distinct and intelligible line of demarcation be drawn between the two virtues of justice and humanity—and this is what the law of pauperism has done every thing to obliterate. While that law subsists, every nascent feeling of generosity on the one side, is in constant danger of being stifled by most galling and ungenerous suspicions on the other—and not till the *right* of the poor to relief be taken away, will

the humanity of the rich be in fair circumstances for the development of all its fruit, and of all its graciousness.

It is out of these various elements, then, that on the abolition of pauperism, we would confidently look for a sounder and happier state of the commonwealth. At first sight, it might appear that were a legal provision swept away from the face of English society, it would leave a fearful territory of helpless and unrelieved misery behind it. But there would first be a mighty abridgment upon this territory, by the resurrection that would ensue of providential habits among the people: and secondly, by the revival of their kindred or relative duties: and, thirdly, by the new excitement that would be given to those mutual sympathies which operate to a vast and unknown extent throughout the mass of the community: and, lastly, by the generosities of the affluent, who, going forth spontaneously, with ampler means, and on a field of charity now rendered more manageable, by all the antecedent limitations, would, at the same time, earn the reward, and be upheld by the encouragements of charity, in the gratitude of a people, then divested of legal jealousy, and of all that bitterness wherewith the imagination of a rightful claim has tainted the whole of this ministration.

And it would be wrong to conceive, that ere there could be any sensible approach to such a state of things, we must wait the tardy and laborious culture of many generations. The principles which guarantee a much quicker recovery of the nation to this state, are not instilled, however much

they may be strengthened by a process of education —but rank with the strong and uncontrollable instincts of our nature. They are now, it is true, in part overborne by an artificial stress—but, on its simple removal, they will rapidly, and as by an elastic spring, assume a tone and vigour that shall give them instant efficiency. Even under the whole weight of those adverse and chilling influences, whereby the law of pauperism has so greatly enfeebled the antecedent laws of Nature in the human constitution, yet are the laws of self-preservation among individuals, and of sympathy among relatives and neighbours, still in manifest activity. They are cast down, but not destroyed—and when again set at liberty from their present unnatural bondage, they will replace all the dispensations of pauperism, with a tenfold blessing on the comfort and virtue of families.

It might seem somewhat ridiculous to hold a lengthened and laborious argument—and that, for the purpose of showing that the people of England have the same urgent appetite for the interest and preservation of self with the rest of our species; and that withal, there may be further detected in their hearts the same instinctive affection for offspring and kinsfolk—the same prompt sympathy with the wants and sufferings of their fellowmen. But, they are the parliament of England who first set the example of this strange incredulity. That act of Elizabeth, which has been extolled as a monument of English feeling, and English wisdom, is a monument of the legislature's fears, that neither feeling nor wisdom were to be

found in the land. It is, in fact, the cruellest reproach which the government of a country ever laid upon its subjects. It is an enactment founded on a distrust of the national character—or, an attempt to supplement by law, an apprehended deficiency in the personal, and the domestic, and the social virtues of Englishmen. And never did an assembly of rulers make a more unfortunate aberration across the rightful boundaries of the province which belongs to them. Never did legislation more hurtfully usurp the prerogatives of Nature, than when she stretched forth her hand to raise a prop, by which she has pierced the side of charity, and did that with an intent to foster, which has only served to destroy.

Before that we state, and attempt to justify our own opinion of the best way by which a retracing movement might be made, we shall shortly consider the two leading expedients—one of which has been partially acted on; and the other of which we shall advert to, not for the purpose of urging its instantaneous adoption, but to prepare the way for arguing those modifications upon it, which we shall venture to recommend. The first of these expedients is a more strict administration of the law of pauperism—the second is the abolition of it.

There has, of late, been a decided impulse felt, in many parts of England, towards a more strict administration of the law, founded both on the distress of the times, and on the unexampled height to which the expense of pauperism had arisen. And a very important facility has been rendered

to this undertaking, by the Select Vestry Act, whereby the power of the justices, in summoning overseers to show cause why relief should not be granted, has been greatly limited or impeded—and the whole matter has been placed more absolutely than before under the discretion of the Parish vestry.* There are many towns and parishes in England, where this act has been proceeded on, and a good many more where of late paid and permanent overseers have been employed, who soon acquire a habit and an experience that qualify them for the business of rigid investigation. The expedients which have been used either to reduce the claim of the applicant, or to repel him altogether,

* The act referred to in the text, is that of 59 Geo. III. c. 12, and is better known by the name of Sturgess Bourne's act. England is much indebted to this enlightened senator, for the attention that he has bestowed on far the most interesting question in her domestic policy. He has, perhaps, done as much as human wisdom can possibly effectuate for arresting the mischief of a compulsory provision in behalf of indigence. But there would appear to be an inherent mischief in the very principle of such a provision, which baffles every expedient that falls short of extirpation. In the meantime, however, legislators must feel their way as they can, through the prejudice and the practical obstinacy that might still withstand the application of a radical cure—and so it is, that the parliamentary measure which has been devised and carried by any individual, might not be a fair exponent of his whole mind and principle on the subject to which it relates. The greater number of those philanthropists who restricted their endeavours, in the first instance, to the abolition of the Slave Trade, were, at heart, and from the very outset, the determined enemies of all slavery. It is natural to expect, that all palliatives and superficial treatments shall be put to the proof, ere the method of amputation is resorted to—and it does appear pretty evident, from a Report, drawn up with admirable judgment, of the Committee of 1817 on the Poor Laws, to the House of Commons, that the necessity is at length becoming obvious of a change far more systematic and fundamental than any which shall ever be achieved by a mere improvement in the way of administration.

are exceedingly various—and certain it is, that under the energy of a far more active and watchful regimen than wont to be exercised, there has been a very marvellous reduction of expenditure in many parts of England. In some instances, it has suddenly subsided to one third of what it was before—and in far the greater number of cases that were investigated by us, the saving has been ascribed to the improved management more than to any improvement which may have taken place in the circumstances of the people. It was most gratifying to learn, that even after the many dismissals, and reductions of allowance, which had taken place, the people were, to all sense, in as great comfort and sufficiency as before. This is a fact pregnant with inference. Every negation of a claim, and every abridgment that is made on a former allowance, is, in fact, a commitment of the people back again, either in whole, or in part, to the antecedent resources of nature, whether these resources should lie in their own thrift and industry, or in the kindness of relatives and neighbours towards them. It is of no consequence to the reasoning, what the instrument has been by which they have been displaced from the region of pauperism, and either their entire or partial support has been devolved on capabilities which exist elsewhere. It may have been an obstinate refusal on the part of the vestry. Or it may have been a decision of theirs, founded on a strict investigation, that may have led to the discovery of means of which they had not been previously aware. Or it may have been the offer of

work, which the applicant disliked.* Or it may have been the threat of an exposure, that he would have been ashamed of. Still the conclusion which may be drawn from a great and sudden contraction of the pauperism, in those places where a strict management has been entered upon, remains unaffected—and more especially, if there be the same visible aspect of sufficiency as before. There was much of the former pauperism wholly uncalled for. The sufficiency of the natural resources had been underrated, and there had been a delusion as to the need of a supply from the resources of artificial pauperism. So that, in some cases, the expenditure was three times greater than it ought to have been—and the discovery of a delusion to such an extent, might well lead us to suspect that, perhaps, could all the channels of aid, and employment, and sympathy, be traced throughout the mass of society, with all those hostile influences by which public charity has done so much to close or to obstruct them, then it might be found, that there exists a still deeper and more subtle delusion than has yet been ascertained.

* The workhouse is often employed as a scarecrow, by which to distance or to deter applications. Is this fair treatment of a people? first, to instil into them the imagination of a right to subsistence, and then to counteract this by associating terror or disgrace with the prosecution of it? Does not the very necessity of thus assimilating an eleemosynary house to a Bridewell, prove that there is a fundamental error in the whole system? Would it not be better, if instead of first giving a wrong impulse, and then devising a force of resistance by which to neutralise it, that both the one and the other were dispensed with? Or, in other words, instead of first granting a right, and then guarding against it by the severities of a prison discipline, that both the grant and the guard were withdrawn; or, in other words, that the legislature

We will lay no disguise on the whole amount of our convictions upon this subject. Under a lax administration, it would appear that instances have occurred of an expenditure three times greater than was afterwards found to be necessary. Or, in other words, the dispensers of legal charity were so far misled as to overrate, in this proportion, the call which existed for it. But even under a strict administration of pauperism, and when there is no misleading of the dispensers at all, still there is a most grievous misleading both of the recipients, and of society at large. The very existence of a public charity has misled them. It misleads many annual thousands from their own economy, who otherwise would never have been reduced to a dependence on charity at all. It misleads parents and children, and remoter kindred, from the exercise of their relative duties. It misleads the benevolent, of all ranks, from that sympathy they else would have felt, and that liberality they else would have exercised. On the part of the dispensers, the discovery of their error has occasionally been the saving of two-thirds to the legal charity —but the correction of that error on the part both of the poor and of the public, into which the very existence of a legal charity has blinded them, would greatly more than cover the remaining one-third. Or, in other words, the good of the wholesome re-action that must ensue on the abolition of pauperism, would greatly overpass all the apprehended evils—and were the legal charity for indi-

would disencumber the land at once from the invasion which itself hath made, and the defence which itself hath provided.

gence utterly swept away, there would be less of suffering, as well as less of sin in our borders.

But, it may be asked, if, under the operation of existing acts, the cost of pauperism really admits of so great an alleviation, might not the whole evil of it be reduced in the same proportion? And ought we not to be satisfied with this, rather than hazard a radical change of system throughout the land?—and see what can be done with a good administration of the laws that we have, ere any further innovation shall be thought of?

The Select Vestry Act has been proceeded upon only in 2145 instances. There has no such vestry been formed in about six-sevenths of the English parishes. The number of permanent overseers, too, is only 1979. The truth is, that in the country, it is extremely difficult to find materials for the formation of an efficient vestry—and in this way the benefit of the act has been very much confined to towns. Throughout the great majority of the land, the business of English pauperism is moving on in its wonted order—and there is as strong a practical sense of its oppressiveness in the kingdom at large, as at any former period. The agricultural interest, in particular, was never more heavily burdened with it than at this moment—and were the whole present poor rate of England translated into quartern loaves, or estimated according to the price of the necessaries of life, it would be found, that in no past season of our history, has so much of the effective wealth of the country been expended upon its pauperism.

And there is reason to fear, that even in those

parishes where a select vestry has been most successful, there may be a speedy recurrence to the same lax and careless style of administration as before. There were a vigour and a strenuousness at the first which may, perhaps, subside with the novelty of the undertaking. Even the very relief that has been achieved, might lead to a satisfaction and a repose, that would soon call back as great a host of applicants as ever—for it is in the very nature of pauperism, that, at all times, there is the pressure of a tendency from without, which will instantly force admittance, so soon as there is the slightest relaxation from that vigilance, wherewith its approaches have been guarded.

The marvels which have been of late effected by a strict administration, have suspended, in some places, the desire that was at one time felt for a radical change of system in the public charity of England. But we do not think that this can last long, and have no doubt, that after various expedients have been tried and found wanting, the final result will be a stronger experimental conviction than ever, of something wrong in the principle as well as in the practice of the poor laws. There is, we believe, a possible rigour in the execution of them, by which, if put into operation, two-thirds of all the paupers now in the country, might be thrown back upon their own resources, and yet be landed in a state of as great comfort and sufficiency as, with their present allowances, they at present enjoy. This has been exemplified in some parishes, and we do imagine, that it might be exemplified throughout the vast majority of the land. But

then this requisite degree of rigour will, in the first place, not be adopted in most parishes; and, secondly, in those parishes where under a strong temporary impulse it has been resorted to, and with great immediate success, it will not be persevered in. The very success will lull the administration into its old apathy. The pitch and the tension to which it has been wound up, will relax again. The very humanity as well as indolence of managers, will gradually and insensibly lead them to admit of successive mitigations—and nature, at length, tired out of that strenuousness which was assumed at the outset, will subside into her old inertness. This has been the history of many a philanthropic establishment, and more especially, of many a parish workhouse. They set out with amazing vigour and efficiency, but at length relapse into the tame and ordinary style that is averaged all over England. There must ever be an equilibrium in pauperism between the pressure of demand from without, and the force of resistance from within. We hold it possible so to increase that force as to throw back the pressure of at least two-thirds of the demand, which has actually been yielded to. But we do not think it probable, however, that such an increased force of resistance will either be summoned into action at the first, or upheld afterwards. And so soon as it is again slackened to what it originally was, will the equilibrium be again adjusted by the re-admittance of as much pauperism as before.*

* We refer it to the experience of the present administrators of the Poor Law in England—whether the remarks in the text

But even though the force of resistance from within, was kept up in the utmost possible intensity—yet we cannot imagine a state of things more injurious to the virtue and peace of the commonwealth. Even though the discipline of a workhouse should at length be perfectly assimilated to the discipline of a gaol, we fear that like many other of the legal scarecrows which have been devised, its only re-action would be in working down the taste and character of the people to its own standard. In proportion as the law multiplied its severities, would pauperism acquire a stouter stomach for the digestion of them—and those regulations which at first might deter, will, at length, be got over, because of a now fiercer, and hardier, and more resolute population. We have, at all times, exceedingly doubted the policy of those expedients which are meant to operate *in terrorem* —and have ever thought of them as most fearfully hazardous experiments on the principle and feeling of the lower orders. They may repel some of those who are of a better and finer temperament than their neighbours; but, in by far the greater number of instances, will they blunt the delicacies which are thus handled so rudely; and the very instrument which they thought to lay hold of for driving applicants away, will vanish before their grasp. After a temporary subsidence of pauperism from this cause, there will be a reflux of it in its old force and abundance; and worse than the heavy expenditure which it brings back, shall we

are not as applicable, under the present as under the former reforms and modifications of this law.

behold throughout the country a deteriorated *morale*, the hard-favoured aspect of a more sullen and impracticable population.

This holds eminently and conspicuously true of one set of expedients—those by which pauperism is made as affronting as possible. Every thing has been tried this way, and often with great temporary, but never we believe with permanent success. It is indeed a most mischievous ordeal —and never fails ultimately to degrade the poor, without any saving to the wealthy. The badges, and the publication of names, and the posting of them in conspicuous places, may all work a recoil from pauperism for a time, but only to come back with accumulated force, and with a more sturdy and unmanageable character than before. This, in fact, is one of the many demonstrations how ticklish the ground is on which the law of pauperism hath placed the whole of English society. It, in fact, may be regarded as a compound of temptations on the one hand, and of severities on the other; and with the latter it has awkwardly attempted to neutralise the mischief of the former. The practical effect of the whole has been to form two distinct classes or characters of population, which stand more widely and remotely contrasted in England, than they do, we believe, in any other country of Europe. The one is a pure, and a noble, and a high-minded class, who, of course, would be revolted by the severities of pauperism. The other yield to her temptations, and, by weathering the brunt of her severities, their meanness and corruption have only been rendered more in-

veterate. The spirit of education and of moral enterprise that is now abroad in England, must extend the one class. But while the law of pauperism continues, the other class too must increase and multiply. They are the in-field gypsies of the land; and they transmit their habit to their descendants; and this is the reason why pauperism is so apt to fix, as if by a hereditary settlement, in families. There is thus a mass of corruption, that never will be got rid of but with the extinction of this boasted charity by law. Until a blow be given to the root of the mischief, it will be found, in the long run, that there is a noxiousness in its antidotes, as well as in its bane. Its severities, in fact, are alike hurtful with its temptations. It is not by playing the one against the other, that any substantial or abiding reformation will be gained. There must be a way devised by which to cancel both.*

* We have little doubt that ultimately this expedient will not lessen the expense of pauperism; while this serious addition will be added to its other mischiefs—that of being landed in a more hard-favoured population than before.

In a recent conversation with Baron de Stael, who appears to inherit the talent of his mother for observing the features and the discriminations of national character, we were much struck by the remark, that nowhere in Europe did he ever witness a people where the extremes of vice and virtue, of profligacy and good principle, stood out in bolder or more prominent relief than in England. Such a chasm in the scale of character is certainly not at all discernible to the north of the Tweed, where the gradation is filled up between the opposite extremes, and the extremes themselves not stretching far in either direction, leave a sort of decent and uniform mediocrity for the general habits of our Scottish population.

This may explain the reason why such contradictory answers are given by different individuals, to the question that relates to the improvement or decline of character among the people. From

Still the fact of so great a retrenchment in the expenditure of certain parishes, goes far to enlighten the question of pauperism. If the applicant for relief shall swear an inability for his own maintenance, the burden of the refutation of his plea lies upon the parish—and such often is the difficulty of the proof, that, rather than undergo it, his claim is admitted without the due investigation. The severities of a stricter administration bring this matter more closely to the test—and accordingly we have seen, that, as the fruit of iniquiry and discipline, a parish has sometimes been relieved of two-thirds of its expenditure, or the pauperism has shrunk into one-third of its original dimensions. But, under a gratuitous system of relief, the net amount of the distress would have lain within still narrower limits. Much of it would have been anticipated by the higher economy of the people themselves—and much of it been met by a higher sense of relative duty among the families of the

justices of the peace we should expect, and have gotten, an altogether opposite reply to that which is given by clergy or Sabbath school teachers. They come into contact with the two opposite species of character. At Stockport we had most distinct testimonies to the fact of pauperism settling in particular families; and in every place where the activities of Christian and philanthropic zeal are most abundant, may we recognize a marked separation of two classes in the widest possible diversity from each other. Mr Lowe of Darlaston writes, that "here, more than in most places, are to be seen two entirely distinct classes of population, rendered so among the adults partly by the cause above pointed out, but principally by the influence of the Gospel; the reception or rejection of which divides my population into professors and profane, with very little intermixture indeed of the devout or pharisaical. But the distinction is especially observable among the rising generation, to which, if I mistake not, your inquiry especially relates, and is the effect of the introduction of general education."

land. There is not a parish, where the remainder of unprovided want would not have found an ampler and a far kindlier asylum in the charity of good will, than it now finds in the charity of law. Indigence would not have been treated as a crime—nor humanity been so strangely transformed out of its proper and original character. Each of its ministrations would have helped to sweeten the whole breath of society, and to cement more firmly together the materials of which its fabric is composed—instead of being so conducted, as to widen every year the disruption that now obtains between the higher and lower classes of the commonwealth.

Believing then, as we do, that no general or abiding good will ever be effectuated by a stricter administration of the law of pauperism, we feel our decided preference to be for the gradual abolition of it. We have no doubt, that greatly less of poverty would be created in the absence of a compulsory provision, than that which now comes forward and pleads a right and an interest therein. And we have as little doubt, that all the unavoidable or genuine poverty which might then be found, would be more fully, and far more gratefully met by spontaneous charity, than it now is by a legal dispensation. We even think, though we are very far from desiring it, that though a present and sudden arrest were laid on all the existing allowances of pauperism, there would be no instances of starvation throughout all our borders—but that, on this sudden transition to a natural state of things, nature would evince the strength and the promptitude of those better securities, which she herself

hath provided against all the extremes of human wretchedness. But we again repeat, that confident as we feel in the sufficiency of nature, this is not the way in which we should like that sufficiency to be proved—and that, however desirable the transition to her better economy may be, it is not *per saltum*, but by successive steps that the transition ought to be made. It is our firm conviction, that England may thus be made speedily to emerge from her present state of pauperism; and that after its last vestiges have disappeared, she will bear upon her surface a better and a happier people than before. The greatness of this result has led many to assign a spectral or visionary character to the whole argument. Yet surely it is not impossible, both that a result may be great, and that there may be a smooth and practicable avenue which leads to it.

It is only to mitigate the apprehension of serious evils which might ensue, even on a gradual abolition of pauperism, that we affirm our belief of human society being so well founded on its own native and essential principles, as that, without any appalling calamity, it were able to stand the shock of an instantaneous abolition. And we rest this affirmation on an experience which has been recently verified, and is still in process of verification all over England. By the Act of the 59th of Geo. III. c. 12, which was passed only in March, 1819, power was given to the overseers of parishes to follow up each application from a native of Ireland or Scotland, by the removal of him to his own country. This power has been very

extensively acted on. But the way in which it has operated, is, that the great majority of Irish who had been in the habit of receiving parish allowance, on perceiving that each new application was followed up by a removal, simply ceased to apply, and remaining where they were, betook themselves forthwith to a dependence on their own shifts and resources. This act empowering their removal, either on their abiding, or on their proposing to become paupers, was virtually, in reference to them, an instantaneous abolition of pauperism. And yet, did a very small fraction of them indeed consent to be removed—but the interesting fact is, that, generally speaking, of the vast majority who remained, and who had been suddenly dismissed from their wonted parish allowance, there was the same aspect of comfort and sufficiency among them as before. They contrived to do without it, and, to all appearance, did as well. They were thrown, and that with a sudden hand, upon their own expedients—and these availed them for all of which they had been bereft. We doubt not, that all the four counteractives against the mischief of a repealed pauperism were pressed into the service on this occasion, and that these discarded Irish drew more from their own industry, and from the aid of relatives, and from the sympathy of acquaintances, and, lastly, from the liberalities of the affluent, than they else would have done. At all events, they have found their compensation—and so most certainly would English-born paupers too, if the same bold experiment were made upon them.

Yet we recommend no such experiment. We

only would draw from it the benefit of an *argumentum a fortiore* in behalf of that gradual emancipation from pauperism, which we hold to be so practicable, and which has succeeded with ourselves in a way that has greatly outstript our fondest anticipations. Let every existing pauper continue to be treated as he would have been though the present system had been left untouched—and let all that is new in the improved system, be made to bear exclusively on the new applicants. The former of course preserve their right of application to the vestry, and their right of appeal to the magistrate till death. It is with the latter alone, that we would try not the charity of law, but the charity of discretion—and all our surest and strongest convictions are utterly belied, if it be not found, that without the raising of one compulsory sixpence in a parish, there shall be more of contentment, and greatly less of unrelieved want in it than before. Ere we enter on a more detailed exposition of the process, it will, at least, be perceived, from this general outline of it, that the existing pauperism of our land, instead of being forcibly put an end to, is suffered to melt away by the operation of death—that no violence is done to any individual who is now upon the roll—and that it only remains to be seen whether they who would eventually have constituted the next generation of paupers, are not better served and better satisfied, under another treatment that we shall venture to suggest for them. But the question now resolves itself into two parts. There is first the parliamentary treatment of it—and then the parochial treatment of it, after that

the legislature has done its office. These two things are perfectly distinct the one from the other. The one is in contact with the law of the question, and the other with the human nature of it.

There is a stubborn incredulity, which, however widely it may appear to differ, is, in some respects, very much at one with sanguine Utopianism. It is true, that the same magnificence which captivates the latter, is that which is regarded by the former with derision and distrust. So that while the one is easily lured to a chimerical enterprise, and just because the object of it is great, it is this very greatness which freezes the other into hopeless and impracticable apathy. Yet both agree, in that they take a direct and instantaneous impression from the object itself, and are alike heedless of the immediate means by which it may be accomplished. It is thus, that the splendid visionary is precipitated from his aerial flight, because he overlooked the utter pathlessness of that space, which lay between him and the impossibility that he aspired after. But it is also thus, that the fixed and obstinate practitioner refuses to move one single footstep, because he equally overlooks that continuous way, which leads through the intervening distance, to some great yet practicable achievement. But give him time—and the mere length of a journey ought not to repel the traveller from his undertaking—nor will he resign the advantage for which he looks at its further extremity, till you have demonstrated that one or more of its stages is utterly impassable. In other words, there is a blind infidelity, as well as a blinded imagination—and it is difficult to say

whether the cause of philanthropy has suffered more from the temerity of projectors, or from the phlegmatic inertness of men, who, unable to discriminate between the experimental and the visionary, are alike determined to despise all and to resist all.

CHAPTER XV.

On the likeliest Parliamentary Means for the Abolition of Pauperism in England.

A GENTLEMAN who is now bestowing much of his attention on the poor laws, when informed of the speed and facility wherewith all its compulsory pauperism had been extinguished in a certain parish, replied, that it might be easy to effect the deliverance of one parish, but that it was not so easy to legislate for the deliverance of all England. But if an easy and applicable method can be devised for the parish, what is it that the legislature has properly to do? Simply to remove the legal obstructions that may now stand in the way of the method in question. Simply to authorise each parish that so wills to avail itself thereof. And should many, or should all of them at length go forth upon the enterprise, and succeed in it, then the extinction of this sore evil over the country at large, instead of being immediately referable to the impetus of that one blow, which has been struck against it by the lifting up of the arm of parliament

—should be referred to a cause that is far more commensurate with the vastness of the achievement, even to the power of those multiplied energies that have been set at work, throughout the land, each of which, however, has only its own separate and limited object to overtake, and each of which acteth independently of all the rest.

However obvious this may be, yet we have often thought, that the overlooking of it, is one main cause of that despair and helplessness, which are felt by many of our legislators, on the subject of this great national distemper. There are many of them who would feel no difficulty, but for certain legal obstacles that stand in their way, in working off this nuisance each from his own little neighbourhood; and are confident withal, that after this was done, there would, over the whole space which had thus been cleared away, be more of comfort among the families, and a higher tone of character than before. Now, this feeling is precisely that of thousands besides, each of whom, if free from one unfortunate restraint, could clear the mischief away from his own local territory, and thus contribute his own quota to the deliverance of the empire. But he who has a place and an authority in the counsels of the empire, takes a wide and extended survey over the whole of it—and by a sort of fancied ubiquity, he brings himself into contact with all the struggles and difficulties of all the parishes—and he somewhat feels as if the weight and the labour of what is indeed a very operose concern, were wholly accumulated upon his own person—and, instead of regarding pauperism as that which

can only be put to death by inches, and with the help of many separate hands, he sees it as standing forth in single combat, a hydra of dread and direful encounter, at the sight of whom every heart fails, and every arm is paralyzed.

And akin to this delusion, is the imagination on the part, we believe, of many, that the only way of proceeding against pauperism is by imperative enactments, which behoved to be instantly, and simultaneously followed up by a change of administration all over the country. It must be at once seen, that in this way of it a disturbing force would be immediately brought to bear upon each and all of the parishes, that all would feel aroused to a strong, because a practical interest in the measure—and that out of a conflict and variety of sentiment thus spread over the whole land, there might be formed a hostility greatly too fierce and formidable for the safety of the nation. It were the method for bringing into play the elements of a mighty agitation; and spreading out the question on an arena wide enough, and conspicuous enough, for the great master demagogues of the land. Those writers who live upon the discontents of the people, would instantly seize upon it as the fittest topic for keeping up that fermentation, in the whirl and briskness of which all their prosperity lies. And so it is, that an attempt on the poor laws, is dreaded by many as the sure precursor of a revolution—nor is it seen what the possible way is, by which this question can be prosecuted with the same wisdom, and withal in the same calmness, and with the same happy results, as have oft been experienced

in the treatment of other questions, and that, through a long era of peaceful and progressive improvement in the domestic policy of England.

We should, on this account, hold it to be highly advisable that any enactment which might be made on the subject of pauperism, shall not be one that brings a certain force upon all of the parishes, but simply one that allows a certain freedom to any of the parishes—not one that puts forth a law, but one that holds out a leave; and a leave, too, only to be granted on such a free and extended concurrence of householders in the application for it, as to be itself a guarantee, that however odious a general movement against pauperism may be over the country at large, yet that each particular movement is, within the limits of its own separate parish, abundantly popular.

The process might be illustrated by the way in which the commons of England have been appropriated. There are general and public acts, not by which parishes are required to divide and enclose their commons, but by which they are empowered each to petition for a local act, or a separate enclosure bill, authorising the division of its own commons. In the general acts, the principles are laid down and defined, on which the local acts are to be granted. The consent of the parties interested, to the bill being passed into a law, is signified by the subscription of their names to it. And, though there is no fixed rule in this respect, yet it may be proper to state, that the consent of four-fifths of the proprietors in number and value, is expected by parliament.

Thus parliament has not made it imperative on parishes, to turn their commons into private property. But they have struck out a path by which this transition may be effected, and left it to parishes to make the movement if they will. Had so mad an impolicy been conceivable as that of attempting to overbear parishes into the measure, by a positive enactment, there would have been the re-action of a loud clamour and discontent all over the country —nor would any government have braved so formidable an encounter; and that, for the sake of a reform principally intended for the benefit of those local districts where it was carried into effect. It was far wiser to break down the mass into fragments; to do the business piece-meal, and to make the improvement of this branch of our domestic economy a successive process, and not a simultaneous one. The thing has now been in progress for years, and a great national improvement is going surely and quietly forward. Parliament has done its part by opening a practicable door—and it wisely leaves the country to do theirs; and that, not by any general movement, but by the separate movements of separate parishes. And we do hear occasionally of a little parochial effervescence. But it is not such as to fill or to agitate the public mind, or to bring into slightest hazard the tranquillity of the state. A parish in the depths of Cornwall or Yorkshire, will be all alive, of course, to the interest of its own local arrangements; but it is wholly unfelt by the public at large; and it is well that what might have been food and fuel for the politics of a nation, has been thus frittered down

into distinct portions of aliment, for the politics of its thousand remote and isolated hamlets. The violence is dissipated and disposed of, which might else have gathered into one wasting volcano. The march, upon the whole, has been as peaceful as it is beneficent—and a measure which, under one form, might have called forth a great popular insurrection, has under another been carried forward with sure and silent footsteps over the kingdom. It has, for the time at least, depressed the value of agricultural produce, and so lessened the income of the landlord, who, perhaps, counted on being the chief gainer by it. But it has also, for the same time, cheapened the necessaries of life, and so added to the comfort of the labourer, who perhaps felt himself to be the chief sufferer by it. Meanwhile, it is clearing its way through all the near-sighted and nugatory apprehensions of the various classes —and whatever be the temporary evils that are charged upon it, its undoubted effect is to add to the abundance of the country, and to make of it a wealthier and more flourishing land.

Now, this we conceive should also be the order of attack upon pauperism.* It is thus that this

* It might serve to reconcile us the more to the process which is now recommended, that it is in the very order by which previous reforms on the poor laws have been attempted by Parliament, and responded to by the country at large. By the Select Vestry Act, or the Act of 59 Geo. III. c. 12, it is declared, "that it shall be lawful for the inhabitants of any parish, in Vestry assembled, and they are hereby empowered to establish a select vestry for the overseers of the poor of such parish." And so of the Act 22 Geo. III. c. 83, commonly called Gilbert's Act, which does not pass into effect in any parish, till called for by two-thirds in number and value of the owners or occupiers according to their poor rate. Thus, under the authority of a general act previously

common, now a defenceless prey to the inroads of vice and idleness, should be gradually reclaimed, and placed within the secure limits by which all property ought to be guarded. We know it to be still a prevalent impression, that this were making an outcast, and an unprotected orphan of human misery; and though we hold this to be erroneous, yet it is an impression that ought to be most tenderly and respectfully dealt with. The benevolence of Englishmen must be satisfied; and it says much for that noble people, that burdened as they are, and mighty as the deliverance would be, could the poor rate be done away, yet the conviction must first be done away, that the poor are not to suffer by it. This surely is not a feeling which ought to be rudely handled; and, therefore it is, that throughout the whole business of reform, there should not merely be the utmost tenderness to the lower orders, but the utmost tenderness to the humanity of those who feel for them.

There are three distinct objects that should be comprehended in the provisions of the General Act, and each of which may be regarded separately.

passed, and by which leave is given to parishes on the consent of a certain number of qualified owners or occupiers to adopt certain arrangements, under which the affairs of the poor may be forthwith administered—parishes come forward, and on presenting the concurrence that is required, these arrangements are carried into effect. It is thus that Gilbert's Act has made a certain progress throughout England, and Sturgess Bourne's Act is still in progress. The Appendix to the Report of July last, from the Select Committee on Poor Rate Returns, contains many testimonies in its favour from the parishes that had adopted it. This, of course, will extend the range of its operation still more widely; and thus it is that facts are multiplied, and experiment passes into experience.

The first relates to the act of concurrence that should be required of any parish, ere that parish shall be empowered to make a radical change in its management of the poor. The second relates to the nature of the change. And the third, to the way in which the parliament and people of England are to be satisfied, both at the outset, and through all the subsequent stages of this retracing movement, that its effects are so beneficial, and more particularly to the poor themselves, as to be altogether worthy of a humane and civilized nation.

I. To grant allowance for the enclosure of a parish common, parliament expects the consent of four-fifths of the proprietors, in number and value. To grant leave for the new-modelling of its pauperism, we should not object to the consent of a larger proportion than this of all the parish householders, who are not paupers themselves, being required by parliament. It is obvious, that the larger the consent is that shall be required by the general act, the fewer will be the parishes who can avail themselves of its provisions. It were far more difficult to obtain the requisite number of householders in a large and populous town, than in a small and manageable country parish; and it is therefore to be expected, that any movements which shall be made under the general act, will be made first in the agricultural districts of England. At the outset then, the more unwieldy parishes will have no interest in this regress from a legal to a free system of charity, unless in so far as they shall be the interested spectators of what is going on,—looking intently on the whole way of those

adventurers who have slipt cable before them, and perhaps waiting their arrival at a safe and prosperous landing-place, ere they shall have acquired the courage to think of an imitation. It is because we should like the whole process to be gone about surely and experimentally, that we should like, at least the first general act, to require a concurrence so very large in each parish, as that the number of parishes which it may actually set a-going, shall be indeed very small. It were well that this act was loaded, on purpose, with a condition that is not easily satisfied; and thus the trials will be restricted, in the first instance, to a few of the easiest and likeliest of the parishes. We do not want the whole of England to be thrown adrift, at the bidding of a yet untried hypothesis. But we want England to put herself to school. We think that she needs to go to school; and when looking attentively to those trial parishes, she is, in fact, learning the first lessons, and acquiring the sound rudiments of a sound education. Those parishes will be to her the alphabet, whence she may venture forward to achievements that are still more arduous; and at length be able to master those more complex and difficult results, which now lie far removed, on a distant and impracticable background, from the eye of her understanding.*

* It gave me great pleasure to receive a letter from an English clergyman of talent and energy, and who has paid great attention to the management of the poor, in which the very idea that we have attempted to develop, is briefly but distinctly brought forward. "If power," he writes, "by a general bill, was given to vestries to make experiments and adopt measures suitable to themselves, some materials might be furnished for a universal principle. I know a case or two where the whole property of a parish is in

There are many distinct advantages, in a very large concurrence of householders being required at the outset, ere any parish shall have liberty to enter on the new system of pauperism, and a few of these we shall barely announce, without expatiating on them.

First, it confines the operation of the proposed act to those parishes where the experiment is most popular; and so removes it altogether from those regions, where its very obnoxiousness to the community at large, would be a serious impediment in the way of its success. And it is evident, that the larger the requisite concurrence is made, the more effectually will this object be secured.

But, secondly, a large concurrence in favour of the new method, is our best guarantee for a resolute and powerful agency to carry on the execution of it. We should not despair of a most efficient vestry in any parish, for conducting aright the business of its gratuitous charity, where there had been nearly a unanimous consent to the abolition of its legal charity. There is no fear of any parish which has thus singled out, and made a spectacle of itself, that it will not acquit itself well, and at length demonstrate to all its neighbours, that without a poor rate, and without any painful sacrifice at all, it can boast a happier and a better population than any of those who are around it. We prophesy a success to their undertaking that

the hands of one person, and that a person who saw and determined to meet the growing evil; and the poor rate has been reduced to a mere nothing, and that instantly. There is a case you may see of Mr Estcourt, in the Report for Bettering the Condition of the Poor."

will be quite marvellous, even to themselves; and that they will very soon find, how nought is wanting but an energetic outset, to ensure the transition, both to the people's contentment and their own repose. But there is a better chance for the energetic outset where there has been a very extended concurrence—a surer warrant of success, where there is a wider responsibility. It is for this reason, that we would not have parishes to be selected for the experiment, by parliamentary commissioners or any constituted body whatever. We would have parishes to offer themselves; and the single event of their doing so, with that full complement of names and signatures which the general act shall require, is, of itself, the best ground on which the selection of experimental parishes can be made.

And, thirdly, although the provision of a nearly unanimous concurrence on the part of householders, should, at the very commencement of this process, restrict the trial to a very small number of parishes, this does not eventually exclude the great body and majority of England from the proposed reformation. It only prepares the way for it. The truth is, that should so few as twenty parishes come forward, under the first general act, and should their experiment prosper, it will do more to assure the hearts and the hopes of the people of England than a thousand dissertations. It will be like the finishing of the first lesson that parliament has dealt out to the country, and will prepare both the teachers and the taught for a second. The next flight will be a bolder one; or, in other words,

a second general act may be passed, whose conditions it shall be easier to satisfy, and under which as many hundreds may now come forward, as before there were tens of parishes. The success, in fact, of the first set of parishes will both embolden parliament to widen the door for succeeding parishes, which it does by lowering the terms of admittance, and it will also embolden these parishes to a readier, and more confident imitation. The simple expedient of reducing the extent of the concurrence would effectually answer. If upon the terms of an application from seven-eighths of the householders, so few as twenty parishes did adventure themselves on a yet untried project, and succeeded therein, then we may be sure, that upon the terms of a similar application from four-fifths of the householders, it is not too much to expect that two hundred parishes will soon feel encouraged to follow them. It is thus that by a series of general acts, as by a series of stepping-stones, England may emerge out of all the difficulties of her present pauperism. The very first footstep that she takes is on a firm basis, and all along she moves by a way that is strictly experimental. Throughout every inch of her wary progress, she never needs to abandon the light of observation; and on the whole of this interesting walk over her provinces, and, at length, to her great cities, till she reaches her own mighty metropolis in triumph, is she guided from one achievement to another, and by the way that she best loves, because the way that is most eminently congenial, with the sober and the practical character of her understanding.

II. In regard to the nature of the change, we should leave untouched the condition and the rights of all who, at the time of its being entered upon, are permanent paupers. There should be no dismissal of any who would not have been dismissed under the old regimen. It is, of course, quite fair to scrutinize their means and resources to the uttermost; and on any discovery of their being adequate to their own support, or on any actual improvement that may have taken place in their circumstances, by which they are enabled to provide for themselves, it is perfectly right that their names should be expunged from the roll. But this, in fact, is what always takes place under the present system, and should, therefore, take place under the new one: and ere they can be discarded, they may appeal, as now, to the magistrate,—a right which they should only forfeit, by the act of their being ejected beyond the pale of the existing pauperism. All, in short, who are actually paupers in any parish, at the time of its entering upon the new system, should, while paupers, have the very rights and securities which they now enjoy; and the change of treatment, whatever it may be, should apply exclusively to those who apply for parochial relief, either for the first time, or apply for it anew, after they have been made to do without it for a period. In this last clause, a special reference is had, not merely to those who once, perhaps, were regular paupers, and were afterwards excluded, because of their means having grown better, or been better ascertained, but also to those who, alternate upon the parish from sum-

mer to winter, and, in general, those who, being neither the inmates of the workhouse, nor regular weekly pensioners on the out-door list, pass under the denomination of casual poor, or occasional poor.*

The first change then that we should propose in the parochial system, for the management of the poor, is that in reference to every new applicant, the special power of justices to order relief, should be altogether taken away. The parish vestry would, in this case, be the ultimate and the only

* We are aware that this might expose a trial parish to considerable trouble at the outset, for, in many instances, the casual poor form a very great proportion of the whole population; and, in some instances, there is a prodigious alternation of the pauperism from summer to winter. This might be remedied by the suggestion of an English clergyman, who proposed that all who had received, in any shape, from the poor rate, through the year preceding the time when the parish began to act upon the new system, might be treated as old paupers; and that those alone should be treated as new applicants who had never, prior to that, been in contact with the poor rate. This would certainly lighten, at the outset, the work of the parochial administrators, while it would only retard the ultimate accomplishment of an entire deliverance from the burdens of the old pauperism. For my own part, I do not think that, in the first instance at least, any such extended definition of the old cases is at all necessary. The trial parishes would be only those which were not encumbered with any appalling difficulties at the commencement of their undertaking; and ere the imitation parishes come forward, the legislature would have felt its way to all those nicer adjustments that might be deemed expedient. If a parish feel so oppressed either with its casual poor, or the fluctuations which they undergo from summer to winter, as that it could not adventure upon them with a gratuitous fund, it were better that it should wait the experience of such parishes as may have entered before it upon the new system; and we feel confident that this experience will be altogether encouraging. There are a thousand fears and difficulties in pauperism which vanish before the touch of personal intercourse; and, more especially, when that right has ceased on which the people wont to depend, and by which they went to regulate their habits and their expenses.

place of application; and their decision, both as to relief, and as to the amount of it, would be final. There would, forthwith, cease all summoning by a justice of parish overseers, to show cause why relief should not be given. The thing, in fact, would be confided, as it practically is throughout the greater part of Scotland, to the humanity and discretion of the parochial court; and the thing to be ascertained in the trial parishes, is whether there would not be less of unrelieved poverty, as well as less of all profligacy and disorder under this regimen, than under the one that is now in force.

The second change that we should propose relates to the fund out of which the new applicants shall be met. Of course, the poor rate, levied as it is at present, upholds the fund out of which all the expenditure of the old pauperism is defrayed, —an expenditure that lessens every year by the operation of death on the old cases. Now we hold it essential to a sound and abiding reformation of the pauperism, that no fund should ever be raised in this way, for the new pauperism—that the power which the church-wardens and overseers have of *making a rate*, either with or without the concurrence of the inhabitants, for the purpose of meeting any fresh applications, shall henceforth cease—and that, if any fund be judged necessary, in order to provide for new cases, it shall, under a public and parochial administration, be altogether a gratuitous, and in no shape a legal or compulsory one. For the purpose of constituting such a fund, the minister and church-wardens may be empowered to have a weekly collection at the church doors; or

what is now gathered in the shape of sacrament money, may be made over to it; or donations may be received from individuals—in all which ways the revenue of a Kirk-Session in Scotland is mainly upheld. The fund could be still further, perhaps, reinforced in England, by an act of parliament, empowering this new destination to those charitable donations which abound over the whole country, and to the extent of nearly half its parishes. We do not think this indispensable, though it might give a little more confidence at the outset, of a prosperous result. We think that many parishes might venture on their new cases without it; and we have no doubt, that under a kind, and moral, and, withal, an uncontrolled administration of the vestry, there would, from the free-will offerings of the parish alone, be found a landing-place, quite broad enough for the accommodation of the new pauperism, after that the old pauperism, and its corresponding poor rate, should have wholly disappeared.*

* We hold it nearly as indispensable, that the power of raising money by assessment, on the part of those who administer the parochial fund, should be taken away, as the right of an appeal to magistrates on the part of those who apply for relief from it. There are many parishes of England where, by local acts, this right is very much abridged, and yet the pauperism is often as oppressive with them as in other parishes. In those parishes of the south of Scotland too, where there lies no appeal from a pauper, but to the Court of Session—but where the practice of assessments has been introduced, there is, generally speaking, a very rapid progress of expenditure on the poor. The truth is, that the indefinite power of raising money has often as bad an effect on the dispensers, by slackening their management, as it has on the recipients, by corrupting them into habits of dependence. This is more especially the case, where the men who practically administer the fund, contribute very little towards the formation of it, as with the Kirk-Session of an assessed parish in

The third change that would be required, should be in the constitution of the vestry. Now, it is a certain amount of charge or assessment for the poor rate which entitles to a vote; and that, on the principle of those who pay the money having a voice and power in the administration of it. Perhaps it would not be deviating very widely from this principle, if, in respect of the annual sum yielded by the church-door collections, or the sacrament money, the ministers and church-wardens were made members of this vestry; and were the church-wardens of a parish only a more numerous class, there would, at this point, be a very near resemblance between the parochial courts of distribution and supply in England and Scotland. And when the old charitable donations of a parish have been transferred to the new poor's fund, it may be further right, that the legal guardians, or administrators of them, might be also members of vestry. And if a constitution still more popular were required, then the contributors of a specified annual sum might, for each year of such a contribution, be members. But we shall venture no farther upon

Scotland; or, as it might often happen with the vestry of an English parish. We much fear that nothing will effectually stay the contagion in Scotland, but a law by which it shall be declared incompetent to raise a compulsory fund in behalf of any who shall apply for parochial relief after a certain specified date. This would both limit all new applicants to the Kirk-Session, and also limit the Kirk-Session to its own proper income—and we have the confident belief, that when both parties were so limited, there would, from the more moderate expectations of the one, and the more vigilant dispensations of the other, ensue a far more comfortable system of relief, than could possibly be attained with an ample command of means, and an appetency for absorbing them that was equally ample.

such details of regulation; though we are quite sure that there are sound and obvious principles upon which, under the new system, a suitable constitution for parish vestries might be framed.

We are aware of the demand that there is for a *gradual* amendment of the pauperism, and that the change now recommended is of such an entire and revolutionary character, as might appear to be at utter variance with this wise and salutary principle in the practice of legislation. But it should be remembered, that there are two ways in which a process of improvement might be gradualized; either by a series of successive approximations, in the general law, to a state of it that shall at length be perfect and unexceptionable; or by the application, at once, of the best possible law, to a few of the simple and manageable parishes, and thence, the successive adoption of it by the larger and more unwieldy parishes. Now, our preference is for the latter way of it. Rather than experiment at large with a defective principle, we hold it better to seize, at once, on the right principle, and experiment with it on a few select and favourable territories, whence the light of experience may break forth, and gradually spread itself over the land. We should far rather behold a sudden change in the jurisprudence of the question, followed up by a gradual operation among the parishes, than a creeping and timid progress in the former, but at each step of which there behoved to be a general movement among the latter. The law which enacted the abolition of all legal aliment to th mothers of illegitimate children, or in aid of defec

tive wages, would raise a far greater ferment in the country, and cause a more hurtful and hazardous jolt in the career of amelioration, than the law which empowered the abolition of all legal aliment whatever, but on conditions that would ensure that safe and gentle progress, which should not outrun the prejudices or the fears of any neighbourhood. In one view of it, the process that we recommend may be charged with a speed and a suddenness. But then this speed and suddenness are all confined to the statute-book, where we should like if there could be recognized at once the true principle and philosophy of the subject. Practically, there would be no inconvenient suddenness. In the inner department of legislation there would be a gigantic stride, but there would not in the outer department of the kingdom. There, the march of improvement would go on most smoothly and progressively; and far better were it, therefore, that instead of feeling our way, through a series of successive enactments, to the pure and the rational principle, we should lay hold of it *instanter*, and then find our way with it through a series of successive parishes, till it was carried into full and practical establishment over the whole empire.

III. But what is this rational principle? Have we a right to fancy it, and to go abroad with the phantasy over the land? Is it not possible that after all, it may be a wrong outset that we make; and how are we to know, that under the operation of this boasted panacea, we might not add to the number, and sorely aggravate the wretchedness of our suffering families?

Now, to meet these questions, we affirm of the process, that it is strictly a tentative one. It is not the dictatorial imposition of a method on the part of one who bids an implicit acquiescence therein. It is the confident recommendation of a method, on the part of one who asks that it may be submitted to the touchstone of experience, and who is willing to submit himself to the guidance and the correction of this safe schoolmaster. There is all the difference in the world between rashly presuming on the truth, and respectfully feeling our way to it. A very few initial attempts will decide the question and set it at rest. It is a question between the free or gratuitous, and the compulsory or legal systems of charity. The latter has been tried all over England and found wanting. Let the former be fairly and fully tried, in a few parishes of England, and abandoned if they become sensibly worse, and do not become sensibly better. It is our own belief, that every year will witness an addition to her trophies and her triumphs—that she will accumulate her credentials, by each footstep that she takes along the varied line of her perambulations, and, at length, be welcomed as an angel of deliverance in all parts of the kingdom. But should her career not be a prosperous one, she will share the fate of her many predecessors,—she will vanish, with other expedients, into oblivion; and the parliament of England can withdraw its sanction, when the people of England have ceased from their demand for her.

It is on this account, that to watch the progress of this new system, there ought to be parliamentary

commissioners, not for the purpose of receiving appeals on the question of relief; for this would be reviving the present system in another form—but for the purpose of noting and reporting how it is that those parochial communities really do thrive, where the parochial managers have been left to their own unfettered discretion—how it now fares with the families—and whether the charity of law be so replaced by sobriety among the poor, and sympathy among the rich, that the charity of nature is more than enough to meet all those apprehended deficiencies which, in the distance, look so big and so fearful. If they can report any abuse more flagrant in the trial parishes than now occurs on the average throughout the parishes of England—if they can quote instances there of shameful neglect and cruelty, which under the present style of administration, would not have been realised—if they can speak adversely of the scheme, either because of the particular evils of it which it shall be in their power to specify; or, because of that darker aspect of misery, which stands visibly out on those parochial families that are under its operation—then let such a testimony to the effects of the gratuitous system be its condemnation. But if, instead of this, they can allege, as the fruits of it, an increased contentment, and cheerfulness, and goodwill; a more manifest kindliness of heart on the part of the higher orders; and this returned by a confidence and gratitude on the part of the lower orders, that had been before unknown; a more frequent intercourse between the various classes of society; and withal, such an impulse on the side

of popular education, as to be sensibly raising the mind and the habits of the peasantry; if they can further attest, that never had they been called to witness the spectacle of distress left to suffer for a season, except in the cases of guilt or of idleness, when it was wise that nature should be left to her own correctives, and her own cures; and that even then starvation was a bugbear, which, with all their most diligent search after it, they had in no one instance been able to embody—surely, if such shall be their testimony, the voice of parliament will soon be at one with the voice of the people, and both must unite in stamping their acceptance on a system so fully tried, and so nobly vindicated.

It is not wrong to demand proof for the soundness or efficacy of any expedient—but surely it is wrong to refuse the demand of him, who seeks that a proof shall be led. There is no error, but the contrary, in the paramount value that is set upon experience. But how can he be said to value experience, who obstinately shuts out the light of it? And every experiment lands in experience. An experiment may be just as instructive by its failure, as by its success—and if there be parishes in England that are sanguine enough to encounter its difficulties, or willing to brave the hazards of an eventual disgrace—on what possible grounds of reason, or of expediency, should the opportunity be withheld from them? It interferes with nothing. It hinders nothing. Those who desire it not, are not disturbed by it—and each corporation, whether of parish or township, is left to the repose of its own settled prejudices, till the light of ocular de-

monstration may chance to awaken it. Even the most incredulous may, at least, consent to the trial. And they who hold it in uttermost derision, should be the first to cheer it forward to the field of exhibition, that they might hold their delicious regale upon its overthrow. Meanwhile, all the other devices of reform and regulation, might go on as busily as before. This one does not elbow out any of the former from the parishes by which they are preferred. The act of Mr Gilbert has been tried. The act of Mr Bourne is in progress of trial. Other suggestions, we doubt not, will be made, and, perhaps, adopted for the purpose of mitigating the load of pauperism; for the purpose of arresting, and perhaps, turning the footsteps of this mighty destroyer. There is just one more that we should like were added to the number of them. We should like a radical change of principle, combined with a progressive operation—an entire revolution in the system of management, but carried into effect in such a way as should bring none of the anarchy or uproar of revolution along with it—a process no doubt, chargeable with the stigma of being altogether new, and which, therefore, should not be permitted to range over the land, till it has earned a credit by its actual achievements; and a process, whose speed regulated only by its tried and ascertained safety, shall give no disturbance to other experimental processes, and bring no danger to the commonwealth.*

* Should even the number of parishes that applied at the outset, be deemed too great by the Commissioners, they might have the power of limiting and selecting, and thus, of checking for a time, those parishes where there seemed to be a smaller likelihood

And nothing, it appears to us, can be more simple than how to suit the law of settlement to a parish which shall come under the new system. A stranger acquires no right in such a parish, though he should fulfil all those conditions on which a settlement is acquired in other parishes. He may, or he may not, share with the other parishioners, in the gratuitous ministrations of the vestry; but neither he nor they should have any right to relief, after that the care of human want had been devolved on the free sympathies of our nature. It is thus, that a trial parish would not import any burden by the influx of strangers from the country at large, and the fair reciprocity therefore is, that the country should not be burdened by any efflux from the parish. As there can be no right acquired by one removing to a trial parish, neither should there be any right acquired by one removing from it. And let us not, therefore, look upon him as an unprivileged outcast from the securities of civilized life. He moves at his own choice, and with his eye open to his circumstances; and he is richer far by trusting to his own resources, and by knowing that he has nothing else to trust to, than he, who, along with the rights, has also the temptations of pauperism. Such a man will find his way; and it, on the whole, will be a way of greater sufficiency and comfort than any which law provides for the nurselings of her artificial charity. The emigrants from a trial parish into any other part of England, will exemplify the general habit of those who have acquired no settle-

of success, or a less degree of humanity and information among its householders.

ment in the place of their residence, yet choose not to leave it—a habit, it has oft been remarked, of greater industry and virtue than is averaged in the mass of the population.

CHAPTER XVI.

On the likeliest Parochial Means for the Abolition of Pauperism in England.

The first obstacle in the way of entering upon a process for the extirpation of pauperism in any parish, is, that the difficulty of it will be greatly overrated. The present and the palpable thing is a large annual sum that needs to be levied for the support of the existing generation of paupers—beside the very ponderous establishment that has been raised, and which continues to be required, for their accommodation. It is quite obvious what an unwieldy concern it would be, were the assessment forthwith to cease, and provision to be made on the instant for all those actual poor, from whom their accustomed supplies had thus suddenly been withdrawn. There is scarcely a body of parochial managers in England, that would not shrink from such an undertaking—and without reflecting for a time on the real difference that there is between this undertaking, and the one which we have suggested—they look upon both with the same kind of fearfulness, and almost with nearly equal degrees of it. They measure the weight and labour

of the enterprise, by the weight of the present pauperism that is now before their eyes; though, in fact, there is not one fraction of it, with which the new system has necessarily any thing to do. The pauperism that has been already formed, so long as any part of it exists, may be upheld just as it wont; and as it gradually melts away by death, the levies will gradually decline, till both the poor rate, and the poor who have been admitted upon it, shall have altogether ceased to be. Meanwhile, it is only with new applicants for relief that the new system has any task to perform—not with the full-grown pauperism of the present generation, but with the embryo pauperism of the next. There are many parishes, and more especially if you rank all who have been casual poor with the old cases, where the fresh applications do not come in at the rate of one every month, and in the treatment of which, therefore, you can calmly and leisurely prosecute every right expedient for the right disposal of them. There can be no overwhelming labour at the outset of such an undertaking. With the management that provides for the existing pauperism, there is much business to attend to. But with the management that is set up to meet and to anticipate the eventual pauperism, the business comes on gradually. At first, there is none. It does not begin but with the first applicant who offers himself—and he finds you at perfect leisure to attend to him—to take up his case, and most thoroughly to investigate it—to calculate his means and his facilities—to make inquiry after his relatives—to ascertain what work might be provided for

him—to arrange perhaps some method with a neighbour, as cordially disposed against pauperism as you, for taking him into employment, and making his industry available still to his maintenance—to shift away his application by some temporary aid from the purse of unseen charity—in a word, to ply every expedient for disposing of him better, than by admitting him upon the roll of your new pauperism, under that new economy which it is now your earnest concern to administer well. After the first has been disposed of, a second comes at a longer or shorter interval, and he finds you still better prepared for him than before; more skilled in the treatment of such applications; more intelligent about the resources of humble life; more able to acquit yourselves prudently and even popularly, by every new act of intercourse with the poor; more rich in experience and knowledge; and withal, more dexterous in the talent, not of so shifting the request away from you, as that your petitioner shall starve, but of so shifting it away from you as that he shall be in better condition than if he had been made a pensioner of yours. Let this be persevered in for a little—and if one regular pauper was admitted upon the list every month under the old regimen, one will not be admitted every half-year under the new regimen. The thing which now looks so formidable in the distance, will, on the actual encounter with it, dwindle into a very moderate and manageable affair. Both the facility and the success will very much astonish yourselves—and by the time that the pauperism on the poor rate has all died away, you will find it replaced by

a pauperism both so mild in the character, and so moderate in the amount of it, that out of free-will offerings, and of these alone, all its expenses will be cheerfully borne.

And there is a very important difference between the old and the new administration, the practical operation of which you are not able to appreciate now, but in which you will soon experience that there is really all the might and marvellous efficacy of a charm. What is now demanded as a right, will then be preferred as a request. It is just the difference between the claiming of a thing, and the asking of a thing. Now, the use which you ought to make of this difference is not to bid any one parochial applicant sternly away from you, because now you have the power; but to give courteous entertainment to them all. When a fellow-man comes into your presence, and tells you of want or of disease in his family, you are not to "hide yourself from your own flesh." It will always be your part, and more especially at the moment of transition to a system of charity which is yet untried, patiently to listen to every case, and calmly to investigate, and mildly to advise, and to mix up the utmost civility and temper with your wise and firm prosecution of the matter which has been submitted to you. Now it is when so employed, that you will come to feel, and that very speedily too, the breath of another spirit altogether in your intercourse and dealings with the poor, than that by which they wont to be formerly animated. At present there is a jealousy between the two classes, upholden by a sense of right upon the one side, and

by a dread of rapacity upon the other. But very soon under the new regimen, will the one party come down from their insolence, and the other party from that distant and defensive attitude which they now think it so necessary to maintain. This single change in the law will act, and that instantaneously, with all the power of an emollient between them—the poor ceasing to distrust the rich, and the rich forthwith ceasing to be afraid of the poor. It will give a wholly different complexion to the proceedings of the parish vestry—who now left to their own discretion, will use it discreetly; and who, in proportion as they feel relieved from compulsion, will resign themselves the more to the influence of kindness. They will soon discover, that a harsh and imperious manner to the poor, is not at all necessary for their own protection. It will be quite enough for their security, that they investigate, that they advise, that they suggest expedients, that they offer their friendly interposition with relatives, who might aid, or with neighbours who might employ them—that, on the discovery of a vicious or expensive habit, they address them in a tone of remonstrance which is at once meek, and moral, and affectionate. It is not known how soon the poor would be moulded and transformed into another habit, under the power of a treatment like this; and how, when once the imagination of a right was done away, the old ministration of charity, as if delivered of the wormwood that law had infused, would instantly take on its native temperament of love and liberty. The rich would have a comfort in being kind, when what they did was recognized

as kindness. The poor would have a pleasure in being grateful, when they saw, in the attentions of the wealthy, the spontaneous homage of that sympathy, or that reverence which is due to our common nature. There would no longer be a jaundiced medium between them. The hearts of the affluent would not revolt, as they now do, from that misery which, instead of calling for pity, loudly challenges redress. And the plebeian mind would not fester, as it does now, with untrue and ungenerous imaginations of the upper classes of society. With such an improvement in the materials of the parochial community, would it become greatly more manageable than before; and the body of management, the vestry, the parochial court of influential men, to whom the public charity, now rendered wholly gratuitous, had been committed, would soon find such an adequacy in the better and previous resources that either their own strict investigation had disclosed, or their own active influence had created, as to demonstrate that public charity, in this best form of it, could either be most easily upheld, or even was very much uncalled for.

And it should be adverted to here, that agreeably to the scheme which we have ventured to recommend, no parish at the first can embark on this retracing process from legal to gratuitous charity, without a very large concurrence of householders in its favour; and that this, of itself, is the guarantee for an outset which shall be altogether safe and prosperous, and, at least, for several years being passed over without any oppressive weight of applications. For whence are these applications

to come? Not from the old paupers, on whose condition or on whose rights no change, by the supposition, has been made—not surely in very great number, from the families of those who, by their concurrence in the new system, have expressed a hostility against pauperism, which is the best security for such sentiments and habits as will keep them permanently above it—and therefore, only from that small body of dissentients who were not paupers at the time of the new system being adopted, or from the descendants of the old generation of paupers. The applications which do come from these quarters will come very gradually: and there will be ample leisure for discriminating between the real or the deserving want, and that which is either pretended, or is the fruit of vicious indulgence; and it will be found a work of perfect lightness and facility, to devolve most of those cases which ought to be attended to, on other resources than those of public charity. So that the remainder, which must be taken on the parochial fund, will be met and upheld at an expense that is indefinitely small, or, at least, that bears no comparison with the poor rate, which, by this time, shall have nearly disappeared. And, as this old burden melts away, the new resources will be every year becoming more productive. With the *morale* of private benevolence, now more free and energetic than before, its *materiel* will be also more abundant. There will be more both of power and willingness among the rich. There will be less both of need and of expectancy among the poor. The vestry, in fact, might very easily so manage,

as at length to find, that even their office, as the administrators of the parochial fund, shall be well nigh superseded; and that in regard, at least, to the affairs of parochial indigence, the whole economy of a parish can be well and prosperously conducted, not only without any legal charity, but without even the semblance of it, in any public charity at all.

But another fear is, that however sufficient the means may turn out under the proposed system, the management will be so very laborious, as to leave no room for hoping, that it can long be persevered in. Now this too is a bugbear—and if possible, a still more airy and unsubstantial one than the former. The only strenuous management that is at all required, will be at the outset, where each case ought to be fearlessly met, and sifted to the uttermost; and every right expedient be thought of and tried, that, if possible, it may be shifted aside from the parochial fund, and devolved in a better way on the thrift and labour of the applicant himself, on the duty of his relatives, or on the charities of private benevolence. Let this method be acted upon but for a month or two—and here is the way in which it operates. When the people come to perceive, that this is the way in which their applications are met, they simply, in by far the greater number of instances, cease to apply. They who are conscious of means which they know that it is in the power of a careful scrutiny to detect, will forbear to offer themselves. They who are idly disposed, will shrink from the hazard of having their plea refuted by some employment being put

into their hands, which they would rather decline. Some who have kind relatives or neighbours, will rather continue to draw from them in secret, than subject their private matters to the inquisition of a vestry. There are many securities against the vestry being overwhelmed with applications. Some they will have—and each of them it is their part to follow up, by the most elaborate process of examinations and expedients. But they may rest assured, that in proportion to the labour bestowed on each one, will be the smallness of the number of them. Their business will at length be very much confined to the relief of such unquestionable and genuine distress, as they shall find it a delight to succour and sustain—and often a matter of perfect ease to find enough of benevolence for taking it off their hands. It is thus, that from an outset of strenuousness, they will, at length, be conducted to a state of permanent repose. This style of administration acts by a preventive influence upon the people. Its genuine effect is, to keep each man in his own place—and many whom the old system would have seduced to the door of the parish vestry, will "study to be quiet, and to do their own business, and to work with their own hands, rather than be burdensome." Many who would have brought aged relatives there, will learn to show piety at home, and to "requite their parents." Many who would have thrown their children upon a poor rate, will in the absence of this ruinous temptation, "provide for their own, and specially for those of their own house." That fermentation of hopes, and appetites, and busy expedients which

might be witnessed now in every parish of England, where so many families have been thrown agog by the very existence of a legal provision, will speedily subside, when such a provision ceases to be administered; and with the greater speed, that the vestry are more dexterous and diligent with their investigations. The people will, at length, settle down into a habit of most manageable quiescence —and the vestry, after having marvelled at the end of the first year, because, after strict inquiry, they have had so little to expend, will still more marvel at the end of their second year, because of the very few inquiries which they shall be called upon to make.

Now no investigation, however rigid, or however persevered in, under the present system, will ever conduct the population to this state. It may repress, for a time, the appetite for public relief, but will not extinguish it. If the right shall remain with the people, they will be on the watch to recover it—and on the first moment of relaxation by the vestry, there will be a set in of the pauperism as before. And besides, a vestry liable as they now are to the control and interference of magistrates will often prefer a compromise with an applicant, though they know him to be unworthy of relief, to the labour which is often impracticable, of proving this to the satisfaction of others. The right may be looked upon as the principle that gives all its elasticity to pauperism, which by an external force may be compressed within narrower limits, but which, on the removal of that force, will suddenly expand again to its former dimensions. Let

the elasticity be taken away, and the compressing force will not be long necessary. All that is ungracious in charity will at length be done away. When freed from constraint, it will assume its natural character; and under its reign, we shall shortly behold a better served and a better satisfied population.

Having now fully considered the fears which might restrain many parishes at the first from the adoption of the new system, let me advert to the mistakes and mismanagements which might be incurred in the prosecution of it.

First, then, if the experiment shall prosper, it will not be because of the great supplies which are raised, but because of the great care which has been observed in the administration of them. We should not hold it to be a happy conclusion of the enterprise, if the vestry, under the new system, enabled by the liberality either of the collection at church, or of private donations, were to expend as much in the relief of indigence, as it did under the old. This is not the way in which we should like compensation to be made for the loss of the poor rate. A far better equivalent would be, in the improvement that had taken place on the industry, and sobriety, and self-respect, and virtuous habits of the population. Let there be as profuse an expenditure as before, and there will be nothing to foster these habits, in the new change that has taken place, from the system of a poor rate, to the system of free-will offerings. Now, if this be not adverted to, there might be a grievous error at the very commencement of the undertaking.

The truth is, that even though there should be moderate supplies, yet for the first months there may be a rapidly accumulating surplus in the hands of the vestry, from the very gradual onset of the new applications. Hence a temptation to liberal allowances, which might afterwards land them in an embarrassment—for even on the principles of a friendly society, they ought to husband well their capital at the first, that they may be prepared for the full weight of those cases, which shall not for several years have attained their maximum. But independently of this, the charity that is administered by the new vestry is public charity; and this ought always to be held out as the worst, and, therefore, as the last resort of human suffering. The whole management should be conducted upon this principle as its basis. To have one's name enrolled in the lists of a parochial almonry, should be regarded as a humiliation, from which there ought to be felt an anxiety that the humblest and poorest of the community should, if possible, be protected. Let this principle be acted upon in the spirit of truth and friendship, by the upper classes of a parish, and it will soon be caught, and spread itself, as if by sympathy, among the lower classes. Ere an applicant shall become a pensioner on the parochial fund, every right expedient of prevention ought to be tried, and it is, in fact, the successful prosecution of these expedients wherein the great moral and economical good of the new administration lies.

But, secondly, though the private liberality of the rich in a parish to its poor, ranks as one of

those expedients, and is much to be preferred over that open and visible distribution, that is so fitted both to corrupt and to degrade the objects of it—yet may the rich also be, to a certain degree, the instruments of the very same mischief, that we have now charged on an incautious public administration. They ought never to forget, that the best economic gift which can possibly be rendered to the lower orders, is a habit of self-respect and self-dependence—and for this purpose, they ought not to disdain a free and frequent intercourse with them. This of itself will go far to elevate the mind and the manners of our peasantry; and it is a very great mistake, that the visit of rank or affluence to a poor man's cottage, is not welcomed, unless it be followed up by some beggarly ministration. Wherever a case of obvious and ascertained distress meets the philanthropist on his walk, it is his part to approve that his benevolence is real, by "willingness to distribute," by "readiness to communicate." But he should recollect, that there are also other topics than those of mere almsgiving, upon which he might most pertinently and most profitably hold fellowship with his humbler brethren of the species; and shortly earn the confidence and regard of all his neighbourhood. The education of their families; the good order of their houses; the little schemes of economy and management in which he requests their co-operation; the parish bank, for which he has to solicit their agency and their contributions; the counsel, the service, the little presents of courtesy, by which he does not sink but signalize them; the cheap and

simple attentions by which the cottage children can be made happy, and their parents grateful; those thousand nameless graces and benignities, by which the accomplished female can light up a moral gladness, in the hamlet which she has selected as the theatre both of many duties, and of many friendships—there is a way of prosecuting all these without alimenting the rapacity or the sordidness of our labouring classes—a way that is best learned in the school of experience; and after, perhaps, the many blunders which have been committed, and the many mortifying disappointments which have been sustained, by the young practitioner in the art of well-doing. It is not by money alone that he is to manifest his kindness. There are innumerable other ways, and better ways of doing it—and in the prosecution of which he might, in truth, refine and heighten that delicacy which he else would overbear. Let there be but good-will in his heart; and this, amid all his forbearance in giving, nay, amid all his refusals, when he apprehends a cunning or a corruption in the object of them—this will, at length, shine forth upon the people, in the lustre of its own moral evidence; and will give for him an ascendancy, that might be convertible to the fine result of their permanent amelioration. Such a man will nobly clear his way, through all those initial suspicions or calumnies, that for a time may obstruct his best aspirings after usefulness. If he have failed in those petty and oft-repeated, while heedless liberalities, by which many an indolent sentimentalist scatters poison on every side of him—the season of his vin-

dication will come round, when the endowment of a village school, or some costly yet unquestionable benevolence calls for his princely offering—and from the vantage ground of his now accredited worth, he can deal with efficacy among the people, his remonstrances both against the vice and idleness which impoverish, and against the beggary which degrades them. All that good, by the exhibition of which he might corrupt others, he doeth by stealth, or in secret—but the main good that he doeth, and by which he most emphatically acquits himself as the benefactor of the poor, is by working out this lesson in the midst of them, that their own resources are the best securities against want, and that they themselves might indeed be their own best benefactors.

There are many of England's most enlightened clergymen, who, each at the head of his own vestry, in the absence of poor rate, that sore pestilence in the work of all reformation, could, after having seized the true principle for the management of the poor, speedily send a new pulse throughout the community over which he presides, and spread an aspect of moral healthfulness over the face of his parish. With this as the distinct object of their management, of which no secret ought to be made, that they were, as far as in them lay, to commit every applicant back again, upon his own expedients, and first to ascertain what his own industry, and the relative duties and sympathies by which he was surrounded could do for him, ere they would admit him as a pensioner of theirs—with this as their object, firmly yet feelingly pro-

secuted, they will at length be gratified to find how marvellously little is left for them to do. If benevolence to our kind, be the real animating spirit of a parochial court, then let it be as careful, and resolute, and moral as it may, nothing will withstand it. The opposition which it may excite, at the first, by its wholesome severities, will at length hide its head as if ashamed. All the right sense and feeling of the parish will speak for it and be upon its side. Even the popular mind will be at length gained over— and then every thing is gained. The families of the poor themselves will at length feel an atmosphere of good-will around them which, under the reign of legal charity, they never once felt; and they will acknowledge themselves to be now the happier objects of an attention, and a kindness, and a directing wisdom on the part of their superiors, under which they breathe a new moral existence. They will at length make common cause with their vestry—and whenever their innumerable sympathies are unlocked by the abolition of that system which has congealed them, it will be found, that apart even from the now increased aid and succour of the opulent, there is throughout the plebeian mass such a busy circulation of mutual help and liberality from house to house, as to leave the ministrations of the parochial charity very much uncalled for.

A more unfettered vestry, acting as it ought, in the spirit of a moral and ecclesiastical court, will, by the discouragements which it lays on profligacy, protect itself from the inroads of that which, in fact, is the main feeder of our existing

pauperism. They will then have the power of doing so in their own hands; and they need be under no apprehension, lest by the putting of it forth, they should prove the occasion of such crimes, or such consequences as are shocking to humanity. They will, in fact, make no violent departure from such principles as are already recognised. In refusing the application of the mother of an illegitimate child, they will have the sanction even of English precedents. When they rest a denial on the idleness or drunkenness of the applicant, the trial vestry will just do what the select vestry are already warranted to do by act of parliament, which empowers them to have respect unto his character, as well as to his circumstances. Even when they forbear to act on the event of a run-away parent, and that, because, as a body, responsible for the virtue of the parish, they are fearful of the slightest countenance to a habit, by which the ties of natural relationship have so wofully been broken,—even this seeming cruelty to one family, will turn out a blessing and a kindness to many families. Nature will re-assert her supremacy, after that temptation is withdrawn by which her feelings and her principles had been enfeebled. Let it be the invariable practice of the vestry never to interpose for the purpose of repairing the consequences of crime. The habit will be found as safe as it is salutary. Many will be restrained from evil, and a whole century may roll over a parish thus purely and rigorously conducted, without one guilty mother being tempted to an act of unnatural violence,—without one

deserted family being left by its neighbourhood to starve.

It is because of the mighty retrenchments which may thus be effected, that we hold it quite safe for a trial parish to meet, upon its now voluntary fund, both the casual poor, and those who alternate from summer to winter. At least there are many parishes, that might well hazard the treatment of both these on the footing of new cases, instead of consigning them, along with the regular paupers, to the compulsory fund. We should like it, in fact, on account of the proof which it would afford of the very great force of education that lay in circumstances, and of the speed wherewith a change of habit followed in the train of a change of circumstances. In regard to the casual poor, their trivial and temporary applications to the parish are, many of them, founded upon some slight derangement that has taken place in their personal or domestic history—the illness of a few days of the father—or the confinement of the mother on childbed—or some short suspension of employment from the weather, or the cessation of demand for a week or two. Now, surely, to treat them as if they were incapable of foresight so very brief, is not treating them like rational creatures. It is most desirable that they should be trained to anticipation; and, by contesting these little demands with them, I should like to teach them this first and earliest lesson of it,—and so, carry them forward in this line of prudential habits, till even summer be made to provide for the deficiences of winter. The parish bank and parish vestry might thus be

made to act to each other's hands; and the reason why I do recommend an encounter with the casual poor, and that, upon the voluntary income alone, is because I count on the most striking and immediate success with this part of the experiment, confident, as I am, of the very great facility wherewith a people may be made to suit their new habits to their new circumstances. It gives a hardier outset to the vestry, but with firmness and good management, the difficulty will be got over, and the greater will be the triumph.

The truth is, that under a good management, though with very slender means, the first difficulty which shall meet the vestry will be a very different one from that which is now apprehended. It will not be how to find the adequate supplies, but how to dispose of the unappropriated and accumulating surplus. Instead of a pressure on the voluntary fund, which it cannot hold out against, there will, from year to year, be a progressive enlargement of it. The vestry will not be put upon their devices to recruit their exhausted treasury. They will be put upon their devices to find out a safe and salutary absorbent for its overplus. In these circumstances, the clergyman who is aware of the mischiefs of public charity, might be tempted to lay an arrest on the liberality of his parishioners and hearers. But better far would it be, that he kept this liberality agoing, nay stimulated it the more, and then impressed such a direction on the produce of it as went not to corrupt the people but to elevate and to moralize them. He might do them harm by a large public distribution for the relief of indi-

gence, whether the means of it were provided by a poor-rate or free-will offerings. But there is no harm in thus meeting certain of the helpless and involuntary sufferings of our nature. There is none in so signalizing the dumb, and the blind, and the lunatic of a parish. There is none, but quite the contrary, in bestowing of this spare and superfluous revenue in the erection or the support of village schools, and so adding still to your securities against pauperism, by widening, through education, the moral distance between the habits of the people, and a condition so degrading. And there is something more to be taken to account than the eventual good of such a destination. It lends a most important facility to your present administration. It enables you to meet every applicant for relief, with an argument that will moderate the tone of his demand, and perhaps shame him altogether away from it. You can then tell him, that, by his forbearance, he leaves you in better condition for the relief of families still more helpless than his own; that he in fact will be a virtual contributer to the good of humanity, and to the interest of the rising generation, simply by shifting for himself, and leaving your fund entire and untouched for higher charities; that he ought, on this ground, to make common cause with you; and that he renders a most important co-operation, when he ceases to be burdensome, and ministers with his own hands to his own necessities. Such an argument tells with prodigious effect in many parishes of Scotland—and it will tell in England too, as soon as it is relieved from that artificial system,

by which the worth and capability of the popular mind are now overborne. There will at length be a kindred spirit, between the aristocracy of a parish and its common people. Public charity will fall into desuetude. Instead of a now apprehended deficiency in the voluntary fund, there will be a now unlooked-for surplus. The point will not merely be carried but over-carried—and the best auxiliaries on the side of this great reformation, will be found in that very class of families, out of which pauperism now draws its ravening myriads.

But we forbear the prosecution of these details, and shall but slightly allude to the benefits of a management, which elsewhere has been fully explained by us, as bearing an important part in all those measures which might be set agoing through a parish, for the extinction of its pauperism. We refer to the subdivision of a parish, and the assignation of a given district to each member of the vestry, who may charge himself with all its pauperism, and be the medium through which the applications from its people are conveyed to the parochial court. It will be found an effectual management for crowded towns—and is even not inapplicable to country parishes. That member of the vestry does his business best, not who transmits the greatest number of applications from his local territory, but who intercepts the greatest number; and who intercepts them not by his stern and haughty negative, but by his patient inquiry, and his friendly argument, and his kind offers of work, or of interest in behalf of the family, and his affectionate persuasion with the husband who is

profligate, or the children who are hard and unnatural to their parents, and withal his firm discountenance both to the artifices of low imposture and to the effrontery of vice. He will be astonished to find, in a few months, that all the fancied difficulties of his task have vanished into nothing; that the people, when thus frankly and naturally dealt with, forthwith betake themselves to the resources of Nature, and find them to be enough; that after perhaps a little storm of trials and contests, which outlive not one short and fleeting season, there is a calm, and a calm not again to be disturbed, because that angry spirit to which law ministered its provocatives is now hushed for ever. His work ceases, because now the *vis medicatrix* works for him, with all that primitive liberty and vigour which belongs to her. His office becomes at length a sinecure, and should he choose to lay it down, he may retire with the character of having best done the duties of a vestry man, because he gave the vestry nothing to do.

CHAPTER XVII.

On the Wages of Labour.

The difficulties of removing such a great national evil as pauperism, are of two classes, which are wholly distinct the one from the other; and it would clear away much of its darkness and perplexity from the question, were these difficulties

kept by the inquirer as separate in thought, as they are separate in reality. The first difficulties are those which are presented by the economic condition of the lower orders. They are such difficulties as have their seat among the circumstances and necessities of the people. It is the imagination of many, that to do away a legal provision for indigence, would be to abandon a large population to a destitution and distress that were most revolting to humanity; and in as far as this imagination is true, it offers a most formidable difficulty, and one, indeed, which should foreclose the question altogether. The population ought not to be so abandoned; and if, in virtue of the abolition of pauperism, they shall become worse either in comfort or character than before, then this abolition ceases to be desirable. We happen to think, that no such consequences would ensue, and that, on the supplies of public charity being withdrawn, there would not only be much less of actual want in the country, but that this want would be sure to find relief, and in a way greatly more consistent both with the comfort and virtue of families. In other words, we happen to think, that the first difficulties have no real or substantive existence whatever—that if any portion of the British territory were submitted, in a right way, to the trial,* they would, one and all of them, vanish before the touch of experience—and therefore, that, by a series of distinct and successive operations on each of

* For the method of conducting such a trial, in any parish, see the 16th chapter—and for the method of obtaining permission for the trial, see the 15th chapter of this work.

the portions, the whole of our land might at length be made to emerge from this sore evil. In as far as the needs and habits of the population are concerned, we hold the problem to be manageable, and most easily manageable; and, such being our conviction, we have long deemed it a worthy object of our most strenuous endeavours to prove it so by argument, or, what is still better, to evince it so by actual exhibition.

But, one cannot be long engaged in the prosecution of such a task, without coming into contact with other difficulties which are wholly distinct from the former, and which may be termed the factitious, or political difficulties of the question. Even though there should be, as we believe, no essential or natural difficulties at all, yet the difficulties of this second class are enough, in themselves, to retard the progress of light and of sound doctrine upon the subject, and far more to retard the accomplishment of any sound practical reformation. It is a very possible thing, both that certain views should be just and well-founded; and yet that those whose co-operation is indispensable to give effect to these views, should be very long of giving their consent to them. One might feel no difficulty in ridding any specified district of its pauperism, after that he has been permitted to take his own way, and pursue his own measures, with its families—while, at the same time, he may feel the uttermost difficulty in gaining the permission. They who have the constitutional right, either to arrest his proceedings, or to allow of them, must first be satisfied; and whether from honest con-

viction, or from the tenacity of a wedded adherence to old and existing methods, they may stand in the way of all innovation. Ere he come into contact with the human nature of the question among the poor themselves, he may have far greater obstacles against him in the law of the question, and in the obstinate prejudice or wilfulness, of those men with whom the right is vested of adjudging or administering for the poor. We should like the reader's clear apprehension, of the utter difference and dissimilarity which there is between these two sets of difficulties. The place of encounter with the one is in the parish, and among the applicants for relief from the parish. The place of encounter with the other may be in the vestry, where men have assembled to act upon the law; or in the quarter sessions, where men have assembled to pronounce upon, and to enforce the law; or, finally, within the walls of parliament, where the proposal is submitted to repeal or to rectify the law. It may be true, that there is a system of utmost facility, which, if adopted, shall be of omnipotent effect to expel pauperism from a parish, and with less of want and wretchedness among its families than before; and also true, that there shall be a weary struggle with the incredulity and perverse misconceptions of influential men, ere the system shall be suffered to have a trial. It might so be, that there is a method, which, after that it is established, shall be found of easy and effective operation amongst the poor, but which, before that it is established, shall have to encounter many years of formidable resistance amongst the present guides and gover-

nors of the poor. And this is enough to make the problem of pauperism a difficult problem. But still it is of importance precisely to see where the difficulty lies—and not to confound the natural difficulties which are inherent in the subject of management, with the political difficulties by which the way of the philanthropist is beset, when he comes into collision with the prejudices or partialities of those who at present have the right or the power of management.

At the same time, it ought to be remembered, that if the natural difficulties of the problem be indeed so very light and conquerable, its political difficulties must, of necessity, subside, and at length vanish altogether. It is the imagination, in fact, of the greatness of its essential difficulties, that mainly gives rise to the opposition of our influential men, or to what is still more hopeless than their active opposition, the listlessness and apathy of their despair. Could we succeed in proving, that there is really nothing in the condition of the lower orders which presents an insuperable barrier to the abolition of pauperism, the barrier of prejudice and dislike, on the part of the higher orders, to any radical change, must finally give way. Truth may be withstood long, but it cannot be withstood eternally. The provisions of Law will at length be made to accord with the principles of Nature; and whatever shall be found by experience, in the human nature of the question, to be most wholesome for the people, the law of the question must, in time, be moulded into a conformity therewith. The voice of wisdom will ascend from the parish

to the parliament; and the light which is struck out among the details and verifications of but an humble district in the land, will ultimately force all those inveteracies that now barricade the hall of legislation.

Let me now give one or two specimens of the way in which both sound opinion, and sound policy, may be baffled, and, for a time, arrested; and that, in virtue of certain impediments, to which even the most enlightened views on the question of pauperism stand peculiarly exposed.

There is first, then, an incredulity which is sure to be immediately lighted up, on the mention of so great an achievement, as the deliverance of a whole empire from its legal and compulsory pauperism. The very hopelessness of a result so mighty and marvellous, induces a heedlessness of every explanation that can be offered regarding it. The thing looks so utterly impracticable, as to carry, in the mere announcement of it, its own refutation. The apparent romance and unlikelihood of the whole speculation, beget a certain arch incredulity on the part of the hearer; and this is the most unfortunate posture that can well be imagined, for the entertainment of any demonstration in its favour. And there is really so much of empiricism in the world—the public ear has been so repeatedly assailed by the crudity, and the nostrum, and the splendid imagination, of successive adventurers—so manifold have been the promising theories which have passed, one after another, before the view of British society, and then passed away into utter abortiveness, that truly we cannot wonder, if the

general infidelity be now so strong, as to have settled down into the attitude, not merely of determined unbelief, but of downright listlessness. This is the kind of outset that we have to encounter, at the very opening of our proposals on the subject of pauperism; and the more surely, because of the magnitude of that change after which we aspire. It is this magnitude which stamps an aspect of extravagance and wildness on the whole speculation; insomuch, that the only treatment that is held meet for it, by many, is a rejection as summary and contemptuous as if it were one of the visions of Utopia.

Now, to meet this impression, and to overcome the incredulity which is founded upon it, it can be urged, that though suddenly a very great achievement may be impracticable, yet that gradually it may not be so—that a way may be devised of breaking it into distinct and successive steps, each of which is most easily practicable—that though the proposed transition is far too gigantic to be accomplished at once, yet that piece-meal, and by inches, the whole of it may be described in time, with no other than every-day instruments, and no other help than that of ordinary men—that though the mischief cannot be exterminated by a blow, it may by a process: And so, the whole of our demand is not for a sublime power that shall inflict the one, but for a sober-minded patience, that shall wait the result of the other. This is the very nature of our proposal for the extinction of pauperism. We have no mystic charm to propose, that shall work an instant extermination. We would

go over the ground, not by flights, but by footsteps —insomuch, that the deliverance of a single parish is not completed but by the disappearance of its whole existing generation of paupers; and the deliverance of the whole empire is not completed, but by this separate operation being repeated upon each, till it has overtaken all the parishes. We are not aware of one impracticable link or stepping-stone in the whole of that consecutive series, by which, at length, the evil, in its last vestiges, may be utterly swept away; and what we should like to press into this service, is not the enthusiasm that will impel to a lofty and magnificent daring after some enterprise which is great, but the assiduity that will work its way through a course or succession of littles, and, without any straining or impetuosity whatever, will wait for the termination of it.

But no sooner do we get rid of one antipathy, than we are instantly met by another. The very men who have no credit for what is great, may have no value for what is gradual. When, to get the better of their incredulity about the efficacy of our process, we tell them how slow it is, then we have just as hard an encounter as before with their indifference. There is the substitution of one mental prejudice or perversity for another; and in making our escape from the first, we run into a conflict with the second. In the first instance, there is the same unbelief in the possibility of all pauperism being done away, as they would have in a magical performance; and in the second instance, whatever is to be done in the way of reformation, has no charm for them, unless it can be done with

a rapidity that would be altogether magical. We do not see how it is possible to suit the taste of such people with any acceptable speculation on the subject of pauperism—sceptical as they are of any relief being practicable, and, at the same time, impatient as they are for that relief being immediate. We cannot devise for them a scheme that shall at once be moderate enough in its aim to suit the narrowness of their apprehensions, and at the same time speedy enough in its operation to suit the extravagance of their wishes. When they hear the promise of a total deliverance, they spurn it away from them as romantic. When the romance is mitigated, by the proposal that the deliverance shall be very gradual, they spurn it away from them as tardy. It is not more beyond the limits of human strength to do what is great in a great time, than to do what is small in a small time; but they will not allow these elements to be properly sorted together. They first quarrel with the greatness of the achievement, as the thing which makes it to be hopeless; and then they quarrel with the greatness of the time which is required for doing it, as the thing which makes it to be worthless. After all, those are the more egregiously romantic, who would have nothing to be done, unless it can be brought about with the quickness of legerdemain; and theirs is the imagination which, of all others, outruns the soberness both of arithmetic and experience. It is not uncommon that the same individual should feel distrust in the possibility of some given accomplishment, because of a greatness that threw over it an

air of the marvellous, and, at the same time, an utter disregard for the accomplishment at all, unless it could be done with a velocity which would indeed make it marvellous. This incredulity on the one hand, and impatience on the other, are frequently attributes of the same mind, although as frequently, perhaps, each is realised separately on two distinct classes; and it is between those who are hopeless, and those who are precipitate, that it is so difficult to extricate a nation from the evils of a wrong domestic economy.

And yet, if a method be proposed, by which relief from a great existing pressure might be made to commence immediately, although it cannot be completed immediately, this surely should be held as not altogether unworthy of regard. Though not wholly lightened in a year of some grievous burden, yet if a process can be devised by which it shall be made lighter next year than it is at present, and gradually lighter each successive year, until it has melted finally away, this surely ought not to be treated with indifference, because of the many impetuous spirits, who will be satisfied with nothing short of a deliverance that shall both be total and immediate. The man who is heavily in debt, will be thankful of deliverance, even though it should be only by successive instalments. And it is thus, that we would have the cure and the clearing away of pauperism to proceed. The relief commences immediately, but it must proceed by instalments. There may be the lapse of a whole generation ere it is consummated. We do not propose to lift the enchanter's wand, for the

purpose of an instant dissipation. The evil must be dissipated gradually. We do think that great things may be done, but we demand time for the doing of them. We do not ask that any gigantic strength should be put forth, but only that a sober and very practicable business should be persevered in.

There are various methods, and these gradual ones too, by which it is proposed to attack this hydra of pauperism, and, if possible, by inches to destroy it. For the full exposition of our own method, we must refer to former chapters of this work; and we now enter on the consideration of another method which still engrosses a good deal the attention of our public and parliamentary men. It is to be observed, that indigence may arise from two sources—either from inability for work, or from the inadequacy of its wages. The original pauperism of England, it is said, was restricted to those who were poor from impotency; and it is regarded by many as an abuse or corruption of it, that it should ever have been extended to able-bodied labourers, in order to make up for any deficiency in their wages. Now, the great aim at present is, to repress pauperism within its original limits, by putting an end altogether to this latter application of the poor's fund,—thus separating between the distress which age and impotency bring upon the labouring classes, and the distress which is occasionally brought upon them by the fluctuations in the price of labour. There are some who would be satisfied with the lopping off of this last excrescence from the system of poor-laws in England;

while others contemplate the possibility, and admit the desirableness of an ulterior reformation. We think that there is a gradual process for the extermination of the system in both its branches, which is alike applicable, and from the very outset of it, to each of them. Yet this does not supersede the importance of discussing, separately and at some length, the effects of a poor rate when applied in aid of defective wages. We feel, however, that this will require a few preliminary explanations.*

The first thing to be attended to, is the way in which the price of any article brought to market is affected by the variations of its supply on the one hand, and of the demand for it on the other. The holders of sugar, for example, after having reserved what they need for their own use, bring the whole surplus to market, where they dispose of it in return for those other things which they do need. It must be quite obvious, that if there be more of this sugar exposed than there is a demand for, the great force of the competition will be among the sellers, to get it off their hands. Each will try to outstrip the others, by holding out a greater inducement for purchasers to buy from him—and

* We are quite sensible that several of the principles advanced in the course of our discussions, are abundantly obvious to all who are in any way conversant with the first elements of political science. It may be thought, that, on this account, they should be immediately assumed as the basis of an ulterior argument; but that it is an idle detention of the reader to argue over again to him those positions or doctrines wherewith he is fully satisfied already. But we can never help the feeling, that on this subject we are addressing practical, as well as studious and speculative men; and that, though at the hazard of over-satiating the latter by a redundant explicitness, we can scarcely err against the former either by an excess of simplicity or of copiousness.

this he can only do by holding it out to them on cheaper terms. It is thus that each tries to undersell the rest—or, in other words, the great supply of any article of exchange is always sure to bring down the price of it.

On the other hand, let the same article have been sparingly brought into the market, insomuch that, among the buyers, there is a demand for it to a greater extent than it is to be had. The force of the competition now changes place. It is among the purchasers, instead of the sellers. Each will try to outstrip his neighbours, by holding out a larger inducement to the holders of a commodity now rare, and, therefore, in more urgent request, than usual. This he can only do by offering a greater price for it. It is thus that each tries to overbid the other—or, in other words, the small supply of any article of exchange is always sure to bring up the price of it.

The price, then, of a commodity, falls with the increase of the supply, and rises with the diminution of it; a law of political economy, which is expressed still more shortly thus—that the price of every article of commerce is inversely in proportion to its supply.

But it is conceivable, that there might be no variation whatever in the supply—that, from one week to another, the same quantity of sugar, or corn, or any other commodity, may be brought to market, and yet, for all this, may there be a great weekly variation in the price of them. The truth is, that not only may the holders of an article have not always the same quantity on hand for sale, but

the buyers may not always have the same need of it. There may be a fluctuation in the demand for an article, as well as in the supply of it; and it is quite evident that the price just rises and falls with the demand, instead of rising and falling inversely to it. Hence the more extended aphorism in political economy, that the price of any commodity is directly in proportion to the demand, and inversely in proportion to the supply—a doctrine that is somewhat more loosely and generally expressed, by saying, that the price of an article depends on the proportion which the demand and the supply bear to each other.

There is nought in the interposition of money to affect this process. Its office is merely to facilitate the exchange of commodities. But the proportion of their quantities in the exchange is just the same, when made to pass through such an intermedium, as when brought closely and directly into barter. The venders of so much corn may, with the price of it, buy so much sugar. It is not convenient to bring both these articles, or perhaps either of them, in bulk and body, to the scene of the negotiation; and so the money that is received for the one is given for the other. This, however, does not affect the proportion between the number of quarters of the one commodity, which, in the then state of the market, is held as equivalent to the number of hundred-weights of the other commodity. This depends on the two elements of demand and supply alone; and is the same as if the expedient of money for carrying into effect the contracts of merchandise, had never been devised.

The mere intervention, then, of money, will not perplex the reader out of a right estimation upon this subject. He has only to remember, that either by adding to the supply of any article, or lessening the demand for it, the price of it is diminished; and that either by lessening the supply, or adding to the demand, the price of it is increased.

Now there are certain articles, that, in this respect, are far more tremulous than others, or that more readily vibrate in price, and with a much wider range too of fluctuation. All are aware of the fluctuations of the corn market; and how, in consequence, the heat, and often the frenzy, of deep and desperate adventure, are associated with the temptations and the losses of such a trade. The truth is, that, generally speaking, the necessaries of life are far more powerfully affected in the price of them by a variation in their quantity, than are the luxuries of life. Let the crop of grain be deficient by one-third in its usual amount, or rather, let the supply of grain in the market, whether from the home produce or by importation, be curtailed to the same extent,—and this will create a much greater addition than of one-third to the price of it. It is not an unlikely prediction, that its cost would be more than doubled by the shortcoming of one-third or one-fourth in the supply. Not so with an article of luxury, and more especially if something else can be purchased for it in the way of substitution. For example, let such be the failure of West India produce, on any particular year, that rum is deficient by one-third from its usual supply. There will be a consequent rise in

the price of it, but nothing at all like the rise which an equal deficiency would create in the price of grain.

Such is the fact; and there can be no difficulty in apprehending the cause of it. Men can more easily suffer the deprivation or the diminution of a luxury; and when its price offers to rise extravagantly, they can limit their demand for it. I can commute the use of rum, for the use of another and a cheaper substitute; or, failing this, I can restrain my consumption, or abandon it altogether. Its scarcity will enhance its cost on the one hand; but this, on the other hand, can be met or counteracted, to any extent, by a slackening of the demand. The point of equilibrium between the sellers and the buyers of rum will be shifted; and its price will become higher than before, but not so high as it would have been, had rum been an indispensable of human comfort, and therefore given all the more of urgency to the applications of purchasers. This is not the case with rum; but it is so with grain. The mass of our families could not, without distress or great inconvenience, limit their use of it to two-thirds of their wonted consumption. Each will press forward to obtain a larger share of the general stock than his neighbour; and it is just this earnest competition among the buyers, that raises the price of necessaries greatly beyond the proportion by which the supply of them is deficient. Men can live without luxuries; and will be content to put up with a smaller allowance of them for a season, rather than pay that price to which they would be elevated by

a demand as intense as all must have for the necessaries of existence. Men cannot live without necessaries, and will not be so content to put up with a reduced allowance of them, as they would of the mere comforts or expensive gratifications of luxury. It is thus that the same proportional lack in each class of commodities gives rise to such a difference of effect in augmenting the price of each of them; and it is just the more earnest demand, in the one case than in the other, that explains the difference.

A failure in the general supply of esculents to the extent of one-half, would more than quadruple the price of the first necessaries of life, and would fall with very aggravated pressure on the lower orders. A failure to the same extent in all the vineyards of the world, would most assuredly not raise the price of wine to any thing near this proportion. Rather than pay four times the wonted price for Burgundy, there would be a general descent, on the part of its consumers in high life, to claret, or from that to port, or from that to the home-made wines of our own country, or from that to its spirituous, or from that to its fermented liquors. And the facility of thus substituting one indulgence for another, is not the only refuge against an enormous charge upon these articles. There is also the facility of limiting the amount of the indulgence, or of withdrawing from it altogether —a refuge that is not so open to the population under a famine of the first necessaries of existence. There is much of shifting and of substitution certainly among families, when such a calamity visits

them—as from animal to vegetable food, from flour to meal, from meal to potatoes. But, on the supposition of a general short-coming in the yearly produce of the land, the price of each of these articles rises successively with the run of purchasers towards them. On the one hand, the eagerness of demand after all the varieties of food, will enhance the price of all, and greatly beyond the proportion of the deficiency in the supply of them: and, on the other hand, this enhanced price is necessary so to restrain the consumption of the families, as to make the deficient stock of provisions stand out till the coming of the next harvest. It is thus, by the way, that a population survive so well those years of famine, when the prices, perhaps, are tripled. This does not argue, as is obvious from the explanations which we have now given, that they must therefore be three times worse fed than usual. The food of the country may only, for aught we know, have been lessened by a fourth part of its usual supply; or, in other words, the families may, at an average, be served with three-fourths of their usual subsistence, at the very time that the cost of it is three times greater than usual. And to make out this larger payment, they have just for a year to retrench in other articles —altogether, it is likely, to give up the use of comforts, and to limit themselves more largely in the second, than they can possibly do in the first necessaries of life—to forego, perhaps, many of the little seasonings wherewith they wont to impart a relish to their coarse and humble fare, to husband more strictly their fuel, and be satisfied for a while

with vestments more threadbare, and even more tattered, than what, in better times, they would choose to appear in. It is thus that, even although the first necessaries of life should be tripled in price for a season, and although the pecuniary income of the labouring classes should not at all be increased, yet they are found to weather the hardships of such a visitation. The food is still served out to them at a much larger proportion than the cost of it would, in the first instance, appear to indicate. And, in the second instance, they are enabled to purchase at this cost; because, and more especially, if they be a well-habited and a well-conditioned peasantry, with a pretty high standard of enjoyment in ordinary years, they have the more that they can save and retrench upon in a year of severe scarcity. They can disengage much of that revenue which before went to the purchase of dress, and of various luxuries that might, for a season, be dispensed with —and so have the more to expend on the materials of subsistence. It is this which explains how roughly a population can bear to be handled, both by adverse seasons, and by the vicissitudes of trade —and how, after all, there is a stability about a people's means which will keep its ground against many shocks, and amidst many fluctuations. It is a mystery and a marvel to many an observer, how the seemingly frail and precarious interest of the labouring classes should, after all, have the stamina of such endurance, as to weather the most fearful reverses both of commerce and of the seasons; and that, somehow or other, you find, after an interval of gloomy suffering and still gloomier

fears, that the families do emerge again into the same state of sufficiency as before. We know not a fitter study for the philanthropist, than the workings of that mechanism by which a process so gratifying is caused, or in which he will find greater reason to admire the exquisite skill of those various adaptations, that must be referred to the providence of Him who framed society, and suited so wisely to each other the elements whereof it is composed.

There is nought which appears more variable than the operation of those elements by which the annual supply of the national subsistence is regulated. How unlike in character is one season to another; and between the extremes of dryness and moisture, how exceedingly different may be the amount of that produce on which the sustenance of man essentially depends! Even after that the promise of abundance is well nigh realized, the hurricane of a single day passing over the yet uncut but ripened corn, or the rain of a few weeks, to drench and macerate the sheaves that lie piled together on the harvest-field, were enough to destroy the food of millions. We are aware of a compensation, in the varieties of soil and exposure, so that the weather which is adverse to one part of the country might be favourable to another; besides, that the mischief of a desolating tempest in autumn must only be partial, from the harvest of the plains and uplands falling upon different months. Still, with all these balancing causes, the produce of different years is very far from being equalized; and its fluctuations would come charged with still more of distress and destitution to families, were

there not a counterpoise to the laws of Nature, in what may be termed the laws of Political Economy.

The price of human food does not immediately depend on the quantity of it that is produced, but on the quantity of it that is brought to market; and it is well, that in every year of scarcity, there should be instant causes put into operation for increasing the latter quantity to the uttermost, so as to repair, as much as possible, the deficiencies of the former. It is well, that even a small short-coming in the crop should be so surely followed by a great advance of prices; for this has instantly the effect of putting the families of the land upon that shortness of allowance, which shall cause the supply, limited as it is, to serve throughout the year. But, besides the wholesome restraint which is thus imposed on the general consumption of families, there is encouragement given, by this dearness, to abridge the consumption upon farms, and, by certain shifts in their management, to make out the greatest possible surplus, for the object of sale, and of supply to the population at large. With a high price, the farmer feels it a more urgent interest, to carry as much of his produce to market as he can; and, for this purpose, he will retrench to the uttermost at home. And he has much in his power. More particularly, he can and does retrench considerably upon the feed of his cattle; and, in as far as this wont to consist of potatoes or grain, there must an important addition be gained in this way to the supplies of the market. One must often have been struck with the comparative cheapness of animal food, in a year of scarcity. This is because

of the greater slaughter of cattle which takes place in such a year, to save the heavy expense of maintaining them; and which, besides affording a direct accession to the sustenance of man, lightens still more the farm consumption, and disengages for sale a still greater amount of the necessaries of life. We do not say, but that the farm suffers a derangement by this change of regimen, from which it might take years to recover fully. But the evil becomes more tolerable by being spread. The horrors of extreme scarcity are prevented. The adversity is weathered, at its furthest point. The country emerges from the visitation, and without, in all probability, the starvation of one individual; and all, because from the operation of the causes that we have now explained, the supply of the market is made to oscillate within smaller limits than the crop—insomuch, that, though the latter should be deficient by one-third of the whole, the former might not be deficient by one-fifth or one-sixth of what is yielded usually.

This effect is greatly increased, by the suspending of distillation in years of scarcity. And after all, should the supplies be yet very short, and the prices therefore far more than proportionally high, this will naturally, and of itself, bring on the importation of grain from foreign parts. If such be the variety of weather and soil, even within the limits of a country, as in some measure to balance the scarcity which is experienced in one set of farms, by the comparative abundance of another set, this will apply with much greater force to a whole continent, or to the world at large. If a small defi-

ciency in the home supply of grain induce a higher price than with other articles of commerce, this is just a provision for a securer and readier filling up of the deficiency, by a movement from abroad—a thing of far greater importance with the necessaries, than with the mere comforts or luxuries of life. That law of wider and more tremulous oscillation in the price of corn, which we have attempted to expound, is in itself a security for a more equal distribution of it over the globe by man, in those seasons when Nature has been partial—so as to diffuse the more certainly, and the more immediately, through the earth, that which has been dropped upon it unequally from heaven. It is well, that greater efficacy should thus be given to that corrective force, by which the yearly supplies of food are spread over the world with greater uniformity than they at first descend upon it; and, however much it may be thought to aggravate a people's hardships, that a slight failure in their home supply should create such a rise in the cost of necessaries, yet certainly it makes the impulse all the more powerful, by which corn flows in, from lands of plenty, to a land of famine. But what we have long esteemed the most beautiful part of this operation, is the instant advantage which a large importation from abroad gives to our export manufacturers at home. There is a limit in the rate of exchange to the exportation of articles from any country; but up to this limit, there is a class of labourers employed in the preparation of these articles. Now, the effect of an augmented importation upon the exchange is such as to en-

large this limit—so that our export traders can then sell with a larger profit, and carry out a greater amount of goods than before, and thus enlist a more numerous population in the service of preparing them. An increased importation always gives an impulse to exportation, so as to make employment spring up in one quarter, at the very time that it disappears in another. Or rather, at the very time when the demand for a particular commodity is slackened at home, it is stimulated abroad. We have already adverted to the way in which families shift their expenditure in a year of scarcity, diverting a far greater proportion of it than usual, to the first necessaries of life, and withdrawing it proportionally from the comforts, and even second necessaries of life. Cloth may be regarded as one of the second necessaries; and it were woful indeed, if, on the precise year when food was dearest, the numerous workmen engaged in this branch of industry should find that employment was scarcest. But in very proportion as they are abandoned by customers at home, do they find a compensation in the more quickened demand of customers from abroad. It is in these various ways, that a country is found to survive so well its hardest and heaviest visitations; and even under a triple price for the first articles of subsistence, it has been known to emerge into prosperity again, without an authentic instance of starvation throughout all its families.

The better to illustrate the principles of our immediate argument, we may here state a case which looks at first to be an anomaly, and yet is capable of being resolved in a way that is quite consistent

with the view which we have laboured to impress. Our general doctrine is, that the price of a commodity oscillates with the quantity of it which is brought to market; but that the oscillations are much larger with a necessary, than with a luxury of life. Now, there is an apparent exception to this, in the case of the more rare and valuable spiceries. There is a well-known practice among the monopolists of these, which obtained so far back as centuries ago, when, to enhance their price, they destroyed a large proportion of their cargoes, at every time that there was danger of an overplus being brought to market. And they found their account in this. Or, in other words, an article that is more entitled to the denomination of a luxury, than the one we have already specified,—certainly far more a luxury than rum, as confined, in the use of it, to a very peculiar class, the affluent in society, —may bear a greater resemblance to corn, than to rum, in the magnitude of those oscillations which the price of it undergoes. Take, for example, the three commodities of grain, and sugar, and nutmeg. Let the supply of each fail, by one-third of its wonted quantity. With such a deficiency, the price of grain may be doubled, or perhaps trebled; the sugar will rise in price, too, but not to any thing like the extent of the former; while the nutmeg, which is certainly more of a luxury than sugar, in as far as it is of rarer indulgence, and restricted, in the use of it, to a far more select class of society, which in this respect, therefore, stands at a wider distance from the grain than the sugar does, will come much nearer to it, in respect of the oscillation

that its price undergoes. It too may double or treble its price, on suffering the deficiency of a third part in its supply.

Now, the account of the matter is simply this. Sugar, though a luxury, is yet used in such quantity, that it forms a very heavy article of family expenditure. The offer to double its price, on the same deficiency that would double the price of grain, behoved instantly to be met by a severe retrenchment and economy, on the part of the great majority of its consumers. With grain, it is an object to economise; but, from being a necessary, it is not easy to do so beyond a certain extent. So that there is in that article, an intense demand, and, consequently, a high price. With sugar, it is also an object to economise; and, from being a luxury, it is possible to do so to any extent. Hence a slackening of the demand with it, which will keep down its price more than in the case of grain. With nutmeg, which is the veriest of all luxuries, it is still more possible to economise, than even with sugar; but then it is no object. There is not sixpence a-year consumed of it for each family in Great Britain; and perhaps not one family that spends more than a guinea on this article alone. Let the price then be doubled or trebled; this will have no perceptible effect on the demand; and the price will far rather be paid, than that the wonted indulgence should in any degree be foregone. The aged gentlewoman, to whose taste the nutmeg flavour is an improvement upon the tea, will not be driven from her dear aromatic, by such a doubling or trebling of its price, as might

incur to her the additional expense of perhaps a halfpenny in the month. The same holds true of cloves, and cinnamon, and Cayenne pepper, and all the precious spiceries of the East; and it is thus, that while, in the general, the price of necessaries differs so widely from that of luxuries, in regard to the extent of oscillation, there is a remarkable approximation in this matter, between the very commonest of these necessaries, and the very rarest of these luxuries.

Wages form the price of labour; and this price, like that of every other commodity, is determined by the proportion which obtains between the supply of it in the market, and the effective demand for it. Should the supply be diminished, or the demand increase, the price rises. Should the supply be increased, or the demand slacken, the price falls. But there are certain commodities that undergo a much greater fluctuation of price than others, though there should only be the same change with each of them in this proportion between the demand and the supply. Take, for example, the two articles of wheat and rum. A government contract for wheat, to the extent of one-twentieth part of its whole stock in the country, would increase its price far more than a similar contract for a twentieth part of all the rum. One bad harvest that caused a deficiency in the crop to the same extent, would raise the price of this grain in a much higher proportion, than the spirit would be raised by a deficiency of the same magnitude from a bad season in the West Indies. The cause of this difference is very obvious; yet, from its application to our

present subject, it must be still a little expatiated on.

Wheat is a necessary of life. Rum is not. I can want spirits. I cannot want bread. Neither can I so conveniently reduce my consumption of the latter article as of the former. And I will, therefore, pay a greater price to overcome the greater inconvenience. This holds particularly true of the great mass of families in a population. Bread is the staple article of their subsistence; and, generally speaking, one can less bear a retrenchment upon his usual allowance of food, than a retrenchment upon his usual indulgence in a luxury. Should the price of rum offer to rise beyond a certain amount, I can abstain from the purchase of it: I can shift my demand to another kind of spirits, or I can give up the use of them altogether. In reference to grain, I have no such control over my determinations. I can neither want it altogether, nor can I, without considerable suffering, make any great abatement in my demand for it. With a luxury of life, the sellers are more dependent on the taste and whim of the purchasers. With a necessary of life, the sellers have the purchasers in their power. It is thus that a rise in the price of spirits, consequent on a deficient supply, might so far limit the consumption, as to prevent it from rising extravagantly. But when grain is deficient in quantity, each has a far more urgent demand for his wonted supply of that article, and will make greater sacrifices to obtain it. There is a far more intense competition in the one case than in the other—insomuch, that a very small deficiency in

the harvest will produce a greater rise of price on the one article, than a similar deficiency in the imports will produce upon the other article. It is thus that grain, in respect of price, is among the most tremulous of all the commodities which are brought into a market—as sensitive, and as subject to variations, as is the fitful weather; and not only has it a greater range of fluctuation, but vibrates in its price with far greater facility and frequency than the other commodities of trade. A deficiency of one-tenth in the crop, will raise the price greatly more than one-tenth. A deficiency of one-third will produce the alarm, and even much of the actual suffering, of a famine.

Now, labour might be considered in the light of a marketable commodity—the supply of which is measured by the number of labourers—and the price of which is regulated, as in other instances, by the proportion between this supply, and the demand. This price partakes, with that of the necessaries of life, in being liable to great fluctuation; and on the same principle, too, but in a sort of reverse direction. It is the urgent need of subsistence which so raises articles of the first necessity, even upon a very slight short-coming from their usual quantity in the market. And it is the same urgent need of subsistence which so lowers the price of labour; and that, upon a very slight overplus in the number of labourers. What, in fact, looking to one side of the negotiation, may be called the demand of the capitalists for labour,—when looking to the other side of it, may be called the demand of the labourers for employment; and,

in this latter demand, there may be all the importunity and vehemence of a demand for the necessaries of life. Employment, in fact, is the vehicle on which these necessaries are brought to their door; and should there be more hands than are wanted, rather than be thrown out of the competition altogether, there will be a general cheapening of their labour, and so that the fall in its price shall go greatly beyond the excess in the number of labourers. Men must have subsistence; and if employment be the essential stepping-stone to this, men must have employment;—and thus it is that capitalists have the same control over workmen, when there is an excess in their number, which the holders of the necessaries of life have over their customers, when there is a deficiency in the crop. And so, the price of labour too is a most tremulously variable element, and has as wide a range of fluctuation as the price of corn. A very small excess in the number of labourers will create a much greater proportional reduction in their wages. Should twenty thousand weavers of muslin be adequate, on a fair recompense for their work, to meet the natural demand that there is in that branch of manufacture, an additional thousand of these unemployed, and going about with their solicitations and offers among the master-manufacturers, would bring a fearful distress and deficiency on the circumstances of the whole body. The wages would fall by much more than a twentieth part of what they were originally; and thus, by a very trifling excess in the number of workmen, might a very sore and widely felt depression be

brought upon the comfort and sufficiency of the lower orders.

Now, however melancholy this contemplation might be in the first instance, yet, by dwelling upon it a little further, we shall be led to discover certain outlets and reparations, that might cause us to look more hopefully than ever on the future destinies of our species. One thing is clear, that if so small a fractional excess in the supply of labour, over its demand, is enough to account for a very great deficiency in its remuneration, then, after all, it may lie within the compass of a small fractional relief to bring back the remuneration to its proper level, and so restore the desirable equilibrium between the wages of a workman and the wants of his family. It is comfortable to know, that the misery of an overwrought trade is capable of being retrieved on such easy terms—and that could either the present small excess of labourers be otherwise disposed of, or their future annual supply be somewhat and slightly restored, then might well-paid, and well-conditioned industry, that most cheerful of all spectacles, again be realised. Could any expedient be devised by which the number of labourers might be more equalised to the need that there is for them, then, instead of the manufacturers having so oppressive a control over the workmen, workmen might in some degree have a control over manufacturers. We should certainly regard it as a far more healthful state of the community, if our workmen, instead of having to seek employment, were to be sought after; and that masters had to go in quest of service, rather

than that labourers had to go a-begging for it. It is most piteous to see a population lying prostrate and overwhelmed under the weight of their own numbers; nor are we aware of a finer object, both for the wisdom and benevolence of patriotism, than to devise a method by which the lower orders might be rescued from this state of apparent helplessness. This would be done, if they were only relieved from the pressure of that competition by which they now elbow out, or beat down each other; but nothing more certain, than that not till the number of workmen bears a less proportion to the need which there is for them, will they be able to treat more independently with their employers, or make a stand against all such terms of remuneration, as would degrade their families beneath the par of human comfort.

That a very small excess of workmen over the need which there is for them, will create much more than a proportional depression in their wages, is just as true, as that a very small deficiency in the supply of the corn-market will create much more than a proportional rise in the price of that commodity. Both are true, and on the same principle too. It is, in either case, a very sore mischief, traceable to a very slight cause; and which, therefore, perhaps, may admit of being cured by the application of a very slight corrective. It appears, by M'Pherson's Annals of Commerce, that the average importation of corn, during a great many years, exclusive of the two remarkable seasons of scarcity in 1800 and 1801, did not amount to more than eleven days' consumption annually;

and that even the greatest importation ever known, did not amount to one-tenth of the consumption of the island. These might appear but fractional remedies, which could be easily dispensed with; and so, the good of importation might come to be under-rated. But minute as these annual supplies may appear in themselves, they are momentous in their consequences; and lower the price of corn in the market, far more than they add to the stock of it. And, it is even so, of the relation which subsists between the number of people in a country, and the degree of comfort which they enjoy. A very small excess in the number, will operate a very great reduction upon the comfort. But just as a slight importation will restore the price of necessaries to their fair and natural level, so may either a slight exportation of our people, such as to dispose of their small excess, or a slight change of habits, such as to prevent their small excess, have the effect of raising the lower orders to that condition, in which every generous friend of humanity would rejoice to behold them.

It does not follow then, because there is a very great depression in the circumstances of a people, that, great as it is, it may not be removed either by a very slight exportation, or by a very slight prevention, so as somewhat to diminish the number of them. These two expedients of relief are so distinct, that the one, it is imagined by many, might entirely supersede the other. That emigration, by which the excess of our population might be disposed of, should, in their apprehension, do away the practical importance of those checks by

which the excess might have been prevented. There is, at all events, a certain relation between these two expedients, which, as well as each of the expedients themselves, is worthy of consideration.

We cannot enter upon this argument without adverting, in the first instance, to the celebrated theory of Mr Malthus, on the subject of population. And one thing at least is manifest, that the very comprehension of his views, has retarded the practical application of them to any question of political or domestic economy. He writes in reference to the species, and the world; and the mind of his reader, by being constantly directed to the population of the whole globe, and to the relative capacities for their subsistence, that are diffused over the surface of it, can make escape from his conclusions by roaming in imagination over the vast regions that are yet unpeopled, and the wilds that, however rich in nature's luxuriance, have been yet untrodden by human footsteps. The speculation is admitted by many to be true, who, nevertheless, would lie upon their oars till the last acre on the face of the earth was brought to its highest possible cultivation. The reply to an alleged excess of population in Britain, is, that New Holland offers a space equal to twenty Britains, which has been yet unentered upon; and that till this space be fully occupied, there is only one expedient which we have to do with, even that of emigration—that, meanwhile, the other expedient, or a preventive check upon the increase of population, is wholly uncalled for, that it may lie in re-

serve for that futurity which is still at an indefinite distance from us—and that when agriculture shall have done its uttermost upon all lands, it will be fully soon enough to think of keeping the human species within that maximum of human subsistence which shall then have been arrived at.

But after all, it does not necessarily follow, that the pressure of the world's population upon the world's food, will remain unfelt, till the latter has attained its maximum. It is quite enough for this effect, that the tendency to an increase of population is greater than the tendency to an increase of food. When a moving body comes into contact with one that is stationary, it exerts upon it the force of a certain pressure—which may represent that of an increasing population upon means of subsistence now stationary, because now augmented to the uttermost. But when the moving body, instead of coming into contact with one that is stationary, overtakes one that is moving in the same direction with itself, but with less velocity—still there is a pressure, no doubt less than the former one, yet proportional to the difference between the velocities, and which may represent the actual pressure, wherewith every population will bear upon their means of subsistence, should they but tend to increase faster than their means. It all depends on the proportion which there is between the tendencies to an increase of population and an increase of food; and hence, it is a possible thing, even now, for the population of the world to press too hard upon its means of subsistence—and therefore, a desirable thing at this moment, as well as

centuries afterwards, that every moral and salutary check were laid on the multiplication of our species. It is quite an imaginary comfort to the suffering families of England, that there are tracts in New Holland, capable of maintaining a tenfold population to that of the British empire. They cannot transport themselves there in an instant. They cannot raise at once the means, either for their own emigration, or for the cultivation of this unbroken territory—and if not at once, then it must take a time ere this consummation is gained; and it is simply enough, for the upholding of a continuous pressure, that during that time, there is a greater force of progress in the world's population than in the world's food. Could we, by the lifting up of a magical wand, cause a ripened harvest to arise and cover the whole of earth's improvable surface, then every preventive check on the number of mankind, may, for the present at least, be suspended. But if, in point of fact, our species have to toil their way to this accomplishment for many successive generations, then, by reason of the intervening obstacles, a pressure may be felt, and without the operation of a preventive check, the great human family may all along be in the misery of a straitened condition. The existence of such a country as New Holland may lighten this misery, but no more do it away than a similar tract of land in the moon or any of the planets, to which emigration is impossible. There may not be such a barrier, as shall intercept all emigration, and utterly close every outlet for our redundant people, but at least such a barrier as would impede the full

tide of emigration requisite for our complete and total deliverance. Thousands of years may elapse ere all the facilities shall be opened, and the requisite capital shall so overflow, as to occupy the whole of that domain which has been yet unentered on. It is a gradual process, carried forward by the emigrations of each successive year; and, during the whole period, it may hold true, that many shall be in circumstances of distress, while few shall be in circumstances to emigrate. This is the real condition of every country that is sending forth its families, from time to time, to colonize distant territories. There are light and adventurous spirits that will move on every impulse; but nothing, save actual and felt distress, will exile from their homes any considerable number of whole families. Those who do move, have the means to emigrate; and others who have not, remain in straitness and suffering where they are. Even the aid of government cannot go beyond a certain limit; and, after it has done its uttermost, still there may be a distressed, because a redundant population. These successive ejections of the people, are like the successive escapes of steam by a safety-valve, which relieve the pressure that is within, but still it remains a pressure that is in equilibrium with the weight which is incumbent over it. Now, it is not desirable that there should be so strong an elastic pressure from within, as that the people shall be straitened and in durance, up to the point of being tempted to emigrate. A country is in a state of violence when at all comparable to a vessel, that is always on the eve of bursting, unless

relieved by a constant efflux, or by successive discharges. To mitigate this violence is at all times desirable; and it were surely a better and a blander community at home, if, instead of the people being urged on to the very margin of the country's capabilities to maintain them, they had rather ease, and amplitude, and sufficiency in their own native land, and were kept a good way within the point of emigration.

It says much for the soundness of the principles of Mr Malthus, that they always become more evident the narrower the field is on which they are exemplified; and, consequently, the nearer the inspection is to which they are submitted. When he affirms, in reference to the whole species, that there is an evil in premature marriages, for that the population of the world are thereby caused to press inconveniently on the food of the world, one finds a refuge from his conclusions, in the imagination of many fertile but yet uncultivated tracts, that might yield the greatest possible scope to the outlet of families for centuries to come. Or, when he affirms the same thing, in reference to a kingdom, even apart from emigration, there is still a refuge from his conclusions, in the yet unreclaimed wastes, and yet imperfect agriculture, of the land in which we dwell. But one needs not his philosophy to feel the whole force of his principle within the limits of a family, where the premature marriage of a son, who had rashly, and previously to any right establishment of himself in the world, entered upon this engagement, would be deplored by all the members of it as a most calamitous visi-

tation; and that, too, both on account of the present expense, and also the eventual expense of a rising progeny. It would be no consolation, in these circumstances, to be told of the millions of acres, both at home and abroad, that could yet be turned to the sustenance of millions of human beings. This will pass for a reply to the speculations of Mr Malthus, when the question relates to the population of the globe, or to the population of our empire: but it will not be sustained as a dissuasive of any weight against the alarm that is felt, lest the improvident marriage of a son, who had no tenement of his own, should bring on the inconvenience of an over-peopled household. The danger and the imprudence are here distinctly apprehended; and no objection that can be alleged against his Theory of Population, when proposed in its abstract and universal form, can surely overbear those lessons of practical and experimental wisdom, that have been familiarly recognized as such by men of plain, yet substantial understanding, long before his theory was ever heard of.*

* Mr Malthus, in his chapter on the checks to population in the islands of the South Sea, says well of Otaheite, that "The difficulty here is reduced to so narrow a compass, is so clear, precise, and forcible, that we cannot escape from it. It cannot be answered in the usual vague and inconsiderate manner, by talking of emigration and further cultivation. In the present instance, we cannot but acknowledge that the one is impossible, and the other glaringly inadequate. The fullest conviction must stare us in the face, that the people on this groupe of islands could not continue to double their numbers every twenty-five years; and before we proceed to inquire into the state of society on them, we must be perfectly certain, that unless a perpetual miracle render the women barren, we shall be able to trace some very powerful checks to population in the habits of the people."

It is the narrowness of the compass which causes the operation

In like manner would we plead for an exemption from the obloquy that attaches to this Theory, when, instead of speculating and providing for the whole world, we concentrate our views on a single parish, and recall our scattered imagination from other continents and other climes, to that which lies directly and familiarly before us, among the population of our own little vicinity. And the truth is, that the poor laws of England tend to isolate each of its parishes from the rest of the world; and so, to bring it more clearly and definitely before us, as a separate object of contemplation. More particularly, do they throw a barrier around each, which, though not altogether insuperable, has yet been of great efficacy in hemming each population within its own boundaries, and closing up the outlets to emigration. It is in this way that the most encouraging offers of a settlement in distant lands, are often resisted by the English peasantry. They are aware of a certain right by the law of pauperism, upon their own native soil; and this they are not willing to forego. They feel that they have a property at home, which they would relinquish by the measure; and that reasoning, therefore, which blinds the eye of the reader against the truth of the general speculation, is not applicable in present circumstances to the case that is before us.

of Mr Malthus' principle to be so distinctly seen within the limits of a household, and also within the limits of a parish, if any barrier to emigration has been thrown around it. Now the poor laws have thrown an artificial barrier of this sort around an English parish; so that the miseries of a redundant population may there be most distinctly exemplified, and without escape from them, either in emigration, or in the further cultivation of distant parts of the world.

And the poor laws not only check the egress of the redundant population to our distant colonies; they go a certain way to impede and to lessen the free interchange of people from one parish to another, both by begetting in each a jealousy of new settlers, and augmenting the natural preference for home by the superadded tie, that there they have their proper and their rightful inheritance; the benefit of which can be got far more directly and conveniently when on the spot, than when they remove themselves to a distant part of the country. But even when so removed, they still hold on their own parish; and, like non-resident proprietors, can have their rent transmitted to them; and may, in fact, be as burdensome as if they still resided within its limits. It is thus that the vestry, whence the dispensations of pauperism proceed, may be regarded as a kind of adhesive nucleus, around which the people of each parish accumulate and settle, and so present us with as distinct an exemplification of the theory of Mr Malthus, as if each were in itself a little world; the affairs and difficulties of which, may, at the same time, be considered without his theory being in our heads at all. It is not in the least necessary to blend with the argument any wide or general speculation. We happen to regard Mr Malthus' Theory of Population as quite incontrovertible. Yet we do not link with it our reprobation of English pauperism, any more than we would link with it our reprobation of a precipitate marriage in a destitute and unprepared family. Let his theory be execrated as it may, t it even be out-argued by its adversaries,

this will not overthrow any of those maxims of domestic prudence, that might be learned at the mouth of every ordinary housewife; and, neither, will it overthrow any demonstration of those evils in pauperism, which, with or without a philosophical treatise, are quite obvious to the home-bred sagacity of country squires and parish overseers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the Effect of a Poor Rate, when applied in aid of Defective Wages.

Let us therefore withdraw our regards from the extended speculations of Mr Malthus, and confine them to the state and regimen of one parish—addressing ourselves to the current experience of plain and practical men, who both painfully feel, and clearly understand the mischiefs of their present economy; yet, whose understandings would only be mystified by the demonstrations of a political arithmetic, which took in a wider scope than that of their own humble community. In every such parish, there is a certain quantity of work to be done, and a certain number of labourers would suffice for the doing of it. Some of them may be imported from abroad; and, on the other hand, some of the native workmen may have gone beyond their own parochial limits in quest of employment. Still, with or without these movements, there is a certain number in the parish of able or available

labourers, who, if barely adequate to the labour that is required, will be hired upon a fair remuneration; but who, if they exceed, will be glad to accept of an inferior remuneration, rather than want employment altogether. It is this competition which brings down the wages of labour; and, on the principle that is already unfolded, a very small excess in the number of labourers may give rise to a very large reduction in the price of labour. It is in vain to say that this excess will naturally discharge itself upon other places. So it would, in a natural state of things. So it always does in those parishes of Scotland where a compulsory provision is unknown. But in England, where the practice is now established, of ministering from the poor rate, not merely to the indigence of age, and sickness, and impotency, but to the indigence of able-bodied, though ill-paid industry, this excess is not so easily disposed of. There is a principle of adherence in the system, which detains and fastens it upon every parish where once this excess has been formed; and we hold it very instructive, to look at the various expedients by which it has been met, and at the uniform failure which has attended them.

The distress of inferior wages, is, in the first instance, felt by the fathers of large families; and, accordingly, they are the first who have been benefitted by the extension of the legal charity of England beyond those cases, for which it has been alleged, by the defenders of the system as established by the Act of Elizabeth, that it was strictly and originally intended. Certain it is, that if there

really was any such limitation designed in the primary construction of the statute, it is now very generally disregarded, and there is nought more common, particularly in the southern counties, than a composition of wages and poor rate, both of which are made to enter into the maintenance of an able-bodied labourer. There are two questions generally asked of the applicant for parish relief, and which may be regarded as furnishing the data that fix the parish allowance: "What do you earn?" and "What is the number of the family that you have to maintain?" and, if the wages be held inadequate to the family, the deficiency, in most instances, is held to be as firm a ground of application, as the utter helplessness of impotency or disease. The defect in wages is eked out by a weekly allowance from the poor rate; and he, who in other circumstances would have been left as an independent workman upon his own resources, becomes, under this system, a dependent upon legal charity.*

* I have had the honour of receiving communications upon this subject, from the justly celebrated Thomas Clarkson. The following is his information of two methods, according to which they proceed in certain villages of the county of Suffolk, with regard to the allowance for parents of large families.

"In some villages they allow handsome and proper wages per week, say nine shillings to every man employed. Now, nine shillings will do very well, as far as a man, wife, and two children go; but will not be enough where the children are from three to six, or more. All, therefore, which the large families may want beyond the nine shillings, they pay out of the poor's rates. This is not unjust, because they give to every man a fair and equitable wage, according to the times; that is, as much as he can earn. The family-man wants undoubtedly more than the single man, but still he cannot earn more; and, very often, not so much. All, then, have fair wages; and if there are wants beyond what the weekly wages will provide, they belong to the

This then is the first application of poor-rate to wages which claims our regard. Before that single and able-bodied men can have the benefit of this poor-rate, the parents of families must have been visited by its allowances; and that, just in proportion to the number of their offspring. It is a premium on population, and must serve to perpetuate the cause of that mischief which it is designed to alleviate. There is a general feeling, all over England, of something wrong in this composition of wages with the parish allowance; and, along with it, a sort of anxiety, in some places, to vindicate their management from the imputation of a practice that is felt to be discreditable; so that when the question is put, whether it be the habit of the place

parish in common. The tailor, the shoemaker, &c., is equally bound with the farmer to contribute to the wants of the parish; and what reason have they to complain, when the farmer, after paying his men fair wages for their work, pays also his share towards their extraordinary wants?

"In Playford, again, we do differently. We do not pay all our men alike. We pay nine shillings per week, as far as a man, wife, and two children; but we pay all the family, or rather large family-men, by the piece, so as to make them earn ten, eleven, and twelve shillings per week. We differ again in another respect, for we pay all the surplus beyond nine shillings entirely out of our own pockets. We never go to the poor rates for this surplus, in order, if possible, to promote a spirit of independence among our labourers. Where the surplus is paid out of the poor rates, every labourer knows it; that is, he knows that he gets nine shillings from the farmer, and two or three from the parish: but in Playford, the labourer, when he takes his money home at the end of the week, has the pleasure of reflecting, that all the money is of his own earning, unmixed with any parish gift. This is so, except in a few cases; for, where a man has a wife, and seven or eight children, it would be hard upon a farmer to pay him twenty shillings per week, when the labourer could only earn ten or twelve. In such extraordinary cases as these, there is a regular allowance for such pauper, beyond his wages, out of the parish funds, to do justice both to the man and to the master."

to supplement defective wages out of the poor-rate, a very frequent reply is, that it is never done by them; and that nothing is ever given in consideration of a low wage, but only in consideration of a large family. This way of shifting it from one ground to another, though practically it makes no difference as to the effect of the regimen, yet is very instructive as to the rationale of its operation. Though Malthus had never written, there could not be a more complete exposition than is given by the answers of unlettered and unsophisticated men, of the bearing that English pauperism has upon population. We do not need to embarrass this contemplation with any argument respecting the soundness or unsoundness of his theory. Here we have parents paid out of a legal and compulsory fund, because of the largeness of their families; and we may safely appeal to the common sense and sagacity of the most unspeculative minds, whether this must not add to the number of marriages in a parish—whether it does not slacken all those prudential restraints, that else would have operated as a check upon their frequency—whether the hesitation and delay, that, in a natural state of things, are associated with this step, are not in a great measure overborne by the prospect thus held out, of a defence and a guarantee against the worst consequences of many a rash and misguided adventure. Must not marriages become earlier, and, therefore, more productive under such a system, than they otherwise would be? Or, in other words, is not this remedy for the low wages, induced by an excess of people, the likeliest instrument that

could be devised, not only for keeping up the excess, but for causing it to press still more on the already urged and overburdened resources of this small parochial community? This mode of curing the disease is the most effectual for upholding it; and that, in constantly increasing vigour and virulency from one generation to another. And when one adverts to the principle that has already often been appealed to, that a very small excess of labourers is enough to account for a very great deficiency in the price of labour, it just ascertains and aggravates the conclusion the more, seeing, by how very slight an addition to the frequency of marriages, the mischief in question might be effectuated.*

One needs only to be versant in the familiar

* From the abstract of the returns sent to the Committee on Labourers' Wages, and ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on the 10th of May, 1825, it would appear that the practice of making an allowance to able-bodied labourers, according to the number of their families, obtains very extensively in the southern and midland counties. To the question, "Do any labourers in your district employed by the farmers, receive either the whole or any part of the wages of their labour out of the poor rates?" there seems to be a great majority of affirmative answers from many of the counties. The same holds true of the answers to the second question: "Is it usual, in your district, for married labourers having children, to receive assistance from the parish rate?" And to the third question: "If so, does such allowance begin when they have one child or more?" the answers are exceedingly various. In many cases they give to able-bodied labourers without children. Some parishes commence the allowance from the poor rate with one child; others when the family has attained the number of two, three, or four children. There is frequently a rule upon which they proceed, of calculating so much a head for each individual of the family, and if the earning do not amount to the computed sum, making up the difference out of the poor rate. Hence this allowance is familiarly known, in many parts of England, by the name of "head-money."

details of parish management in England, in order to be convinced of the real practical effect that their pauperism has on the frequency of marriages. In some cases, the allowance is not given till the family have reached the extent of two or three children. But, in other cases, when the proper wages have been still further depressed, and the habit obtains of compounding with them a still larger ingredient of poor-rate, the distinction between pensioned and unpensioned labourers takes place at an earlier stage in the progress. Sometimes the formal parish allowance begins immediately with the event of matrimony. Insomuch, that single men, on being refused the parochial aid for eking out their miserable wages, have threatened to marry—have put their threat into execution, and been instantly preferred, in consequence, to a place in the vestry roll, among those who have qualified in like manner. When marriage is thus made the qualification for an allowance from the poor-rate, one does not see how the poor-rate can escape the charge of being a bounty upon marriage. And, accordingly, this evil is so much felt and deprecated, that, in certain places, they have resolved to abolish the distinction between the allowances to single and married men; and actually pay all alike, though at a great additional expense in the meantime—and this, to arrest and lighten, if possible, that coming tide of population wherewith they fear to be overwhelmed.

But we are not to suppose, that by this compromise between the payers of charity and the payers of labour, all the able-bodied of a parish are admitted to employment. There is a limit to

the work of a parish; but while this economy lasts, there can be no limit to the number of its workmen, who, of course, after various expedients and ingenuities have been practised, for the purpose of intercepting them with something to do, at length overflow into a state of total idleness. One of these expedients is to send round the men who have not fallen into employment in the regular and customary way, to send them round among the farmers, with the lure of getting their work on very cheap terms, as the parish will pay the difference between their low wages, and the sum that might be deemed necessary for their entire maintenance. It is no doubt an advantage to the farmer to have his work done cheaply—but where is the advantage, if he have no work for them to do? Every one department may be already filled and supersaturated with labour. For the accommodation of idle hands, threshing machines may be put down, and a ruder and clumsier agriculture may have been perpetuated, and all ingenious devices by which the human mind could contrive to abridge labour, may have been proscribed, and just that human muscles may be kept in as full requisition as possible. Yet all is ineffectual; and many a weary circuit often have these roundsmen to make, knocking at every door for admittance, yet everywhere refused—till at length, after all their attempts are exhausted, they devolve the whole burden of their existence on the parish, and gather into a band of supernumeraries.*

* The following impressive statements on this subject are from the pen of Mr Clarkson:—"I verily believe that every farmer

And, exceedingly various have been the devices for their employment. Sometimes they have been congregated into work-houses, where they are provided with any employment that can be got for them by the parish overseers. At other times they have been farmed out to a speculator, who has turned the work-house into a factory, and

with us takes as many as he can find money to pay, and that he gives his men competent wages, I mean his regular men, and not the supernumeraries; for these are labourers to the parish at a very inferior rate. The regular men were seldom better off of late years than they are now. I think that our farmers, if they had money, might employ between them three or four more regular labourers than they do; but I think they could not, even if they had money, find work for all; and, if this be the case now, what will it be in fifty years, if the poor laws remain unaltered, if the poor continue to increase as they have hitherto done, and if there be no vent for the surplus population, or if the population will take no pains to seek support for itself. I am sure the Suffolk farmers take as many as they can pay, and almost as many as they could employ, and yet leave a long list of supernumeraries: but, in some parts of the county, they do not pay their labourers so liberally as we do in ours, not by eighteenpence per week a man.

"We had seven supernumeraries in October, 1822, but we have had more since: we had, in December and January, 1823, thirteen at one time. We have, however, not one at this moment (July 1823); for the dry, windy weather, which we have had almost incessantly for the last seven weeks, has been the finest season for hoeing wheat, and other crops, almost ever known; and hoeing is a process indispensable in Suffolk. But I understand that five or six are likely to become supernumerary in a few days; and this number will increase, and be out of regular employ, more or less, till harvest; and that even then, some of them will not have work; but that, after October or November, we shall have from eight to thirteen out of employ till spring again. This will bring a great burthen on the Parish, and be a great calamity to the poor supernumerary; because, not having half the wages of the regular man, he will not have enough to support himself with any comfort; and this will probably lead to idleness and crime."

It is to be observed, that Playford, of which Mr Clarkson writes, is a very small Parish, of only 264 inhabitants, by the census of 1821.

possesses himself of their services at a rate exceedingly beneath the market price of labour. At other times, they may be seen in a kind of disorderly band, labouring either upon parish roads, or in sand and gravel pits. The value of what they render in this way for their subsistence, is in general very insignificant. The truth is, that an increasing population can no more be supplied indefinitely with profitable work, than they can be supplied indefinitely with money or with food. It is more for a moral effect, than for the worth of their labour, that these various modes of industry are laid upon them. Better give them something to do, than that they should be wholly idle. Though even this object is not always accomplished, and in many of the agricultural parishes, they may be seen lounging out a kind of lazzaroni life, upon a weekly pittance from the vestry, in the fields or on the highways.

There is one very sore evil in this system. It has distempered altogether the relationship between a master and his servants. The latter feel less obligation to the former for being taken into his employment, seeing that they have a refuge in poor-rates, from the destitution which in other countries attaches to a state of idleness. They are not so careful in seeking work for themselves, as the law has rendered them in some measure independent of it. It becomes more, in fact, the interest of the house and land occupiers in the parish that they shall have employment, than their own interest; and they, exempted in this way from the care of themselves, and from all those sobrieties

and virtues which are thereby called into exercise, become reckless, and like to a difficult or unmanageable charge in the hand of guardians. The consequences are most mischievous, and more particularly in the bitterness and discomfort which have been introduced into all the departments of service. In like manner, as the anxiety of the lower orders to get employment is lessened under this system, so their anxiety to keep the employment is lessened also; and, in this way, the master loses a most important hold on their fidelity and good conduct. They care little though they should be dismissed; and this has often the effect of making them idle and insolent. They know, that even though it should come to the worst, they must be maintained; and one may well conceive all the harassments and heart-burnings of such a loose and ill-sorted alliance, between a master that has no authority, and servants that are under no dependence—the one in a state of constant irritation, or fearfulness—the other in a state of hardy defiance, and, in fact, inverting the relationship altogether, by the virtual subjection in which their employer is held by them.

For under this perverse and most unlucky arrangement of things, the master has little or no choice of servants, and no benefit from any competition of theirs for employment. It has the effect, in a certain manner, of limiting the market for labour, within the narrow boundaries of each distinct and isolated parish. In the present state of the agricultural districts, over-peopled as they are even to compression, a master cannot go for

labourers into another parish, without as many being thrown totally idle at home, as he has imported from abroad, and whose total maintenance, therefore, must be devolved on that poor-rate to which he himself is a contributor. This is felt by himself in common with all the other payers, so that often there is a sort of tacit obligation on the part of farmers, to employ none but the hinds, or labourers, whose settlement and right of relief lie in the parish. This is well understood by the other party. They know that their masters have no other resource than to keep them in their service; and the utter carelessness of habit, which this must engender amongst them, may be easily imagined. Nature has established a mutual interest between man and man; and when left to herself, she maketh the checks, and the mutual influences that are dependent thereupon, most beautifully subservient to the well-being of all. But this injudicious policy of man has broken it up, and has now brought the society of England into a state of most fearful disorganization.

After all, the employment which is given for the purpose of mitigating the rate, is little better than idleness in disguise. In the case of roundsmen, the whole remuneration is made up, partly of wages from the master, and partly of an allowance from the parish; and there is nothing more common, than when they have wrought to a certain amount, or for so many hours in the day, to take the rest of the day very much to themselves—and though still under the semblance of doing something at an allotted task, literally to do nothing. It is a

familiar saying amongst them, that " Our master has now got all that time in the day from us which he has paid for—what the parish pays for is our own!" and this proportion, even though fairly and accurately struck, leaves a sad vacancy in their hands, which is often filled up with positive mischief. At all events, it wholly corrupts and relaxes them as labourers. They lose the tone and habit of good workmen. Under this artificial economy, the interest and the industry of the labourer stand dissociated the one from the other; and that wholesome discipline of penalties and rewards, which nature hath instituted, is put an end to. They become ill-conditioned, both morally and economically; and the fabric of our ancient commonwealth becomes unsound at its basis, as the olden character disappears, of a hearty, hard-working, well-paid, and withal well-habited peasantry.

There is one very melancholy process connected with this system, and that must transmit and accumulate this deterioration from one age to another. As the young generation of numerous and premature families rises up in a parish, and the boys are veering towards manhood, they of course swell and aggravate still more the already overdone competition for employment. Now, it is regarded as a higher place in labour to be admitted among the regular servants of a farmer, than among the roundsmen. The former are on the whole better paid; and the latter look to any vacancy there, as a sort of preferment, to which those of full-grown manhood, and who have per-

haps served months and years in the capacity of roundsmen, have a better claim than mere striplings who have come out for the first time in quest of employment. So that very generally, in many of the parishes, the vacancies among the regular farm servants are filled by roundsmen, and the consequent vacancies among the roundsmen filled by the raw and unpractised youths from the general population. In other words, their first outset as labourers, is with those who have got into the idle and profligate habits to which their situation peculiarly exposes them—a circumstance most ruinous to their own future habit and character as workmen, and most directly fitted to perpetuate and augment the tide of corruption, as it bears downward from the present generation to the next. It is further a most grievous necessity in their state, that they should be forced to commence their life as paupers, that they should be familiarised, from a tender age, to the allowances of the parish vestry, that all generous and aspiring independence should be smothered when in embryo within them, and a new race should arise so fostered and prepared as to outstrip their predecessors in the rapacity, and the meanness, and all the sordid or degrading habits of pauperism.*

It comes to the same result, whether they are

* In the Parliamentary Abstract, above referred to, the fourth question is, " Is it usual for the Overseers of the poor, to send to the farmers labourers who cannot find work—to be paid partly by the employer, and partly out of the poor-rates ?" And, from the affirmative answers which are returned by the parishes of the midland and southern counties, it would appear, that this practice is a very general one.

sent about as roundsmen, or are wholly paid and employed by the parish as supernumeraries. In the latter case, they may give their labour either in a work-house or out of doors. But both from the difficulty of supplying work, and from the lax superintendance into which the whole system is so apt to degenerate, it may be regarded as a vast nursery both of idleness and vice all over England. We do not hesitate to charge on the pauperism of England the vast majority of its crimes—detaining by its promises, within the borders of every parish, a greater number of families than it can well and comfortably provide for—luring, as it were, more into existence than it can meet with the right and requisite supplies—and, after having conducted them onward to manhood, leaving them in a state of unsated appetency, and withal in leisure for the exercise of their ingenuities, by which to devise its gratification. We cannot conceive a state of the commonwealth more fermentative of crime, from the thousand unnoticed and unnoticeable pilferments, that, we fear, are in daily and very extended operation among the labouring classes, to the higher feats of villany, the midnight enterprise, the rapine, sealed, if necessary, with blood, the house assault, highway depredation.*

* It is obviously a thing of some delicacy, to publish the representations which may be given of the state of morality in a neighbourhood—and more especially, when furnished by one who is residing within its limits. But we fear, that the following account, given by Mr Clarkson, of the decay of all right independence among the lower classes, will serve for a great many of the neighbourhoods in England.

"The spirit of independence is not entirely, but nearly gone. It is not, I believe, to be found in nine out of ten among the

Simply, if labour were better paid, it would not be so. Were there room and occupancy for all the

poor. Here and there an old-fashioned labourer remains, who would suffer much, rather than ask for relief. I have two of this description, out of fourteen labourers; but I doubt if there are other three of the same sort, in the three other farms of the parish. Among the persons born of late years, from the age of ten to thirty, all hang upon the parish for support. No one of these blushes to ask for relief, but, on the other hand, they demand it unblushingly as a right. Poor-rates, as you know, were first established for the aged, sick, lame, blind, and impotent. No fault could reasonably be found with this part of the law; but afterwards, in the same reign, the parishes were made to find work for the unemployed, however robust, active, and healthy. Here the great evil began; for poor people, after this, would not take the trouble of going to other places to look for work. Why should they travel about for a precarious subsistence, when there was an obligation to maintain them at home? Since this time, the poor have been making, slowly and by degrees, new demands and encroachments; and the Magistrates, having been generally men of humanity, and not having foreseen the consequences which have taken place, have generously yielded to them, till their concessions from time to time have grown into customs, and been falsely interpreted into laws. When a poor woman, for example, has been delivered of a child, the husband generally goes to the Overseer, and applies for relief for his wife. Some overseers, timid or compassionate, acquiesce: others refuse. But it has now passed into a custom, that every lying-in woman should be relieved with her third or fourth child. Let us see what happens next. A young family rises up. The father of this family sometimes hears of a place for his son or his daughter, with some farmer of a neighbouring, or other parish. He then applies to the Overseer to fit out his child with clothes. Such applications have passed also into a custom; and it has become a custom to accede to them, on the principle, that they who look out for service for their children, ought to be encouraged, and that, if the child keeps his service for one year, he belongs to another parish. I have been frequently at Vestry Meetings, when such applications have been made for clothing. I have told the father,—'The children are yours, and it is your duty to provide for them, or you ought not to have married.' The answer has always been, 'The children belong to you (the parish); I cannot get for them what they want; you therefore must.' No one can beat it into their heads, that the children belong to them, not to the parish. I have been quite disgusted with their conversation at such meetings. I have often been inclined to think,

demand after employment, and did that employment meet with a comfortable subsistence in return

that they have no natural affection for their children, and I have told them so. Certain it is, that they do not consider themselves to be under any obligation to bring up their children, at their own expense, beyond a certain age. They will tell you at once, 'I have brought up the boy so far. I wish to get rid of him. (What an expression this!) He belongs to you.' If the boy arrives at this age, and his father cannot find a service for him, the father makes no hesitation to demand either a weekly allowance for him, or that work may be found for him, or that he may be apprenticed out at the expense of the parish. Thus the parish is to do every thing, and the father nothing. Thus generation follows generation, and the notion is every where diffused, that the poor man is under no necessity to rely upon his own efforts. In fact, almost all our labourers hang upon the parish for every thing. This hanging upon the parish, is discernible in various ways that may be mentioned. If a man, for example, is turned away by his master, for idleness, negligence, abusive language, supposed theft, &c., &c., he goes directly to the Overseer, and, though in some degree a culprit, he has the assurance to ask for money or work. The Overseer then sends him round (this is the usual practice), to all the other farmers in the parish (except the man who discharged him) to see if any of these will employ him. Perhaps he is two days in making the inquiry. At length he returns. His report is, that no one has a vacancy for him. He demands, therefore, again, either work or money; and, what will appear to you to be most extraordinary, he demands, without blushing, to be paid for the two days he lost in looking out for new work, though he lost his former seat of work by his own misconduct. The Overseer resists this new demand. The consequence is, that the pauper generally pours forth against him a torrent of abuse. The Overseer, however, remains firm in this point, and then proceeds to speak to him thus: 'If you cannot, as you say, get work in your own parish, you must go to the next town or village to seek it.' What, think you, is the man's reply? He talks about his rights. He refuses to go. 'No,' says he to the Overseer, 'it is your business to find me with work. I will not budge a step out of the parish. You must go yourself, and seek it.' This, I assure you, insolent as it is, is the general answer. The Overseer, after this, is obliged to give him either a weekly allowance, or to make him a supernumerary; that is, to set him upon some parish job. Here a new scene takes place between the two. The pauper is usually dissatisfied with his allowance, and therefore abuses the Overseer. He threatens to bring him before a magistrate, and

for it, we should forthwith see a more orderly, and tranquil, and safe population. It bears the expression of a kindness to the people, that, when all the regular departments of service are filled, and there is still left an overplus of hands, there should lie a legal obligation on each parish to harbour, either as roundsmen or as supernumeraries, the men who have not been so fortunate as to find

proceeds to imprecations. This is not always, but almost always the case. Some Overseers have been so timid, as to have made the best terms they could with the pauper. Others have taken him before a magistrate, but this seldom happens; and he has been confined a few days in prison for his abuse. Other Overseers, being strong men, and also men of great courage, have turned him by main force, or kicked him, out of their premises. These violent scenes have occurred every now and then, during the six years I have been in Playford. The supernumeraries are still insolent to the Overseer, as he happens to come in contact with them, either when he superintends their work, or pays them at the end of the week; but they are not in general so grossly or vehemently abusive, as they used to be four or five years ago, because the magistrates, having begun to see the evil of the poor-laws, have of late leaned more to the side of the farmers than of the paupers, but particularly in confirming lower allowances to the latter. In fact, the poor-laws have taught the paupers to discard all dependence upon themselves, and to look to the parish for every thing they want. During the last three or four years, they have been making a new effort at encroachment. Several of them have applied to the Overseer to pay their rents for them, that is, the rents of their cottages; and such applications have increased. What will they want next? The more you give them, the more helpless you make them, or the more you lessen their dependence on their own exertions for their support. Let me now mention, that, besides all these demands, it is usual, when a man or woman dies, to apply for coffins for them; and it has passed into a custom for the parishes to allow these. The labourer never thinks of making any savings or provision for burying the dead: at least, for any coffin to hold the body.—Thus a pauper in England, though he has the finest chance in the world of providing for himself, in consequence of the free scope which the constitution of his Government gives him, can neither, as we have seen, come into the world, nor live in it, nor go out of it, without burdening his parish."

the better occupation. It is not known how woful the amount of depression is, which a very few of these might bring upon the wages of agricultural labour. If there be any truth in the principle that we have already attempted to expound, a small fractional excess of workmen thus detained, and under the guise of humanity too, are enough to bring a sad discomfort and deficiency on the circumstances of the whole body. In the higgling for wages between the farmer and his servants, what a mighty advantage is given to the former, by the simple circumstance of there being a few outcasts from regular work, that would be glad of the very place which any of his present workmen may be threatening to leave, or refusing to accept of on his terms. On the other hand, had there been no supernumeraries and no roundsmen, or still more, a very few less in the parish than its farmers and capitalists have use for, what a mighty turning of the scale would this produce in favour of the other party. A very small difference, indeed, in the number of the people, would suffice to create this most important difference of relationship between them and their masters—whether they should seek for masters, or masters should seek for them. There is a tremulous balance here, that will be decided by a very slight difference either in the one or the other of these ways; and surely there is no enlightened or liberal friend of his species, who would not rejoice to see it decided in favour of the population. In this view of the matter, we may see at once the cruelty of a poor-rate: how, in the first instance, by the en-

couragement which it gives to precipitate marriage, it multiplies the people beyond the rate at which they would otherwise have multiplied—how, in the second instance, by holding out to all of them a right and a property in their native parish, it detains the people, and closes up, as it were, those outlets of emigration by which relief might have been obtained from the competition of a most hurtful excess—how, in the third instance, it provides for this surplus of labourers, but on terms which lie at the arbitration of the upper classes in society—how, in the fourth instance, it gives to the masters a mighty advantage over their regular labourers, and enables them to bring the general wages of husbandry indefinitely near to the parish allowance for roundsmen and supernumeraries*—Thus,

* Mr Clarkson has stated some additional samples of the inconvenience to which an over-peopled parish is exposed.

"We used to employ our supernumeraries in raising gravel for the roads, and in repairing the roads also. Since that time we erected a machine for dressing flax, and we bought, and we even grew flax; and we dressed it, and sold it when dressed. But the price for the article was so low during our trial of it, that the concern was in all respects a losing one. We were obliged therefore to give it up. Since that time we have raised gravel again; but as nearly all the gravel in our parish has been dug up and sifted, we fear that we shall have no other resource left us, in a short time, than to allow our supernumeraries what we call 'walking passes;' that is, to pay each of them a small weekly pittance, according as he is a boy or a man, or as he has a large or a small family—say, from half a crown to six shillings each per week, and let him walk or go where he will, and earn what he can besides, and take his earnings to himself.

"The poor laws most undoubtedly prevent the benefit of a competition for labourers. I could get more skilful, and better men, and better labourers, than I have at present, but I cannot take them: because, if I were to take them, I must pay them, and I should be obliged, besides, to help to maintain those whom I discarded, while they were doing nothing for me. We must maintain those who belong to us, whether we want them or not—whe-

in fact, under the guise of kindness to the stragglers of the community, operating a most injurious reduction on the state and comfort of the whole body—grinding down the lower orders to the very point of starvation, and with a malignity not the less provoking, that it works by a system, on the face of which there are constantly playing the smiles of mercy, and in the support of which, the sweetest poesy hath been heard to pour forth her dulcet strains into the ear of weeping sentimentalism.

We do not need any thing half so ponderous as a theory of population for the whole species, to be assured, that at this moment there are more people than can be maintained with comfort in our agricultural parishes. The thing is plainly felt all over England; and this is a feeling which cannot be overborne by any argument, either for or against a theory. The doubt which attaches to a speculation, ought not to overshadow a distinct experience that forces itself rather on the observation of our senses than the conviction of our understanding. And, along with the palpable exhibition of an overpeopled parish, there is the equally palpable habit both of most abandoned licentiousness, and most improvident marriages. The number of illegitimate children alone, superinduces such an excess upon the other population, as is quite adequate to a great and general reduction in the price of labour. And surely there is nought, either in the reasoning for,

ther they are good or bad, industrious or idle, sober or drunken. We have therefore no competition, except at too great an expense, beyond our own parish."

or in the ridicule against, the philosophy of Mr Malthus, that can affect a matter of such plain and popular understanding, as the undoubted connexion which there is between too early marriages and too large families; a thing that is true of a single household, and true of such a number of households as makes out a parish—beyond which any argument of ours does not require us to extend our contemplation. There may be ways of evading to be a Malthusian in reference to the world, but not in reference to a parish, where the people adhere, by the law of settlement, with a force and a tenacity as great as if drawn together and detained by the law of gravitation. The poor-rate, in fact, has isolated, in a great measure, each of the parishes in England, and turned it into a little world of its own, where we might see in model such an exemplification of the truth, as recommends itself even to the unlettered eye. And the question before us is not a right economy for the globe. It is not even at present a right economy for the whole empire; for this will at length be arrived at by committing to each parish the management of its own affairs, and that management is all which we are now called upon to attend to.

It were a very crude legislation for giving effect to the speculation of Mr Malthus, to define the earliest age at which people should marry. There is no doubt that, by postponing the average period of marriage, there behoved to be a relief from the increase of population; and it is not known by how few months, or by how very few years of a later average, the whole amount of necessary relief would

be gained. But, for the purpose of securing an average, it is not indispensable that each individual case should be rigidly fixed down to it. There might be a sure average, and, at the same time, the utmost freedom and variety of individual cases.

To enact any age for marriages, would be just attempting to neutralise one blunder in legislation by another. It were striving to bring about a right result by a compensation of errors; when it were surely better if both were expunged, and there remained no error to be compensated. The law of pauperism has given undue encouragement to matrimony: and it has been proposed, by a law of matrimony, to repress the encouragement. It is the excess of legislation which has done the mischief; and the best method of doing it away, is simply to lop off the excess, and not to counteract one foolish law by another. The tree that would have grown in an upright direction might rise obliquely, because of an artificial pressure on one side of it, though it is possible to correct this by an equal pressure on the other side: still it would have been preferable that it had grown free and unencumbered, without any pressure on either side, and that nature had been simply left to its own way. It is just so in the matter before us. We have only to commit back again to the wisdom of nature, that which ought never to have been meddled with by the wisdom of man. She balances the matter aright between the proneness to marriage, and the prudence that delays it; and the desirable result is brought about, not by the enactment of a new law, but by the cancelment of an

old one. The abolition of the law of pauperism would translate the people into other circumstances and in these circumstances they should be left to act freely.

There can be no doubt, that the abolition of the law of pauperism would bring on a somewhat later average of matrimony among the people. Should this abolition ever take place, and the consequent period of marriage become the subject of political arithmetic, there can be no doubt that its tables will exhibit a more advanced age, on the whole, at which females marry under the new system, than under the present one. This might safely be predicated on the general experience of human nature, although it is further satisfactory, to have had the connexion so distinctly exhibited in the parishes of England, between the encouragements of pauperism, and the utter rashness and improvidence of marriages among the peasantry. Should these encouragements be done away, there would be rash and imprudent marriages as before, but not so many. There would, even without the law of pauperism, be a premature entry upon this alliance, but not so premature upon the whole. The evident tendency of a legal provision, is both to speed and to multiply marriages; and were this provision done away, they would be neither so early nor so frequent as they are now. Many still would be the outbreakings of irregularity and folly; but, if at all diminished, there would necessarily be a certain shift for the better in the average of matrimony; and it were in the face of all arithmetic, it were losing sight of the principles and the

property of numbers altogether, to deny that this must tell on the births of a parish and its population. We do not say, that profligacy would be exterminated with the law of pauperism; but it would be checked, and, we venture to affirm, that were the supplies of pauperism withdrawn from all future illegitimates, there would be an instantaneous diminution of their number. In all these ways, the market for labour would be less crowded than it is now; and labourers would stand on a higher vantage-ground in the negotiation between them and their employers. There would be some fewer workmen than before, and this is enough to cause much higher wages. This is a most important compensation that awaits the lower classes of England, after that the dispensations of pauperism have been withdrawn from them.

In one part of his work, on the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, Dr Adam Smith speaks lightly of political arithmetic. But he can only mean to reflect on the inaccuracy wherewith its data are often guessed at, and presumed upon, and not on the substantial importance of the data themselves. The average date of marriage, in the various countries of the world, may not have been precisely ascertained, in any one instance. But still there is such a date, certain, though not ascertained; and, furthermore, having a certain influence upon the population, in regard to the increase or diminution of their number. Whatever postpones the date, must retard the increase; and, let the obscurity be what it may, which rests upon the numerical statements that have been exhibited

upon this subject, the connexion is indisputable between the prudence that would delay marriage, and the relief that would thereby be given to an overpeopled land. This were true in the particular of each household, and just as true in the general of that aggregate of households which make up a population. And we ought not to lose sight of those elements which are known to have force and substantive being in our land, though numerically they are unknown to us. We cannot specify the accurate proportion which obtains between the money expended by the lower orders on dissipation, and that expended in pauperism. But there is no doubt that the former bears a very great proportion to the latter, and, perhaps, overpasses it. So that, even in the absence of all detail, it is a most legitimate conclusion, that though pauperism were abolished, there might still remain throughout the mass a capability for the subsistence of all their families; and, that if an adequate impulse were given first to the sobrieties, and then to the sympathies of our population, there might still exist such a sufficiency among all, as would, of itself, prove an effectual guarantee against the starvation of any. It is obviously the direct tendency of such an abolition, to stimulate both their sobrieties and their sympathies; and it is further a comfort to know, from the general fact of the sums expended by the working classes on intemperance alone, that, after all, and apart from public charity, the *materiel* of an entire subsistence passes into their hands, and that nought but the *morale* is wanting, which, by the kindness and the economy that pauperism

now supersedes, might impress a right distribution upon it.

But we are quite aware of the incredulity wherewith all argument and affirmation are met, when proposed in terms so very general; and it is this which makes us the more solicitous for a tentative process in so many individual parishes. We have elsewhere sufficiently explained by what steps such a process might be obtained for the remedy of pauperism at large; and it would be found equally applicable to that more special abuse of it, which we have now attempted to expose. A few trial parishes, rightly conducted, would soon set the discussion at rest. Every thing would be gained by the success of the experiment; and no widely spread mischief could ensue from the failure of it. All who were actually roundsmen, and supernumeraries in a parish at the commencement of the retracing process, might, like all who were then actually paupers, continue to be treated as old cases—so that the only innovation would be in the treatment of the new applicants. And it should never be out of view, that these applicants must come on very gradually; and that there are many small manageable parishes, where the whole inconvenience would not amount to more perhaps than three or four, each having to wait a few months ere some regular vacancy in labour should occur for their accommodation. And meanwhile, it were well, that they had no right to any other accommodation—that they felt it to be their own business, to look out for work to themselves—that they should be kept on the alert, and on the inquiry for

any openings which might occur—and in a word, that the whole matter regarding the employment of the rising youth in a parish, should simply be devolved on their respective families. This would instantly bring into play all the busy interests and activities of self; and under their wholesome operation, there is not a doubt that families would weather all the apprehended evils of this transition, and be at length landed in a state of greater comfort and sufficiency than before. Were each man left to the consequences of his own imprudence, there is a moral necessity for it, that the imprudence would at least be abridged; and if only some few marriages were suspended, and some few criminalities refrained from, it is arithmetically sure, that in a very few years the market for labour would be less loaded with this commodity, and the market price of labour would yield a greater sufficiency to the families of workmen than before. And this is a benefit that would be extended more and more, in proportion to the wisdom and the virtue of our peasantry, who might thus become the agents of their own amelioration; and, through the medium of their own intelligence and worth, be raised to a place of greater security and comfort than they now occupy.

There are many ways in which the transition to a natural state could be smoothed and facilitated in country parishes. Instances might be named, of a single gentleman taking up all the supernumeraries of a parish, and giving them employment for months; and if ever such an effort can be looked for, it is at the outset of a retracing process, in the

success of which so many of the landlords and other parishioners must feel an interest. Nay, if they so willed it, it is quite possible, at such a crisis as this, to abolish at once the whole system of composition between wages and poor-rate, in the case of able-bodied labourers, by simply translating their whole existing allowance into wages, and relieving the farmer by a diminution of his levy to as great an amount, as is the addition which he has made under this arrangement to the pay of his servants. In this way, every vestige even of the old pauperism, might be swept away *instanter* from the class of able-bodied labourers—a thing of incalculable advantage in warding off that corrupt influence by which the people of many parishes in England have become almost *en masse* reconciled and assimilated to a state of pauperism. And if the existing supernumeraries could, in many instances, be so easily absorbed and provided for; one cannot doubt that new cases, coming on as they would very gradually, might, for a time, be as easily disposed of. Meanwhile the right is abolished. Employment might be asked, but it could no longer be demanded. It would not now, be in such certain and unfailing reserve for the superfluous members of a family, as to supersede the necessity of their own shifts and their own expedients. In such circumstances as these, the precipitate marriage of one of their boys, and still more the seduction of a daughter, would be far more felt than it is now as a family visitation; and thus a higher tone of virtue would spring up among them, almost as soon as the necessity which compels it. It is not yet

known how very soon the state of the population would accommodate itself to this new state of things, or how soon labourers would attain to independent and well-earned comfort, and that simply because there would be fewer labourers.

Emigration to our colonies is worthy of the utmost support from government, if connected with a process for the abolition of pauperism. But should the system of pauperism continue, it will operate no sensible relief to England. It has been likened to a safety-valve—but it is a valve, the very lifting and opening of which implies the elasticity within of a state of compression and violence; and up to this state it will remain, notwithstanding the successive escapes of a redundant population. The creative process will always maintain a balance with the relieving process; and a people must be in distress, when the difficulties of home are so nearly in equilibrium with its charms, as to place them on the eve of desire and deliberation to renounce it for ever. And besides, the poor laws act in an opposite direction to the offers and the encouragements of emigration; though, if connected with any plan for the abolition of them, we cannot conceive a better way both of smoothing the transition, and of keeping the country in a clear and healthful state after the transition has been effected. It would, at all events, afford a ready answer to the complaints and difficulties of able-bodied men, who alleged a want of employment; if a parish were enabled, by the facilities that government held out, to aid, upon easy terms, the emigration of them. It were a test by which to ascertain the

truth of their complaints; and we believe that, when the proposal of emigration was made, it would be declined in by far the greater number of instances. The parish would at least stand acquitted; and it would afterwards be seen, that a very small fraction of the labourers of a parish stood in need after all of the resource of emigration. On this account, it would not be very expensive to government, though it held out very great advantages to emigration; and it would shield every parish from the charge of inhumanity, were it enabled to suggest this expedient to its unemployed labourers.

But it is to the reaction at home, that we look for our best securities against any shock or disaster that might be apprehended to our families from the overthrow of pauperism. When charity is altogether detached from the remuneration of labour, this of itself will keep off a very wide and wasting contamination from the spirit of our peasantry, and they will again recover the honest pride of independence. Still more would this feeling grow in strength and sensibility, were they trained to the habit of small but constant accumulation. It is at this crisis, that a parish saving-bank might achieve a wondrous transformation on the state of the people, by begetting a sense of property among labourers. A very few philanthropists could set it on foot. By a very few easy devices, at the outset of the retracing process, there could, in many places, be afforded as much employment and as liberal wages to all, as might enable them to deposit. Once that the turning point has been made from being a

pauper to being a possessor, a new ambition is felt, and a new object comes to be intensely prosecuted. This is a better expedient for postponing the date of marriage than any act of parliament. The days were in Scotland, when it was customary, during the virtuous attachment of years, for the parties to fill up the interval with those frugalities and labours by which they made a provision for their future household; and there is no doubt, that a saving-bank is fitted to inspire with a similar purpose those who repair to it. If it did so with a few only, still the average period of matrimony is somewhat shifted for the better; the tide of population is somewhat arrested; the excess in a few years is somewhat reduced from what it would otherwise have been; and the market price of labour is elevated in greater proportion. These are the sure steps which lead from a growing virtue among the people, to a still more rapidly growing prosperity in their economic condition; and by which a process that guides to sufficiency and comfort each individual family who embark upon it, carries in it a further and a wider blessing to the general mass of the population.

We have already said, that nothing was easier than to suit the law of settlement to that state of things, which would take place in a parish, when the law of pauperism was done away. To acquire a right of settlement in the parish itself were altogether useless, when by it there is nothing to acquire. After that any given subject of right or of distribution has vanished, the laws which relate to it, cease to be of any significancy. And thus it is,

that the mutual law of settlement between parishes is virtually abrogated, by the very act which releases either the one or the other from the *legal* obligation of maintaining its own poor. After that the poor at home have been devolved on the free charities of nature, in any given parish, it is never to be imagined that the poor from abroad, and who may have chosen to reside in that parish, should have any other resource provided for them there. And it is thus, that while two trial parishes may freely exchange their people with each other, neither would feel any addition to its legal burden in consequence of this, because neither would lie under any legal obligation.

The case is different, where one of the parishes only has emerged from the old system, and the other still remains under it. There may still be a free reciprocal transit of families between them; but it were not fair, if, while the families of the latter acquire no right by passing within the confines of the former, those of the former should acquire any right by passing within the confines of the latter. The emancipated parish comes under no burden by the influx of people from other parishes; and, conversely, it is right that these parishes should not be exposed to any burden by the efflux of people from that parish, which shall have now exchanged the compulsory for the gratuitous system of charity. This does away every apprehension, lest the rest of England should suffer from those portions of it which are delivered of the poor-rate: And, we have elsewhere argued abundantly for our persuasion, that the emigrants from a trial

parish, though without any right on the parish which they have left, and without any possibility of acquiring a right on the parish into which they have entered, will be generally found of a higher and better condition than the population by whom they are surrounded.

But while it is indispensable, that the parishes still under bondage of pauperism shall sustain no injury from the reformed parishes, there is a way, in which, without a certain modification in the law of settlements, the workmen of a reformed parish might sustain injury from the others. The mixing of poor-rate with wages, has depressed the allowance that is given in the name of wages, throughout all those parishes of England where this practice is in force; and should the practice be abolished in any parish, this allowance would forthwith be raised. It is not impossible, that while in one parish a workman earns eight shillings a-week in the shape of wages, and receives four in the shape of poor-rate, the workmen of a contiguous parish, where the poor-rate has been done away, might earn the whole twelve shillings in wages alone. The difficulty, in this case, would be to protect the labourers of a reformed parish from the competition of those exotic labourers who might come in to reside amongst them, although they belonged, by settlement, to other parishes—men who might endeavour to compound the high wage of the one with the vestry allowance of the other, and might succeed for a time in the pocketing of both. Meanwhile, there might be an under-bidding of the native, by the imported workmen; and although,

if England were wholly emancipated from poor-rate, wages might sustain a high level all over the country, which would not be trodden down by the freest movements of its people from one part to another; yet so long as the emancipation is only partial, there will be, at least, a tendency to the sinking of wages down to the low rate of the assessed parishes.

Perhaps the most effectual security against this evil, would be a law, by which every man capable of working, should forfeit all right of relief from his own parish, so long as he resided in any of the trial parishes. This would give, at least, a theoretical consistency to the whole arrangement; besides being a defence against the apprehended mischief, in all those cases where the mischief would have followed. We do not think, however, that practically it could ever be felt to any great extent. In those parishes, where the retracing process had been entered upon in the spirit of a pure and patriotic reformation, there would be a strong preference for the employment of their own people. And what is more to the purpose, we do not find that the prevalence of this abuse in one part of England, has compelled the adoption of it in another part of England. The northern counties are comparatively exempted from the evils that lie in the composition of a poor-rate with wages; and though exposed to competition both from the labourers of the south, and what, perhaps, is still more formidable, to the competition of Scotch and Irish labourers, they still maintain that high rate of wages, which enables them to ward off, in a

great measure, the stigma of pauperism, from the healthy and able-bodied of their population.

But, after all, we should hold it quite a safe measure, to abolish, *instanter*, the application of poor-rate to the relief of all able-bodied labourers. We have no doubt, that there would be an immediate compensation in the rise of wages;* and, at all events, that the change of circumstances, however sudden, would be followed by no distress, either of great intensity, or of great duration. Our preference is for gradual changes; but still our confidence is, that when the change is from a wrong to a right system, even though accomplished at once by the fiat of authority, the country will always right itself surprisingly soon, and without any great suffering ensuing from the transition. On this same subject, we have the experience of a change, *per saltum*, in the condition of all the Irish paupers resident in England, the great majority of whom chose to remain, and without any sensible inconvenience, and certainly without one authentic case of starvation occurring in consequence. The speed and the facility wherewith the population

* The following extract is from the report of Mr Vivian's examination before the Select Committee on the Poor Laws in 1817. His Parish was Bushey in Hertfordshire.

"Is it not, then, the practice in your parish, to advance regularly, weekly, a sum in addition to the wages earned by your labourers? Never: and to that I ascribe, almost as much as any thing, a diminution of the rates.—If a man has six young children, no one of which can maintain himself, you do not give any permanent relief beyond his wages? Never: occasional presents, and that very seldom.—How did you prevail on the parish to put an end to that practice? By strong persuasion, and by desiring them to try the experiment; and it answered. They immediately got into task-work, and got twenty-five shillings a-week."

accommodate themselves to some new condition, into which they are suddenly transported by some great and unlooked for change in the circumstances of a country, are never more strikingly exemplified, than in the changes which take place in the direction of national industry, on passing from a war to a peace, or from a peace to a war establishment. Still we are unfriendly to all violence, even on the career of undoubted amelioration. And we only give this instance to prove, that legislators may, without danger, proceed with bolder footsteps than they are generally inclined to do, in the path of economic improvement.

And certain it is, that however impotent the relief may be which emigration could afford to a country, the system of whose pauperism still continued to give full licence and encouragement for the increase of population, yet, as connected with a scheme for the abolition of pauperism, it might be of most useful auxiliary influence, for smoothing the transition in parishes, from a compulsory to a gratuitous system of charity. Emigration could afford no adequate relief to the miseries of an overpeopled land, where a legal provision for the destitute still continued to uphold the recklessness of families. But emigration were an admirable expedient, both for tranquillizing the fears of the public lest labourers should starve, and also for meeting the complaints and applications of these labourers, when they alleged a want of employment. Apart from a process which pointed to the extinction of pauperism, it is altogether a superficial remedy for the disorders of an excessive

population. But when attached to such a process, it might speed and facilitate the whole operation; and it is only when so attached, that a scheme of emigration will repay, by its blessings to the country, the expense which it might bring upon Government.

CHAPTER XIX.

On Savings Banks.

WITHOUT the co-operation of their own virtuous endeavours, there seems no possible way of doing good to the labouring classes, or of helping them upwards from a lower to a more secure and elevated place in the commonwealth. But we can see a very patent way to it, in such habits and such resources as, generally speaking, are within their reach. It is for them, and for them only, to regulate the supply of labourers. In the command which belongs to them of this mighty element, the price of labour may be regarded as the product of their collective voice, which pitches either high or low, in proportion to the amount of worth and intelligence and sobriety that are diffused throughout the population. Could we only imagine a nation of regular and well-habited families, where the folly of premature marriages, and the vice of illicit associations, were alike unknown —there would then be no inconvenient excess of labourers; no fall of wages beneath the par of

human comfort, or at least, no fall that would not almost be instantly repaired by the reaction it would have on the principle and prudence of an enlightened peasantry. Now, though such a nation is not to be born in a day, yet in a single day might we at least begin the work of approximating thereunto. Every additional school for popular education brings us nearer to it. Every new deposit in a savings bank helps us on to it. The removal of the whole system of pauperism, were the removal of a sore obstruction in its way; an obstruction which, if suffered to remain, will, we honestly believe, seal the peasantry of our land to irrecoverable degradation. So sure do we esteem the operation of these principles, that we should look for the visible result of them in a very few years, in any parish, where the retracing process had been entered upon. It is this which makes us so desirous of the experiment in England. The comparison between two parishes on the old and new system, would flash more conviction on the public understanding than a thousand arguments.

The frugality of a workman might at length, through means of a savings bank, land him in a small capital; and there is one effect of a capital in the hands of the labouring classes, which must be quite obvious. It were a barrier between them and that urgent immediate necessity, which gives such advantage to their employers in the question of wages. A man on the brink of starvation has no command in this negotiation. He will gladly accept of such terms as are offered, rather than perish of hunger; and it is thus, by their improvi-

dence and their reckless expenditure in prosperous times, that on the evil day they lie so much at the mercy and dictation of their superiors. The possession of a capital, and that not a very great one, by each individual labourer, or rather by each of a considerable number of labourers, would reverse the character of the negotiation entirely. They could stand out against miserable wages. They could afford to be idle; and while so, the stock of that commodity which they work, and wherewith the market is for the present glutted, would soon melt away; and the price of their labour be speedily restored to its fair and comfortable level. It were most delightful to see the lower orders, by dint of foresight and economy in good times, thus enabled to weather the depression of bad times, nay inconceivably to shorten the period of it, by simply living on their accumulated means, and abstaining to work for a wretched remuneration. Or if they should continue to work, they would, at least, not need to overwork. It is this, which so lengthens out at present the season of ill-paid labour. The low wages stimulate to a greater amount of industry, that a subsistence, if possible, might be forced from it to their starving families. The use of a capital in savings banks would be to prevent this. Men would not, while they had a resource in the earnings of past years, put themselves to an unnatural violence, in order that the current earnings might meet their current necessities.* At all events, the overstocked market

* "There cannot be conceived a more cruel dilemma for the poor operative, than that, in eking out a subsistence for his family,

would sooner be cleared of its surplus, and, with a brisker demand, there would quickly come round a better remuneration. And such a state of things would not only serve to reduce the inequalities in the condition of labourers; but, on the whole, it would somewhat elevate their condition, and that permanently. If in possession of means that raised them above the urgencies of immediate want, they could treat more independently with their employers. They would not as now, be so much the parties that sought; but more at least than now, they would be the parties that were sought after. The whole platform of humble life would take a higher level than at present; and we repeat that, to every man who felt aright, it were a satisfaction and a triumph, then to recognise a hale and well-conditioned peasantry.

We are aware of a jealousy here; and how much it is that capitalists have suffered by unlooked-for conspiracies on the part of the workmen. We are also aware of the sums that have been subscribed by the latter, for the express purpose of maintaining all the members of the conspiracy in idleness, and so of holding out, till masters should

he should thus overwork himself, and, by that miserable effort, should only strengthen the barrier that lies in the way of his final deliverance; that for the relief of the present urgencies of nature, he should be compelled to put forth more than the strength of nature, and yet find, as the direct result of his exertion, a lengthening out of the period of his distress; that the necessity should thus be laid upon him of what may be called a self-destroying process,—accumulating as he does, with his own hand, the materials of his own wretchedness, and so annoying and overwhelming the earth with the multitude of his commodities, that she looks upon his offerings as an offence, rather than an obligation, and refuses to sustain him."—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxxiii. p. 388.

surrender to their terms. It is on these considerations that an apprehension has been felt, in certain quarters, lest savings banks should arm the mechanics and workmen of our land with a dangerous power, and place at the mercy of their caprice the interest of all the other orders in society. This, at least, is a concession of the efficacy of these institutions for all the purposes on account of which we would argue in their favour; and they who fear lest provident banks should make the lower orders too rich, must at all events allow, that, with care and conduct on their part, there is a capability amongst them for becoming rich enough to be wholly independent of the supplies of pauperism. While we have no doubt that the power of becoming rich enough is in their own hands, we cannot sympathize with the feelings of those who fear lest they should be too rich. We should like to see them invested with a certain power of dictation as to their own wages. We should like to see them taking full advantage of all that they have fairly earned, in the negotiation with their employers. We should like to see a great stable independent property in the hands of the labouring classes, and their interest elevated to one of the high co-ordinate interests of the state. It were well, we think, if, by dint of education and virtue, they at length secured a more generous remuneration for labour, so as that wages should bear a much higher proportion than they do now to the rent of land, and the profit of stock, which form the other two ingredients in the value of a commodity. In this competition between capitalists and workmen,

we profess ourselves to be on the side of the latter, and would rejoice in every advantage which their own industry and their own sobriety had won for them. Rather than that, at the basis of society, we should have a heartless, profligate, and misthriven crew, on the brink of starvation, and crouching under all the humiliations of pauperism, we should vastly prefer an erect, and sturdy, and withal well-paid and well-principled peasantry, even though they should be occasionally able to strike their tools, and to incommode their superiors by bringing industry to a stand. We have no doubt, at the same time, that the fear is altogether an extravagant one—that the two classes would soon come to a right adjustment—and that, in particular, the employers of labour would find it a far more comfortable management, when they had to do with a set of prosperous and respectable workmen, than when they have to do with the fiery and unreasonable spirits that so abound among a dissipated, ill-taught, and ill-conditioned population. In the strength of the principle of population, nature has provided a sufficient security against the prudential restraint upon marriages being carried too far; and we may, therefore, always be sure of an adequate supply of labourers for all the essential or important business of the land. But, through the law of pauperism, the restraint is not carried far enough, and now we are oppressed, in consequence, by a redundancy of numbers. By abolishing this law, we simply leave the adjustment of the balance to nature. Legislators vacillate, and are uncertain about the alternative of the people being either too

rich or too poor. But nature, if unmeddled with by their interference, will so manage between the animal instincts on the one hand, and the urgencies of self-preservation, or the higher principles of the mind, upon the other, as that they shall neither be richer nor poorer than they ought to be.

This prejudice, however, against savings banks, and this alarm for the independence of the lower orders, are very much confined to capitalists of narrow views and narrow circumstances. There is a delightful experience upon this subject, that is multiplying and becoming more manifest every day, and which goes to prove how much the interest of the employer and that of the workman is at one. It is, that the expense of a well-paid labourer is in general more than made up by the superior worth and quality of his service. The farmer, in those parishes where there is a composition of poor-rate with wages, does not find his account in this system. The labour is cheaper, but far less valuable in proportion—the work that is underpaid, being done in a way so much more slovenly as to annihilate any advantage that might otherwise have accrued to the master. It is an advantage grasped at by men of limited means, and who find a saving in their immediate outlay to be of some consequence to them. But in the large and liberal scale, either of a great manufactory, or of any agricultural operation in which a sufficient capital is embarked, it is found that, with well-paid and well-principled workmen, the prosperity both of masters and servants is most effectually consulted. There is something triumphant and cheering in the perspective

that is opened up by such a contemplation; and we cannot but admire that wisdom of nature's mechanism, in virtue of which, if law would only recall its blunders, and philanthropy go forth in the work of indefinitely enlightening and moralising the lower orders, we should behold, in their extended sufficiency and comfort, nought to impair, but rather every thing to improve, the condition of all the other classes in society.

It holds out a seeming advantage to the lower orders, that when the wages of their labour fall short of their necessary subsistence, they should have the difference made good to them from a fund that is chiefly provided by the higher orders of the community. It is the boast of equitable law, that it both ordains rights for the poor man, and protects him as effectually from all encroachments upon them, as it would the possessors of highest rank or opulence in the land. He has the right of freedom, and the right of personal security, and the right of property in his wages, and in all that he accumulates from these wages: and when, additionally to these, there is enacted for him the right of levying from the other classes, that sum by which his wages are deficient from the maintenance of himself and of his family, it hath the appearance of rendering him a more securely, and a more abundantly privileged individual than he was before. But the last privilege is wholly neutralized, should it be made palpable, and that, by a very obvious political economy, that the law which enacts it, creates the very deficiency which it professes to provide for; that the right of parish relief

just makes so much the less valuable to him the right of property, even by abridging this property at least to the full extent of its own allowances; that though it should only operate to increase the number of workmen by a very little, this is enough of itself to reduce the wages very much; and that therefore it would have been better for him, if law had ceased one step sooner from that series of enactments which has been made in his favour. It is quite undeniable, from the state of every parish in England, that marriages are greatly more precipitate, and that licentiousness is greatly more unrestrained, by the way in which the law of pauperism hath palliated the consequences both of vice and of imprudence, and that practically and really, in agricultural districts, a very great oppression is felt from the redundancy of labourers. And the consequent deficiency in their wages is made up at the judgment of the upper classes in society, whose tendency of course will be to rate the allowance as low as possible. It is thus that their state is subjected to the arbitration of others, when, under a better economy of things, it might have virtually been at their own arbitration.

It marks most strikingly the evil that ensues, when the wisdom of man offers to mend or to meddle with the wisdom of nature, that not alone have the rich suffered in their patrimony, but the poor have become more helpless and dependent, because of the violence that has been done to the original feelings of property, by the aggressions thereupon of an artificial legislation. A people under the imagination that law must provide for them, will

spread and multiply beyond the possibility of them being upheld in comfort at all. A people under a law that undertakes no more than simply to protect them in their earnings, have a patent way for raising a perpetual barrier against that indigence, which law hath vainly endeavoured, by its direct and formal provisions, to avert from our borders.

The man who leans on the fancied sufficiency of the poor laws, to meet his necessities when the day of necessity cometh, has no inducement to economise. He spends as fast as he gains; and on an adverse fluctuation in the price of labour, he has nothing for it but to submit to the terms of his employer. It is true, that when the remuneration is very glaringly beneath the par of human subsistence, there is a certain allowance eked out to him from the legal charity of his parish; but in those seasons of dreary vicissitude, when hundreds beside himself are thrown out of profitable work, we may be sure that this allowance will form but a meagre subsistence to himself and his family. The peculiar hardship of such a condition, is, that in order to enlarge the now straitened comforts of his household, there is the utmost temptation to overworking; and what is done by him, is done by thousands more in the country beside himself—or, in other words, the excessive supply of the market with the commodities of their particular manufacture, continues to be kept up and be extended, at the very time when it is most desirable that the overplus under which it labours should be wholly cleared away. In these circumstances, it is quite obvious, that the evil of an overstocked market,

with the consequent depression of wages, must be sorely aggravated by the reckless improvidence of labourers; who, without economy, are always from hand to mouth, and must therefore put forth a busier hand, at the time when it is most desirable for them that the production were lessened, instead of being augmented. It is thus, that in as far as a poor-rate adds to the improvidence of workmen, and in as far as it adds to the number of them, (and it most directly and intelligibly ministers to both these effects,) in so far does it aggravate the helplessness of their condition, on those melancholy occasions, when the manufacturer, oppressed and overpowered with the solicitation of labourers for employment, can, in fact, hold them in subjection to his own terms, and possess himself, for the lowest possible recompense, of the time, and strength, and services of a prostrate population.

This process may be most beautifully reversed under another system of things that would stimulate the economy of the lower orders; or, in other words, under a system where, instead of leaning on the fancied sufficiency of a legal provision, each knew that he had nought but himself to lean upon. Just conceive his little savings to be accumulated into a stock that could at length uphold him for months, even though the daily income was to be arrested for the whole of that period. Let this, we shall not say, be the universal, but let it approximate, in some degree, to the general habit and condition of labourers—and then we cannot fail to perceive that they will stand on a secure and lofty vantage ground, whence it is that they will be able,

not only to weather, but also to control the fluctuations of the market. More particularly, in any season of mercantile distress, when, because of the heavy accumulation of goods, prices had fallen, and manufacturers were sure to lose by bringing for a time any more of them to market, how precisely accommodated to such a state of things, is the simple capacity of labourers to uphold themselves for a season, without that helpless dependence on the daily wage, which is felt by those who, in virtue of their own reckless improvidence, are ever standing upon the very brink of their resources. A set of workmen who must either work or starve, is a sad incumbrance in a situation like this; and it must be at once obvious how, in their hands, the calamity that weighs them down must be woefully aggravated and prolonged. A set of workmen again, who in the sufficiency of their own accumulated means, can afford to work less at a time of scanty remuneration, or could even go to play for a season, and refuse to touch one farthing of so miserable a hire; or (which is the likeliest direction for them to take in these circumstances) who could keep themselves a-going with other, though less lucrative work, that perhaps might never have been performed, but for the cheapness at which they are willing to undertake it—let such workmen, in one or other of these ways, simply withdraw from their own particular manufacture the labour which they wont to bestow upon it; and, with the production so lessened, while the consumption proceeds at its ordinary, or perhaps at a much faster rate, because of the existing low price of the article, the now

overladen market must be speedily relieved, and the price of the commodity will again rise to its wonted level. The simple ability of the workman to maintain himself for so many weeks without his accustomed wages, is that which brings up these wages in a far shorter period, than they otherwise would to their customary level. A fair recompense for labour, speedily accrues, as before, to the labourer, whose past economy in fact, is the instrument of his present relief, and whose future economy, in like manner, will effectually shield him from all those coming adversities to which a fitful and fluctuating commerce is exposed

But the growth of capital among the lower orders, would not only secure for them this occasional relief. It would be the instrument of a general and permanent elevation. They would not only be saved by it from those periodical descents to which they are else so liable; they would not only throw a passage for themselves across those abysses, through which they would otherwise have had to flounder their hazardous and uncertain way; but they could raise the whole platform of their condition, and lift up its average, as well as smooth or equalise its fluctuations. At any time let manufacturers have to treat with workmen who are not just dependent upon them for the subsistence of to-morrow, but who for weeks or months to come, could live upon the fruits of their past industry and good conduct; and they will meet a far greater difficulty and resistance in bringing them to their own terms. The workmen will be able to treat independently with their employers. They are

not obliged, in such a state of things, to acquiesce in the low wage that they would gladly submit to in other circumstances; and it will take a higher wage than before to satisfy them. This they can attain to without a poor-rate; but with a poor-rate they never will. It is through the medium of their own virtuous economy that the only patent and effectual way lies, for elevating the lower orders, and that permanently, in the scale. The law of pauperism has all along, with her lying promises, acted as a cheat to lure them from the only road to their own stable independence and comfort. It has now placed them, all over England, on the brink of a most fearful emergency. The wages of agricultural labour have lamentably fallen beneath the par of human subsistence; and, throughout the great mass of the peasantry, there is a very general recourse to such little scantlings or supplements as are reluctantly doled out to them in the shape of beggarly ministration from the parish vestry; and all this to men, who but for this accursed law, might, in the pure capacity of honest and hard-working labourers, have, instead of being arbitrated upon, been themselves the arbitrators of their own state.

There is no institution then, more adapted to the condition of a parish, at that juncture when it enters upon the retracing process, which I have elsewhere explained, than a savings bank. It is then that every endeavour should be made for rearing the people into a habit, utterly the opposite of that by which they are now depressed and degraded. The influential men of any little vicinity, could do

much by their countenance and liberality on such an occasion. They could, at least, afford to give each new applicant for work as much more in the shape of wages, as they would then withhold from him in the shape of poor-rate. The nominal price of labour would rise by this difference; and with such a prospect before them, as an ultimate deliverance from the burden of the poor-rate altogether, some might add a little more to the wage, with a special view to the training of the young in the practice of accumulation. And certainly the motive to deposit would not as now be neutralised by the existence of a right to relief, which the new economy of things supposes to be done away. And when once they exchanged the feeling of paupers for the feeling of proprietors, the breath of another spirit would animate the people; and that principle, to which Dr Adam Smith so often refers, the instant effort of every man to better his own condition, would have its free and full operation among them. When the general aim is to make the most of that right which every man possesses to parochial relief, from this must ensue a slothful, and beggarly, and worthless population, who will be kept in as low a condition as masters and overseers can reduce them to. When the general aim is to make the most of that right which every man has to his own earnings, from this must ensue a population the reverse of the former in all their characteristics, and who, by every new accession made to the capital of the working classes, will attain to higher wages than before. The best service which can be rendered to the lower orders, is to take away

the former right altogether, and to turn to its utmost possible account the latter right; which, in truth, is the only one that can at all avail them. On the moment that they could afford to live for a given period without labour, from that moment the value of their services would rise in the labour market.* They would never need to overwork for the sake of an immediate subsistence; nor, of course, to overdo the supply of any article of consumption. The proportion between the supply

* We are quite aware, that it is not by the operation of but a few savings banks, and a consequent capital in the hands of fractionally a very small number of our people, that a higher rate of wages will become general in the country. To work this effect, there must be a corresponding generality in the cause. There will not be this general elevation in the status of labourers, till there be a general habit of accumulation amongst them; and however much the individuals who do accumulate may benefit themselves, they must bear a certain proportion to the whole mass of the community, ere they can work a sensible advancement upon the whole in the circumstances of the lower orders. Suppose a district of the land, where the peasantry had, by economy and good management, attained a measure of independence; yet, if surrounded by other over-peopled districts, teeming with reckless and improvident families, this were enough to keep down the remuneration of labour, even in that place where labourers had universally become little capitalists. It is thus that the neighbourhood of Ireland will retard the progress of the lower orders in Britain, towards a permanently higher state of comfort and sufficiency than they now enjoy. And the only way of neutralising the competition from that quarter, is just by carrying to them too the beneficent influences of education, and training the people to that style and habit of enjoyment which will at length bring later marriages, and a less oppressive weight of population along with it. We are abundantly sensible that the enlargement, which we now contemplate as awaiting our operative classes, must be the slow result of a moral improvement among themselves, which we fear will come on very gradually. But certain it is, that, tardy as this way may be of a people's amelioration, it is the only way; and, at all events, there is nothing in the tumult and stir of those popular combinations, which have so recently arisen in all parts of the land, that in the least degree is fitted to hasten it.

and the demand, would be generally in favour of the workmen; and wages would be made permanently to stand in a higher relation, both to rent and profits, than they ever can maintain in the hands of a reckless and improvident peasantry.*

* The disciples of Ricardo, who have adopted all his formulæ on the subject of rent, profit, and wages, and of the relation which these three elements bear to each other, while directly led to perceive how it is that wages may increase at the expense of profit, may not acquiesce so readily in the position, that wages may increase without any diminution of profit, and solely at the expense of rent. Now it should be observed, in the reasonings of this economist, that when he speaks of profit, and of it alone, falling by an increase of wages, he keeps out of view, for the time at least, that process which he himself describes so well, and by which it is that inferior soils are, one after another along the scale of descent, brought into cultivation. Now the truth is, that, connected with this movement, there is not the mutual action of wages and profit, but the mutual action of wages and rent, and also that of profit and rent, upon each other; and as, on the one hand, in the direct process of an extending cultivation, the landlord gains both upon the capitalist and the labourer, so, on the other hand, there is a reverse process, in which both the capitalist and the labourer may not only keep their ground, but even make head against the encroachments of the landlord.

For, what is it that "obliges a country to have recourse to land of a worse quality, to enable it to raise its supply of food?" It is "the progress of population." (Ricardo's Political Economy, p. 52, second edition.) Now, the circumstance of the land being worse, implies, that it yields a less return to the same quantity of labour. Previous to its being entered upon for the purpose of cultivation, there was a better land which paid no rent, and whose larger return went all to the wages of that labour, and the profit of that capital, which were applied to it. The reason why land which yields a less return to the same labour has been entered upon is, that either labourers were willing to marry, and perpetuate their numbers, upon inferior wages, or, that capitalists were willing to trade upon inferior profits. Both causes may have operated. And certain it is, that if, after land of a given quality had been cultivated, there was still such a "progress of population" as to force an entrance upon land of a worse quality, that progress must have been owing to the standard of ease and enjoyment together, among the people, having been lower than was sufficient to keep them stationary in point of numbers. They were willing, for the sake of earlier marriages than they would

The whole philosophy of a subject may be exemplified within a narrow space. In its practical

otherwise have formed, to surrender part of this ease or enjoyment; and thus they married so early as to increase the population, and hence to make it necessary that "land of an inferior degree of fertility should be taken into cultivation." (Ricardo, p. 51.)

Now, if, previous to the overflow of people upon this inferior soil, there had been such an influence, from education, and other moral or exalting causes, upon the lower ranks, as kept them from descending to a lower style or standard of enjoyment, this of itself would have restrained the population to later, and therefore to less prolific, marriages. It would have made a higher soil the extreme barrier, for the time, of cultivation. And thus it is, that, by connecting the standard of enjoyment among the working classes, with the limit to which agriculture is carried downward among the soils of worse quality, you make the wages of labour have a direct bearing, not on the profits of the capitalists alone, but also on the rent of the landlord.

And further, it can be conceived of the popular taste, that it might not only be preserved from sinking, but that, by the humanising influences of scholarship and Christianity, it might even be elevated. As far as this cause operates, it must narrow the extent of cultivation. It must force the abandonment of those worse soils which could not yield the now higher wages, consequent on a now less numerous and overstocked population. It would require, after such a change in the habits of enjoyment among our people, a better soil, to furnish the requisite profit, and the requisite wages, without leaving any surplus of rent to the proprietor. This would of course diminish the rent of his whole land, and so prove an encroachment by the labourer on the income of the proprietor.

And as the population can thus keep their ground, and even make head against the landed proprietor, so there is a way in which capitalists can do the same thing. There are certain points of analogy between the two elements of capital and population, which have not been adverted to; and the statement of which, therefore, might appear paradoxical. We are sensible that it would require a separate work fully to vindicate the statement—and yet we cannot at present refrain from making it. We shall afterwards refer to the suddenness and the spontaneous facility wherewith capital is replaced so as to recover, as if by the force of elasticity, all its former extent, after any great curtailment which, from violence or other causes, it may have undergone. In this it resembles population, the blanks of which, created by wars or epidemics, are so speedily repaired. This, combined with the general fact, that population, so far from having to be fostered

effects, pauperism is co-extensive with our empire, In its principles, and in the whole rationale of its

by encouragement, tends of itself to press inconveniently on the food of a country, has changed the policy of the state regarding it—insomuch that, instead of watching solicitously over it, as if it were at once the most precious, and at the same time the most precarious element of national prosperity, it is now justly regarded as one of those interests which may, with all safety, be left to itself, and which can never be permanently short of the subsistence that is afforded in any given state of the world.

Now, we are far from expecting the full or immediate sympathy of all our readers, when we affirm of mercantile capital also, that it tends so to reproduce and to extend itself, as to press inconveniently on the business which is afforded in any given state of the world. For the upholding of this interest, there is no call for that strenuous parsimony which Dr Smith insists upon so urgently, throughout the whole of his work. There need be no greater apprehension of a sufficient capital at all times for the profitable business, than there is of a sufficient population for the food of the world. And if it be desirable that population should be restrained within narrower limits, for the object of a more plenteous allowance to every single family, then may it also be desirable that mercantile capital should be restrained from its tendencies to overgrowth, to assure a more liberal profit to every single capitalist.

It may be an excess of population that compels the entry upon inferior soils, and causes the people to be satisfied with their scantier produce, as the fund out of which their now inferior wages can be paid. Or it may be an excess of capital that compels the same entry, by causing capitalists to be satisfied with an inferior profit. The way to check both of these excesses, is, by a higher style of enjoyment, which prevents, in the one class, too rapid an accumulation of people, and prevents, in the other, too rapid an accumulation of capital. We confess, that we should not object to the moral preventive check of Malthus being extended from labourers to capitalists; and a higher style of enjoyment is the instrument, in both cases, of putting it into operation. Ricardo has the sagacity to foresee the tendency of things—which is, that profits shall fall indefinitely low, so as that "almost the whole produce of the country, after paying the labourers, will be the property of the owners of land, and the receivers of tithes and taxes." The mercantile classes of society have it in their power to retard, if not to prevent, this fall in the circumstances of their order. They *collectively* can uphold a higher profit, by means of a more profuse expenditure, and a higher style of living in their families—by turning a larger share of their gains

operation, it may be effectually studied even on the limited field of a small parochial community. It then lies before us in more manageable compass; and we even think, that one might in this way acquire a truer discernment of the process—just as a process of mechanism is better understood by our regard being directed to the model, than to the ponderous and unwieldy engine itself. It is on this account that we prize so much the following little narrative by the overseer of Long Burton, in Dorsetshire; a parish with a population of only three hundred and twenty-seven, and therefore peculiarly adapted for the distinct exhibition of any influence which its parochial economy might have on the state of its inhabitants.

The overseer had three able-bodied men out of employment, and whom it fell upon him to dispose of. The farmers all saturated with workmen, could not take them in; and rather than send them to work upon the roads, he applied to a master mason in the neighbourhood, who engaged to take their services at the low rate of six shillings in the week—the parish to make up the deficiency to the

to the object of immediate enjoyment, and a less share of them to the growth and extension of a capital, which, just in proportion to its magnitude, will diminish the profits of future years. The individual merchant may take to himself so liberal a share now of this world's enjoyments, as to trench on his enjoyments afterwards; but certain it is, that if, by a change in the average habits of the whole mercantile body, there was to be a more liberal expenditure among them, this, instead of wasting, would perpetuate to them the means of liberal expenditure in all time coming. It would keep the capital lower than it now is, and the profit higher; and thus it is, that by the collective will of capitalists, as well as by that of the peasantry, a limitation might be raised to the rent of the landlord—and all the three classes might share more equally in the produce of the country.

three men, so as that they should, on the whole, have fifteen pence a-week for each member of their families. The mason had previously in his em ployment, from seven to ten men, at the weekly wage of eight or nine shillings each. But no sooner did he take in these three supernumeraries from the parish at six shillings, than he began to treat anew with his old workmen, and threatened to discharge them if they would not consent to a lower wage. This of course would have thrown them all upon the parish, for the difference between their reduced and their present wages; upon perceiving which, the overseer instantly drew back his three men from the mason, and at length contrived to dispose of them otherwise.* Upon this the wages of the journeymen masons reverted to what they were before.

Now this exemplifies the state of many agricultural parishes in England. There is a reserve of

* The following is an extract of a letter received from the overseer, Mr Poole:—

"The facts respecting the three men at Long Burton, were as follows: we had three able men out of employ, and rather than send them on the roads to work, we engaged with Mr Perratt, the mason, for them, at six shillings per week each. Mr Perratt was at that time giving his men (from seven to ten men) eight or nine shillings each. Mr Perratt then saw he could get men at a lower rate, and informed some of his old hands that he should discharge and lower the wages; therefore, in consequence those men (or many of them) would, at their discharge, become very burthensome to the parish of Long Burton. We immediately saw our error, of letting him have men at a low rate, (for recollect, it was one or two shillings lower than the farmers were giving at that time,) and took the men back on the roads at certain prices, so as to make their earnings fifteen pence per head, for their families; which, with Mr Perratt's six shillings per week, we were obliged to make up from the parish to fifteen pence per head, per week."

supernumeraries constantly on the eve of pouring forth over all the departments of regular labour, and on the instant of their doing so, forcing one and all of the regular workmen within the margin of pauperism. It is instructive to observe how very few supernumeraries will suffice to produce this effect; and by how very small an excess in the number of labourers, a very great and grievous reduction takes place in the wages of labour. It is not even necessary for this purpose, that there should be an actual breaking forth of supernumeraries on the already crowded departments of regular industry. It is enough that they are at all times in readiness to break forth. The consciousness of a few idle hands in every neighbourhood, gives an advantage to the master, and an inferiority to the servants, in all their negotiations with each other. It has the effect of bringing wages as far down as possible; so low as to the very confines of beggary, and in many instances so low as in fact to beggar the great mass of the population. So wretched a remuneration as that of eight or nine shillings a-week to masons, and that even previous to the irruption of supernumeraries upon them, was still the effect of the existence of supernumeraries. It is this in fact which has so reduced the wages of agricultural labour over a great part of England; and virtually placed the question of a workman's recompense at the disposal, and under the arbitration of parish overseers.

It will be seen how beautifully this process would be reversed under a system where a parish bank came in place of the parish vestry, and when

the people, instead of a claim upon the one, had, what is far better, a capital in the other. Had these masons been free of the presence of all supernumeraries, and, moreover, had they been in possession of a fund which could have subsisted them, even but a few weeks, they would have stood to their employers in a much firmer and more independent attitude; and the miserable pittance of nine shillings a-week would not have satisfied them. It is a mere evasion of the argument to say, that the master could have reduced them to his own terms, by hiring in labourers from a distance. This is just saying, that ere a capital in the hand of labourers work its full effect upon their condition, it must be generally, and not partially diffused among them. There can be no doubt, that the vicinity of a population with inferior habits, that the vicinity of Ireland, for example, must retard the march of our working classes, to a greater sufficiency, and a higher status in the commonwealth. But this does not impair, it rather enhances the conclusion, that the high road to their advancement is the accumulation of such a capital as might enable them to weather all the adverse fluctuations of trade, and as might enable them, throughout every season, to treat more independently with their employers, than labourers can do, who, without resources, are constantly, to use a familiar phrase, from hand to mouth, or on the very brink of starvation. The establishment of so much as one savings bank is at least the beginning of such a progress, although it will require the establishment and the successful operation of

many, ere a sensible effect can be wrought by them on the general economic condition of our peasantry. This, however, is the unfailing way of it; and in proportion to the length that it is carried, will be its effect in raising the price of labour.

We hold the following narrative, which relates to the distresses experienced some years ago in the town of Leicester and its neighbourhood, to be very rich in the principles of this question. It was given and authenticated by one of the most respectable citizens in the place.

The great employment of the population in that quarter is the manufacture of stockings; which manufacture, in the year 1817, was in a state of very great depression. It was at this period that Mr Cort was applied to by the township of Smeaton Westorby, in the parish of Kibworth, Beauchamp, for work to some of their people. He succeeded in finding admittance for them to the service of a hosier in the town of Leicester, who agreed to pay each of them five shillings a-week; and the township to which they belonged, were very thankful to make up the deficiency in their wages, according to the state and number of their families. Mr Cort was, in a few days afterwards, called upon by a man whom he knew to have been a regular servant in the establishment of this hosier, and who complained that, immediately after the importation of the mechanics from the country, he and others had been dismissed from their employment. On remonstrating with their master, and asking him how they were to live, he replied that it was not his affair; an answer which, however

harshly it may sound in those countries where pauperism is unknown, may signify no more, in many parts of England, than simply a committal of discarded workmen to their legal right on the charity of the parish. Certain it is, that the excess of workmen beyond the work in demand, created a very melancholy reduction in the wages of the whole; insomuch that, according to the estimate of our very intelligent informer, in the parish alone of St Margaret's in Leicester, the wages of the stocking trade sustained a decline at the rate of at least £20,000 in the year. At the time of greatest depression, the sum earned by an able-bodied mechanic was five shillings and sixpence in the week; to which there was added an allowance from the parish, according to the circumstances of his family. In the case of a man, wife, and two children, it was made up to nine shillings in the week. This *allowance system*, as it is termed in some parts of the country, was persevered in for a considerable time, but was soon found to aggravate the mischief which it was designed to alleviate. It obviously detains a much greater number at the work of the depressed manufacture, than would otherwise have adhered to it; and thereby has the effect of perpetuating and even augmenting the glut of its commodities in the market. It was thus found, that just in proportion as the parish extended its allowances, the manufacturers reduced their wages; for which wages, however, it was still an object, in the midst of their scanty means, that all the hands of the family should be pressed into the employment, and be exerted to the uttermost.

In this style of management matters grew unavoidably worse, till the glut became quite oppressive, and was felt to be alike burdensome to the manufacturer and the operative. They tried, therefore, a new expedient; and, instead of making good the defect of wages by means of parochial aid, they resolved on a subscription for the purpose of detaching a large proportion of men from the employ altogether, whether by maintaining them in a state of total idleness, or by employing them at some agricultural work, for a very inferior wage, or even for nothing at all. In a single month, this way of it operated like a charm. The glut was soon cleared away, when the production of the article was thus limited; and just in virtue of a certain number being kept off from their own professional business of working stockings, there was speedily restored to that neighbourhood the cheering spectacle of well-paid industry, and a well-fed population.

The whole sum by which this restoration was achieved, amounted to nine thousand pounds; and this did not exceed twelve shillings for each individual engaged in the stocking manufacture in the town and environs of Leicester. Had there been a deposit then to this extent from each in a savings bank, they had the means of accomplishing a deliverance for their whole body, by supporting in idleness, or at other work, a certain part of them. But this is not the way in which, after that a habit of accumulation has been established among labourers, the product of that accumulation will be applied. For the purpose of working a good effect,

it is not necessary that there should be any such combined or corporate movement; or any resource whatever to the plans and expedients of committee-ship. The thing works far best when it works naturally. The same effect is arrived at just by each individual living upon his own accumulation; and when a glut comes round, he will spontaneously work less when a miserable remuneration is going, than if he were depending for his daily subsistence on his daily labour. An overstocked market is either prevented or more speedily relieved, simply by so many of the workmen ceasing to work, or by a great many working moderately. It is thus, that a savings bank is the happiest of all expedients for filling up the gaps, and equalising the deficiencies, and shortening those dreary intervals of ill-paid work, which now occur so frequently to the great degradation and distress of every manufacturing population.

The subscription of nine thousand pounds at Leicester, just did for the population there, what, by the system of savings banks, any population might do for themselves. It would not of course take two or three thousand people off from their work, and keep them idle or otherwise employed for a month or two. But it would exempt all from the pressure of that immediate necessity which now urges them to work to excess. The effect in clearing away the glut would just be the same; and the people would owe to themselves a benefit that, in this instance, was conferred upon them by others. They would soon recover the level of their old and natural prices; nay, permanently raise this level,

so as to obtain a permanently higher status in the commonwealth.

We conclude this chapter by the following extract from that article in the Edinburgh Review, which we have already alluded to.

"There is another and a far more excellent way—not to be attained, certainly, but by a change of habit among the workmen themselves—yet such a change as may be greatly promoted by those whose condition or character gives them influence in society. We have always been of opinion, that the main use of a savings bank was, not to elevate labourers into the class of capitalists, but to equalise and improve their condition as labourers. We should like them to have each a small capital not wherewith to become manufacturers, but wherewith to control manufacturers. It is in this way (and we can see no other) that they will be enabled to weather all the fluctuations to which trade is liable. It is the cruel necessity of overworking which feeds the mischief of superabundant stock, and which renders so very large a transference of hands necessary ere the market can be relieved of the load under which it groans and languishes. Now, this is a necessity that can only be felt by men on the brink of starvation, who live from hand to mouth, and have scarcely more than a day's earnings for the subsistence of the day. Let these men only be enabled, on the produce of former accumulations, to live through a season of depression while they work moderately, or, if any of them should so choose it, while they do not work at all,—and they would not only lighten such a period of its wretch-

edness, but they would inconceivably shorten its duration. The overplus of manufactured goods, which is the cause of miserable wages, would soon clear away under that restriction of work which would naturally follow on the part of men who did not choose, because they did not need, to work for miserable wages. What is now a protracted season of suffering and discontent to the lower orders, would, in these circumstances, become to them a short but brilliant career of holiday enjoyment. The report of a heavy downfal of wages, instead of sounding like a knell of despair in their ears, would be their signal for rising up to play. We have heard, that there does not exist in our empire a more intellectual and accomplished order of workmen than the weavers of Paisley. It was their habit, we understand, to abandon their looms throughout the half or nearly the whole of each Saturday, and to spend this time in gardening, or in the enjoyment of a country walk. It is true, that such time might sometimes be viciously spent; but still we should rejoice in such a degree of sufficiency among our operatives, as that they could afford a lawful day of every week for their amusement, and still more, that they could afford whole months of relaxed and diminished industry, when industry was underpaid. This is the dignified posture which they might attain; but only after the return of better times, and through the medium of their own sober and determined economy. Every shilling laid up in store, and kept in reserve for the evil day, would strengthen the barrier against such a visitation of distress and difficulty as that

from which we are yet scarcely emerging. The very habits too, which helped them to accumulate in the season of well-paid work, would form our best guarantee against the vicious or immoral abuse of this accumulation, in the season either of entire or comparative inactivity. We would expect an increase of reading, and the growth of literary cultivation, and the steady advancement of virtuous and religious habits,—and, altogether, a greater weight of character and influence among the labouring classes, as the permanent results of such a system. Instead of being the victims of every adverse movement in trade, they would become its most effective regulators.

"This is the eminence that the labourers of our nation are fully capable both of reaching and of maintaining. But it is neither the Poor-rate of England, nor the law of Parochial aid in Scotland, that will help them on to it. These have only deceived them away from the path which leads to independence; and amid all the complaints which have been raised against the system of a compulsory provision for the poor, nothing is more certain than that our poor, because underpaid operatives, are the principal sufferers by it. Every other class in society has its compensation. It is paid back again to the manufacturer in the shape of a reduction in the wages of his workmen, and to the landholder by a reduction in the price of all manufactured articles. It is only the operative himself, who appears to be pensioned by it, that is really impoverished. It has deadened all those incitements to accumulation which would have raised

him and his fellow-labourers to a footing of permanent security in the state—And, not till their eyes have been opened to the whole mischief and cruelty of this delusion—not till they see where it is that their most powerful and malignant enemy is lying in ambush—not till they have learned that, under the guise of charity, there has been an influence at work for many years, which has arrested the march of the lower orders to the elevation that naturally and rightfully belongs to them, and till they come to understand that it is by their own exertion and self-denial alone that they can win their way to it—not, in short, till the popular cry is for the abolition, rather than the extension of pauperism, will our labouring classes have attained their full share of comfort and importance in the commonwealth."

CHAPTER XX.

On the Combinations of Workmen for the purpose of Raising Wages.

We fear that the cause of savings banks may have sustained a temporary discredit from the recent conduct of workmen all over the country. The apprehension is, that, by a large united capital amongst them, they might get the upper hand of their employers altogether; that, in possession of means which could enable them to be idle, they may exercise a power most capriciously and most

inconveniently for the other classes of society; that they may lay manufacturers under bondage by their impregnable combinations; and, striking work at the most critical and unexpected junctures, they may subject the whole economy of human life to jolts and sudden derangements which might be enough for its overthrow. These fears, enhanced though they have been of late by the outrages of workmen in various parts of the country, would speedily be dissipated, we believe, under the light of growing experience. The repeal of the combination laws has not even yet been adequately tried. The effervescence which has followed on that repeal, is the natural, and, we believe, the temporary effect of the anterior state of things. There was nothing more likely than that the people, when put in possession of a power which they felt to be altogether new, should take a delight in the exercise of it, and break forth into misplaced and most extravagant manifestations. But if the conduct of the one party have been extravagant, the alarm of the other party we conceive to have been equally extravagant. We trust that the alarm may have in part been dissipated, ere Government shall be induced to legislate any further upon the subject; or to trench, by any of its acts, on the great principle of every man being entitled to make the most of his own labour, and also of acting in concert with his fellows for the production of a general benefit, as great as they can possibly make out to the whole body of labourers.

The repeal of the combination laws in England has been attended with consequences which strongly

remind us of the consequences that ensued, after the Revolution, from the repeal of the game laws in France. The whole population, thrown agog by their new privilege, poured forth upon the country, and, variously accoutred, made war, in grotesque and unpractised style, upon the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. In a few months, however, the extravagance subsided, and the people returned to their old quiescent habits and natural occupations. We feel assured that, in like manner, this delirium of a newly-awakened faculty among our British workmen will speedily pass away. They will at length become wise and temperate in the use of it. Neither party, in fact, well understand how to proceed in the unwonted relation wherein they now stand to each other. There is indefinite demand upon the one side; upon the other there are distrust, and a most sensitive dread of encroachment. They have not yet completed their trial of strength; and just because, in ignorance of each others' powers, there are yet the effort, and the excitation, and the busy rivalship, of a still undetermined conflict. If parliament would but suffer the great principle upon which its repeal has been founded to have full and unfettered swing in the country, we have no doubt, that, after a very few vibrations, the matter would at length settle down into a right and a comfortable adjustment for all parties. The experience of the evil that results to themselves from an overdone ambition, would far more effectually chasten and repress the obstinacy or the daring of workmen, than all the terrors of the statute-book; and a harmony would soon be esta-

blished in a natural way between those parties whom the laws of the state had only set at variance.

The whole of this subject seems resolvable into three great divisions. First, for the question, "What were the right enactment in regard to combinations, on the pure and abstract principles of law?" Second, the inquiry whether, under such an enactment, all the practical mischief that is apprehended from combinations, would not be sufficiently provided against without further law, and just by the action and reaction of certain natural influences, that operate throughout society, and among the parties themselves. Third, the consideration of the fears and the prejudices of men upon this subject, which are grounded upon economic theories.

I. The great principle of law upon this, and upon every other subject, is, that it should quadrate as much as it can possibly be made to do, with obvious morality. It is most desirable, that whatever the legislature shall ordain to be a crime, and liable to punishment, should be felt as a crime by man's natural conscience. In every case when there is a want of sympathy between the enactments of the statute-book, and the dictates of natural virtue, there is an expenditure and loss of strength incurred by the government of a country, when it either ordains such enactments, or carries them into effect. It is sure to lose ground thereby, in public or popular estimation;—and when the arbitrary regulations of a state are thus made to thwart and run counter to the independent feelings and judgments of men, this is certain to infuse an

element of weakness into the body politic. The heart-burnings of him who suffers the penalty, meet with powerful reinforcement, in the sympathy of all his fellows. He feels himself to be a martyr or a hero, and not a criminal; and, if treated as a criminal, this only puts a generous indignancy into his heart, in which he is supported by a kindred sentiment among all the free and noble spirits of the land. It is thus that the stability of government, and with it the cause of public order and tranquillity, is put to hazard by every law which squares not with the jurisprudence of Nature—and that some strong case of expediency would need to be made out, ere that should be held a crime in the eye of the law, which is not a crime in the eye of Nature also.

On the other hand, let law be on the side of clear and unquestionable morality—let that which it reckons with as a delinquency, be regarded as a delinquency by every unsophisticated conscience—let the offence against which its penalties are directed, be felt as an offence against the natural dictates of humanity and rectitude—let its voice of rebuke or of threatening, be at one with the voice of the heart, insomuch that all the denunciations of the statute-book are echoed to by the universal sense of justice in society; and every act of such a legislation will inconceivably strengthen the authority from which it emanates. Even though a very numerous class of the community should be thwarted by it in some favourite but iniquitous design, any discontent of theirs would be overborne by the general and concurrent feeling of the whole

community besides. Nothing could withstand the force of law, if thus aided by the force of public opinion; and any government whose deeds are responded to by this natural sense of equity among men, may surely count on such support and sympathy through the land, as shall make its authority to be quite irresistible.

Now, we fear that there have been times when both these principles were traversed by Government, in its management of combinations. For, first, there seems nothing criminal in the act of a man ceasing to work at the expiry of his engagement, because not satisfied with his present wage, and desirous of a higher; or in the act of men confederated and doing jointly, or together, the same thing. On the contrary, it seems altogether fair, that each should make as much as he can of his own labour; and that just as dealers of the same description meet and hold consultations for the purpose of enhancing the price of their commodity, so it should be equally competent for workmen to deliberate, and fix on any common, if it be not a criminal agreement, and that to enhance, if they can, the price of their own services. There really is nothing morally wrong in all this; and however a man may be treated on account of it as a delinquent by the law, he certainly is not regarded as a delinquent in the eye of natural conscience. It was because of this discrepancy between nature and the law, that we held it a good thing, when, by the repeal act, it was expunged from the statute book—and we hope that no subsequent act will again restore it. It is true, that while the

whole statute law against combinations has been abrogated, they, by the last act of parliament, have again been made liable as before to prosecution and punishment under the common law. Yet we fondly trust, that even the application of common law to the practice in question, will fall into desuetude, as a thing not suited to the spirit of the age—an expiring relict of the barbarity of other times. And accordingly, in almost all the prosecutions which have taken place ever since the repeal act was modified, and in part done away, it is not the simple deed of combination which is proceeded against, but certain obvious and undoubted criminalities which are charged upon the promoters or the agents of combination.

But, secondly, while Government on the one hand, by its penalties against the simple act of combination, put forth a rigour far beyond the natural dimensions of this alleged enormity, they, on the other hand, have not been declared and rigorous enough against those real enormities, which are often attendant on combinations. If, in the one way, they have greatly outrun the sympathies of the country—in the other way, they, for a time, perhaps, as greatly fell short of them. A mere combination among those who are unwilling to work, is not in the eye of morality a crime. But the members of a combination proceed to a very great and undeniable crime, when they put forth a hand, or even utter dark and terrifying threats of violence to those who are willing to work. This is the point against which the whole force of legislation ought to be directed; and though the public

cannot go along with those severities of imprisonment and exile, which law has inflicted for the naked offence of combination, yet they will go most readily along with far greater severities than have ever yet been inflicted for the outrage done to those who refuse to enter them.

This then is the point at which the legislature should put forth all their rigour—even to protect those who abide in their employment, or who have newly entered, from the hostility and violence of those who have abandoned it. In consistency with their own great and glorious principle of freedom, they should guard to the uttermost the freedom of those who are willing, from the tyranny and violence of those who are not willing to work. It was in the spirit of kindness to the working classes, that the act for the repeal of the combination laws was passed; and it would appear, as if in the exuberance of this spirit, that an unwonted gentleness and forbearance had been made to run through all the provisions of it. The punishment, whether for forcing, by violence, their fellow-workmen to combinations along with them—or for forcing, by violence, their masters into a compliance with their own prescriptions, is a great deal too small. By a *prosecution under this act*, no violence to person or property, no destruction of machinery, tools, goods, wares, or work, is liable to any greater penalty than that of two months' imprisonment and hard labour. It is true, that by the subsequent clauses, the penalty is extended to three months' imprisonment and hard labour. And it is also true, that all these offences are liable to prosecution and punishment under the

severer laws that were previously in operation. But it may help to account in part for the recent popular ebullitions, that the repeal act held out a more mild and merciful aspect than the law ever held out before, to the very offences which itself was calculated to provoke. It was to this act that workmen naturally looked, and by which they measured the hardships and the criminalities of all the violence which they might use to enforce their combinations. To them, in the first instance, then, it may be said to have offered a temptation to such violence; nor are we to wonder, if anterior to their experience of those heavier penalties, which this act did not bring into view, they heedlessly broke forth into outrages that were alike hurtful to the interest of their employers, and to the interest of their fellow-workmen.

It would help to clear and to facilitate the determination of this whole problem, were it extricated from that confusion of sentiment, in virtue of which, the right and the wrong of combinations have been blended together into one object of contemplation. The public indignation has been very much fostered against the cause of natural liberty in workmen, by the shameful outrages of which associated workmen have been guilty in many parts of the land. It is thus that we are hurried into a desire for the abridgment of that liberty, by barring with legal penalties the very act of combination. Whereas, in fact, it is by the perfecting and extending of natural liberty, that all the mischiefs of combination are most effectually neutralised. But legislators themselves participate in this confusion,

and forget, that after they have resolved to leave untouched the freedom of those who are not willing to work, there lies with them the remaining duty of shielding to the uttermost the freedom of those who are willing. In such a career of legislation, they do not need to relinquish for a moment that fine aspect of liberality which characterised the outset of it. They do not need to recall any part of that boon which they granted to the labouring classes; but only to add to the boon of protection from the alleged tyranny of their masters, the further boon of protection from the far more severe and substantial tyranny which, if not restrained, they would exercise on each other. In the prosecution of this walk, they will find, how much it is that sound morality and sound legislation harmonize. There is nought, either in the joint or separate resolutions of workmen, not to work for their masters under certain wages, that should be enacted against; for in such resolutions there is truly nothing wrong. But there is a most glaring moral evil in the threats, or the annoyances, or the assaults that have been committed by them against their fellows; and, to put these down, the whole strength and wisdom of Government should be called into operation.

It is of vital importance that any future effort of legislation should be well directed; not against the principle of workmen being at full liberty to act both individually and conjointly in opposition to their masters, in every such way as is not criminal for a rise of wages, but against the practice of workmen putting forth the slightest violence, or committing the smallest outrage in their opposition

to each other. The thing to be desired, is, that any new act shall not contravene the expression of the repeal act, which was altogether framed in the spirit of an honest friendship to the labouring classes of society. Its design was to protect them from what, in the fervour of their indignation, they have often denominated the tyranny of their employers. The truth is, that they require a still further protection; and that is, full protection from a still more odious and oppressive tyranny which is apt to spring up among themselves. We can confidently appeal to the experience of many workmen, whether they ever felt so grievously thwarted and overborne out of their own free choice, as by the terrors of their own association, whose secret and mysterious power wielded a far more despotic sway over their imaginations, than ever did the old law in the plenitude of all its enforcements. We venture to affirm, that the dread of ruin to their families, and of injury to their persons, has been far more frequently inspired by this new despotism, within these few months, than has been done by the statutes against combinations among all the working classes put together for a whole century. An act for the further protection of workmen from this regimen of terror, so far from even the most distant approach to a re-enactment of the Combination Laws, would, in fact, be tantamount to a grant of additional liberty; and, notwithstanding all the clamour and jealousy of the obstinately disaffected among them, would be substantially felt as such by the body at large. It were to be regretted, if Government, after having done so well by the repeal of these laws,

should forfeit any portion of the popularity and real strength which it has thereby acquired; and, therefore, it is especially desirable, that any subsequent measure which might be necessary, should wear the appearance, as well as possess the reality of being a measure for still further defending the liberties and the interest of workmen.

By the repeal of the Combination Laws, full liberty has been granted, that workmen shall either singly, or in a body, cease to work till they obtain such superior remuneration as they may choose to fancy or to fix upon. But the liberty is imperfect, if any one, or more of these workmen, be not in full security, when they please to work for any inferior remuneration. The man who is willing to accept of a lower wage than his fellows, is the man who can least of them all afford to be idle. It is he who is most goaded by his own necessities, and those of his family, to an exertion for their subsistence; and he, therefore, is the individual, to whom the restraints of an association enforced as they often are by the persecution and violence of its agents, are in fact the most gallingly and oppressively cruel. The members of a combination of workmen hold out their cause to be that of the poor against the rich, whom they would represent as the tyrants and oppressors of society. They reflect not on the tyranny which they are exercising all the while on those who are still poorer, and in a state of more pitiable helplessness than themselves—on the individuals of their own body, who are most immersed in debt, or whose children are farthest sunk in destitution, and who most gladly

would labour in their behalf for the current wages, were it not for the rigours and the menaces of this worse than revolutionary despotism. The greatest mischief which has ensued from the repeal in question, can be met by a legislation that might stand forth, not in the character of opposition, but in the character of friendship and benignity to the lower orders; a legislation that took the side not of masters against servants, but of the poorest and most helpless of these servants, against that crowd of petty oppressors who were of somewhat elevated condition above them. A legislation of this sort, whose equity recommends itself to every man's conscience never can awaken any popular disaffection that will be at all hazardous; and we therefore would repeat it as our fondest hope, that parliament will devise a method for putting down those outrages, that we suspect at the very worst are temporary, without at all impairing that fine aspect of liberality, which is not less consonant with the soundest economic wisdom, than it is in grateful harmony with the spirit of our age.

The associated workmen with the cry of liberty in their mouths, have most glaringly traversed all the principles of liberty. They have erected themselves into so many little corporations, and are chargeable with all the monopoly and intolerance of the corporation spirit. They have endeavoured to narrow the field of competition for employment, by shutting the avenues to their respective trades against the general population. The same paltry selfishness which wont to characterise in other days, the exclusive companies of

merchants, has now descended among our labourers, and with them has acquired a still more hideous complexion, from the savage cruelties wherewith it has been aggravated, and which have armed against their cause all that is generous and good in the feelings of the country. Still it is hoped that even misconduct so outrageous as theirs will not precipitate the legislature back again to those antiquated prejudices from which they had emerged; but well may it warrant them to utter a voice of greater decision, and lift an arm of greater strength than they have ever yet done, against such enormities as can never be endured in any Christian or civilized land.

Because Government may have conceded to our artisans and mechanics the fullest liberty not to work, that is no reason why a power should be permitted to arise in another quarter, which might trench upon their liberty to work. Government has nought to do, but to assert itself the equal patron and defender of both kinds of liberty. By means of the one liberty, it will neutralise all the mischief which is apprehended from the other. It is not by a regimen which does violence to any of the principles of natural freedom, but by the equal and impartial maintenance of all its principles, that a wise government is enabled to uphold the best and most wholesome state of society.

And so far from any call for any peculiar delicacy or tenderness of legislation in this matter, there is a very peculiar reason, why in every manufacturing country, the attempt to molest or impede workmen in the free exercise of their call-

ings, should be visited with a treatment the very opposite of that lenity, wherewith this offence seems to be regarded at least in the Repeal Act. It is not because of the alleged importance of our manufactures to the public and political strength of our nation; an advantage which we have long held to be quite imaginary; but it is because of the very great number of those whose interest and safety are involved in the protection of every workman from the aggression of his fellows. We allude to the workmen themselves. There is altogether as great propriety in it, that the crime of forcing or interrupting a labourer should be signalized above an ordinary assault, by the severer penalties which are annexed to it, as that the crime of forgery should be so signalized. The latter severity, over rigorous as it surely is, has been defended on the ground of the extensive mischief done by forgery to the merchants of a trading nation. The former might well be vindicated on the ground of a mischief as extensive, done, by the forcing of workmen, to the mechanics and artisans of a manufacturing nation. To provide a barrier against the outrages of associated workmen, it is not necessary to conjure up again the legislation of barbarous times. It can be done by a better legislation, which shall bear upon its forehead the impress both of kindness to the labourer, and of enlightened patriotism.

II. But what theoretically may appear to be a good law in the statute book, might turn out, after all, to be practically a powerless or inapplicable law in society; like a machine, that however beautiful and perfect in the model, might not work

well in the manufactory. Therefore it is, that ere such an inquiry as the present can be completed, we must pass from the abstract jurisprudence of the question, to the gross and living experience of the question; and, going forth on the outer field of actual and concrete humanity, we must observe, there, what the forces and the interests are which come into busy play, and in how far such a law as we have argued for, is of sufficient control over them, for all right and salutary purposes. It is not by the mere categories of ethical science that such a question ought to be determined. Such a law as would suit the republic of Plato, or some similar Utopia, might be the whole fruit of one's studious excogitations at home. But it is only by a survey abroad, and over the domain of business and familiar life, that he learns to modify, when needful, the generalisations of abstract thought, by the demands of a felt and urgent expediency.

Let us now look, then, to this outer field of contemplation—not to the principles of the question in any system of natural law, but to the exemplifications of the question in the midst of living society; and we greatly mistake it, if it be not found that there is a most entire harmony between them; and that the complex workings of what may be termed the economic mechanism, are altogether at one with the simplicities of theory. We hold that there are certain natural securities for a right adjustment between masters and servants, in the very relationship itself, which ought to supersede the interference of Government;—we mean, its inter-

ference for any other object than the enforcement of justice between the parties, and the protection of both from all sorts of personal violence. Even from the very history of some recent misguided adventures, on the part of workmen, we may learn what these securities are, and how powerful and efficient they must ultimately prove in their operation. So that the interference of Government, with the just and natural freedom of any of the parties, is really superseded by those better influences that lie in the mechanism and the spontaneous workings of human society.

The great compensation, then, for the evils of a strike, is the power which masters have of replacing those who have struck work by other hands. We will not deny the very great temporary inconvenience of such an event to masters; but we deny that it is such as to warrant a legislation, which traverses any of the principles of an obvious or natural equity. And besides, we are not to estimate the inconvenience in all time coming, by any degree of it which might be felt or experienced at present; for now the conflict is at its height in many places; and though, by this time, subsided into quiescence in some quarters, yet, in others, still in a state of busy and unsettled fermentation. Still, however, we have to wait the various terminations of this controversy, which the repeal of the Combination Laws has so very naturally awakened all over the land, ere we shall obtain the complete verification of its result. We are yet in the suspense, and among the uncertainties of the experiment; and though gradually brighten-

ing towards it, we have not yet arrived at the full and finished experience. This experience, however, if waited for patiently, and for a sufficient length of time, will, we have no doubt, be in the highest degree tranquillizing to the combatants, and satisfactory to the public at large. Meanwhile, even from the already bygone history of these combinations, in places where the warfare has been stoutest and most alarming, might we gather, I apprehend, enough of argument why the great principles of natural justice and liberty ought not to be violated.

In the first place, then, on the event of a general strike in an industrious establishment, there have been frequent instances of the old hands being replaced by new ones, who were rendered effective in the course of a few weeks. This has been done, and with ultimate success, at collieries and cotton-mills, and in many other manufactories. At the Redding colliery, for example, belonging to the Duke of Hamilton, and where the disturbances assumed a very riotous character, this expedient was resorted to. By a series of questions and answers now before me, it appears that the manager there, on the defection of the old colliers, employed in their place such labourers as were about the work, and who were before employed in above-ground jobs, together with a few strangers who accidentally came. The labourers were instructed in their new occupation by three oversmen of the work, and a few other colliers (three or four, chiefly old) who did not join the association. They were allowed two shillings and six-

pence a-day at the first, but in a few weeks most of them earned more by the piece; and the good hands, in a very few weeks, made five shillings, and even more per day.

This narrative is chiefly valuable as affording the example of a good termination to the strike, achieved by the mere vigour and promptitude of the Sheriff-depute of the county. We feel persuaded, that without any recurrence to an antiquated law, the whole mischief of these combinations might be neutralised by means of a greater spirit and energy on the part of our executive officers. A stronger or more efficient police might be necessary for the purpose of putting down all that is really bad in them; and this were far better than to call in the aid of a legislation that traversed any great principle of liberality or justice.

The next narrative serves to demonstrate how much, without the aid either of law or of police, might be accomplished by a mere spirit of determination on the part of masters. It exhibits a fine miniature specimen of the progress and the natural expiry of combinations, by the action alone of those natural forces and interests which are involved in them. We think that it goes to establish the safety wherewith (after Government has fulfilled its duty of protection from all outrages) the whole matter might be left to its own issues: and we do think it hard that the legislature should be called upon, either to brave the odium, or to sustain the burden, of a management which devolves more properly on capitalists themselves.

The following is the extract of a letter from a

gentleman connected with a colliery near Ayr:—"Being firmly determined to withstand this system of dictation, we looked about us for the means of counteracting their measures; and nothing appearing to us so effectual as the taking or employing of new hands, we instantly set about preparing tools, and engaging every labouring man we could obtain. In about three weeks, we had introduced seventy men into our pits; and the produce of our colliery daily increasing, it became evident that we were ultimately to prevail in the struggle. The men whom we employed were mostly Irishmen, but were picked up by us about the place. Had we not succeeded in getting them in that way, we had determined to send a person to Ireland to recruit there. Our old hands, at least such as we have chosen to employ, have returned to their work, and have, in a submissive manner, renounced the system of associations. Our new colliers continue with us, and are doing well."

These are only two examples, selected almost at random from the mass that lies before us, and which serve to demonstrate the facility wherewith raw and unpractised labourers can be rendered effective at least in this important branch of industry. In many other branches masters have precisely the same resource.

But, secondly, we are aware that, in the greater number of trades, a labourer from the general population is not so speedily convertible to use as in collieries; and that, therefore, with even full security for the new workmen, a time must elapse, and loss must be incurred, and a most inconvenient

suspension of the manufacture must take place, ere it can again be set a-going in the same effective way as before. The old workmen who have struck, cannot all at once be replaced by the same number; and the new workmen who succeed them, cannot all at once acquire the habit and skill of their predecessors. It is certainly relieving to observe how soon an ordinary labourer can be transformed into a good collier, and even made serviceable in many of the branches of cotton-spinning. Yet there can be no doubt, that in all those crafts and occupations which require a long apprenticeship to be accomplished in their mysteries, there might be a cessation of work which, if persisted in beyond a certain length, might be inconvenient to master manufacturers, and still more inconvenient to their customers. To look fairly and openly at all the possibilities, one can conceive a great extent of inconvenience from a universal strike of shipwrights, or house-carpenters, and still more, perhaps, of clothiers and shoemakers, and all classes of workmen that cannot be so instantly replaced, as some others, out of the general population.

Now, in the nature of the case itself, there is a sufficient protection even against this evil, alarming as it may appear; and that without any express interference of parliament in the matter. We mean the certainty, that, sooner or later, the workmen who have struck must surrender themselves to terms of agreement with their employers. They cannot hold out against this self-inflicted blockade beyond a certain period. There must of course be a rapid expenditure of their means;

and, if living without work, and therefore without wages, their resources must soon melt away. No associated fund can, for a great length of time, afford the indispensable allowances to the men, and their families, of a very numerous combination; and so, of necessity, the combination must sooner or later be broken up. They may submit to very great privations, and put their faculty of suffering to its uttermost endurance, ere they will again resign themselves to a treaty with their employers. But stern necessity must at length prevail over their resistance; and a visit, in the first instance, from one or two stragglers, or the offer of some new and modified terms, will be the sure precursor to a general surrender of the whole body. It is altogether misplaced and unnecessary for government to meddle, but for the prevention or punishment of crime, with the steps of a process that will so surely terminate in the very result which it can be the only object of Government to effectuate.

And what we hold to be of prime importance in this argument, is, that the result brought about in this natural way, has a far more permanent and pacifying effect upon the workmen, than when overborne out of their combination by the force of legal restraints, and the terror of legal penalties. It will be of far more quiescent and satisfying power, when it is the result of their own experiment. They will be greatly more manageable, after having themselves made full trial of their own impotency, than when festering under a sense of the injustice and hostility wherewith, under the old combination laws, they conceived that the hand

of Government was lifted up against the interests and natural rights of their order. It was quite to be expected, that there should be frequent, and even fierce out-breakings on their part, after the repeal of these laws; but, most assuredly, this general experience of the upshot will be of far more healing influence, than any thing so fitted to exasperate and tantalize, as the re-enactment of them. And it should further be recollected, that, when freely left, first, to their own experiment, and then to their own experience of its failure, all the accompaniments of the process are such as serve to deter from the repetition of it. They will not be so readily tempted to place reliance again upon an association that has failed, and from very powerlessness, to make good any of those plans and promises which had so deceived them. And they will be still further alienated from such an enterprise, by their recollection of the miseries to which it already had exposed them—of the hardships which they had to suffer while it lasted—and, finally, of the humiliating prostration of themselves to their masters, in which it terminated. For they will not forget, that, should the perseverance of their employers outlast their own, it places them on high vantage-ground, and themselves in a state of most submissive helplessness. Should the master have but partially replaced them by new workmen during the strike, then he may not have room for all, after the strike is over; and he might signalize the ringleaders of the opposition by a determined exclusion of them; and he might re-admit the rest on less favourable terms than before. Under all

these recollections, the proposal for another combination may be repeated, in the course of years, but it will not just have the same charms for them. And better security far, we affirm, for the quiescence of our working classes, that they should be conducted to it, at length, by the lessons of their own experience, than that they should be constrained to it, at once, by the laws of authority.

And it is really not for the interest of the masters, that there should be a revival of these laws. Greatly better for them too, that there should have been a trial of strength, after which both parties are landed in that state of settlement and repose, which comes after a battle that has been decisively terminated. We are aware of the spirit which is now abroad among the workmen, and that it is going forth in succession through the manufacturing districts of the land. But, truly, we contemplate the progress of these outbreakings with no other feelings, and no other anticipations, than we should regard the progress of an ambulatory school, whose office it is to spread the lessons of a practical wisdom over the face of the country; and the peace and meekness of wisdom will be the inevitable results of it. Accordingly, we do find that the earlier combinations have been dispersed, and given place to the re-establishment of a good understanding between the workmen and their employers; while other and more recent combinations are still in progress. This is just to say, that in some places they have acquired the lesson, while in others they are only learning it. The country is still at school upon this subject; and it were a pity

that she was not permitted to finish her education. For ourselves we feel persuaded, that a lasting tranquillity will be the effect of troubles which shall soon pass away. But, for this purpose, it is indispensable that they should work themselves out by their own natural effervescence, instead of being forcibly repressed by the hand of authority. One consequence is very obvious. It will serve to bring out more singly, and therefore more impressively, to the view of workmen, the natural control and ascendancy which masters have over them. It has an influence the very reverse of pacific, when servants are led to regard their master in the light of one who is invested, by arbitrary laws, with the power of a tyrant. But let Government and the laws be kept out of this controversy altogether. Let it be reduced to a single-handed contest between the power which should belong to the one party, of giving or withholding employment, and the power which should equally belong to the other party, of giving or withholding their services. Let Parliament not meddle in this altercation at all; and it is impossible, but that at length, by the simple operation of its own rival and conflicting forces, a fair adjustment must come out of it. And a solid peace will be the fruit of this adjustment. After the artificial checks to combination have been withdrawn, workmen will be taught, and become intelligent as to the real power and operation of the natural checks; and they will not be so readily thrown agog by the plausibilities which now so mislead and agitate them. More especially, they will come to perceive, that apart

from the authority of law altogether, there is a natural power which belongs to the holders of capital; and we are persuaded, that the demonstrations which have been recently given of it in the defeat of many associations, will do more to compose the turbulence of workmen, than all the threats and penalties of the statute-book. And better, greatly better for the masters, that their security should be founded upon this, than upon any odious and unpopular legislation, which has the effect of alienating from their persons, the respect and gratitude of their own servants. Let this hateful intermeddling of law be withdrawn from their negotiations; and, on both sides, there will at length be felt the sweets and the ties of a natural relationship. The mutual dependence, and the mutual obligation will be far better understood. And employers will never be on so secure and kindly a footing with their workmen, as when the latter have been taught, by sad experience, precisely to estimate how much they have to fear from any scheme of hostility against the interest of the former, and how much it is they owe for admission and continuance in their service.

On every view then of this question, we feel as if there was nothing so much to be abjured and deprecated, as any regress, on the part of Government, towards the combination laws. It were endangering the peace of the country for the interest, and that, too, the imaginary interest, of merchants and master manufacturers. It were bringing upon Government the burden of a popular odium, which, for the cement and security of the social fabric,

every friend of public order should rejoice in seeing it delivered from. It were setting the authorities of the land in array against the population; and that, for a purpose which is abundantly provided for by the workings and the influences, and the actions and re-actions of the natural mechanism of society, if that mechanism were only left to its own free operation. We are reminded, while on this argument, of the delusions which have been so well exposed by Dr Smith; and which were practised by the traders of other days upon Government, when they attempted, and but too successfully, to enlist her on the side of their own peculiar interests. Hence the wretched jealousies of that mercantile system, which is now verging to an overthrow; and by which the relation of Great Britain with all foreign nations, was placed on a footing the most vulnerable and precarious. In like manner, there are certain home jealousies, to which we trust that Government will not lend herself as the instrument of any subserviency whatever, else her own relation to the plebeian orders of the community, which it were so desirable should be a relation of kindness on the one side, and of grateful and confiding attachment on the other, might be turned into a relation of hostility and discontent. By the late enlightened reformations of her economical code, she has done much to propitiate the favour of people abroad; and of consequence she is now strong in the admiration and approving regards of all Europe. Let her proceed in the career upon which she has entered, of economical improvement at home, and higher achieve-

ment still, she will become equally strong in the affections of her own population.

The mercantile system, with its competitions and jealousies, has been the fertile source of many foreign wars, which we now trust will not be so easily or so frequently kindled as in past generations. And the same system turned inwardly upon ourselves, has been the prolific source of many intestine divisions, which we trust, by the wisdom of a more enlightened policy, will henceforth be effectually superseded. It is too much, that Government, to appease the premature and exaggerated alarm of our capitalists, should be called forth to interfere in such a way, as must excite against her the heart-burnings of a whole population. Her wisdom is forbearance; and save for the punishment of crime, or the defence of obvious and natural equity, she might safely leave the whole question to the determination of the parties themselves—to the adjustment, in which it will of its own accord settle down by the way, in which the claims of the one are met and limited by the counteractions of the other.

Government might, with all confidence, leave the price of labour to find its own level, in common with all other marketable commodities. The recent outrages that have arisen from the repeal of the combination laws, called most certainly for an exercise of legislation, but an exercise altogether distinct from that by which any great principle of natural liberty is trenched upon or violated. It will really be too much, if any premature or imaginary alarm on the part of interested capitalists,

shall precipitate our rulers into a departure from that wise and liberal policy, by which they have earned both the attachment of the people, and the admiration of all those who are any way versant in the philosophy of human affairs. The best friends of peace and order in our land, will ever regret that most useless waste of popularity which they must incur, if they give way to the sensitive fears, or the sordid wishes of traders and manufacturers upon this subject—a class of men, who, centuries ago, led our lawgivers into that Ishmaelitish policy, which laid us open to the hostility of all surrounding nations; and some of whom would now have us to brave the hazards of a still more fearful hostility at home, and despoil our truly paternal Government of her fair and natural inheritance in the affections of her own children.

CHAPTER XXI.

The same Subject Continued.

It is competent for masters too, to frame such articles of agreement with their workmen, as shall protect them in a great measure from any sudden or unlooked-for cessations; and for the violation of which, these workmen shall bring down upon themselves, not the arbitrary, but the rightful penalties of law; and which penalties, should it be found necessary, might be still further aggravated, without any offence to the principles of an obvious

or natural morality. They could engage their labourers for a service of months, instead of weeks or days, and then put forth a most legitimate strength to compel their fulfilment of the stipulated period. To make the security more effectual, they could hire their workmen in separate classes at all separate periods; so that, at worst, it could only be a partial, and never a universal strike at any one time. They could further ascertain before-hand, as in domestic service, whether any of them mean to leave their employment at the termination of their bargain; and thus masters, with time to look about for new workmen, could never be caught unprepared. We do not imagine that all these devices will be found necessary, but it is well that they lie in reserve, as so many natural expedients for preventing a mischief, the prevention of which, ought not to be the office of law, but the office of the parties concerned. All that law has to do, is to avenge violence and to redress injustice; and a master, secure of these, should make no further demand upon Government, but take upon himself the burden of his own arrangements, for the right and the prosperous conduct of his own affairs.

And, more than this, such is the plenitude of his means for the counteraction of his associated workmen, that he can not only protect himself from them, by the system of prevention which we have now adverted to; but, failing this, there is a way in which he may find compensation for any losses which he may have sustained by the suspension of his works. Masters and manufacturers can lay an assessment on the wages of the re-admitted

workmen, or, which is the same thing, can take them in again upon reduced wages, till they have recovered, by the difference, a complete indemnification for all that they have suffered by the interruption of the manufacture. This has often been held out as a threat, although we are not aware of any instance in which it has been put into execution. Still it is an available method, which, if adopted, would at once make up for the strike, and afford another security against the repetition of it. It were a competent, and, in many cases we believe, a fair chastisement inflicted by the employers upon their workmen, and so would serve to increase the weight of all the other chastisements, which, by the very nature and necessity of the case, are sure to follow in the train of such a combination. There is no need that to these there should be superadded the terrors of the law, or that masters, with such a weight of natural ascendancy as belongs to them, should call in the aid of Government for the settlement of their own private quarrels with their workmen. They have ample means for this in their own hands; nor is it fair to saddle our legislature with the odium and the responsibility of a most objectionable law; and that, for the purpose of bringing about a result which their own power and their own spirit should fully enable them to achieve.

At the very worst, and though masters should not be wholly able to protect themselves from inconvenience and loss by combination, this should just be regarded as one out of many other hazards to which their business is exposed. Manifold are

the casualties to which they are subjected, whether from fire or shipwreck, or unlooked-for fluctuations in the state of the market. It is not more the part of Government to interfere for their defence against the uncertainties of the market for labour, than against the uncertainties of the market for those commodities in which they deal—against the fitful elements of discontent or cupidity in the minds of their workmen, than against the fitful agitations of the weather or of the ocean. It is for them to lay their account with the chances and the changes in the price of labour, as well as in the price, whether of their raw material or of their finished commodity, and just to charge or to calculate accordingly. In a word, it is altogether their own affair; and Government has acquitted itself fully of all its duties to them, if, watching over the preservation of the peace, it simply protects all, and provides for all, in the exercise of that full natural liberty which belongs to them.

But what completely exonerates Government from the duty of protecting masters against the losses that may arise from simple combination is, that, in the mere workings and effects of such a transaction, there does naturally, and at length, cast up a most liberal compensation, we will not say to each individual master, but certainly to the general body; so that their interest, viewed as a whole, does not suffer by it. The master, in truth, is only the ostensible, or at worst the temporary sufferer by this conspiracy of his workmen; and if there be any sufferer at all in the long run, it is not he but the customer. He loses profit for a

season; but it is all made up to him by the eventual rise of profit that ensues on the production of his commodity being suspended. This is the well-known effect of a general strike among operatives. It relieves the overladen market of the glut under which it labours, and, by the time that workmen at length give in, the manufacturer enters upon what to him is the most enriching of all harvests, the harvest of a brisk demand upon empty warehouses. These cessations are the very calms which not only precede, but ensure the gales of prosperity that come in between them. This paltry attempt of the legislature, to regulate and restrain the monsoons of the trading world, works nothing beneficial to the one party, while it hurts and harasses the feelings of the other. Would they but withhold that perpetual interference by which they are ever cramping and constraining the liberty of things, they would find how much better the laws of nature, and the laws of political economy, provide for the great interests of human life, when unchecked by the laws of parliament.

There is one consideration more on which the friends of the combination laws would plead for the re-enactment of them, and that is, the difficulty of legislating effectually against outrages. When once an association is formed, there are innumerable ways by which it can control workmen out of their liberty, and which are utterly beyond the correction or the cognizance of law. There is a formidable authority in the very contempt and hatred of a large body; and thus, by the bare existence of a combination, although no overt act can

be charged on any of its members, might all those who are willing to work, be despoiled of their natural freedom, and brought under the power of a virtual despotism. And better, it may be thought, that by a law against combinations there should be a preventive security established against a very sore oppression, against whose acts and whose positive outbreakings no law can be devised which might operate with efficacy as a corrective. A law against combination, it may be contended, that has this preventive power, even though it should contravene the abstract principles of legislation, is to be preferred to a law against outrages, which, however accordant with the dictates of natural justice and morality, is utterly devoid of that corrective power which is essential to the ends of practical utility.

But here it is altogether forgotten, that if there be difficulties, which we most fully admit, in devising an effective law against the outrages of workmen, there are equal, we think greater difficulties, in devising an effective law against combinations. It is quite notorious, that, previous to the repeal of these laws, combinations were frequent, and fully as atrocious in their proceedings, upon the whole, as they have been since. After the repeal, there has been a most natural imagination among the workmen, which is making progress from one district of the land to the other, as if now they were on the eve of some great coming enlargement. This imagination has nearly finished its course, and has had also its correction—a far more salutary correction, from the hand of experience, than any

which could possibly be administered by the hand of authority. And, meanwhile, the statute-book is purged of the old unpopular aspect which formerly sat upon it. It now represents more truly the real spirit and design of Government towards the humblest peasantry of our land—a spirit of undoubted benignity and good will, if the people would only think so; and to conciliate the affection and confidence of these people is a mighty object, and an object that will at length be promoted mightily by the repeal of the combination laws.

It is not that we imagine of these laws against combination, that they can really keep down the wages of workmen, or that, by so doing, they can secure a larger profit to the capitalist than he would obtain in a state of perfect freedom between the parties. The truth is, that a large profit goes to augment capital, and so eventually to reduce itself. Should manufacturers, by any artificial means, be made to realise a larger profit than they would otherwise do, this at once creates and allures to their manufacture that additional capital, which will bring down the profit to the rate at which it would have settled in a natural state of things. That process, by which it might appear at the outset, that profits will be increased at the expense of wages, must very soon work in favour of the labourers, so that the increase shall again come back to them, and bring their wages just to what they would have been, although no disturbing force had ever been brought into operation. So that though all combinations of workmen were forcibly put an end to, there would yet remain an effective security

for fair and adequate wages in the competition of the capitalists. However much the interference of Government, in favour of the latter, should raise their profits in the first instance, the ultimate effect would be to allure more capital into their branches of industry than otherwise would have flowed into them; and so, by producing a larger demand for workmen, would just cause the wages to rise to the very height from which they had fallen by the adverse and unpopular law. In other words, it is not possible for any legislature, even though it would, permanently to ensure a higher profit to the masters, and that, by means of a lower wage to their workmen than what would take place on a free and natural adjustment of the matter betwixt them. It cannot, by the force of any enactment, bring up the average rate of profit in a land, by reducing the market price of labour. On the moment of this being done, there would, by the now higher profit, be the formation and the influx of more capital into all the departments where these profits were realised; and thus, by the greater competition of capital, which is tantamount to a greater demand for labour, the price or wages of this labour would be speedily brought up to the level from which it had descended.

Were there no other depressing influence then brought to bear upon wages than combination laws, these would be altogether harmless; and the friends of the lower orders might cease from all alarm and indignation upon the subject. But there is an evil in these laws which might well alarm the friends of loyalty. However innocent they may be in

effect, they bear towards the working classes an aspect of hostility. The artisan or the labourer understands them in no other way than as looking adversely towards himself; and, instead of recognizing a friendly and a paternal Government, in the reigning authority of the state, he will view it as leagued with his employers in the fellowship of one common tyranny. The only interpretation which he puts upon the enactment, is, that it is on the side of the masters and against the workmen; and it is quite fearful to contemplate the advantage which such a feeling, when widely diffused and deeply seated in the hearts of our peasantry, might give to the demagogues of our land. There should be some very strong and imperious necessity made out ere the burden of such an odium be laid upon Government, or a task in every way so invidious be put into its hands. It were surely better for peace and for public order, if capitalists and workmen could be left to settle their own affairs; and it is hard that the tranquillity of the state should be endangered for the sake of an interest, which the natural economics of the case seem most abundantly to have provided for. It perhaps is all the more provoking, that for the object on account of which the interference is made, it is altogether nugatory—that after all, neither masters are the better, nor workmen are the worse for it—that the hand which Government lifts up in this business of regulation, is a hand of entire impotency, but that, felt at the same time, by the labouring classes, as a hand of hostile and menacing demonstration, it should have the effect

of alienating, from the established order of things, the largest class of society.

On the other hand, if there be an utter impotency on the part of Government to depress wages beneath the fair market price of labour, there is just as great an impotency on the part of workmen permanently to raise the wages above this level. The fair market price of labour, is that at which it would settle in *a free state of things*, on the given state of its demand and supply. Labourers, themselves, cannot force a permanent elevation of the wages above this level, but by excluding from the competition a certain number of their own body; or, in other words, by a monopoly more hurtful and oppressive still than that of any mercantile society that has ever been recorded, and which Government does a most righteous and equitable thing in preventing. Workmen cannot raise their wages above the fair market price of labour, but by the infliction of a grievous injury on certain of their own body, whom they would violently eject beyond the pale of that competition to which all are equally admissible, both by justice and by law. Government is only acting in discharge of her most beneficent functions, as the parent, and the equal protector of all, when she interposes against the restraints and outrages of labourers upon their fellows, and that with penalties just as strong and as severe as shall be adequate to put them down. But though this way of advancing the remuneration of labour cannot be permitted, there is another and a patent way by which labourers may most effectually, and, at the

same time, most legitimately secure the very advancement which they are aiming at. When they succeed in raising their wages by violence, it is just by lessening the supply of labour, and this supply is lessened by the number of labourers whom they have forced away from the field of competition. The very same rise would have taken place, if, instead of that number being forced away, they simply had not been in existence; or, if the whole population of the country had just been equal to that portion of them who maintain their ground on the field of competition, after having made outcasts of the rest. Had there just been a less population by these outcasts, their object would have been carried without any assertion on their part, and simply by the operation of the demand of capitalists upon a smaller supply. It is the redundancy of their own numbers, and nothing else, which is the cause of their degradation. They charge their masters with depressing them; but the truth is, that they depress and elbow out one another. And in spite of all the ridicule, and of all the sentimental indignancy which have been heaped on the doctrine of population, it remains as unalterable as any of nature's laws, that nothing can avail for the conducting of our peasantry to a higher status, but a lessened competition for employment, and in virtue of there being somewhat fewer labourers.

This guides us to the view of another great mischief in these combination laws. The former mischief, that of creating a disaffected peasantry, is more felt by the patriot, who has conceived a strong

affection for the cause of loyalty. The other great mischief to which we are now to advert, is more felt by the general philanthropist, who has conceived a strong affection for the good of the species, and more especially for the enlarged comfort and intelligence of the lower orders. He who looks to the wrong quarter for a disease, will, in all likelihood, betake himself to a wrong remedy. And this, perhaps, is the very worst consequence of combination laws. They have turned the attention of our artisans and labourers away from that only path on which they can reach a higher status in the commonwealth. They are misled as to where the disease of their economic state lies; and are, therefore, alike misled as to the application of the remedy. It were well, if they had no pretext for referring to the policy of Government, that degradation and misery which are altogether due to their own habits. They behold an adverse enactment against them in the statute-book, and they look no further. They conceive this to be the only bar in the way of their elevation, and they ply not the expedient which is in their own hands; and by virtue of which, they might attain an independence which Government can neither give nor take away. They would lay upon the state the whole burden of that responsibility, which, in fact, lies upon themselves; and this at once makes them resentful to their superiors, and reckless of that alone way by which themselves can be guided onward to a more secure and permanent comfort than they have ever yet enjoyed. It is altogether a way of peace and of sobriety; a way that "cometh not with

observation;" and by which, without the din or disturbance of any popular ebullitions, the solid interest of the people will come at length to be established on a basis that shall be impregnable.

Should the present repeal law be superseded, not by a law that is restrictive, but by a law that is perfective of freedom, this will conduct the people to a state of things, the best possible for enlightening them both in what that is where their weakness, and in what that is where their strength lieth. Let the principle, in the first place, be left untouched of the utmost freedom to all workmen who, either conjunctly or severally, are not willing to work. In the second place, let this be followed up by the principle, not yet adequately provided for, of the utmost protection and freedom to all workmen who, either conjunctly or severally, are willing to work. For this purpose, let law put forth all the preventions and all the penalties which can be devised to secure every willing workman from the terror or the violence of his fellows—and then the whole machinery of these combinations will proceed in that very way which is most fitted to develope, even to the popular understanding, the real cause of a people's degradation, and so the real and only corrective by which it can be efficaciously met. It will then be quite palpable, that they are the new, or unassociated workmen, who have broke up the combination—that the outstanding workmen have not been able to enforce their own terms, just because of the numbers beside themselves, who are thankful for their employment on lower terms—that their masters stood upon a vantage ground, not

because of any legal power over them, but because of the natural resource which they had in the men whom they could find, or in the men who offered themselves out of the general population. For this purpose, these masters have only to enlist the willing, and do not need to compel the unwilling —or, in other words, they prevail in this struggle, just because there are so many who are willing to be thus enlisted. If, instead of finding so many, they had found that the population of the land were barely enough to satisfy the demand for labour, and to fill up its various departments in the country, then they could not have allured new workmen into their service, but by the offer of a higher remuneration than they were earning in some previous service. This would reverse the competition; and, instead of workmen pressing for admittance into employment upon a lower wage, we should behold masters detaining, by a higher wage, those whom others were endeavouring to seduce from their employment. Workmen would come at length to perceive, that the question between them and their employers all hinged on the single element of their own numbers—that if there be too many labourers, no combination can keep up their wages —or, if there be too few, no law against combinations can keep them down—and that, in short, with the command which they have over this element, they have themselves, and neither their masters nor their rulers, to blame as the authors of their own degradation.

They are not in circumstances for making this discovery, so long as the imagination lasts among

them, that in every effort to better their condition they are thwarted and kept in check by the oppressive enactments of the statute-book. Better far that all these enactments should be swept away, and that workmen should be let forth on the arena of a free competition with their employers. On this field, let them be made welcome to every attempt and every expedient for a rise of wages which is not criminal. They will soon arrive at a sound experience upon the subject; and at last acquiesce in the conclusion, that they have no other control over the price of labour than that general control, wherewith, by means of their moral and prudential habits, they can limit and define the number of labourers.

And certain it is that this will avail them, without the expedient of any organized association at all. For the sake of simplicity, let us confine the argument to any one branch of manufacture which we might suppose to be in the hands of a certain number of capitalists, and that it is somewhat straitened for a supply of labourers. In consequence, the commodity will be produced in somewhat less abundance than can fully meet the demand for it in the market, and its price inevitably rises. This increment of price, in the first instance, raises the profits of the masters; but its final landing-place is among the workmen, for, in the second instance, and without combinations, it will go to the raising of the wages. The rise of profits in any trade tends both to create more of capital within the trade, and to allure to it more of capital from without. In other words, master manufacturers will not long

be permitted to enjoy this additional profit; for out of it there will almost instantly emerge a busier competition, either among themselves, or from new adventurers enticed to this more hopeful walk of speculation. The prosperity of any trade is ever followed up both with the means and the efforts to extend it; but this cannot be done without a call for more operatives than before. Each individual master, while the demand is brisker than the supply, and therefore profits encouraging, will try to widen and enlarge his own establishment; and, as the effect of this competition among all, a higher wage will be held out than before to labourers. Let there be an endeavour, on the part of every capitalist, to make out a full complement of workmen; and nothing more is necessary than a difficulty of doing so, from the smallness of the numbers to be had, in order to secure for these workmen a liberal remuneration. Apart from any association on the side of the operatives, their object is gained by a competition on the side of their masters. And all which they have to do, is to cultivate, each in his own family, those habits of foresight and sobriety, without which it is utterly impossible, either by device or by violence, to save them from the miseries of an over-peopled land.

It is true, that we have only reasoned on the case of one manufacture; and it is a possible thing, that any deficiency in its workmen may be recruited from the general population, either by enlisting those who are without employment, or by alluring from previous service those who are engaged in the service of other manufacturers. But the supposi-

tion of a more intelligent and better-habited peasantry, precludes the idea of any being without employment. It would secure the state not merely of one, but of all manufacturers having barely enough of labourers to keep them a-going. It would extend the competition from masters in but one line of employment, to that of all the masters and capitalists in our land. This of itself will elevate the condition of the working classes. Let there but be somewhat more of virtue in their conduct, and somewhat more of prudence and delay in their marriages, and there will forthwith commence that progress, by which, silently, and gradually, and indefinitely, the price of their services must rise, and themselves must ascend to a higher status in the commonwealth. And all this, without the turmoil or effervescence of combinations. These can never permanently raise the price of labour. There is one precise point at which this price settles; and this point is altogether determined by the proportion which obtains between the work to be done, and the number of workmen that are to be had for the doing of it. The effect of strikes, and associations, and long suspensions of work, followed up by hurricanes of prosperous trade, and high wages—the effect of all this may be, to produce large oscillations on each side of the average price of labour, but certainly not at all to raise the average itself. This average is fixed by the proportion before specified; and labourers have a command over this proportion, because they can command one of the terms of it. Their own number is wholly dependent on their own

general character and habits; and, if they will but limit the supply of workmen, a higher recompense for work, not in virtue of any concert among themselves, but in virtue of competition among their masters, will be the inevitable result of it.

Every thing in the state and history of the commercial world, announces how little capitalists have it in their power to sustain an extravagant rate of profit, for any length of time, at the expense of their customers or of their workmen. It is a prevalent impression among workmen, that they are too much at the mercy of capitalists. If they only knew the whole truth, they would soon perceive that capitalists are wholly at the mercy of each other; and in such a way, that without being able to help it, they are very much at the mercy of their workmen. At least, if it be not so, it is altogether the fault of the workmen themselves; who, by the simple regulation of their numbers, might, not in a way of turbulence, but in a way of order and peace, become the effectual dictators in every question between them and their employers. These employers cannot, though they would, reserve in profit to themselves any part of that, which, in the state of the labour market, must go in wages to their labourers. They cannot keep up their profits beyond a certain rate at the expense of their workmen, and in the progress of things, too, this rate is constantly falling. For how short a time can any lucrative branch of trade be upheld in its lucrativeness! In a few months the rush of capital fills it to an overflow. Let but a stage coach upon any road, or a steam boat upon

any river, have realised the smallest centage of excess above the ordinary profits of the country, and in a moment, by other coaches and other boats, the excess, or perhaps the whole profit together is annihilated. The same holds true of every other department. Each is crowded with capital—and profit, all over the land, is rapidly verging to a minimum. This is satisfactorily demonstrated by the fall in the interest of money; and perhaps a still more striking exhibition of it is the way in which capital is going about among all the schemes and possibilities of investiture that are now afloat, and absolutely begging for employment. With such a creative and accumulating force in capital, the labouring classes may be in perfect security, that any hostile combination of their masters against them must speedily be neutralised, by competition among themselves. On the other hand, would labourers but restrain their own numbers, and so guard their wages against the depressing effects of competition among the members of their own body, this would have in it all the force, without any of the ferocity or turbulence, of a most overwhelming combination. This is the high-way to their independence—a noiseless way, on which they will neither strive, nor cry, nor cause their voice to be heard upon the streets —a way on which every philanthropist would rejoice to witness their advancement, and by which, without danger or disturbance to society, they will raise the whole platform of their condition, and secure a more abundant share of the comforts and accommodations of life, than they have ever yet enjoyed.

Nevertheless, and although it is by a process altogether independent of combinations, that the state of the working population is to be elevated, yet for reasons, which have in part been already given, we should deprecate any return, however slight, to a law against combinations. The whole mischief of them will at length be wrought away in the violence of their own fermentation. It is right, too, that all the occasional violence which has attended combinations, should be repressed by the utmost force of legislation; and this is a legislation, which, however severely it may bear on the radicals or the ringleaders of a popular tumult, will at length have the full consent and acquiescence even of the popular understanding to go along with it. A government never does excite any permanent or wide-spread hostility against itself, by those laws which recommend themselves to our natural principles of equity; and it is only when the equity is not very obvious, that a sense of oppression rankles in the hearts of the people, and carries them forth to proceedings of turbulence and disorder. Now, the equity of a law of protection for all who are willing to work, is obvious. The equity of a law of compulsion against any, even although in concert and joint deliberation, who are not willing to work, is not obvious. Let the latter law, therefore, be expunged, but the former be instated in full authority, and have the weightiest sanctions to uphold it. After this, workmen might, with all safety, be left to themselves. They will soon feel their way to the evil of combinations, and make discovery, that, apart

from them altogether, there is a secure and a peaceful road by which the people might help themselves onward to a state of greater sufficiency. It is a great lesson to teach them that this is the only road;—a lesson which they never can be taught, so long as law debars them from any other expedient which possesses a virtue in their imagination. It were the most precious fruit of their liberty, that this imagination should be dissipated; and that so they should be shut up by their own experience, that most authoritative of all schoolmasters, to the only remaining expedient which can avail them. It is well for them to know, that it is the weight of their own numbers, and nothing else, which degrades and depresses them; and that the cause of all their sufferings does not lie in the want of protection from the legislature, or of kindness from their masters, but in the want of prudence and economy among themselves.

And, for ourselves, we confess it to be a cheering anticipation, that the labouring classes shall, not by a midway passage of anarchy and misrule, but by a tranquil process of amelioration in their character and habits, make steady amelioration at the same time in their outward circumstances. We believe it to be in reserve for society, that, of the three component ingredients of value, the wages of labour shall at length rise to a permanently higher proportion than they now have, either to the profit of stock or the rent of land; and that thus, workmen will share more equally than they do at present, with capitalists and proprietors of the soil, in the comforts and even the elegancies

of life. But this will not be the achievement of desperadoes. It will be come at through a more peaceful medium, through the medium of a growing worth and growing intelligence among the people. It will bless and beautify that coming period, when a generation, humanised by letters, and elevated by the light of Christianity, shall, in virtue of a higher taste and a larger capacity than they now possess, cease to grovel as they do at present among the sensualities of a reckless dissipation. This dissipation stands often associated with a stout and a sullen defiance; and the two together, characterize a large class of the mechanics of our present day. But these are not the men who are to accomplish the enlargement of that order to which they belong;—at one time on the brink of starvation by their own extravagance, and then lying prostrate at the dictation of their employers; at another, in some season of fitful prosperity, made giddy with ambition, and breaking forth in the complaints and the clamours of an appetency which is never satisfied. It is not by such a process of starts and convulsions as this, that our working classes are to be borne upwards to that place of security and strength, which, nevertheless, we believe to be awaiting them. But there is no other foundation than that of their own sobriety and good principle on which it can solidly be reared. And the process in this way may be easily apprehended. In proportion as man becomes more reflective and virtuous, in that proportion does he seek for something higher than the mere gratifications of his animal nature. His desires take a wider range; and he will not be

satisfied but with a wider range of enjoyment. There is a growing demand for certain objects of taste and decency; and even the mind will come to require a leisure and a literature for the indulgence of its nobler appetites, now brought into play by means of a diffused education. Altogether, under such a regimen as this, the heart of a workman is made to aspire after greater things than before; and in perfect keeping and harmony with a soul, now awakened to the charms of that philosophy which is brought down to his understanding in a mechanic school, is it that he should hold, as indispensable to his comfort, a better style of accommodation than his forefathers, whether in apparel, or furniture, or lodging. And it is just by means of a more elevated standard than before, that marriages become later and less frequent than before. This we deem to be the precise ligament which binds together an improvement in the character with an improvement in the comfort of our peasantry; and makes a taste for certain conveniences, the very stepping-stone by which a people do arrive at them. It is enough that these conveniences should be regarded as among the essential ingredients of maintenance; and then will a sense of their importance come to operate with effect, as a counteractive to the temptations of precipitate or imprudent matrimony. The man who counts it enough for himself and his family, that they have rags, and potatoes, and a hovel, will rush more improvidently, and therefore more early, into the married state, than he who feels that, without a better provision and a better prospect than these, he should offend

his own self-respect, and compromise all his notions of what is decent, or dignified, or desirable. We are aware of the exceeding difference between one individual and another in the same country; but this does not prevent a certain average standard of enjoyment in each country; and thus, in respect of this average standard, may the difference be very great between one country and another. And, if we except the case of still youthful colonies, we shall be sure to find, that, corresponding to this difference in the average standard of enjoyment, is there a difference in the average period of marriage. The higher the one is, the later the other is. The greater the demand for family comforts, the smaller and the fewer are the families. The larger the ambition of labourers, the less is the number of labourers; and sure consequence of this, the greater are the means in the hand of each for satisfying his ambition. This is one of those felicitous cases, in which the desire of good things is at length followed up by the power of obtaining them. It is thus that workmen can enforce their demand for higher wages. Those distempered outbreakings which approach to the character of rebellion, will retard instead of forwarding their cause. But nothing can arrest the march of light among the people, and when this light is conjoined with virtue, it will guide their ascending way to a vantage ground, where they will make good the precise status to which their worth shall entitle them—a status for all whose comforts and accommodations, they will then be in circumstances to prefer their demand with a small and a still, but yet an irresistible voice.

It is by a tranquil process, such as this, that the general condition of our people will at length be elevated. It is by a slow, but a resistless movement, which combination cannot speed, but which will be sure to make its way, though in the absence of all combination. In none of its successive steps is there ought that can endanger the peace of society, or that should give alarm to the rulers of it. The triumph that awaits the humbler classes, will not be extorted from the higher by the outcry of popular discontent, but silently and insensibly gained from them, by the growth of popular intelligence and virtue. What is there to convulse our land, in the multiplication of schools, in the exchange which our people make of loathsome dissipation for respectable scholarship, in their habits of improving comfort and cleanliness, in their general postponement of marriages, and in the consequent result of smaller but well-conditioned families? In the whole of this beautiful progression, there is nothing to alienate, but every thing to attach the people to that established order of things under which they find that industry meets with its recompense, and that, with the labour of their own hands, they can rear their children in humble, but honest independence. Instead of so many fiery spirits, now in bitterness, under a sense of difficulties, and in the vain imagination that they are so many wrongs inflicted by the hand of an arbitrary government, casting resentment and reproach on the politics of the kingdom, we should find each in busy occupation with the management of his own thriving affairs, and recognizing, in the hopeful

prosperity of his own household, the best evidence of a sound public administration. The question of wages, instead of being agitated in stormy debate between the parties, may be decided with all the quietness of a common market transaction, yet decided in favour of the workmen; and that simply because, in virtue of their now purer, and more prudential habits, they have not overdone the supply of labour. Ere this result is arrived at, there may, or there may not be frequent combinations. In themselves they are altogether useless; but let workmen be at full liberty to make the experiment. Let not Government, save for the sake of justice between man and man, interpose in this controversy between them and their employers. Let not labourers be driven from their associations by the penalties of law, and they will soon be schooled out of them, by those chastisements of Nature and Necessity which follow in their train. They will, all the sooner because of this liberty, be schooled into the lesson, that wages must, by a necessity which no force or artifice of man can overbear, be fixed by the proportion which obtains between the work to be done, and the number of workmen to be had for the doing of it—that for this number they are themselves responsible—and that, without the education to which all the good and the wise of the land are inviting them, and the moral and religious culture to which they are bound by far higher than any earthly obligations, and the consequent elevation which must ensue in their whole taste and standard of enjoyment—and, lastly, as the result of all this, that, without the prospec-

tive economy which of itself will push forward the average date of marriages in the country, no power under the sun can help them out of the degradation into which nothing, on the other hand, can plunge them, but their own recklessness and folly. Let them look as fiercely as they may at the other classes of society, there is most gross and grievous injustice in all their indignation. They are only wreaking upon the innocent the mischief which they have brought upon their own heads; for, in truth, Government and the wealthier orders of society are most innocent of it all. And should, in the wild surges of a popular frenzy, the institutions of this fairest and most flourishing country in the world be ever swept away, it will be the impartial voice of justice in all distant ages, that, under pretence of resentment and resistance to the tyranny of the few, all the equities of human life had been most oppressively lorded over by the iniquitous tyranny of the multitude.

In the act of dealing equally with the various classes in society, it is perhaps impossible to avoid saying what might occasionally be offensive to them all. And if, on the one hand, there are labourers who need to be rebuked out of their turbulence and unjust discontent; so, on the other hand, there are still a few of the British aristocracy who eye with jealousy and dread all the advances that are making by the people in knowledge, and even in the sufficiency and style of their enjoyments. More especially have the recent outbreakings of workmen engendered in certain quarters a dislike of Savings Banks, as the likely organs of building up

such a capital for the lower orders, as might be the instrument at length of a popular despotism, at once the most fearful in itself, and the most destructive of all the great political and economic interests in our land. We think that we can discern pretty obvious manifestations of this jealousy brought before the eye of parliament itself. And therefore, before closing our remarks upon this whole subject, we should like, in a few sentences, to state our opinion of the result that would ensue from a habit of accumulation amongst the working classes of society.

The connexion of this habit with a higher rate of wages, we have already endeavoured to explain. It is not in the foresight or the contemplation of such an ulterior effect that the habit is adopted. Each individual who does accumulate, has been led to do it from the mere impulse of a taste and an affection for a property to himself. He does not consider the effect which such a taste and habit, if they became general among workmen, would have upon society. Nevertheless, it is not the less true, though he should not perceive it, that a spirit of economy among the lower orders would land us in a more reflective, and rational, and sober peasantry; and that a certain postponement of marriages would surely accompany this growing taste for property, and for the enjoyments which property can command. The consequent rise in the price of labour, is from the quiet operation of an economic law, even the law of dependence that subsists between the price of an article and its supply; and so in the present case is the result of a somewhat diminished number of labourers.

This result is arrived at by a peaceful process, and not by the power which a capital would give to labourers of holding out for a greater length of time in combinations. The truth is, that when once a property is built up by a man, and embodied into a given sum, and expressed by the bank credit which he holds in his hand, and made the object of his strong and distinct affection for it, he feels a pain in any violation of its entireness; and this new feeling comes into play against those combinations which impose a protracted season of idleness upon their members. Such a season, in the present state of the working classes, only brings privations upon them, which they can weather from day to day by the mere power of endurance; and far more readily, we are persuaded, than a man can suffer the careful product of the economy of many long and laborious years to be melting away before his eyes. In other words, we should hold this habit to be more a security than otherwise against combinations. By him who had won his way to the possession of a small and cherished capital, the waste of this capital would be felt as one of the sorest evils. He would bethink himself well ere he submitted to those repeated draughts upon his capital, which a suspension of labour must surely bring along with it; and so he, and such as he, would not be so prone to the rash or misguided adventure of a strike, as our present race of desperadoes.

And there is a very substantial, and, at the same time, a very pure compensation, awaiting the higher classes of society, for this encroachment, or

rather for this appearance of an encroachment that is made upon them by the increased wages of the lower. It is founded upon this: the greater amount and value of the services that will then be rendered. We are not indulging any Utopian imagination; but speaking, in fact, to the experience of practical men, when we say that there are a power and a charm in a certain generous style of remuneration, the whole benefit of which will come to be realised in that better state of things, to which we believe that society is fast tending. We are aware of the union which often obtains, in large manufacturing establishments, between the enormous wage, and the reckless, loathsome dissipation of its workmen. But, ere the higher wage that we contemplate shall obtain throughout the country at large, this recklessness must have very generally disappeared, and a sober, reflective, and well-principled character, substituted in its place. Now we pre-suppose such a character, when we prophesy a sure compensation to the higher orders, for the then more elevated status of the population beneath them; and for the experimental proof of our anticipation, we appeal to cases where servants are at once well-principled and well-paid. We are confident of being fully met by the recollection of many masters, when we affirm an overpassing worth in the labour of such servants; and that, where there are that higher tone of character, and that self-respect, and that fidelity, which can only be upheld by the well-conditionedness of a better remuneration, then the difference in the worth of the service greatly more

than atones for the superior wage which has been rendered. If masters will reflect, they will generally find, that those men whom they found to be perfect treasures as servants, were never so because of the lowness of the wage, but always so because of the trustiness of their own character; and that the difference in the amount of that *materiel* which they render out in wages, is far more than made up in the larger return which comes back, because of that higher and better *morale* which pervades the workmen of their establishment. The same lesson is afforded by the reverse experience of those farmers, who employ a set of worthless, degraded, and half-paid paupers, in the business of their agriculture. They are far more unprofitable, as workmen, than the regular servants who obtain a full and respectable allowance. This points, it is obvious, to a very delightful consummation—a higher peasantry, yet a fuller tide of affluence all over the land, in which, too, the great and the noble will participate more largely than ever—the basis of the social polity more elevated, yet, at the same time, its pinnacles towering more proudly, and blazing more gorgeously than before—the labourer upholden in greater comfort, yet the landlord upholden in greater elegance and enjoyment,—the fruit of that exquisite, but substantial harmony, which obtains among all the truly desirable interests of human society.

And, upon this subject, we have often felt that the legislature have missed an opportunity, but which still, we fondly hope, is not irrecoverable. They should have combined the two questions of

combination and of pauperism, and made a compromise between them. In the act of expunging from their statute-book that law of combination which bore an aspect of hostility to the lower orders, although it does them little harm, they were most favourably situated for expunging from their statute-book that law of pauperism, which bears an aspect of friendship to the lower orders, although most assuredly it does them no good. They should have availed themselves of this balance between the partialities and the prejudices of the popular understanding. The people of England might have acquiesced in the abolition of that law for which they have a predilection, because feeling it compensated by the abolition of that law for which they had a dislike. When the burden was removed from the industry of workmen, then was the time for attempting a removal of the burden from the property of landlords. The thing is not yet so definitely settled, as that it can be said to have conclusively gone by, or as to have precluded the adjustment of a great and comprehensive question of equity between the labourers and the landlords. When to the one there is conceded the entire right to make the most, without the old legal obstruction, of the product of their service, to the other let there be conceded the entire right to make the most, and without the present legal obstruction, of the product of their soil.* It were

* We, of course, must be understood to point at the abolition of the law of pauperism, only in the way which we have already attempted to explain, in a former volume of this work—a gradual way, by which it might be accomplished, without violence done to any of the existing paupers, and without disturbance to the

a fair reciprocal acquittance between the two parties—the higher and the lower classes of society—leaving to the one an unburdened property in their land, and to the other an unburdened property in their labour.* And even though a high wage should be the ultimate consequence of such an arrangement, there is no country where this ought to be more thankfully acquiesced in by the higher ranks of society than in England. For to her, of all others, there would accrue the most abundant compensations. She, in the first place, would have a compensation in those better and more productive services that are rendered by well-paid labourers, rather than by labourers sunk

commonwealth. It would remove the hazard of disturbance still further, if, for the imaginary loss which the people have suffered by one law, there could have been devised a compensation to their prejudices and feelings, even though it were by an imaginary gain secured for them through the abolition of another law.

* For the fancied bereavement which they sustain by the abolition of pauperism, the people might find a *solatium* in the boon which is rendered to them by the entire abolition of the combination laws. Or, if this opportunity be now regarded as lost, there are other boons in reserve for them. Such is our view of the incidence and effect of taxes, that we do not hold it possible to make them fall upon labourers; and, though ostensibly paid by them, they are really paid by the purchasers and employers of labour. Still, a poll-tax, or a house-tax, or a tax on the necessaries of life, have all the odium of so many felt burdens upon the poor. So that, by a reform in the system of finance, by a transference of taxes from the lower to the higher orders, or from the necessaries to the luxuries of life, there might at least be the imagination of a relief to the former, without the reality of any additional burden upon the latter. This suggests another expedient for making the removal of pauperism more palatable to the labouring classes—even by accompanying it with the removal of one or more of those taxes that bear on the subsistence of their families. The gratification which they should feel in the one measure, would neutralise the grievance which they might feel to be in the other.

as they now are, in the sloth and degradation of pauperism. And secondly, she would have still more palpable compensation, in being eventually disburdened from that enormous tax of six millions in the year for her poor, which were enough, of itself, to afford a much higher sufficiency to a perhaps somewhat reduced, but greatly more sound and serviceable population.

END OF VOLUME FIFTEENTH.

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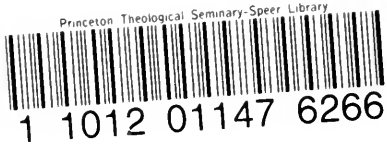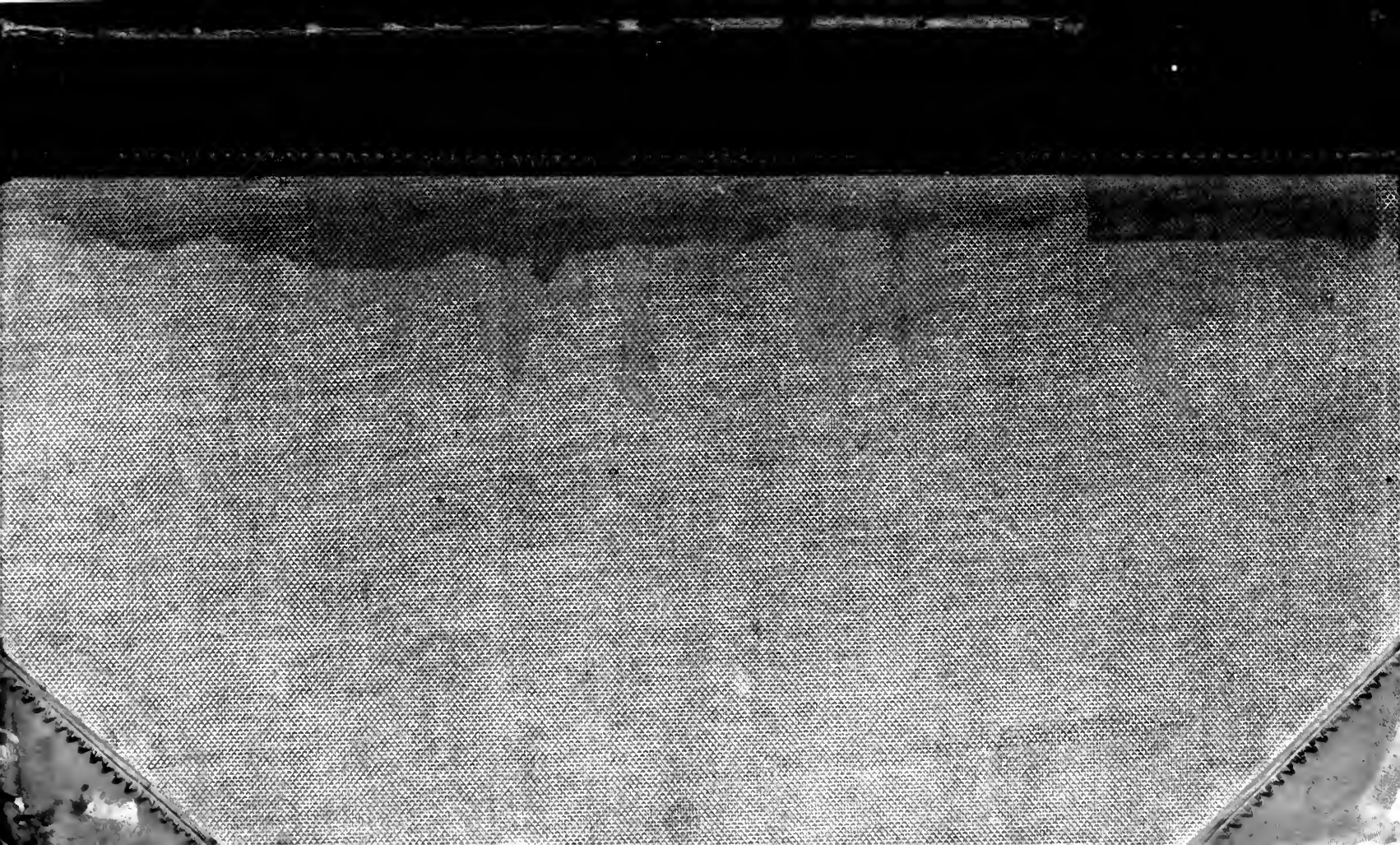
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