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Richard Whately, *Introductory Lectures on Political Economy* [1831]



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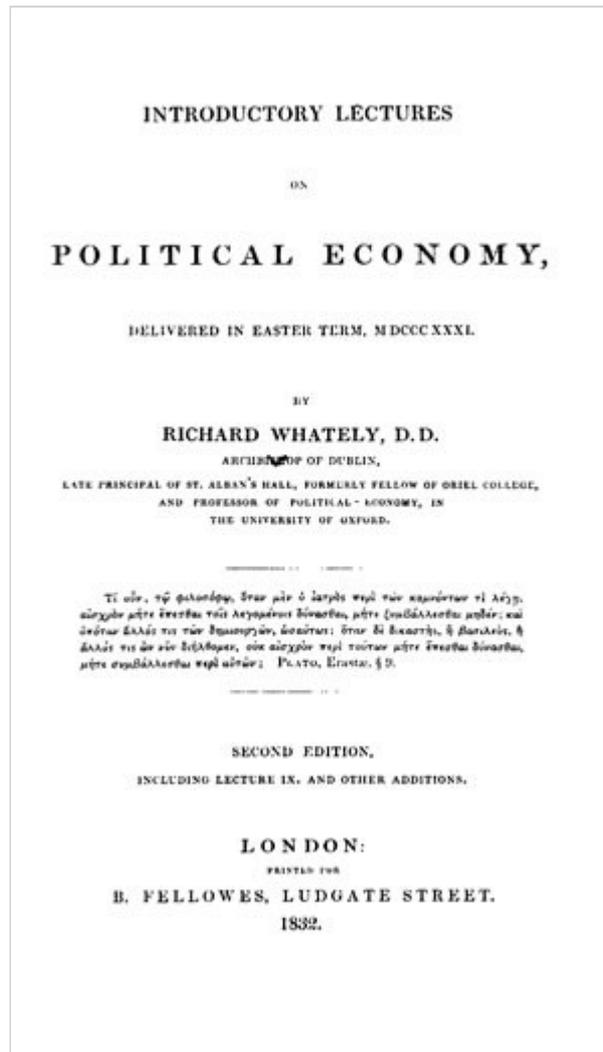
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8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Suite 300
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250-1684



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Author: [Richard Whately](#)

About This Title:

Whately followed Nassau Senior as Professor of Political Economy at the University of Oxford. He brought logical clarity to the previously murky relationship between morals and the underpinnings of economics. These are a series of lectures he gave on economics at Oxford in 1831.

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Delivered In Easter Term, M DCC XXXI.

Τί οὖν; τῷ φιλοσόφῳ, ὅταν μὲν ὁ ἰατρός περὶ τῶν καμνόντων
τὴ λέγει, αἰσχρὸν μῆτε ἔπεσθαι τοῖς λεγομένοις δύνασθαι,
μῆτε ξυμβάλλεσθαι μηδέν; καὶ ὅποταν ἄλλός τις τῶν
δημιουργῶν, ὡσαύτως; ὅταν δὲ δικαστῆς, ἢ βασιλεὺς, ἢ
ἄλλός τις ὧν νῦν διήλθομεν, οὐκ αἰσχρὸν περὶ τούτων μῆτε
ἔπεσθαι δύνασθαι, μῆτε συμβάλλεσθαι περὶ αὐτῶν;

—Plato, Erastæ, §. 9.

To the
Munificent and Enlightened
FOUNDER
of the
PROFESSORSHIP OF POLITICAL-ECONOMY
at Oxford,
and to the
MEMBERS OF CONVOCATION
The Electors,
This Volume
is
Respectfully and Gratefully Inscribed
by
THE AUTHOR.

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Preface

The following pages are presented to the public, in compliance with a requisition of the Statute relative to the Professorship of Political-Economy, that one Lecture at least shall be published every year.

Conceiving that one object of that provision must be, that the Public may have some knowledge of what sort of Lectures on the subject are annually delivered at Oxford, I have not thought myself at liberty to make any material alterations in the Lectures as they were delivered. Otherwise, I might, perhaps, have endeavoured, to change the method and the style, adopted with a view to oral delivery, for such as might be more suited to the closet. Perhaps, indeed, I might, but for that requisition, have hesitated as to the publication of such a Work at all. For the title of it is not unlikely to deter one class of readers, and to disappoint another. Those who have never applied themselves to the study, may perhaps be led to anticipate, from the title of Political-Economy, something dry, abstruse, and uninteresting; and those again who are, and have long been, conversant with it, may perhaps expect such discussions of various important questions, as I have thought it best not to enter on, in an introductory Course.

It has been my first object, to combat the prevailing prejudices against the study; and especially those which represent it as unfavourable to Religion. Convinced as I am, that the world, as it always in fact has been governed by political-economists of some kind, must ultimately be under the guidance of such as have systematically applied themselves to the science, I could not but regard it as a point of primary importance, to remove the impression existing in the minds of many, both of the friends and the adversaries of Christianity, as to the hostility between that and the conclusions of Political-Economy.

It was indeed, in great measure, this feeling, that induced me to offer myself as a candidate for the Professorship. I considered myself, in this, to be contributing, as far as lay in me, to second what has been done by the University of Oxford, towards counteracting the false and dangerous impressions to which I have alluded.

By accepting the endowment of a Professorship of Political-Economy, the University may be regarded as having borne her public testimony against that prejudice; and as having thus rendered an important service to the Public, independently of the direct benefits resulting from the cultivation of the science. And

subsequently, in appointing to the Professorship one of her members, who is not only professionally devoted to the Ministry of the Gospel, but whom she has judged worthy (in the office of Bampton Lecturer, and three times in that of Select Preacher,) to offer religious instruction to an academical audience, she has implied the full conviction of a Body which is above all suspicion of indifference to Christianity, that there is at least no discordancy between that and the pursuits of the political-economist. However slender may be my qualifications in the science, (a science which no one, I conceive, has as yet fully mastered,) the University has at least testified, in the appointment, the most complete dissent from the notion, that the studies of Political-Economy and of Theology are unfriendly to each other.

It is unnecessary, I trust, to observe, that these circumstances relative to myself are not brought forward by way of testimonials or recommendations on my own behalf. One who has been ten years before the public as an author, must be very sure that, as an author, the public will judge of him for themselves, without seeking, or attending to, any testimonials from the Society he belongs to. But it is on account of the University herself that I mention these circumstances; as furnishing a full vindication of the Academical Body, as such, from all suspicion of participating in those narrow prejudices, which would set Science and Religion in array against each other.

I trust that, before many years shall have elapsed, the views of the University in accepting, and of her public-spirited Benefactor in founding, the Professorship, will be to a considerable extent realized;—that idle prejudices against the Science will be done away by a distinct view of its real character;—and that there will be no one who will not be ashamed of employing, much more of deliberately recommending, (as some have ventured to do,) undefined language, and a loose style of reasoning, in a subject in which the most careful accuracy of expression is most especially called for. I trust that, while due encouragement shall still be afforded to those more strictly *professional* studies which conduce to the professional advancement in life of each individual, Political-Economy will, ere long, be enrolled in the list of those branches of knowledge, which more peculiarly demand the attention of an endowed University;¹ those, namely, which, while the cultivation of them is highly important to *the Public at large*, are not likely to be forwarded by the stimulus of private interest operating on individuals. The time is not, I trust, far distant, when it will be regarded as discreditable not to have regularly studied those subjects, respecting which, even now, every one is expected to feel an interest—most are ready to adopt opinions—and many are called on to form practical decisions.

ALBAN HALL, OXFORD,

May 17, 1831.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In the former Edition, the Ninth Lecture was omitted, as belonging more properly to a second course, which was then contemplated; and for which, indeed, its delivery would have been reserved, but for the requisition of the Statute, that not less than nine lectures should be delivered in each year.

The same reason not being now in force, the remaining Lecture is subjoined.²

It was observed by some persons, respecting the first eight, that they were not only introductory, but introductory to an introduction;—a preface to a preface. To this charge I plead guilty. How far this was justly made a matter of complaint, and a ground for apprehending that I should not have been able, in five courses of Lectures, to enter on the discussion of the principal questions of the Science, the Public must judge from the Lectures published; in which I have stated fully my reasons for endeavouring in the outset to remove a multitude of prevailing misconceptions, and to prepare the mind of the student for applying himself to the science profitably, and for being on his guard against the crude, rash, and inaccurate speculations that are afloat.

The immediate introduction to the study itself is contained in the Lecture now published, and for which those earlier ones were preparatory.

I have also subjoined such portions of the Evidence given by me before the Tithe-Committee of the House of Lords, as are the most intimately connected with the present subject.

DUBLIN,

Nov. 1832.

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Lecture I

It is not my intention to occupy your time with a panegyric on the judicious public-spirit displayed by the Founder of this Professorship, or with a studied expression of thanks for the honour conferred on me by the appointment. The best way, I conceive, of at once evincing my own feelings, as to both these points, and fulfilling the designs both of the Founder and of the Electors, will be by doing my utmost to recommend and to facilitate the study in question.

Nor shall I detain you by any lengthened remarks on the labours of my predecessor. Not to mention the peculiar circumstances which, in this case, would render it a matter of more than ordinary delicacy, for me, to pronounce any opinion on his Lectures, it may perhaps be laid down universally, that the decision as to how far any teacher has well performed his part, lies properly with his audience.

I think, it right, however, not to pass unnoticed one circumstance, which may be unknown to some of you, and which may have been unthought of by others, but which ought not, in justice to Mr. Senior's character, to be lost sight of. The praise of a *Professor* is usually confined to the *able and diligent discharge* of his duties; the credit of *munificent public-spirit* is in general confined to the *Founder* of a Professorship. But when a man actively and fully engaged in a lucrative profession, (especially one for which the preparation is a very expensive as well as laborious education,) devotes to the business of preparing and delivering lectures a large portion of the time and toil which he would otherwise have made subservient to his own emolument, he may, and should, be considered as a pecuniary benefactor to the Professorship, no less than if he had bestowed on it a formal endowment equivalent to what he has sacrificed. And according to the best estimate I can form, the salary which my predecessor received cannot have covered above one-fifth of the loss which he thus incurred. As this is not, like the degree of merit of a Course of Lectures, a question of opinion, but of fact, I trust I shall meet with your indulgence for having alluded to it.

The branch of study to which I am to call your attention is usually spoken of as one of the most modern;—as dating its very origin almost within the memory of man. This view is partly, though not entirely, correct; but it is important to observe, that the study has the disadvantages of novelty without the advantages. It professes not to bring to light curious new facts; which are what stimulates

curiosity, and arrests attention; the subjects of which it treats are matters the most trite and familiar. Its novelty is only in the *arrangement* of well-known facts—in the views taken of them, the language in which they are described, and the general principles founded on them; in all of which, novelty is a source of difficulty, and often an occasion of hostile prejudice; but possesses little or nothing of attraction. Above all, the novelty of the *name*, I am inclined to regard as on the whole a very considerable disadvantage. The advances made in comparatively modern times, in Mathematics, in Natural Philosophy, and in Chemistry, were sufficient to have been considered as constituting new sciences, with appropriate new titles. But there was an advantage in retaining the established names; which, possessing the veneration due to antiquity, imparted a dignity to studies which were in fact in great measure new: and the greatest innovations met with a more favourable reception, from being regarded merely as *improvements*, introduced into sciences whose worth had long been admitted without dispute: even as the virtues and achievements of a man of noble birth who infinitely surpasses his ancestors, are regarded with less jealousy than those of an upstart.

The name too of *Political-Economy* is most unfortunately chosen. Interpreted according to its etymology, it almost implies a contradiction. The branches of science which the Greeks called

πολιτικὴ

and

οἰκονομικὴ

seem naturally to have reference, respectively, to

πόλις

and

οἶκος

the one treating of the affairs and regulation of a Commonwealth, the other, originally at least, of a private family. And in modern popular use, even much more, Economy is limited, not only to the private concerns of a family, and not only to one, and that not the most dignified part of the regulation of a family, the management of its *pecuniary* concerns, but to the humblest and most minute portion even of these—the regulation of daily expenditure. A man is called a good economist, not for making his fortune by a judicious

investment of his capital in some successful manufactory or branch of commerce, but for making the most of a given income, and prudently regulating, so as to prevent waste, all the details of his household expenses.

To those who are habituated to this employment of terms, the title of Political-Economy is likely to suggest very confused and indistinct, and in a great degree incorrect, notions.

It may be said, indeed, that if a science be of intrinsic dignity and importance, the appellation by which it is known is of little consequence;

"the rose, "By any other name, would smell as sweet."
ἡ κόρη

But this is true only in respect of such as are, if not proficient, at least, students, or inquirers, in each respective branch of knowledge. To all others a name which conveys *no* clear idea of the nature of the science denoted by it, is not attractive; and one which conveys an incorrect idea, may even prove repulsive, by exciting groundless prejudice.

Man might be defined, "An animal that makes *Exchanges*:" no other, even of those animals which in other points make the nearest approach to rationality, having, to all appearance, the least notion of bartering, or in any way exchanging one thing for another. And it is in this point of view alone that Man is contemplated by Political-Economy. This view does not essentially differ from that of A. Smith; since in this science the term Wealth is limited to *exchangeable* commodities; and it treats of them so far forth only as they are, or are designed to be, the subjects of exchange. But for this very reason it is perhaps the more convenient to describe Political-Economy as the science of Exchanges, rather than as the science of national Wealth. For, the *things* themselves of which the science treats, are immediately removed from its province, if we remove the possibility, or the intention, of making them the subjects of exchange; and this, though they may conduce, in the highest degree, to happiness, which is the ultimate object for the sake of which wealth is sought. A man, for instance, in a desert island, like Alex. Selkirke, or the personage his adventures are supposed to have suggested, Robinson Crusoe, is in a situation of which Political-Economy takes no cognizance; though he might figuratively be called rich, if abundantly provided with food, raiment, and various comforts; and though he might have many commodities at hand, which would *become* exchangeable, and would constitute him, strictly speaking, rich, as soon as fresh settlers should arrive.

In like manner a musical talent, which is wealth to a professional performer who makes the exercise of it a subject of exchange, is not so to one of superior rank, who could not without degradation so employ it. It is, in this last case, therefore, though a source of enjoyment, out of the province of Political-Economy.

This limitation of the term Wealth to things contemplated as exchangeable, has been objected to on the ground that it makes the same thing to be wealth to one person and not to another. This very circumstance has always appeared to me the chief recommendation of such a use of the term; since the same thing *is* different to different persons. Even if we determine to employ the terms Wealth and Value in reference to every kind of possession, we must still admit, that there is at least *some* very great distinction, between the possession, for instance, of a collection of ornamental trees, by a nursery-man, who cultivates them for sale, and by a gentleman, who has planted them to adorn his grounds.

Since however the popular use of the term Wealth is not always very precise, and since it may require, just in the outset, some degree of attention to avoid being confused by contemplating the very same thing as being, or not being, an article of wealth, according to circumstances, I think it for this reason more convenient on the whole to describe Political-Economy as concerned, universally, and exclusively, about *exchanges*.

It was once proposed indeed to designate it the "Philosophy of Commerce;" but this, though etymologically quite unexceptionable, being indeed coincident with the description just given, is open to the objection, that the word Commerce has been, in popular use, arbitrarily limited to one class of exchanges.

The only difficulty I can foresee as attendant on the language I have now been using, is one which vanishes so readily on a moment's reflection as to be hardly worth mentioning. In many cases, where an exchange really takes place, the fact is liable (till the attention is called to it) to be overlooked, in consequence of our not seeing any actual transfer from hand to hand of a material object. For instance, when the copy-right of a book is sold to a bookseller, the article transferred is not the mere paper covered with writing, but the exclusive *privilege* of printing and publishing.⁴ It is plain however, on a moment's thought, that the transaction is as real an exchange, as that which takes place between the bookseller and his customers who buy copies of the work. The payment of rent for land is a transaction of a similar kind: for though the land itself is a material object, it is not this that is parted with to the tenant, but the right to till it.⁵

Having settled then what it is that Political-Economy is concerned about, it might seem natural to proceed immediately to the development of the principles of the science, and the application of them to the various questions to be discussed.

But such is the existing state of feeling on the subject—so numerous are the misapprehensions that prevail respecting it—and so strong is the prejudice in many minds against the study—a prejudice, partly the effect, and partly the cause, of these misapprehensions, that I am compelled, however reluctantly, to occupy some of your time in removing objections and mistakes which stand in the very threshold of our inquiries. I find myself somewhat in the condition of settlers in a country but newly occupied by civilized man; who have to clear land overgrown with thickets—to extirpate wild beasts—and to secure themselves from the incursions of savages, before they can proceed to the cultivation of the soil.

It might seem indeed an insult to your understanding, to enter upon a formal apology for treating of a science, for the cultivation of which you have accepted the endowment of a Professorship, whose duties you have done me the honour to entrust to my hands. I have no such intention: nor do I mean to imply, that those who now hear me are likely to be imbued with those vulgar prejudices to which I have alluded. But you should be prepared to expect and to encounter them. Both in the conversation and in the writings, not only of such as are, universally, mere empty pretenders, but of some who, on other subjects, shew themselves not destitute of good sense, of candour, or of information, you will be likely to meet with such assertions and (intended) arguments, on this subject, as the very same persons would treat with scorn, in any other case. If, therefore, I should appear to any of you to bestow, either now or hereafter, more attention than is requisite on mistakes and absurdities which may be thought to carry their own refutation with them, I shall intreat you to reflect how much importance the circumstances of the case may attach to objections and errors, in themselves unworthy of notice. It may be well worth while to suggest popular answers to prevailing fallacies, which could never mislead a man of moderate intelligence, attention, and candour, applied to the question; because the number is so considerable of those who are deficient in one or other of these qualities, or in the exercise of them in a field of inquiry that may be new to their minds. A mixture of indolence and self-conceit inclines many a one to flatter himself, that there can be nothing worth studying in a subject with which he is unacquainted. Many a one is overawed by a blind veneration for antiquity, into a conviction that whatever is true must have been long since discovered; or by a mistaken view of the design of Scripture, into an expectation of finding revealed

there, every thing relative to human concerns. And many again are prone to mistake declamation for argument, and to accept confident assertion and vehement vituperation as a substitute for logical refutation.

In fact, the number of those who are not only *qualified* to appreciate justly the force of arguments, but who are also accustomed to this employment of their faculties, is probably less than is supposed. When a man maintains, on several points, opinions which are true, and assigns good and sufficient reasons for them, both he himself, and others, are apt to conclude at once that he is convinced *by* those reasons: whereas the truth will often be, that he has taken upon trust both the premises and the conclusion, as well as the connexion between them; that he is indolently repeating what he has heard, without performing any process of reasoning in his own mind; and that if he had not been early trained or predisposed, to admit the conclusion, and it had been presented to him as a novelty, the arguments which support it, though in themselves perfectly valid, would have had little or no weight with him. If such a man then enters on any new field of inquiry, his deficiencies at once become apparent. He is in a situation analogous to that of children taught by a negligent or unskilful master, who are often found able apparently to read with great fluency, in a book they have been accustomed to; though in reality they are not so much reading, as repeating by rote the sentences they have often gone over; and if tried in a new book are at a loss to put two syllables together.

Causes such as I have alluded to, and many others, operate more or less to produce indifference, prejudice, or error, as to the subject now before us, in the minds of great numbers, whom you cannot either in prudence or in charity pass by with disdain, as unworthy of attention. There are indeed degrees of intellectual or of moral deficiency, such as to preclude all hope of effecting rational conviction; but there are also minor degrees of these obstacles which may be surmounted by patient assiduity, though not without. And it should be remembered, that a cause would be in no very flourishing condition which should be opposed by all except those who are pre-eminent at once in acuteness, in industry, and in candour. Nay, some may be brought to deserve even this very description, who were at first of a very different character; even as the illustrious authors of our Reformation, who listened and replied with unwearied patience to every objection, found some most zealous and able coadjutors in men who had for a time been strenuous upholders of Romanism.

And there is the more encouragement to labour perseveringly in the removal of prejudices and the inculcation of just principles,

inasmuch as the great majority of those whom you will find assenting to the most absurd arguments, and perfectly unmoved by the strongest, have no such natural incapacity for reasoning as some might thence infer; but possess powers which lie dormant for want of exercise; and these they may be roused to exert, when once they are brought to perceive that they have been accustomed to imagine themselves following a course of reasoning, when in fact they were not. The puerile fallacies which you may sometimes hear a man adduce on some subjects, are perhaps in reality no more *his own*, than the sound arguments he employs on others; he may have given an indolent unthinking acquiescence to each; and if he can be excited to exertion of thought, he may be very capable of distinguishing the sound from the unsound.

Not that after all you must expect even the clearest explanations and the most unanswerable arguments, to prove universally successful. Those who have been too long and willingly enthralled in the fetters of presumptuous ignorance and bigoted prejudice, even if driven out of the house of bondage, which they love, will continue wanderers in a wilderness; but there may be a rising generation of more docile mind, who may be led forward with fairer hopes of ultimate success.

As for the vehement vituperation lavished on the study of Political-Economy which you will be prepared to hear, though, of course, not to answer, I will only remark, that I think it on the whole no unfavourable sign. Invective is the natural resort of those who are either incapable of sound reasoning altogether, or at a loss for arguments to suit their present purpose: supposing, that is, of course, in each case, as far as they are not withheld by gentlemanly or Christian feeling. In proportion therefore as any branch of study leads to important and useful results—in proportion as it gains ground in public estimation—in proportion as it tends to overthrow prevailing errors—in the same degree, it may be expected to call forth angry declamation from those who are trying to despise what they will not learn, and wedded to prejudices which they cannot defend. Galileo probably would have escaped persecution, if his discoveries could have been disproved, and his reasonings refuted. The same spirit which formerly consigned the too powerful disputant to the dungeon or the stake, is now, thank heaven, compelled to vent itself in railing; which you need not more regard than the hiss of a serpent which has been deprived of its fangs.

Having premised, then, that I shall notice misapprehensions and objections in proportion not so much to their intrinsic weight, as to their prevalence, and the probability of your being called on to refute them, you will perhaps be surprised at my mentioning in the first place, a complaint urged against writers on Political-Economy

for confining their attention to the subject of Wealth. This sounds very much like a complaint against mathematicians for treating merely of quantities; or against grammarians for investigating no subject but language. Yet I can assure you that I have seen the complaint urged with apparent seriousness, by writers not generally held in contempt. I believe what is really meant by some of those who make the complaint, is, that some writers (A. Smith in particular has been charged with this) have recommended this or that measure to be at once *adopted*, on the ground of its conducing to national wealth; or have measured the *whole benefit* of each institution—the absolute desirableness of each object—by this standard alone.

I am inclined to think that in many cases this has been the fault of the reader more than of the writer. When an author is avowedly treating, exclusively, of questions of profit and loss, the fair mode of interpretation seems to be, to understand what he says, in reference to the subject in hand exclusively. If therefore I find a writer on Political-Economy treating, for instance, of the comparative merits of different modes that have been proposed for the attainment of some national good, and deciding in favour of one of them, I should think myself bound in candour to understand him as speaking (unless he expressly referred to some other consideration) of the superiority of that one *in reference to national wealth* alone; and as not giving any decision as to its *absolute expediency*.

It is thus we judge in all other cases. When a physician tells his patient, "you ought to go to the sea;" or, "you ought to abstain from sedentary employments," he is always understood to be speaking in reference to *health* alone. He is not supposed to imply by the use of the word "ought," that his patient is *morally* bound to follow the prescription at all events; which would perhaps imply the incurring of ruinous expense, or the neglect of important duties.

If this mode of interpretation be not adhered to, any one who writes or speaks on any subject whatever, will be perpetually liable to be misunderstood; and that, the more, in proportion to the precision and accuracy with which he confines himself to the question before him. For instance, a man who is employed to measure two portions of land, delivers in a statement of the number of acres in each, and represents correctly, (if he has done his work well,) which is the larger. But if, when he has confined himself to his own proper business, to the exclusion of all irrelevant considerations, he is mistakenly supposed to have been expressing an opinion as to the comparative fertility of soil, healthiness of situation, or picturesque beauty, of the two estates, the statement

he has made will be likely to mislead in proportion to its real accuracy.

In like manner, when a geometrician states the ratios of cubes or spheres to each other, though one may be of lead and the other of wood, he is supposed to be taking into consideration, not their substance and weight, but their magnitude alone. And so also, if a writer on Political-Economy is speaking of two articles of wealth as equal or unequal, he ought reasonably to be understood as speaking of their exchangeable *value*, without touching on their greater or less desirableness in other respects. Though one thousand pounds' worth of jewels be of the *same value* as one thousand pounds' worth of instructive books, which must as surely be the case as that a pound of feathers and a pound of lead are equal in weight, it does not follow that each must contribute equally to public and private happiness.

If, however, any writer does maintain this, or in any way asserts or implies that wealth constitutes the sole ground of preference of one thing to another, and that happiness is best promoted by sacrificing on each occasion all other considerations to that of profit, he is then deserving of censure for the doctrine he inculcates; but it is remarkable that this censure will be incurred by a procedure the very opposite of the one complained of. His fault will have been his *not* confining himself to questions relating merely to wealth, but travelling out of his record, (as it is called,) to decide, and decide erroneously, as to what conduces to public happiness. His proper inquiry was, as to the means by which wealth may be preserved or increased: to inquire how far wealth is *desirable*, is to go out of his proper province: to represent it as the only thing desirable, is an error, not *in* Political-Economy, but apart from it; and arises, not from his too close adherence to his own subject, but from his wandering into extraneous discussions.

I could wish, therefore, that the complaint against Political-Economists of confining themselves to the considerations of wealth were better founded than it is; for there is nothing that tends more to perplexity and error than the practice of treating of several different subjects, at the same time, and confusedly, so as to be perpetually sliding from one inquiry to another, of different kinds.

Not, however, that I mean at all to object to the incidental notice by writers on Political-Economy of matters closely allied to, yet forming no part of, the inquiries properly belonging to this science. In questions appertaining to any other branch of politics, or of the philosophy of the human mind, they may be right, or they may be wrong, in their conclusions themselves, yet without introducing any indistinctness and confusion into their own proper course of

inquiry, provided they are but careful to keep the different subjects apart. A digressive discussion, in short, of any point, is not necessarily objectionable, if it be so introduced as not to lose sight of the circumstance that it *is* a digression.

The same sort of complaint, which I have been speaking of as having been urged against the writers who have treated of this science, has sometimes been brought against the study itself. Since wealth, it is urged, is not happiness, and since it is only one out of the many subjects which lawgivers or governors have to consider, a science which has wealth for its subject, is unworthy of so dignified a title, and beneath the attention of a philosophical mind: especially, it is added, since men are in general prone rather to an excess than a deficiency in the pursuit of gain.

To the former part of this objection it may be sufficient to reply, that we are more likely to advance in knowledge, by treating of one subject at a time, than by blending together several distinct inquiries; though all may centre in the one common ultimate end, of human happiness. Even the building and fitting up of a house is a work entrusted to a number of distinct artisans, though their labours all tend to one common end, the comfort of the inhabitant. Much more may it be expected, that in the pursuit of so complex an object as human good, universally, our inquiries will be as vague and unprofitable as those of the Platonists after their

καταλλαττονται

unless we divide them according to the different branches of the subject, and keep steadily in view not merely the general end of them all, but the immediate end of each. This remark, in substance, was expressed several years ago, in relation to another subject, by one of our most illustrious professors, with a neatness and precision which cannot be surpassed: "omnium hæc est laus artium ut hominum utilitatibus inserviant.... atqui non nobis inquirendum est, quid omnibus sit commune, sed quid cuique proprium."

Whether we choose, after the example of the Greek philosophers, to speak of the Political science as having for its object Human Good universally, or whether we understand Politics in the more limited sense which is now the more usual, as relating to public affairs contradistinguished from those of individuals; in either case, Political-Economy will be one branch of Political science; of which *all* branches are worthy of attention, and each demands a *separate* attention.

And as there is no department of knowledge connected with the public welfare, that is undeserving of attentive study, so, the one

now before us is perhaps the more suitable for an academical course of instruction in an *endowed* University, from the circumstance that it is not, like Law or the Military art, &c. the subject of a strictly *professional* education. Many of the arts most essential to society, need no artificial stimulus to their cultivation, because they are such that the success in life of individuals is clearly connected with their (real or supposed) proficiency in those branches of knowledge, by the exercise of which they are to be maintained. But the regulation of public affairs, in which most of the higher and a large proportion of the middle and lower classes in this country have a greater or less share, is not an art learned in any course of regular professional education, but is too often exercised by those who have to learn it (if they learn it at all) in practice, from a series of experiments, of which the nation must abide the peril. Now it is precisely those branches of study the cultivation of which is expedient for the Public, but to which the self-interest of individuals would not lead them—it is these, I say, that most demand the attention of a *University*; unless at least we suppose them the gift of nature, or of inspiration.

As for the latter part of the objection above noticed, that men are already too eager in the pursuit of wealth, and ought not to be encouraged to make it an object of attention, the mistake on which it proceeds is one which you will meet with only in the young, (I mean, either in years, or in character,) and which you will readily remove in the case of those who are even moderately intelligent and attentive. You may easily explain to them that Political-Economy is not the art of enriching an individual, but relates to Wealth generally;—to that of a nation, and not to that of an individual, except in those cases where his acquisition of it goes to enrich the community. You may point out to them that wealth has no more necessary connexion with the vice of *covetousness*, than with the virtue of *charity*; since it merely forms the subject-matter about which the one as well as the other of these is concerned: and that investigations relative to the nature, production, and distribution, of wealth, have no greater connexion with sordid selfishness, than the inquiries of the chemist and the physiologist respecting the organs and the process of digestion and absorption of nutriment, have with gluttonous excess. And you may add, that individuals the most destitute of systematic knowledge, and nations not only ignorant but comparatively poor, are at least as prone to avarice as any others. The Arabs are among the poorest, and the most covetous, of nations; and most of those savage tribes, who have not even the use of money, are addicted to pilfering and plunder of every thing that is wealth to them.

The mistake, however, which I have now been noticing, is evidently the result of such complete thoughtlessness, that you will not probably find it necessary to bestow much pains on its refutation.

As for the degree and the manner in which Wealth is connected with national happiness— this, as well as the points of contact between a knowledge of this subject, and our moral and religious duties—the relation again in which it stands to Natural-theology—and again, the sources from which our knowledge of it is to be derived—all these are points respecting which more serious misapprehensions prevail; and which therefore, requiring to be dwelt on at somewhat greater length, must be reserved for future Lectures.

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Lecture II

In adverting, as I did in my last Lecture, to the mistake respecting the branch of knowledge we are considering, of supposing, that because it relates to wealth, it must have a tendency to encourage avarice, I fear I may have appeared to bestow undue attention on an error too palpable to be of importance. But I must claim your indulgence for occupying yet a little more of your time in suggesting refutations of objections, which at first sight might seem not worth refuting, but which you will find by experience are too prevalent to be in prudence passed by.

That Political-Economy should have been complained of as hostile to Religion, will probably be regarded a century hence (should the fact be then on record) with the same wonder, almost approaching to incredulity, with which we of the present day hear of men's having sincerely opposed, on religious grounds, the Copernican system. But till the advocates of Christianity shall have become universally much better acquainted with the true character of their religion, than, universally, they have ever yet been, we must always expect that every branch of study,—every scientific theory,—that is brought into notice, will be assailed on religious grounds, by those who either have not studied the subject, or who are incompetent judges of it; or again, who in addressing themselves to such persons as are so circumstanced, wish to excite and to take advantage of the passions of the ignorant. "Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo."

Some there are who sincerely believe that the Scriptures contain revelations of truths the most distinct from religion. Such persons procured accordingly a formal condemnation (very lately rescinded) of the theory of the earth's motion, as at variance with Scripture. In Protestant countries, and now, it appears, even in Roman Catholic, this point has been conceded; but that the erroneous principle— that of appealing to Revelation on questions of physical science—has not yet been entirely cleared away, is evident from the objections, which most of you probably may have heard, to the researches of Geology. The objections against Astronomy have been abandoned, rather, perhaps, from its having been made to appear that the Scripture-accounts of the phenomena of the heavens may be reconciled with the conclusions of Science, than from its being understood that Scripture is not the test by which the conclusions of Science are to be tried. And accordingly when attention was first called to the researches of Geology, many who were startled at the novelty of some of the conclusions drawn, and yet were averse to enter on a new field of study, or found

themselves incapable of maintaining many notions they had been accustomed to acquiesce in, betook themselves at once to Scripture, and reviled the students of Geology as hostile to Revelation; in the same manner as, in Pagan and Romish countries, any one who is conscious of crime or of debt, flies at once to the *altar*; and shelters himself in the sanctuary.

It is true, doctrines *may* be maintained, on subjects indeed distinct from religion, but which nevertheless would, if admitted, go to invalidate Scripture. If, for instance, it could be demonstrated, that mankind could not possibly have descended from a single pair, such a conclusion, no doubt, would go far to shake the foundation of our religion. But even in such cases, I would utterly protest against an appeal to Scripture, *as* Scripture—I mean, as a series of *inspired* writings—with a view to the refutation of such theories; even though we might begin by establishing generally the claim of these writings to our belief. Still, we ought to employ them for their own proper purpose; which is to reveal to us *religious* and moral truths. Historical or physical truths may be established by their own proper evidence; and this, therefore, is the course we are bound to pursue. A Christian will indeed feel antecedently a strong persuasion that such conclusions as I have been speaking of, or any others which are really inconsistent with the Bible, never *will* be established;—that any theory seemingly at variance with it, will be found either deficient in evidence, or else reconcilable with the Scriptures. But it is not a sign of Faith—on the contrary, it indicates rather a want of faith, or else a culpable indolence, to decline meeting any theorist on his own ground, and to cut short the controversy by an appeal to the authority of Scripture. For if we really are convinced of the truth of Scripture, and consequently of the falsity of any theory, (of the earth, for instance,) which is really at variance with it, we must needs believe that that theory is also at variance with observable phenomena; and we ought not therefore to shrink from trying that question by an appeal to these. The success of such an appeal will, then, add to the evidence for the truth of the Scriptures, instead of burdening them with the weight of defending every point which they incidentally imply. It is for us to "behave ourselves valiantly for our country and for the cities of our God," instead of bringing the Ark of God into the field of battle to fight for us. He will, at all events, we may be sure, defend his own cause, and finally lay prostrate the Dagon of infidelity; but we, his professed defenders, more zealous in reality for our own honour than for his, shall deserve to be smitten before the Philistines.

I have said, that the object of the Scriptures is to reveal to us religious and moral truths; but even this, as far as regards the latter, must be admitted with considerable modification. God has *not* revealed to us a system of morality such as would have been

needed for Beings who had no other means of distinguishing right and wrong. On the contrary, the inculcation of virtue and reprobation of vice in Scripture are in such a tone as seems to presuppose a natural power, or a capacity for acquiring the power, to distinguish them. And if a man denying or renouncing all claims of natural conscience, should practise without scruple every thing he did not find expressly forbidden in Scripture, and think himself not bound to do any thing that is not there expressly enjoined, exclaiming at every turn,

"Is it so written in the Bond?"

he would be leading a life very unlike what a Christian's should be.

There is no moral formula more frequently cited, and with more deserved admiration, than that maxim, of doing to others as we would have them do to us: and, as Paley observes, no one probably ever was in practice led astray by it. Yet if we imagine this maxim placed before a Being destitute of all moral faculty, and attempting to learn, from this, what morality is, he would evidently interpret it as implying, that we are to do whatever we should *wish* for, if in another's place; which would lead to innumerable absurdities, and in many cases to absolute impossibilities; since, in many cases, our conduct will affect two or more parties, whose wishes are at variance with each other. A judge, for instance, before whom there might be a cause to be tried, would feel that both parties wished, each, for a decision in his own favour; which would be manifestly impossible. But in practice, every one feels, that what he is bound to do, is, not necessarily what would be agreeable to his *inclinations*, were he in the other's place, but what he would think he might *justly* and *reasonably* expect. Now this very circumstance implies his having already a notion of what is just and reasonable. The use he is to make of the formula, is, not for the acquiring of these general principles, but for the *application* of them, in those cases where self-interest would be the most likely to blind him.

Since then we are bound to use our own natural faculties in the search after all truth that is within the reach of those faculties, most especially ought we to try by their own proper evidence, questions which form no part of Revelation properly so called, but which are incidentally alluded to in the sacred writings. If we appeal to the Scriptures on any such points, it should be merely as to an ancient book; not, in reference to their sacred character; in short, not *as* Scripture.⁶

And this, as I have said, holds good even in respect of such physical or other theories as would, if received, clearly militate against religion. They may be, and they therefore should be, refuted on

other grounds. Much less should we resort to Scripture, *as* Scripture, in the discussion of questions *not* involving the truth of Christianity. So far however are many persons from acting on this principle, that the course they habitually adopt, whenever any opinion is broached in which they do not concur, is that of attempting to prove, or, still oftener, assuming, that it is adverse to religion; thus endeavouring to create an odious association with whatever they dislike.

What I have said of the Bible's not having been designed to give such full instruction in morals as should supersede all other, will not be thought irrelevant to the present subject, by those who are aware that Political-Economy has been actually censured by some, as being connected with *human conduct*, and yet not professing to be *drawn from Scripture*. In physical science, (it has been said,) we are to trust our own natural powers; but in the regulation of our conduct, the Bible is the only sure guide; and a system which professes an independence of this guide, in *human* affairs, is to be regarded as something unholy.

To such objectors (and, however strange it may seem, you may meet with such) you may easily explain, if they can be brought candidly to examine the character and design of Revelation, that its object is to furnish principles—motives—encouragement—means of assistance—in the performance of duty; but no such detailed directions, even in cases where moral right and wrong are concerned, as shall supersede the exercise of reflection, observation, and discretion. You may point out to them, for instance, that the Scriptures enjoin Charity to the poor; but give no directions as to the best mode of administering our charity. Now it is evident that all different modes of attempting to relieve distress are not equally effectual; and that those which are altogether injudicious may even lead to more suffering than they remedy. Again, Justice is inculcated in Scripture, as well as by natural conscience; but in public affairs it often happens, that it is public *expediency* that determines what particular course *is* just. It is just, for instance, that all the individuals of a community should bear their share of the burden of contributing to any object essential to the public good;—to any measure, in short, of public expediency. But if the object were one beneficial to a small portion only of the community, it would be unjust that these should be benefited at the expense of all the rest. Here therefore the question of just and unjust, turns upon that of public expediency. And on this point errors may easily arise, by mistaking the interest of a few for that of the State. "Qui autem (says Cicero) parti civium consulunt, partem negligunt, rem perniciosissimam in civitatem inducunt, seditionem atque discordiam." No legislator indeed whose intention was upright, would knowingly and designedly sacrifice the public

good to that of a particular party or class of men; but he may do so unknowingly, even with the best intentions, from not perceiving in what way this or that enactment affects the community; and thus, without any unjust design, may sanction an unjust measure. And it may be added, that though free from the guilt of wilful injustice, he will be much to blame for doing ignorantly what is in itself unjust, if that ignorance be the result of carelessness or of obstinate prejudice:

αὐτὸ τὸ γὰρ αἰθρὸν

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To speak then comprehensively, it is a Christian duty to do good to our fellow-creatures, both in their spiritual and in their temporal concerns: and if so, it must be also a duty to study, to the best of our ability, to understand in what their good consists, and how it is to be promoted. To represent therefore any branch of such study as inconsistent with Christianity, is to make Christianity inconsistent with itself. He who should acknowledge himself bound to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and visit the sick and prisoners, would not be acting consistently with his profession, if he should, through inattention, or prejudice, or any other cause, sanction any measure that tended to increase those sufferings; or oppose, or neglect to support, any that tended to diminish them. The goods of this world are by no means a trifling concern to Christians considered *as* Christians. Whether indeed we ourselves shall have enjoyed a large or a small share of them, will be of no importance to us a hundred years hence; but it will be of the greatest importance, whether we shall have employed the faculties and opportunities granted to us, in the increase and diffusion of those benefits among others.

You will hear it said indeed, with undeniable truth, that wealth is not necessarily a benefit to the possessor. No more is liberty, or health, or strength, or learning. But again you will also meet with some who contend, that a poor country is more favourably situated for virtue than a rich one; and with others, who, without going this length, maintain, that as with individuals, so with nations, a *certain degree* of wealth is desirable, but an excess, dangerous to the moral character. Either or both of these points, you may concede for the present; i.e. waive the discussion of them as far as regards the question concerning the *importance* of the study we are speaking of. For if it be granted that we are to dread as an evil the too great increase of national wealth, or, that wealth is altogether an evil; still, it is not the less necessary to study the nature of wealth, its production, the causes that promote or impede its increase, and the laws which regulate its distribution. We should go

to the fountain-head of the waters, whether we wish to spread them abundantly over our land, or to drain them entirely away, or to moderate and direct the irrigation. If wealth, or great wealth, be regarded as a disease, we should remember that bodily diseases are made the subject of laborious and minute inquiry by physicians, as necessary with a view to their prevention and cure. Formerly, nearly all practitioners recommended inoculation with small-pox; though the practice had been much opposed at its first introduction; now, they are almost unanimous in preferring vaccination; but in any stage of either of the controversies which arose respecting these modes of practice, a man would have been thought insane, who should have questioned the importance of studying the nature, symptoms, and effects of small-pox.

As for the doctrine itself, that national wealth is morally mischievous as introducing *luxury* (in the worst sense of the word,) effeminacy, profligacy of manners, and depravation of principle, it has been inculcated in a loose declamatory way, by a great number of moralists, who have depicted in glowing colours the amiable simplicity of character, the manly firmness, and the purity of conduct, to be met with in nations that continue in primitive poverty; and the degeneracy that has ensued in those which have emerged from this state into one of comparative wealth. Almost all these writers furnish a strong confirmation of what has been just advanced; viz. that whether wealth be a good or an evil, or each, according to the amount of it—on any supposition, it is still no less a matter of importance to examine and carefully arrange the facts relating to the subject, and to reason accurately upon it, if we would avoid self-contradiction. For you will often find men declaiming on the evils consequent on wealth, and yet, in the next breath, condemning or applauding this or that measure, according to its supposed tendency to impoverish or to enrich the country. You will find them not only readily accepting wealth themselves from any honourable source, and anxious to secure from poverty their children and all most dear to them; (for this might be referred to the prevalence of passion over principle;) but even offering up solemn prayers to heaven for the prosperity of their native country; and contemplating with joy a flourishing condition of her agriculture, manufactures, or commerce; in short, of the sources of her Wealth. Nor is even this the utmost point to which you will find some carry their inconsistency; for you will meet with objections to Political-Economy, (meaning thereby either some particular doctrines maintained by this or that writer, or else, all systematic attention to the subject,) on the ground that it has for its object the increase of wealth which is hurtful; and again, that a country which is governed according to its principles, is likely to be impoverished by them. Now the most erroneous doctrines in Political-Economy that ever were promulgated, (and very erroneous ones certainly

have prevailed,) can hardly be chargeable with *both* these consequences. The same system cannot at once tend to make us rich, and also to make us poor.

Such inconsistencies as these do not shew so much an incapacity for correct reasoning, as (what I believe is much more common) an unthinking carelessness, and a habit of stringing together well-sounding sentences, and readily listening to them, without taking the trouble to reflect on their meaning. Eloquent declamation is, to the generality, easier, either to compose, or to follow, than close argument. Seneca's discourses in praise of poverty would, I have no doubt, be rivalled by many writers of this island, if one half of the revenue he drew from the then inhabitants of it, by lending them money at high interest, were proposed as a prize.

I have said that *most* of the moralists who have represented wealth as unfavourable to virtue, have been guilty of the inconsistency of also advocating every measure or institution that tends to the increase of wealth. There is one remarkable exception, in an author now little known except by name, but whose writings attracted great attention in their day; Dr. Mandeville; whose Fable of the Bees, or "Private Vices public Benefits," was received by the world as a most alarming novelty. The novelty however was more in the form and tone of the work, than in the matter of it. He was indeed a man of an acute and original, though not very systematic or comprehensive, turn of mind; but his originality was shewn chiefly in bringing into juxtaposition, notions which, separately, had long been current, (and indeed are not yet quite obsolete,) but whose *inconsistency* had escaped detection.

He is usually believed to have deliberately designed to recommend vice. In his second volume, (which is rather a scarce book, but very well worth reading,) he most solemnly disclaims any such intention, and protests, (I must say with an air of great sincerity,) that his object was to refute those against whom he was writing, by a *reductio ad absurdum*. Of his intentions, however, we have no means of forming a decisive judgment; nor if we had, would that question be to the purpose. It is sufficient to remark, that he is arguing all along on an *hypothesis*, and on one not framed gratuitously by himself, but furnished him by others; and on that hypothesis he is certainly triumphant. That *if* such and such things are respectively vices and virtues, as had been represented, and *if* national wealth and greatness are desirable, and *if* such and such means are conducive to this object,—then, private vices must be public benefits,—is proved to be not only an undeniable, but almost an identical, proposition. His argument does not go to shew *categorically* that vice ought to be encouraged, but *hypothetically*, that, *if* the notions which were afloat were admitted, respecting the

character of virtue and vice, and respecting the causes and consequences of wealth, then, national virtue and national wealth must be irreconcilable; or, as he expresses it,

"Fools only strive To make a great, an honest hive:"

καὶ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ τῷ ἀγνοεῖν κολάζουσιν,
ἐὼν αἴτιος εἶναι δοκῆ τῆς ἀγνοίας .

and consequently, that of two incompatible objects, we must be content to take one, *or* the other. Which of the two is to be preferred, he no where decides in his first volume; in his second, he solemnly declares his opinion, that wealth ought to be renounced, as incompatible with virtue.

Adam Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, gives an account of this system, containing some very just remarks, though I do not think he fully understood Mandeville; partly, perhaps, from having, as it appears, never met with his second volume. I will read an extract from the section, the whole of which is well worth attentive study. It exposes very well many of the fallacies which are to be found in the book, though they are not the author's own, but borrowed from his opponents.

"Dr. Mandeville considers whatever is done from a sense of propriety, from a regard to what is commendable and praiseworthy, as being done from a love of praise—and commendation, or, as he calls it, from vanity. Man, he observes, is naturally much more interested in his own happiness than in that of others, and it is impossible that in his heart he can ever really prefer their prosperity to his own. Whenever he appears to do so, we may be assured that he imposes upon us, and that he is then acting from the same selfish motives as at all other times. Among his other selfish passions, vanity is one of the strongest, and he is always easily flattered and greatly delighted with the applauses of those about him. When he appears to sacrifice his own interest to that of his companions, he knows that this conduct will be highly agreeable to their self-love, and that they will not fail to express their satisfaction by bestowing upon him the most extravagant praises. The pleasure which he expects from this, over-balances, in his opinion, the interest which he abandons in order to procure it. His conduct, therefore, upon this occasion, is in reality just as selfish, and arises from just as mean a motive as upon any other. He is flattered, however, and he flatters himself with the belief that it is entirely disinterested; since, unless this was supposed, it would not seem to merit any commendation either in his own eyes or in those of others. All public spirit, therefore, all preference of public to private interest, is, according to him, a mere cheat and

imposition upon mankind; and that human virtue which is so much boasted of, and which is the occasion of so much emulation among men, is the mere offspring of flattery begot upon pride." "Whether the most generous and public-spirited actions may not, in some sense, be regarded as proceeding from self-love, I shall not at present examine. The decision of this question is not, I apprehend, of any importance towards establishing the reality of virtue, since self-love may frequently be a virtuous motive of action. I shall only endeavour to shew, that the desire of doing what is honourable and noble, of rendering ourselves the proper objects of esteem and approbation, cannot with any propriety be called vanity." "It is the great fallacy of Dr. Mandeville's book to represent every passion as wholly vicious, which is so in any degree and in any direction. It is thus that he treats every thing as vanity, which has any reference either to what are, or to what ought to be, the sentiments of others; and it is by means of this sophistry, that he establishes his favourite conclusion, that private vices are public benefits. If the love of magnificence, a taste for the elegant arts and improvements of human life, for whatever is agreeable in dress, furniture, or equipage, for architecture, statuary, painting, and music, is to be regarded as luxury, sensuality, and ostentation, even in those whose situation allows, without any inconveniency, the indulgence of those passions, it is certain that luxury, sensuality, and ostentation are public benefits: since without the qualities upon which he thinks proper to bestow such opprobrious names, the arts of refinement could never find encouragement, and must languish for want of employment. Some popular ascetic doctrines which had been current before his time, and which placed virtue in the entire extirpation and annihilation of all our passions, were the real foundation of this licentious system. It was easy for Dr. Mandeville to prove, first, that this entire conquest never actually took place among men; and secondly, that if it was to take place universally, it would be pernicious to society, by putting an end to all industry and commerce, and in a manner to the whole business of human life. By the first of these propositions, he seemed to prove that there was no real virtue, and that what pretended to be such, was a mere cheat and imposition upon mankind; and by the second, that private vices were public benefits, since without them no society could prosper or flourish. "Such is the system of Dr. Mandeville, which once made so much noise in the world, and which, though, perhaps, it never gave occasion to more vice than what would have been without it, at least taught that vice, which arose from other causes, to appear with more effrontery, and to avow the corruption of its motives with a profligate audaciousness which had never been heard of before⁸."

The conclusion, however, that private vices are public benefits, is maintained, as I have said, by Mandeville, only hypothetically; viz.

on the assumption, that national wealth is unfavourable to virtue, and poverty the best security against corruption of morals. This assumption is the great principle of his work; which I wish to be remembered, in order that I may be clearly understood, whenever I may employ, as I probably shall have occasion to do, for brevity's sake, the word "Mandevillians," to denote those who embrace this principle. I do *not* mean to confine it to such as assent to *everything* contained in the book; nor indeed to such as have read it, or even heard of it; much less, to those (if there be any such) who seriously profess to advocate vice; since *this* we have no right to consider as even the author's own design; but I apply the term (for the sake of avoiding circumlocution) to those, who have adopted, from whatever quarter, the fundamental doctrine to which the whole argument tends,—the incompatibility or discordancy of national Wealth, and Virtue.

In discussing any question that may arise respecting this doctrine, it is important in the first place, steadily to keep in mind, what has been already remarked, that it does not at all affect the question as to the utility of the studies we are now considering; since, whether wealth be a good, or an evil, or partly both, the knowledge of all that relates to it is not the less important. This, self-evident as it is, is usually lost sight of by the Mandevillians of the present day; who are accustomed to disparage Political-Economy, on the ground that an increase of wealth is rather to be deprecated than sought for. This, if admitted, is so far from proving that the subject is unworthy of systematic attention, that it proves the very contrary. It would indeed follow, that those particular writers are erroneous, who *recommend* any measure to be adopted on the ground of its conducing to wealth; but what is to be shunned, is not less important than what is to be sought.⁹

καὶ γὰρ τὰ κακὰ καὶ τὰγαθὰ ἄξια οἴομεθα σπουδῆς εἶναι,
καὶ τὰ συντείνοντα πρὸς ταῦτα· ὅσα δὲ μηδὲν, ἢ πάνυ μικρὰ,
οὐδενὸς ἄξια ὑπολαμβάνομεν.

If they were to maintain that wealth is a thing altogether *indifferent*, which can produce neither good nor evil results of any magnitude, then, and then only, they might infer, that it is too insignificant to deserve notice.

In fact, the whole question respecting the desirableness and ultimate advantages or disadvantages of wealth, is, as I formerly remarked, only obliquely and incidentally connected with Political-Economy; whose strict object is to inquire only into the nature, production, and distribution of wealth; not, its connexion with virtue or with happiness. In a treatise, for instance, on ship-

building, or on navigation, it would be a digression, (though not a trifling and impertinent one,) if the author should inquire concerning the advantages and disadvantages of a communication between countries separated by the sea; and how far we should adopt as a maxim the expression of the poet,

"Deus abscondit Prudens, Oceano dissociabili Terras."

ἀπλοῶς ἀγαθὰ

This, I say, would be a digression; though not an absurd or improper digression, if the author were but careful to point out, that his own proper subject was, the construction or the management, not the utility, of a ship.

Taking care then not to lose sight of the incidental and digressive character of the inquiry, you may next turn the objector's attention to the distinction between an *individual* and a *community*, when viewed as possessing a remarkable share of wealth. The two cases differ immensely, as far as the moral effects of wealth are concerned. For, first, the most besetting probably of all temptations, to which a rich *man*, as such, is exposed, is that of pride—an arrogant disdain of those poorer than himself. Now, as all our ideas of great and small, in respect of wealth, and of every thing else, are comparative, and as each man is disposed to compare himself with those around him, it is plain, the danger of priding one's self on wealth affects exclusively, or nearly so, an *individual* who is rich, compared with his own countrymen; and especially one who is richer than most others in his own walk of life, and who reside in his own neighbourhood. Some degree of national pride there may be, connected with national wealth; but this is not in general near so much the foundation of national pride, as a supposed superiority in valour, or in mental cultivation: and at any rate it seldom comes into play. An Englishman who is poor, compared with other Englishmen, is not likely to be much puffed up with pride at the thought of belonging to a wealthy community. Nay, even though he should himself possess property which, among the people of Timbuctoo, or the aboriginal Britons, would be reckoned great wealth, he will be more likely to complain of his poverty, than to be filled with self-congratulation at his wealth, if most of those of his own class are as rich or richer than himself. And even one who travels or resides abroad, does not usually regard with disdain (on the score of wealth at least) those foreigners who are individually as well off in that respect as himself, though their *nation* may be poorer than his. And, on the other hand., those individuals who, in a poor country, are comparatively rich, are quite as much exposed as any to the temptation of pride.

As for what may be said respecting avarice, selfishness, worldly-mindedness, &c. it may suffice to reply, that not only (as I have already remarked) these vices are found as commonly in poor *countries* as in rich, but even in the same country, the poor are not at all less liable to them than the rich. Those in affluent circumstances *may* be absorbed in the pursuit of gain; but they *may* also, and sometimes do, devote themselves altogether to Literature, or Science, or other pursuits, altogether remote from this: those, on the other hand, who *must* maintain themselves by labour or attention to business, are at least not the *less* liable to the temptation of too anxiously taking thought for the morrow.

Luxury again is one of the evils represented as consequent on wealth. The word is used in so many senses, and so often without attaching any precise meaning to it, that great confusion is apt to be introduced into any discussion in which it occurs. Without however entering prematurely on any such discussion, it may be sufficient, as far as the present question is concerned, to point out, that the terms Luxury, and Luxurious, are considerably modified as to their force, according as they are applied to individuals or to nations. An individual *man* is called luxurious, in comparison with other men, of the same community and in the same walk of life with himself: a nation is called luxurious, in reference to other *nations*. The same style of living which would be reckoned moderate and frugal, or even penurious, among the higher orders, would be censured as extravagant luxury in a day-labourer: and the labourer again, if he lives in a cottage with glass-windows and a chimney, and wears shoes and stockings, and a linen or cotton shirt, is not said to live in luxury; though he possesses what would be thought luxuries to a negro-prince. A rich and luxurious nation therefore does not necessarily contain more individuals who live in luxury (according to the received use of the word) than a poor one; but it possesses more of such things as *would* be luxuries in the poor country, while in the rich one, they are not. The inclination for self-indulgence and ostentation, is not necessarily less strong in poor than in rich nations; the chief difference is, that their luxury is of a coarser description, and generally has more connexion with gross sensuality. Barbarians are almost invariably intemperate.

As for the effeminizing effects that have been attributed to national luxury, which has been charged with causing a decay of national energy, mental and bodily, no such results appear traceable to any such cause. Xenophon indeed attributes the degeneracy of the Persians to the inroads of luxury, which was carried, he says, to such a pitch of effeminacy, that they even adopted the use of gloves to protect their hands. We probably have gone as much beyond them, in respect of the *common* style of living among us, as they, beyond their rude forefathers; yet it will hardly be maintained that

this nation displays, in the employments either of war or peace, less bodily or mental energy than our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. In bodily strength, it has been ascertained by accurate and repeated experiments, that civilized men are decidedly superior to savages, and that the *more* barbarous, and those who lead a harder life, are generally inferior in this point to those who have made more approaches to civilization. There is indeed, in such a country as this, a larger proportion of feeble and sickly individuals; but this is because the hardship and exposure of a savage life speedily destroys those who are not of a robust constitution. Some there are, no doubt, whose health is impaired by an over-indulgent and tender mode of life; but as a general rule, it may safely be maintained, that the greater part of that over-proportion of infirm persons among us as compared, for instance, with the North American Indians, owe, not their infirmity, but their life, to the difference between our habits and theirs. How much the average duration of human life has progressively increased in later times, is probably well-known to most of you.

Lastly, one of the most important points of distinction between individuals and nations in respect to wealth, is that which relates to industry and idleness. Rich *men* are indeed often most laboriously and honourably active; but they *may*, and sometimes do, spend their lives in such idleness as cannot be found among the poor, excepting in the class of beggars.

A rich *nation*, on the contrary, is always an industrious nation; and almost always more industrious than poor ones.

Without entering therefore prematurely into the consideration of the *manner* and degree in which wealth and industry mutually promote each other, you may be satisfied with simply pointing out their *connexion*; so as to remove all apprehensions that may be entertained, on that score, of the demoralizing effects of national wealth.

Since then the dangers, you may add, attendant on the acquisition or possession of wealth, have reference chiefly, if not entirely, to the case of individuals, and to them, not less in a poor than in a rich community, while national wealth has little or nothing of such dangers to counterbalance its advantages; and since almost every one thinks himself even bound, in the case of a private friend, notwithstanding the dangers thus incurred, to enrich him, by honourable means, if he has the opportunity; much more, in the case of that collection of friends which we call our Country, will a patriotic spirit lead us to promote national wealth, when it does not interfere with more important objects.

But is there (it may be asked) any one that ever seriously doubted this? Judging from men's conduct, I should say, No. Many measures indeed have been advocated, which really tend to impoverish the country—many opposed, which tend to enrich it; but never, *on those grounds*. It has been always from their tendency being, at least professedly, understood to be the reverse. Much lavish expenditure again has often been recommended for inadequate objects; but always on the ground that the object *was* adequate. I never heard of any one, even of those who in theory deprecate the increase of national wealth as an evil, being consistent enough in practice to advocate any measure on the ground that it tends to destroy wealth, and for that express purpose; or to oppose a measure on the ground that it will too much enrich the country. The fact is, the declaimers against wealth are, by their own shewing, mere declaimers, and nothing more; who, rather than say nothing, will say what militates against their own conclusions. They recommend or oppose measures, as conducive, or as adverse, to national wealth: and then if their arguments are tried by the test of well-established principles, and they are exhorted systematically to study these principles, and, before they attempt to discuss questions connected with wealth, to bestow a regular attention on the subject, they turn round and inveigh against such a study because it *has* wealth for its subject, and wealth is a pernicious thing: which would not lessen the importance of such studies, if it were true; and which they themselves have practically admitted, is not true. They resemble the Harpies of Virgil, seeking to excite disgust at the banquet, of which they are nevertheless eager to partake. And as soon as one set of objections are refuted, the same assailants are ready to renew their clamorous attack from an opposite and unexpected quarter:

"Rursum ex diverso cæli, cæcisque latebris, Turba sonans pedibus prædam circumvolat uncis; Polluit ore dapes."

I can suggest no argument by which you can either convince those who care nothing for self-contradiction, or silence those who are bent on the display of mere eloquence:

"Neque vim plumis ullam, nec vulnera tergo Adcipiunt."

But for the sake of others, I have endeavoured to point out how you may clear away some of the fallacies thus scattered at random; and which, though mutually destructive of each other, may cause impediments in the student's path to knowledge: even as the wreaths of snow tossed about fortuitously by the blind fury of the winds, may form serious obstructions in the roads.

On these grounds it may not be beneath your attention to explain fully some of the most obvious truths, which have thus become accidentally obscured;—to bestow some pains in distinctly setting forth even a proposition in itself so simple, as, that national wealth, which even if it were a serious evil, would demand serious attention, is universally, and even by those who declaim against it, considered as a good.

After all, indeed, in regard to wealth, as well as all those objects which the great moralist of antiquity places in the class of things good in themselves,

ἡμῶν ἀγαθὰ

more depends, as he himself remarks, on the use we make of these bounties of Providence, than on the advantages themselves. But they *are* in themselves goods; and it is our part, instead of affecting ungratefully to slight or to complain of God's gifts, to endeavour to make them *goods to us*,

Βουλευόμεθα δὲ μᾶλλον

by studying to use them aright, and to promote, through them, the best interests of ourselves and our fellow-creatures.

I shall hereafter, when I come to treat of Political-Economy as connected with Natural-Theology, enter rather more fully into the consideration of the effects on society which have been produced, and of those which we may conclude were designed to be produced, by the progress of wealth; and also of the causes by which that progress, as well as the several effects of it, have been modified, promoted, or impeded.

In my next Lecture, however, I shall be compelled to occupy your time with the notice of some of the mistakes that prevail respecting the *study itself* of Political-Economy, (distinct from those relating to wealth which is the *subject* of it,) and to the objections that have in consequence been raised, not against the *pursuit* of national wealth, but against the *scientific contemplation* of the subject.

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Lecture III

Supposing Wealth to be *naturally*, and consequently to have *always* been, an object of sufficiently strong desire to mankind, what need can there be, it may be said, to construct a Science, and an Art founded on that Science, relative to the subject? In a matter about which daily practice and daily observation are concerned, and have been, for so many ages, must not the common sense of judicious men, and the experience of practical men, be preferable to the subtle systems of theoretical speculators?

Some again there are, who are far from regarding with disdain the systematic study of the theory of wealth, who yet have no idea of reckoning it an important part of *general* education; but as one necessary, perhaps, or useful, to those at the head of public affairs; and to any others, a matter of mere curious speculation.

With respect to the prevailing fallacies connected with the term Common-sense, I have elsewhere remarked, that all who employ it with any distinct meaning, intend to denote by it "an exercise of the judgment unaided by any art or system of rules; such as we must necessarily employ in numberless cases of daily occurrence; in which, having no established principles to guide us—no line of procedure, as it were; distinctly chalked out—we must needs act on the best extemporaneous conjectures we can form. He who is eminently skilful in doing this, is said to possess a superior degree of common-sense. But that common-sense is only our *second-best* guide—that the rules of art, if judiciously framed, are always desirable when they can be had, is an assertion, for the truth of which I may appeal to the testimony of mankind in general; which is so much the more valuable, inasmuch as it may be accounted the testimony of adversaries. For the generality have a strong predilection in favour of common-sense, except in those points in which they, respectively, possess the knowledge of a system of rules; but in these points, they deride any one who trusts to unaided common-sense. A sailor, for instance, will, perhaps, despise the pretensions of medical men, and prefer treating a disease by common-sense: but he would ridicule the proposal of navigating a ship by common-sense, without regard to the maxims of nautical art. A physician, again, will perhaps condemn systems of Political-Economy, of Logic, or Metaphysics, and insist on the superior wisdom of trusting to common-sense in such matters; but he would never approve of trusting to common-sense in the treatment of diseases. Neither, again, would the architect recommend a reliance on common-sense alone in building, nor the musician in music, to the neglect of those systems of rules, which, in their respective

arts, have been deduced from scientific reasoning aided by experience. And the induction might be extended to every department of practice. Since, therefore, each gives the preference to unassisted common-sense only in those cases where he himself has nothing else to trust to, and invariably resorts to the rules of art, wherever he possesses the knowledge of them, it is plain that mankind universally bear their testimony, though unconsciously and often unwillingly, to the preferableness of systematic knowledge to conjectural judgments.

"There is, however, abundant room for the employment of common-sense in the *application* of the system."[10](#)

It may be added, that what was said in respect of Logic, holds good no less in the present subject, and indeed in most others; viz. that in the practical application of scientific principles there is abundant room for the employment of common-sense.[11](#)

περὶ τὰς τέχνας ἢ τὰς ἐπίστημας
καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀδιόριστον
Θερόξ

There is no fear that we shall ever in practice have too little call for deliberation—too little need of judicious conjecture. Science does not enable us to dispense with commonsense, but only to employ it more profitably; nor does the best-instructed man necessarily deliberate the less; only he exercises his deliberation on *different* points from those that occupy the less-instructed; and to better purpose; he does not waste his mental powers in conjectures as to his road, when he has a correct map in his hand; but he still has abundance of other inquiries to make as he travels over it. The adoption of the Arabic numerals and of the Algebraic symbols, does not supersede calculation, but extends its sphere.

With respect to Experience again, which has been made the occasion of so much fallacy, by a careless and inaccurate mode of appealing to it, I have elsewhere remarked, that "in its original and strict sense, Experience is applicable to the *premises* from which we argue, not to the *inference* we draw. Strictly speaking, we know by experience only the past, and what has passed under our own observation; thus, we know by *experience* that the tides *have* daily ebbed and flowed, during such a time; and from the testimony of others as to their own experience, that they have formerly done so; and *from* this experience, we conclude, by induction, that the same phenomenon will continue."[12](#)

And I have remarked, in another place, "that men are apt not to consider with sufficient attention, what it is that constitutes

experience in each point; so that frequently one man shall have credit for much experience, in what relates to the matter in hand, and another, who, perhaps, possesses as much, or more, shall be underrated as wanting it. The vulgar, of all ranks, need to be warned, first, that *time* alone does not constitute experience; so that many years may have passed over a man's head, without his even having had the same opportunities of acquiring it, as another, much younger: secondly, that the longest practice in conducting any business in *one* way, does not necessarily confer any experience in conducting it in a different way; for instance, an experienced husbandman, or minister of state, in Persia, would be much at a loss in Europe; and if they had some things less to learn than an entire novice, on the other hand they would have much to unlearn: and, thirdly, that merely being conversant about a certain class of *subjects*, does not confer experience in a case where the *operations*, and the *end* proposed, are different. It is said that there was an Amsterdam merchant, who had dealt largely in corn all his life, who had never seen a field of wheat growing; this man had doubtless acquired, by experience, an accurate judgment of the qualities of each description of corn,—of the best methods of storing it,—of the arts of buying and selling it at proper times, &c.; but he would have been greatly at a loss in its cultivation; though he had been, in a certain way, long *conversant* about corn. Nearly similar is the experience of a practised lawyer, (supposing him to be nothing more,) in a case of *legislation*; because he has been long *conversant about law*, the unreflecting attribute great weight to his judgment; whereas his constant habits of fixing his thoughts on what the law *is*, and withdrawing it from the irrelevant question of what the law *ought* to be;—his careful observance of a multitude of rules, (which afford the more scope for the display of his learning, in proportion as they are arbitrary, unreasonable, and unaccountable,) with a studied indifference as to, that which is foreign from his business, the *convenience* or *inconvenience* of those rules,—may be expected to operate unfavourably on his judgment in questions of legislation: and are likely to counterbalance the advantages of his superior knowledge, even in such points as do bear on the question.

"In matters connected with Political-Economy, the *experience* of *practical* men is often appealed to in opposition to those who are called theorists; even though the latter perhaps are deducing conclusions from a wide induction of facts, while the experience of the others will often be found only to amount to their having been long conversant with the details of office, and having all that time gone on in a certain beaten track, from which they never tried, or witnessed, or even imagined, a deviation.

"So also the authority derived from experience of a *practical* miner, i.e. one who has wrought all his life in one mine, will sometimes delude a speculator into a vain search for metal or coal, against the opinion perhaps of *theorists*, i.e. persons of extensive geological observation.¹³

It may be added, that there is a proverbial maxim which bears witness to the advantage sometimes possessed by an observant bystander over those actually engaged in any transaction. "The looker-on often sees more of the game than the players." Now the looker-on is precisely (in Greek)

Φύσει πολιτικὸν ἄνθρωπος

the *theorist*.

When then you find any one *contrasting*, in this and in other subjects, what he calls experience, with theory, you will usually perceive on attentive examination, that he is in reality comparing the results of a *confined*, with that of a *wider*, experience;—a more imperfect and crude theory, with one more cautiously framed, and based on a more copious induction.

It has been remarked by physicians, that no patient or nurse, however conscious of ignorance in medicine, and disavowing all design to theorize, can ever be brought to give such a description of any case of sickness as shall involve no theory, but shall consist merely of a statement of what has actually presented itself to their senses. They will say, for instance, that the patient was disordered *in consequence* of this or that;—that he obtained relief *from* such and such an application, &c. all which is, in reality, theory. And hence medical writers very prudently inculcate a caution to the practitioner, to ascertain what are the habitual notions of his informant, in order that he may interpret aright the descriptions given. The fact is, that (not in what relates to medicine alone, but in all subjects) men are so formed as (often unconsciously) to reason, whether well or ill, on the phenomena they observe, and to mix up their inferences with their statements of those phenomena, so as in fact to theorize (however scantily and crudely) without knowing it. If you will be at the pains carefully to analyze the simplest descriptions you hear of any transaction or state of things, you will find, that the process which almost invariably takes place is, in logical language, this; that each individual has in his mind certain *major-premises* or principles, relative to the subject in question; that observation of what actually presents itself to the senses, supplies *minor-premises*; and that the statement given (and which is reported as a thing experienced) consists in fact of the *conclusions* drawn from the combinations of those premises.

Hence it is that several different men, who have all had equal, or even the very same, experience, i.e. have been witnesses or agents in the same transactions, will often be found to resemble so many different men looking at the same book: one perhaps, though he distinctly sees black marks on white paper, has never learned his letters; another can read, but is a stranger to the *language* in which the book is written; another has an *acquaintance* with the language, but understands it imperfectly; another is familiar with the *language*, but is a stranger to the *subject* of the book, and wants power, or previous instruction, to enable him fully to take in the author's drift; while another again perfectly comprehends the whole.

The object that strikes the eye is to all of these persons the same; the difference of the impressions produced on the mind of each is referable to the differences in their minds.

And this explains the fact, that we find so much discrepancy in the results of what are called Experience and Common-sense, as contra-distinguished from theory. In former times men knew by experience, that the earth stands still, and the sun rises and sets. Common-sense taught them that there could be no antipodes, since men could not stand with their heads downwards, like flies on the ceiling. Experience taught the King of Bantam that water could not become solid. And (to come to the consideration of human affairs) the experience and common-sense of one of the most observant and intelligent of historians, Tacitus, convinced him, that for a mixed government to be so framed as to combine the elements of Royalty, Aristocracy, and Democracy, must be next to impossible, and that if such a one could be framed, it must inevitably be very speedily dissolved.

"Sed quid sequar? aut quem?"

In points wherein all men agree, they may possibly be all in the right; but where they are utterly at variance, some at least must be mistaken.

The illustrations, however, which I have given from other subjects, are extremely inadequate; for I know of none in which so much theory, and that, most paradoxical theory, has been incorporated with experience, and passed off as a part of it, as in matters concerning Political-Economy. There is no other in which the most subtle refinements of a system (to waive, for the present, the question as to its soundness) have been, not merely admitted, but admitted as the dictates of common-sense. Many such paradoxes, as I allude to, (whether true or false, we will not now consider,) you may meet with in a variety of authors of the present, but much

more of the last and preceding centuries; and may not unfrequently hear in conversation. That a state of war is favourable to national prosperity—that it is advantageous to a nation to export goods of more value than it receives in return—that we are losers by purchasing articles where we can get them cheapest—that it is wise for a people to pay, on behalf of a foreign consumer, part of the price for which he purchases their commodities—that it is better to obtain the same results by much labour than by little—that a man is a benefactor to the community by building himself a splendid palace—and many other doctrines that are afloat, may be truths, but they are at least *paradoxical* truths; they may be abstruse and recondite wisdom; at any rate, they are *abstruse and recondite*;—they may be sense, but at least they are not common-sense.

And again, many conclusions maintained by men who have had much experience, of one kind or other, though they may be *just* conclusions, yet cannot be said to have been brought to the test of experience. For instance, that a country would be enriched, by having, what is called, a favourable balance of trade with all the world, i.e. by continually exporting more in value than the goods it imports, and consequently receiving the overplus year by year in money, and exporting none of that money—this has been held by a great number of men, long conversant with public affairs, and so far, men of experience. But the doctrine itself, whether true or false, cannot be said to have been established by experience, because the experiment has never been tried. Many, indeed, *have* tried, for ages together, to *bring about* such a state of things; but as it is notorious, that they have never succeeded—that no country ever has been so circumstanced—the experiment cannot be said to have ever been tried, what would be the *consequences* of attaining such an object; nor can they therefore be said, (however *right* they may be as to the desirableness of the object,) to know by experience that it is conducive to prosperity. Such experiments, therefore, are like those of the Alchemists; who did indeed try innumerable, with a view to discover the philosopher's stone; but cannot be said to have tried the experiment, whether that stone which converts all things into gold, is, or is not, a universal medicine. That it is possible to find a method of transmuting metals, and that it would be connected with the art of healing, has never been disproved; but one who believes this, however rightly, cannot be said to found his belief on experience.

If, again, you should be told, that those who have long been conversant about any subject are likely to have exhausted it—to have ascertained all that *can* be ascertained in it, and to have introduced every practicable improvement—and if you are called on to produce instances to the contrary, you cannot perhaps employ

better than the introduction of so seemingly obvious and simple a contrivance as that of the *Arabic numerals*, after so many ages during which ingenious men have been devoting their lives to the search after improvements in calculation. This is an instance of an Invention: a similar one, of a Discovery, is that of the circulation of the blood, by Hervey; who came after such a multitude of physicians, occupied all their lives with the study of the animal frame, and in the daily habit of feeling the pulse. Neither of these novelties were struck out, like the improvements in some sciences, through the aid of new instruments, or the casual discovery of new substances. Both lay, as it were, under our feet; and yet for how many ages were they missed by common-sense, and experience, and science, both separate and united.

I have dwelt at greater length than perhaps may have appeared necessary, on some of the topics which you may have occasion to employ against the vague notions that are afloat respecting common-sense and experience; and by which you may shew the preferableness of systematic study, to judgments either founded on extemporaneous conjecture, or distorted by popular prejudice; topics by which (to recur to a former illustration) men may be incited to *learn to read* the great book of human transactions which is before them, and to read it according to its true sense, not perverted by a blind acquiescence in the interpretation of unskilful commentators. But you must not expect that reason will universally make its way. "Remedia," says the medical aphorism, "non agunt in cadaver." Those in whom indolence is combined with pride, will be induced, by the one, to remain in their position, and, by the other, to fortify it as well as they can.

I shall proceed to offer a few remarks on that very prevailing idea, that Political-Economy is a subject which may be studied by any one whose taste particularly leads him to it, but which (with the exception perhaps of a few who take a leading part in public affairs) may safely be disregarded by the generality, as by no means necessary to make up the character of a well-educated man.

It may perhaps be conceded, that each should direct and regulate his studies according to his own judgment and inclination, provided he will consent to refrain from taking a part in matters to which he has not turned his attention: but this at least seems an equitable condition: "Ludere qui nescit, campestribus abstinet armis." It is a condition, however, which in the present subject is very little observed. The most difficult questions in Political-Economy are every day discussed with the most unhesitating confidence, not merely by empty pretenders to Science, (for that takes place, and must be expected, in all subjects,) but by persons not only ignorant, but professedly ignorant, and designing to continue so, of the

whole subject;—neither having, nor pretending to have, nor wishing for, any fixed principles by which to regulate their judgment on each point. Questions concerning taxation, tithes, the national debt, the poor-laws—the wages which labourers earn, or ought to earn,—the comparative advantages of different modes of charity,—and numberless others belonging to Political-Economy, and many of them among the most difficult, and in which there is the greatest diversity of opinion, are debated perpetually, not merely at public meetings, but in the course of conversation, and decisions of them boldly pronounced, by many who utterly disclaim having turned their attention to Political-Economy.

The right management of public affairs in respect of these and such-like points, is commonly acknowledged to call for men of both powerful and well-cultivated mind; and yet if every man of common sense is competent to form an opinion, at the first glance, on such points, without either having made them the subject of regular study, or conceiving that any such is requisite, it would follow that the art of government (as far at least as regards that extensive and multifarious department of it, pertaining to National Wealth) must be the easiest of all arts;—easier than even the common handicraft trades; in which no one will knowingly employ a man who has not been regularly taught. And the remark of the Chancellor Oxenstiern to his son, "*quam parva sapientia regitur mundus,*" must be understood to apply not only to what is, but what ought to be the state of things.

Many of you probably have met with the story of some gentleman, (I suppose it is usually fathered on a native of a neighbouring island,) who, on being asked whether he could play on the violin, made answer, that he really did not know whether he could or not, because he had never tried. There is at least more modesty in this expression of doubt, than those shew, who, having never tried to learn the very rudiments of Political-Economy, are yet quite sure of their competence to discuss its most difficult questions.

You may perhaps wonder how it is that men should conceal from themselves and from each other, so glaring an absurdity. I believe it is generally in this way: they profess, and intend, to keep clear of all questions of Political-Economy; and imagine themselves to have done so, by having kept clear of the *name*. The *subjects* which constitute the proper and sole province of the science, they do not scruple to submit to extemporaneous discussion, provided they but avoid the title by which that science is commonly designated. This is as if the gentleman in the story just alluded to, had declared his inability to play on the violin, at the same time expressing his confidence that he could play on the fiddle.

To the *name* of *Political-Economy*, I have already expressed my objection; but the subjects of which it treats are such as are of deep interest to most men; and what is more, they are subjects on which most men *will* form opinions, whether well or ill-founded; and opinions very far from unanimous; and will act on those opinions, whether in their own immediate management of public affairs, or in their choice of persons to be entrusted with the charge. That therefore which most men *will* do, whether well or ill, it must be of the utmost importance they should be qualified for doing well; by collecting, arranging, and combining whatever general propositions on the subject can be well established.

You will find, however, that many understand by Political-Economy, certain *particular doctrines* maintained by this or that writer on the subject; and that those who profess to dislike Political-Economy, mean really, such and such doctrines. You may meet with some again, who, with rather a greater appearance of precision, find fault with what they call the *modern school* of Political-Economy; and this, when perhaps in the next breath they are complaining that the modern writers on the subject are very much at variance with each other, as to the most important principles, and that there are almost as many different schools or sects as there are writers: "Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo?"

Such trifling as this would not be worth noticing on any other subject; but on this, you will find that it is wonderfully tolerated; and that accordingly full advantage has been taken of the toleration.

What *is* the modern school of Political-Economy, I cannot distinctly ascertain; nor (it is evident) can those who find fault with it; since one of their complaints is, that no such thing exists, and that, on the contrary, the greatest discrepancy prevails between the different authors who profess to teach the science. If there be, however, any points on which, notwithstanding their general discrepancy, most of these writers agree, that is certainly a strong presumption that they are right in those points. It is, however, only a presumption; not a decisive argument; since we know, that there are several points in which various philosophers agreed for many ages, yet in which it has since appeared they were all mistaken.

In fact, however, it will be found, that even much greater discrepancy than is alleged, does exist among political-economists, if we include, as we certainly ought to do, under that description, not merely those who usually bear the appellation, but all who discuss, and in practice decide, questions connected with national wealth;—all who recommend or adopt measures which have that object in view. All such are, properly, political-economists; though

many of them may be very bad ones. Those of them who may have never carefully and systematically studied the subject, whether they are in consequence the less likely, or the more likely, to arrive at right conclusions, yet do adopt *some* conclusions, and act upon them. Now a man is called a Legislator, who frames and enacts laws, whether they be wise or unwise;—whether he be by nature, or by his studies, well, or ill qualified for his task. A man who attends sick persons, and prescribes for them, is called a Physician, whether he prescribes skilfully or not, and whether he have carefully, or negligently, studied anatomy, pharmacy, and nosology. So also, men are usually called Generals, and Magistrates, who are entrusted, respectively, with the command of armies, and with the administration of justice; however incompetent they may be to—those offices; else we should never speak of an *unskilful* General, or an ignorant Magistrate. And on the same principle, one who forms opinions, and frames or discusses measures, relative to the matters we are now speaking of, is a Political-Economist; though he is likely to be a *bad* one, if he does so ignorantly, and at random. But in respect of this particular case of Political-Economy, many men are in the condition of the Bourgeois of Moliere, who had been talking prose all his life without knowing it.

And yet he who confines the term Political-Economy to such and such particular doctrines, and because he does not assent to these, professes to disapprove of Political-Economy, would perhaps exclaim against the absurdity of one who should declare his abhorrence of Theology; meaning thereby the works of Bellarmine, or of the School-men; and defending this use of language, on the ground that these were celebrated theological writers.

There is, in fact, no way of keeping clear of Political-Economy, however we may avoid the *name*, but by keeping clear of the subjects of it. And if it be felt as inconsistent with the character of a well-educated man to have nothing to say, and to shew no interest, on those subjects, you may easily make it clear to any man of ingenuous mind, that he ought to be still more inwardly ashamed (though he may not be put to shame openly) at discussing them, without having taken due pains to understand them. Specious and shallow declamation may indeed for a time be even more favourably received by the unthinking, than sound reasoning, based on sound knowledge; but this last must have a tendency to prevail ultimately.

And you may add, that consequently *that* man most especially who is alive to the interests of Religion, ought to take the more anxious care that this advantage be not left exclusively in the hands of its enemies. As the world always in fact has been, and must be, governed by political-economists, whether they have *called*

themselves so or not, and whether skilful or unskilful; so, there must always be a tendency, in a country where all stations are open to men of superior qualifications—there must always, I say, be a tendency, in proportion as intellectual culture spreads, towards the placing of this power in the hands of those who have the most successfully studied the subject. Now if such a state of things were to be brought about, as that none of these should be friendly to Christianity, which would be the case, if all the friends of Christianity should refuse to enrol themselves in the number, it is easy to foresee what must be the consequence. This truism, as it appears when formally stated, is often overlooked in practice. If the efforts of the Romish Church, to represent the cultivation of astronomy as adverse to religion, had proved successful, and consequently no Christian had been an astronomer, the result produced by themselves, viz. that no astronomer would have been a Christian, would have been triumphantly appealed to in justification of their censures.

But what Aristotle says of Dialectics and Rhetoric, that all men partake of them in a certain degree, since all occasionally aim (whether skilfully or unskilfully) to accomplish the objects of those arts—this will in a great degree apply, in such a country as this, to Political-Economy. Many are compelled, and most of the rest are led by their own inclination to take some part, more or less, in the questions pertaining to it. The chief distinction is between those who do and those who do not, proceed on fixed and carefully ascertained principles.

I wish for my own part there were no such thing as Political-Economy. I mean not now the mere *name* of the study: but I wish there had never been any necessity for directing our attention to the study itself. If men had always been secured in person and property, and left at full liberty to employ both as they saw fit; and had merely been precluded from unjust interference with each other—had the most perfect freedom of intercourse between all mankind been always allowed—had there never been any wars—nor (which in that case would have easily been avoided) any taxation—then, though every exchange that took place would have been one of the phenomena of which Political-Economy takes cognizance, all would have proceeded so smoothly, that probably no attention would ever have been called to the subject. The transactions of society would have been like the play of the lungs, the contractions of the muscles, and the circulation of the blood, in a healthy person; who scarcely knows that these functions exist. But as soon as they are impeded and disordered, our attention is immediately called to them. Indeed one of these functions did exist for several thousand years before it was even suspected. It is probable that (except perhaps among a small number of curious

speculators) anatomy and physiology would never have been thought of, had they not been called for in aid of the art of medicine; and this, manifestly, would have had no existence, but for disease. In like manner it may be said to have been diseases, actual or apprehended—evils or imperfections, real or imaginary, that in the first instance directed the attention of men to the subjects about which Political-Economy is conversant: the attention, I mean, not only of those who use that term in a favourable sense, but of those no less who hold it in abhorrence, and of our ancestors who never heard it. Many, no doubt, of those evils have been produced or aggravated by the operation of erroneous views of Political-Economy; just as there are many cases in which erroneous medical treatment has brought on, or heightened diseases; but in these, no one will deny that it is from correct medical views we must hope for a cure.

And you may add this remark; that the greater part of those who do in this way induce disease; are such as make no pretensions to the medical art, nor entertain any respect for it. They are often the foremost to declaim against the folly of trusting in physicians—of dosing one's self with medicines—of tampering with the constitution; and think themselves secure from any such folly, as long as they abstain from the use of any thing that is *called a medicine*; while perhaps they are actually tampering with their constitution by an excessive use of spirituous liquors, or of other stimulants, not bearing the name of medicines, but not the less powerful in their effects on the human frame. In like manner, you may observe, many have ventured boldly on measures tending to produce the most important results on national wealth, without suspecting that these had any thing to do with Political-Economy, because the name of the science was carefully avoided. Buonaparte detested that name. When he endeavoured by all possible means to destroy the commerce of the continent with this country—means which brought on ultimately the war which ended in his overthrow—there is no doubt he believed himself to be not only injuring us, but consulting the best interests of his own dominions. Indeed, the two ideas were with him inseparable; for all that he himself had ever acquired having been *at the expense of others*, he could not understand how we could gain, except by their loss. Yet all the while, he was in the habit of saying that Political-Economy, if an empire were of granite, would crumble it to dust. That *erroneous* Political-Economy may do so, he evinced by the experiment he himself tried: but to the last he was not aware that he had been in fact practising such a system:—had been practising Political-Economy in the same sense in which a man is said to be practising Medicine, unskilfully, who through ignorance prescribes to his patient a poisonous dose.

From whatever causes then evils or inconveniences may have sprung, you may easily explain, that the remedy or mitigation of them must be sought in a correct and well-digested knowledge of the subject.

But how much soever we may lament that those evils should ever have existed, to which probably the art and the science of Political-Economy owe their origin—which led, first to the practice, and many ages after, to the study, of it—we must not regard the study itself as therefore no more than a mere necessary evil;—as having in itself nothing of the character of an interesting or dignified pursuit. Anatomy and Physiology, though, as I have said, they probably owe their rise to Medicine as that did to disease, are yet universally acknowledged to be among the most curious and interesting studies, even for those who have no design to apply them professionally in the practice of medicine. In particular, they are found, the more they are studied, to throw more and more light on the stupendous wisdom of contrivance which the structure of organized bodies displays;—in short, to furnish a most important portion of Natural-Theology. And it might have been anticipated, that an attentive study of the constitution of Society, should bring to light a no less admirable apparatus of divinely-wise contrivances, directed no less to beneficial ends;—that as the structure of a single bee is admirable, and still more so that of a hive of bees, instinctively directing their efforts towards a common object, so, the Divine Maker of the human body, has evinced no less benevolent wisdom in his provisions for the progress of society;—and that though in both cases the designs of Divine Wisdom are often counteracted by human folly—by intemperance or neglect, as far as relates to the body—and by mistake or fraud, in respect of the community—still, in each case, attentive study may enable us to trace more and more the designs of a wise Providence, and to devise means for removing the impediments to their completion.

My next and some succeeding Lectures will be occupied with remarks on this view of the subject.

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Lecture IV

"Bees," said Cicero, "do not congregate for the purpose of constructing a honey-comb; but being by nature gregarious animals, combine their labours in making the comb. And man, even still more," he continues, "is formed by nature for society, and subsequently, as a member of society, promotes the common good in conjunction with his fellow creatures."

ἡ θεὸς ἐστὶν, ἡ θήρ

is the doctrine maintained by Aristotle also. Both these writers stood opposed to some, of their own times, who represented the social union as an expedient which men resorted to on account of their mutual wants, and which they would never have cared for, if those wants could have been independently supplied. The two writers whom I have alluded to resembled each other very little in their intellectual character; but they were both of them far enough from overlooking or depreciating the advantages of the social union; which yet they agreed in representing as not formed by men with a view to those advantages, but from an instinctive propensity: the one insisting, that if a philosopher could be furnished with a magic wand which would command all the necessaries and luxuries of life, he would still crave companions; the other, that without society, though a man should possess all other goods, life would be not worth having;[14](#)

*Ἄνευ γὰρ φίλων, οὐδεὶς ἂν ἔλοιτο ζῆν, ἔχων τὰ λοιπὰ
ἀγαθὰ πάντα .*

and that to be independent of associates, one must be either more or less than man:

Πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ, κ' οὐδὲν

Yet the opinion to which they were opposed, has, in part, always found some advocates, even down to the present day.

When I say, "in part," I mean, that though there are perhaps few or none who deny man to be by nature a social Being, incapable, except in a community, of exercising or developing his most important and most characteristic faculties, yet various parts of man's conduct as a member of society are often attributed to human forethought and design, which might with greater truth be referred to a kind of instinct, or something analogous to it; which

leads him, while pursuing some immediate personal gratification, to further an object not contemplated by him. In many cases we are liable to mistake for the wisdom of Man what is in truth the wisdom of God.

In nothing, perhaps, will an attentive and candid inquirer perceive more of this divine wisdom than in the provisions made for the *progress of society*. But in nothing is it more liable to be overlooked. In the bodily structure of Man we plainly perceive innumerable marks of wise contrivance, in which it is plain that Man himself can have had no share. And again, in the results of instinct in brutes, although the animals themselves are, in some sort, agents, we are sure that they not only could not originally have designed the effects they produce, but even afterwards have no notion of the contrivance by which these were brought about. But when *human* conduct tends to some desirable end, and the agents are competent to perceive that the end *is* desirable, and the means well adapted to it, they are apt to forget, that in the great majority of instances, those means were not devised, nor those ends proposed, by the persons themselves who are thus employed. Those who build and who navigate a ship, have usually, I conceive, no more thought about the national wealth and power, the national refinements and comforts, dependent on the interchange of commodities, and the other results of commerce, than they have of the purification of the blood in the lungs by the act of respiration, or than the bee has of the process of constructing a honey-comb.

Most useful indeed to Society, and much to be honoured, are those who possess the rare moral and intellectual endowment of an enlightened public-spirit; but if none did service to the Public except in proportion as they possessed this, Society I fear would fare but ill. Public-spirit, either in the form of Patriotism which looks to the good of a community, or in that of Philanthropy which seeks the good of the whole human race, implies, not merely *benevolent feelings* stronger than, in fact, we commonly meet with, but also powers of *abstraction* beyond what the mass of mankind *can* possess. As it is, many of the most important objects are accomplished by the joint agency of persons who never think of them, nor have any idea of acting in concert; and that, with a certainty, completeness, and regularity, which probably the most diligent benevolence under the guidance of the greatest human wisdom, could never have attained.

For instance, let any one propose to himself the problem of supplying with daily provisions of all kinds such a city as our metropolis, containing above a million of inhabitants. Let him imagine himself a head-commissary, entrusted with the office of furnishing to this enormous host their daily rations. Any

considerable failure in the supply, even for a single day, might produce the most frightful distress; since the spot on which they are cantoned produces absolutely nothing. Some indeed of the articles consumed admit of being reserved in public or private stores, for a considerable time; but many, including most articles of animal food, and many of vegetable, are of the most perishable nature. As a deficient supply of these even for a few days, would occasion great inconvenience, so, a redundancy of them would produce a corresponding waste. Moreover, in a district of such vast extent, as this "province" (as it has been aptly called) "covered with houses," it is essential that the supplies should be so distributed among the different quarters, as to be brought almost to the doors of the inhabitants; at least within such a distance, that they may, without an inconvenient waste of time and labour, procure their daily shares.

Moreover, whereas the supply of provisions for an army or garrison is comparatively *uniform in kind*: here the greatest possible *variety* is required, suitable to the wants of various classes of consumers.

Again, this immense population is extremely fluctuating in numbers; and the increase or diminution depends on causes, of which, though some may, others can not, be distinctly foreseen. The difference of several weeks in the arrival, for instance, of one of the great commercial fleets, or in the assembly or dissolution of a parliament, which cause a great variation in the population, it is often impossible to foresee.

Lastly, and above all, the daily supplies of each article must be so nicely adjusted to the stock from which it is drawn—to the scanty, or more or less abundant, harvest—importation—or other source of supply—to the interval which is to elapse before a fresh stock can be furnished, and to the probable abundance of the new supply, that as little distress as possible may be undergone;—that on the one hand the population may not unnecessarily be put upon short allowance of any article, and that on the other hand they may be preserved from the more dreadful risk of famine, which would ensue from their continuing a free consumption when the store was insufficient to hold out.

Now let any one consider this problem in all its bearings, reflecting on the enormous and fluctuating number of persons to be fed—the immense quantity, and the variety, of the provisions to be furnished, the importance of a convenient distribution of them, and the necessity of husbanding them discreetly; and then let him reflect on the anxious toil which such a task would impose on a Board of the most experienced and intelligent commissaries; who after all would be able to discharge their office but very inadequately.

Yet this object is accomplished far better than it could be by any effort of human wisdom, through the agency of men, who think each of nothing beyond his own immediate interest,—who, with that object in view, perform their respective parts with cheerful zeal,—and combine unconsciously to employ the wisest means for effecting an object, the vastness of which it would bewilder them even to contemplate.

Early and long familiarity is apt to generate a careless, I might almost say, a stupid indifference, to many objects, which, if new to us, would excite a great and a just admiration; and many are inclined even to hold cheap a stranger, who expresses wonder at what seems to us very natural and simple, merely because we have been used to it; while in fact perhaps our apathy is a more just subject of contempt than his astonishment. Moyhanger, a New Zealander who was brought to England, was struck with especial wonder, in his visit to London, at the mystery, as it appeared to him, how such an immense population could be fed; as he saw neither cattle nor crops. Many of the Londoners, who would perhaps have laughed at the savage's admiration, would probably have been found never to have even thought of the mechanism which is here at work.

It is really wonderful to consider with what ease and regularity this important end is accomplished, day after day, and year after year, through the sagacity and vigilance of private interest operating on the numerous class, of wholesale, and more especially, retail, dealers. Each of these watches attentively the demands of his neighbourhood, or of the market he frequents, for such commodities as he deals in. The apprehension, on the one hand, of not realizing all the profit he might, and, on the other hand, of having his goods left on his hands, either by his laying in too large a stock, or by his rivals' underselling him,—these, acting like antagonist muscles, regulate the extent of his dealings, and the prices at which he buys and sells. An abundant supply causes him to lower his prices, and thus enables the public to enjoy that abundance; while *he* is guided only by the apprehension of being undersold; and, on the other hand, an actual or apprehended scarcity causes him to demand a higher price, or to keep back his goods in expectation of a rise.

For doing this, corn-dealers in particular are often exposed to odium, as if they were the cause of the scarcity; while in reality they are performing the important service of husbanding the supply in proportion to its deficiency, and thus warding off the calamity of famine; in the same manner as the commander of a garrison or a ship, regulates the allowances according to the stock, and the time it is to last. But the dealers deserve neither censure for the scarcity

which they are ignorantly supposed to produce, nor credit for the important public service which they in reality perform. They are merely occupied in gaining a fair livelihood. And in the pursuit of this object, without any comprehensive wisdom, or any need of it, they cooperate, unknowingly, in conducting a system which, we may safely say, no human wisdom directed to that end could have conducted so well:—the system by which this enormous population is fed from day to day.

The phenomena which can be exhibited directly to the senses, afford perhaps, for the youthful mind, the best *introduction* to the study of Natural-Theology; but even greater admiration will arise as the philosophical inquirer proceeds to trace the marks of divine Wisdom in the various contrivances for the well-being of man, exhibited in the complicated structure of Society. The investigation is indeed one of more intricacy and difficulty, from various causes; especially, from the more frequent frustration of the apparent designs of Providence through human faults and follies; in the same manner as, in a less degree, the provisions of Nature for the growth, and strength, and health, of the body, are often defeated by man's intemperance or imprudence. But still I am inclined to think, that if the time should ever arrive, when the stricture of Human Society and all the phenomena connected with it, shall be as well understood as Astronomy and Physiology, it will be regarded as exhibiting even more striking marks of divine Wisdom.

I shall probably take occasion from time to time to advert incidentally to this view of the subject, as the matter which may happen to be before us may suggest. But the point to which I wish at present more particularly to call your attention is, the one in which Man, and more especially Man considered as a social Being, stands contrasted both with inanimate bodies, and with the lower animals;—I mean, the provisions made for the *progress* of society. A capacity of *improvement* seems to be characteristic of the Human Species, both as individuals, and as existing in a community. The mechanical and chemical laws of matter are not only unvarying, but seem calculated to preserve all things either in an unvarying state, or in a regular rotation of changes, except where human agency interferes. The instincts of brutes, as has been often remarked, lead them to no improvement. But in Man, not only the faculties are susceptible of much cultivation, (in which point he does indeed stand far above the brutes, but which yet is not *peculiar* to our species,) but besides this, what may be called the *instincts* of Man lead to the advancement of society. I mean, that (as in such cases as those just alluded to) he is led to further this object when he has another in view. And this procedure is, as far as regards the object which the agent did *not* contemplate, precisely analogous, at least, to that of instinct.

The workman, for instance, who is employed in casting printing-types, is usually thinking only of producing a commodity by the sale of which he may support himself; *with reference to this object*, he is acting, not from any impulse that is at all of the character of instinct, but from a rational and deliberate choice: but he is also in the very same act, contributing most powerfully to the diffusion of knowledge; about which perhaps he has no anxiety or thought: in *reference to this latter object* therefore his procedure corresponds to those operations of various animals which we attribute to instinct; since *they* doubtless derive some immediate gratification from what they are doing. So, Man is, in the same act, doing one thing, by choice, for his own benefit, and another, undesignedly, under the guidance of Providence, for the service of the community.

The branch of Natural-Theology to which I have now been alluding—the contemplation of the divine Wisdom as displayed in provisions for the existence, the well-being, and the progress, of Society, comprises a great number of distinct heads, several of them only partially and incidentally connected with the subject of these Lectures. Our proper business at present is to consider the subject so far only as it is connected with national wealth; and more immediately the connexion of that, with the *advancement* of civilization.

And here I must take occasion to remark, that I do not profess to explain why things were so ordered, that any advancement at all should be needful;—why mankind were not placed at once in a state of society as highly civilized as it was destined ever to be.¹⁵ The reasons for this are probably unfathomable by us in this world. It is sufficient for our present purpose merely to remark the fact, that the apparent design of Providence evidently *is*, the advancement of mankind, not only as Individuals, but as Communities. Nor again do I profess to explain, why in so many particular instances causes have been permitted to operate, more or less, towards the frustration of this general design, and the retardation, or even reversal, of the course of improvement. The difficulty in fact is one which belongs, not to this alone, but to every branch of Natural-Theology. In every part of the universe we see marks of wise and benevolent design; and yet we see in many instances apparent frustrations of this design; we see the productiveness of the earth interrupted by unfavourable seasons—the structure of the animal frame enfeebled, and its functions impaired, by disease—and vast multitudes of living Beings, exposed, from various causes, to suffering, and to premature destruction. In the moral and political world, wars, and civil dissention—tyrannical governments, unwise laws, and all evils of this class, correspond to the inundations—the droughts—the tornados, and the earthquakes, of the natural world. We cannot

give a satisfactory account of either;—we cannot, in short, explain the great difficulty, which, in proportion as we reflect attentively, we shall more and more perceive to be the *only* difficulty in theology, the *existence of evil* in the Universe. [16](#)

But two things we *can* accomplish; which are very important, and which are probably *all* that our present faculties and extent of knowledge can attain to. One is, to perceive clearly that the difficulty in question is of no *unequal* pressure, but bears equally heavy on Deism and on Christianity, and on the various different interpretations of the Christian scheme; and consequently can furnish no valid objection to any one scheme of religion in particular. Even Atheism does not lessen our difficulty; it only alters the character of it. For as the believer in a God is at a loss to account for the existence of *evil*, the believer in *no* God, is equally unable to account for the existence of *good*; or indeed of any thing at all that bears marks of *design*.

Another point which is attainable is, to perceive, amidst all the admixture of evil, and all the seeming disorder of conflicting agencies, a general tendency nevertheless towards the accomplishment of wise and beneficent designs.

As in contemplating an ebbing tide, we are sometimes in doubt, on a short inspection, whether the sea is really receding, because, from time to time, a wave will dash further up the shore than those which had preceded it, but, if we continue our observation long enough, we see plainly, that the boundary of the land is on the whole advancing; so here, by extending our view over many countries and through several ages, we may distinctly perceive the tendencies which would have escaped a more confined research.

In respect of the point now most particularly before us, the provisions made for the *advancement* of society, so far as they are connected with the progress of national wealth, I shall proceed to offer a few remarks, after premising some observations as to the state of society *from* which it is, I conceive, that improvement must date its *commencement*. That this is not (as several writers on Political-Economy have appeared to suppose) what is properly called the *savage* state—that we have no reason to believe that any community ever did, or ever can, emerge, unassisted by external helps, from a state of utter barbarism, into any thing that can be called civilization—is a point which I think can be very satisfactorily established. And I shall afterwards direct your attention to some of the principal steps by which nations have advanced, and may be expected to advance, from a *comparatively* barbarous, to a more civilized, condition. And I shall enter on these subjects in the next and following Lectures.

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Lecture V

It was observed in the last Lecture, that civilized Man has not emerged from the savage state;—that the progress of any community in civilization, by its own internal means, must always have begun from a condition removed from that of complete barbarism; out of which it does not appear that men ever did or can raise themselves.

This assertion is at variance with the hypothesis apparently laid down by several writers on Political-Economy; who have described the case of a supposed race of savages, subsisting on the spontaneous productions of the earth, and the precarious supplies of hunting and fishing; and have then traced the steps by which the various arts of life would gradually have arisen, and advanced more and more towards perfection.

One man, it is supposed, having acquired more skill than his neighbours in the making of bows and arrows, or darts, would find it advantageous both for them and for himself, to devote himself to this manufacture, and to exchange these implements for the food procured by others, instead of employing himself in the pursuit of game. Another, from a similar cause, would occupy himself exclusively in the construction of huts, or of canoes; another, in the preparing of skins for clothing, &c. And the division of labour having thus begun, the advantages of it would be so apparent, that it would rapidly be extended, and would occasion each person to introduce improvements into the art to which he would have chiefly confined his attention. Those who had studied the haunts and the habits of certain kinds of wild animals, and had made a trade of supplying the community with them, would be led to domesticate such species as were adapted for it, in order to secure a supply of provisions, when the chase might prove insufficient. Those who had especially studied the places of growth, and times of ripening, of such wild fruits, or other vegetable productions, as were in request, would be induced to secure themselves a readier supply, by cultivating them in suitable spots. And thus the Society being divided into Husbandmen, Shepherds, and Artificers of various kinds, exchanging the produce of their various labours, would advance, with more or less steadiness and rapidity, towards the higher stages of civilization.

I have spoken of this description as being conformable to the views *apparently* entertained by some writers, and I have said, "apparently," because I doubt whether it is fair to conclude, that all, or any of them, have designed to maintain that this, or something

similar, is a correct account of a matter of fact;—that mankind universally, or some portions of them, have *actually* emerged, by such a process, from a state of complete barbarism. Some may have believed this; but others may have meant merely that it is *possible*, without contending that it has ever in fact occurred; and others again may have not even gone so far as this, but may have intended merely to describe the *steps by which* such a change must take place, supposing it ever *could* occur.

Be this as it may, when we dismiss for a moment all antecedent conjectures, and look around us for instances, we find, I think I may confidently affirm, no one recorded, of a tribe of savages, properly so styled, rising into a civilized state, without instruction and assistance from people already civilized. And we *have*, on the other hand, accounts of various savage tribes, in different parts of the globe, who have been visited from time to time at considerable intervals, but have had no settled intercourse with civilized people, and who appear to continue, as far as can be ascertained, in the same uncultivated condition.

It will probably have occurred to most of you, that the earliest historical records that exist, represent mankind as originally existing in a state far superior to that of our supposed savages. The Book of Genesis describes Man as not having been, like the brutes, created, and then left to provide for himself by his innate bodily and mental faculties, but as having received, in the first instance, immediate divine instructions and communications: and so early, according to this account, was the *division of labour*, that of the first two men who were born of woman, the one was a keeper of cattle, and the other a tiller of the ground.

If this account be received, it must be admitted, that all savages must originally have degenerated from a more civilized state of existence. But I am particularly anxious to point out, that, in a question of this kind, I think it best that the Scriptures should not be appealed to, in the first instance, as a work of *inspiration*, but (if at all) simply as an *historical record* of acknowledged antiquity. And in the present instance I am the more desirous of observing this caution, because I think that the inquiry now before us, if conducted with a reference to no authority but those of reason and experience, will lead to a result which furnishes a very powerful confirmation of the truth of our religion: and it is plain that this evidence would be destroyed by an appeal to the authority of Scripture in the outset; which would of course be a *petitio principii*.

It should be observed, moreover, that the hypothesis above alluded to is not necessarily at variance with the historical records of the creation and earliest condition of mankind. These do indeed

declare, that mankind did not begin to exist in the savage state; but it would not thence follow, that a nation which had subsequently sunk into that state, might not raise itself again out of this barbarism.

Such, however, does not appear to be the fact. On looking around us and examining all history, ancient and modern, we find, as I have said, that no savage tribe appears to have risen into civilization, except through the aid of others who were civilized. We have, I think, in this case all the historical evidence that a *negative* is susceptible of; viz. we have the knowledge of numerous cases in which such a change has *not* taken place, and of none where it has; while we have every reason to expect, that, if it had occurred, it would have been recorded.

On this subject I will take the liberty of citing a passage from a very well-written and instructive book, the account of the New Zealanders, in the Library of Entertaining Knowledge; a passage, which is the more valuable to our present purpose, inasmuch as the writer is not treating of the subject with any view whatever to the evidences of religion, and is apparently quite unconscious of the argument which (as I shall presently shew) may be deduced from what he says.

"The especial distinction of the savage, and that which, more than any other thing, keeps him a savage, is his ignorance of letters. This places the community almost in the same situation with a herd of the lower animals, in so far as the accumulation of knowledge, or, in other words, any kind of movement forward, is concerned; for it is only by means of the art of writing, that the knowledge acquired by the experience of one generation can be properly stored up, so that none of it shall be lost, for the use of all that are to follow. Among savages, for want of this admirable method of preservation, there is reason to believe the fund of knowledge possessed by the community instead of growing, generally diminishes with time. If we except the absolutely necessary arts of life, which are in daily use and cannot be forgotten, the existing generation seldom seems to possess any thing derived from the past. Hence, the oldest man of the tribe is always looked up to as the wisest; simply because he has lived the longest; it being felt that an individual has scarcely a chance of knowing any thing more than his own experience has taught him. Accordingly the New Zealanders, for example, seem to have been *in quite as advanced a state when Tasman discovered the country in 1642, as they were when Cook visited it, 127 years after.*"

It may be remarked, however, with reference to this statement, that the absence of written records is, though a very important, rather a

secondary than a primary obstacle. It is one branch of that general characteristic of the savage, *improvidence*. If you suppose the case of a savage taught to read and write, but allowed to remain, in all other respects, the same careless, thoughtless kind of Being, and afterwards left to himself, he would most likely forget his acquisition; and would certainly, by neglecting to teach it to his children, suffer it to be lost in the next generation. On the other hand, if you conceive such a case (which certainly is conceivable, and I am disposed to think it a real one) as that of a people ignorant of this art, but acquiring in some degree a thoughtful and provident character, I have little doubt that their desire, thence arising, to record permanently their laws, practical maxims, and discoveries, would gradually lead them, first to the use of memorial-verses, and afterwards to some kind of material symbols, such as picture-writing, and then hieroglyphics; which might gradually be still further improved into writing properly so called.

There are several circumstances which have conduced to keep out of sight the important fact I have been alluding to. The chief of these probably is, the vagueness with which the term "Savage" is applied. I do not profess, and indeed it is evidently not possible, to draw a line by which we may determine precisely to whom that title is, and is not, applicable; since there is a series of almost insensible gradations between the highest and the lowest state of human society. Nor is any such exact boundary-line needed for our present purpose. It is sufficient if we admit, what is probably very far short of the truth, that those who are in as *low a state as some tribes with which we are acquainted*, are incapable of emerging from it, by their own unassisted efforts. But many probably are misled by the language of the Greeks and Romans, who called all men barbarians except themselves. Many, and perhaps all other nations, fell short of *them* in civilization: but several nations, even among the less cultivated of the ancient barbarians, were very far removed from what we should be understood to mean by the savage state, and which is to be found among many tribes at the present day. For instance, the ancient Germans were probably as much elevated above that state, as we are above theirs. A people who cultivated corn, though their agriculture was probably in a very rude state—who not only had numerous herds of cattle, but employed the labour of brutes, and even made use of cavalry in their wars, and who also were accustomed to the working of metals, though their supply of them, according to Tacitus, was but scanty—these cannot with propriety be reckoned savages. Or if they are to be so called, (for it is not worth while to dispute about a word,) then I would admit, that, in this sense, men may advance, and in fact have advanced, by their own unassisted efforts, from the savage to the civilized state.

Again, we are liable to be misled by loose and inaccurate descriptions of extensive districts inhabited by distinct tribes of people, differing widely from each other in their degrees of cultivation. Some, for instance, are accustomed to speak of the ancient Britons, in the mass; without considering, that in all probability some of these tribes were nearly as much behind others in civilization, as the Children of the Mist described by Sir Walter Scott in the Legend of Montrose, if compared with the inhabitants of Edinburgh at the same period. And thus it is probable that travellers have represented some nation as in the condition of mere savages, from having viewed only some part of it, or perhaps even some different nation, inhabiting some one district of the country.

When due allowance has been made for these and other sources of inaccuracy, there will be no reason, I think, for believing, that there is any exception to the positions I have here laid down: the impossibility of men's emerging unaided from a completely savage state; and, consequently, the descent of such as are in that state (supposing mankind to have sprung from a single pair) from ancestors less barbarous, and from whom they have degenerated.

Records of this descent, and of this degeneracy, it is, from the nature of the case, not likely we should possess; but several indications of the fact may often be found among savage nations. Some have even traditions to that effect; and almost all possess some one or two arts not of a piece with their general rudeness, and which plainly appear to be remnants of a different state of things; being such, that the first *invention* of them implies a degree of ingenuity beyond what the savages, who *retain* those arts, now possess.

It is very interesting to look over the many copious accounts we possess of various savage tribes, with a view to this point. You will find, I think, in the course of such an inquiry, that each savage tribe having retained such arts as are most essential to their subsistence in the particular country in which they are placed, there is accordingly, generally speaking, somewhat less of degeneracy in many points, in the colder climates; because these will not admit of the same degree of that characteristic of savages, improvidence. Such negligence in providing clothing and habitations, and in laying up stores of provisions, as, in warm and fertile countries, is not incompatible with subsistence in a very rude state, would, in more inhospitable regions, destroy the whole race in the course of a single winter.

As to the causes which have occasioned any portions of mankind thus to degenerate, we are, of course, in most instances, left to mere conjecture: but there seems little reason to doubt, that the

principal cause has been War. A people perpetually harassed by predatory hostile incursions, and still more, one compelled to fly their country and take refuge in mountains or forests,¹⁷ or to wander to some distant unoccupied region, (and this we know to have been anciently a common occurrence) must of course be likely to sink in point of civilization. They must, amidst a series of painful struggles for mere existence, have their attention drawn off from all other subjects; they must be deprived of the materials and the opportunities for practising many of the arts, till the knowledge of them is lost; and their children must grow up, in each successive generation, more and more uninstructed, and disposed to be satisfied with a life approaching to that of the brutes.

A melancholy picture of the operation of these causes is presented in the kingdom of Abyssinia; which seems to have been for a considerable time verging more and more, from a state of comparative civilization, towards barbarism, through the incessant hostile incursions of its Pagan neighbours, the Galla.

But whatever may have been the causes which in each instance have tended to barbarize each nation, of this we may, I think, be well assured, that though, if it have not sunk below a certain point, it may, under favourable circumstances, be expected to rise again, and gradually even more than recover the lost ground; on the other hand, there is a stage of degradation from which it *cannot* emerge, but through the means of intercourse with some more civilized people. The turbulent and unrestrained passions—the indolence—and, above all, the want of forethought, which are characteristic of savages, naturally tend to prevent, and, as experience seems to shew, always have prevented, that process of gradual advancement from taking place, which was sketched out in the opening of this Lecture; except when the savage is stimulated by the example, and supported by the guidance and instruction, of men superior to himself.

Any one who dislikes the conclusions to which these views lead, will probably set himself to contend against the *arguments* which prove it *unlikely* that savages should civilize themselves; but how will he get over the *fact*, that they never yet *have* done this? That they never *can*, is a theory; and something may always be said, well or ill, against any theory; but facts are stubborn things; and that no authenticated instance can be produced of savages that ever *did* emerge unaided from that state, is no *theory*, but a statement, hitherto uncontradicted, of a matter of *fact*.

Now if this be the case, when, and how, did civilization first *begin*? If Man when first created was left, like the brutes, to the unaided exercise of his natural powers of body and mind—those powers

which are common to the European and to the New-Hollander—how comes it that the European is not now in the condition of the New-Hollander? As the soil itself and the climate of New-Holland are excellently adapted to the growth of corn, and yet (as corn is not indigenous there) could never have borne any, to the end of the world, if it had not been brought thither from another country, and sown; so, the savage himself, though he may be, as it were, a soil capable of receiving the seeds of civilization, can never, in the first instance, produce it, as of spontaneous growth; and unless those seeds be introduced from some other quarter, must remain for ever in the sterility of barbarism. And from what quarter then could this first beginning of civilization have been supplied, to the earliest race of mankind? According to the present course of nature, the first introducer of cultivation among savages, is, and must be, Man, in a more improved state: in the beginning therefore of the human race, this, since there was no *man* to effect it, must have been the work of *another Being*. There must have been, in short, a *Revelation* made, to the first, or to some subsequent generation, of our species. And this miracle (for such it is, as being an impossibility according to the present course of nature) is attested, *independently* of the authority of Scripture, and consequently in *confirmation* of the Scripture-accounts, by the fact, that civilized Man exists at the present day.

Taking this view of the subject, we have no need to dwell on the utility—the importance—the antecedent probability—of a Revelation: it is established as a fact, of which a monument is existing before our eyes. Divine instruction is proved to be necessary, not merely for an end which *we think desirable*, or which *we think* agreeable to Divine wisdom and goodness, but, for an end which *we know has been* attained. That Man could not have *made* himself, is appealed to as a proof of the agency of a divine *Creator*: and that Mankind could not in the first instance have *civilized* themselves, is a proof, exactly of the same kind, and of equal strength, of the agency of a divine *Instructor*.

You will, I suspect, find this argument press so hard on the adversaries of religion, that they will be not unlikely to attempt evading its force, by calling on you to produce an instance of some one art, *peculiar to civilized* men, and which it may be proved could not have been derived but from inspiration. But this is a manifest evasion of the argument. For, so far from representing as *peculiar to civilized* men all arts that seem beyond the power of savages to *invent*, I have remarked the *direct contrary*: which indeed is just what might have been expected, supposing savages to be, as I have contended, in a *degenerated* state.

The argument really employed (and all attempts to misrepresent it are but fresh presumptions that it is unanswerable) consists in an appeal, not to any *particular art* or arts, but to a *civilized condition*, generally. If this was *not* the work of a divine instructor, *produce an instance*, if you can, of a nation of savages *who have civilized themselves!*

Such is the evidence which an attentive survey of human transactions will supply, to those who do not, in their too hasty zeal, begin by appealing to the authority of Scripture in matters which we are competent to investigate.

The full development of this branch of evidence, which I have slightly noticed, but which it would be unsuitable to the character of these Lectures to enlarge on, will be found, I think, to lead to very interesting and important views.

Mankind then having, as Scripture informs us, been favoured from the first with an immediate intercourse with the Creator, and having been placed in a condition, as keepers of domestic animals, and cultivators of the earth, more favourable to the development of the rational faculties, than, we have every reason to think, they could ever have reached by the mere exercise of their natural powers; it is probable they were thenceforth left to themselves in all that relates to the invention and improvement of the arts of life. If we judge from the analogy of the other parts of revelation, we find it agreeable to the general designs of Providence, that such knowledge, and such only, should be imparted to Man *supernaturally*, as he could not *otherwise* have attained; and that whatever he is capable of discovering by the exercise of his natural faculties, (however important the knowledge of it may be,) he should be left so to discover for himself:—in short, that no further miraculous interference should take place, than is absolutely indispensable. And if again we judge from observation, we know that a knowledge of all the arts of life was not divinely communicated. The first race of Mankind seem to have been placed merely in such a state as might enable and incite them to commence, and continue, a course of advancement.

And to place Man in such a state, seems in fact no more than analogous to what was done for the lower animals in the mere act of creation, considering how much more completely they are furnished with instincts than we are. To have left man (as the brutes are left) in what is called a state of nature, i.e. in the condition of an adult who should have grown up totally without cultivation, would have been to leave him with his principal faculties not only undeveloped, but without a chance of ever being developed; which is not the case with the brutes. Such a procedure

therefore would in reality not have been, analogous to what takes place in respect of the lower animals, but would have been disproportionately disadvantageous to man. In fact, there is no good reason for calling the condition of the rudest savages "a state of nature," unless the phrase be used (as perhaps in strictness it ought) to denote merely ignorance of *Arts*. But to call their's a state of Nature (as several writers have done) in the sense of "a natural state," is a use of language as much at variance with sound philosophy, as the dreams of those who imagine this state to resemble the golden age of the poets, are, with well-ascertained facts. The peaceful life and gentle disposition, the freedom from oppression, the exemption from selfishness and from evil passions, and the simplicity of character, of savages, have no existence but in the fictions of poets, and the fancies of vain speculators: nor can their mode of life be called, with any propriety, the natural state of man. A plant would not be said to be in its natural state, which was growing in a soil or climate that precluded it from putting forth the flowers and the fruit for which its organization was destined. No one who saw the pine growing near the boundary of perpetual snow on the Alps, stunted to the height of two or three feet, and struggling to exist amidst rocks and glaciers, would describe that as the natural state of a tree, which in a more genial soil and climate, a little lower down, was found capable of rising to the height of fifty or sixty yards. In like manner, the natural state of man must, according to all fair analogy, be reckoned not that in which his intellectual and moral growth are as it were stunted, and permanently repressed, but one in which his original endowments are, I do not say, brought to perfection, but enabled to exercise themselves, and to expand, like the flowers of a plant; and, especially, in which that characteristic of our species, the tendency towards progressive *improvement*, is permitted to come into play.

Such, then, I say, seems to have been the state in which the earliest race of mankind were placed by the Creator.

What were their earliest inventions and discoveries, and in what order the several arts originated, we have no means of ascertaining. The brief and scanty record of Genesis furnishes only a slight notice of two; the working of metals, and the construction of musical instruments. The knowledge of fire must have been earlier; but this was in all probability (agreeably to the tradition of the Heathen respecting *Prometheus*¹⁸) no *human* discovery, but a gift of *Providence*.¹⁹ It does not seem likely, that man could have discovered (at least till after a very long series of years) I do not say fire, but the *uses* of fire. A volcanic eruption, or a conflagration by lightning, might have exhibited fire itself; but the untaught savage would have been more likely to fly from so tremendous an agent, than to attempt making it his servant. Let any one who

judges otherwise inquire of those who, having had intercourse with savages, are aware what unthinking Beings they are; and the result will, I suspect, be in favour of my conclusion.[20](#)

A conjectural history of the probable origin of the various arts which are the most universal among mankind, would suggest much interesting speculation. It is not of course my design to enter on an inquiry which would be in a great degree foreign to the subject before us. I will merely remark, that the more you speculate on this curious subject, the more you will be struck with this consideration; that many of the commonest arts, and which appear the simplest, and require but a very humble degree of intelligence for their *exercise* are yet such, that we must suppose various accidents to have occurred, and to have been noted—many observations to have been made and combined—and many experiments to have been tried—in order to their being originally *invented*. And, as I have already observed, arts will be found to exist among most savage nations such as appear beyond the ingenuity of savages to *originate*.

And the difficulty must have been much greater, before the invention, and the *familiar use*, of writing, had enabled each generation to record for the use of the next, not only its discoveries, but its observations and incomplete experiments. It has often occurred to me, that the longevity of the antediluvians was probably a special provision to meet this difficulty, in those early ages which most needed such a help. Even now that writing is in use, a single individual, if he live long enough to follow up a train of experiments, has a great advantage in respect of discoveries, over a *succession* of individuals; because he will remember, when the occasion arises, many of his former observations, and of the ideas that had occurred to his mind, which, at the time, he had not thought worth recording. But previous to the use of writing, the advantage of being able to combine in one's own person the experience of several centuries, must have been of immense importance: and it was an advantage which the circumstances of the case seemed to require.[21](#)

On the whole, then, it appears, that as soon, and only as soon, as Society has taken a certain step, and is enabled to start, as it were, from a certain point, viz. from such a condition nearly, as that in which the first generation appears to have been actually placed, then, and thenceforward, the tendency towards advancement comes into operation, so far as it is not checked by external impediments. The causes which tend to the gradual increase of wealth, in a ratio even greater than the increase of population, and to the growth of all that we call by the collective name "Civilization," are thenceforth at work; with more or less certainty

and rapidity, according as the obstacles are less or more powerful: and no boundary to the effects of these causes seems assignable.

Some remarks on the principal steps of this progress will occupy the next Lecture.

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Lecture VI

There is, as we have seen, a certain stage of civilization, though it may be difficult to determine precisely where it lies, which is necessary to the commencement of a course of improvement. A community placed in a condition short of this, and not aided from without, must, as experience has fully shewn, either remain stationary, or even sink deeper into barbarism. And when this point is once passed, the progress towards a higher state of civilization, will, as far as it is not prevented by accidental obstacles, begin, and gradually continue. Society may be compared to those combustible substances which will never take fire spontaneously, but when once ignited will generate heat sufficient not only to keep up the combustion, but to burn with still increasing force. A human community requires, as it were, to be kindled, and requires no more.

Let a Nation, though still in a rude state, possess the knowledge of some of the simplest and most essential arts—a certain degree of division of labour—and above all a recognition, and tolerable security, of *property*; and it will not fail, unless very grievously harassed by wars, inundations, or some such calamities, to increase its wealth, and to advance, more or less, in civilization. I have spoken of *security of property* as the most essential point, because, though no progress can be made without a division of labour, this could neither exist without security of property, nor could fail to arise with it. No man, it is plain, could subsist by devoting himself either wholly or partially to the production of one kind of commodity, trusting to the supply of his other wants by exchanging part of that commodity with his neighbours, unless he were allowed to keep it, and to dispose of it, as his own. On the other hand, let property be but established and secured, and the division of labour would be the infallible result; because the advantages of it to each individual, in each particular instance, would catch the attention of every one who possessed but a moderate degree of forethought.

A. Smith, in treating of the advantages of the division of labour, has entirely omitted one, which is, in all respects, *one* of the most important, and, in *giving rise to* the practice, clearly the most important of all. He dwells chiefly on the superior skill which a man acquires, in an occupation to which he has confined himself. This is undoubtedly a very great advantage; but it is evidently such an effect of the division of labour, as could hardly be known but by experience; and indeed could not exist till some time had elapsed for the increased expertness to be acquired: it could not consequently, in any instance, *lead* to the division of labour, till the

practice had been in several instances established, and the improvement in skill thence resulting become matter of common observation. But the advantage I am alluding to (and which is in itself as important as any) is one which would readily be *anticipated*, and would be obtained *immediately*, previous to any advancement in skill. The advantage I mean is, that in a great variety of cases, nearly the same time and labour are required to perform the same operation on a *larger* or on a *smaller* scale—to produce many things, or one, of the same kind.

The most familiar instance of this, and the one most frequently adduced, is the carriage of letters. It makes very little difference of trouble, and none, of time, to carry one letter, or a whole parcel of letters, from one town to another; and accordingly, though there is no particular skill requisite in this business, there is perhaps no one instance that more strikingly displays the benefit of the division of labour than the establishment of the Post-office; but for which, each person would have to dispatch a special messenger whenever he wanted to communicate with his friend at a distance.

But the circumstance to which I am now particularly calling your attention, is, that *this* kind of advantage is one which would be *immediate*, and readily *anticipated*. In fact, a division of labour, with a view to it, is almost immediately adopted for the present occasion, on any emergency that arises, even when there is no peculiar fitness in each person for his own departments and no thought of making the arrangement permanent. For instance, suppose a number of travellers proceeding through some nearly desert country, such as many parts of America, and journeying together in a kind of cafila or caravan for the sake of mutual security: when they came to a halting-place for the night, they would not fail to make some kind of extemporaneous arrangement, that some should unlade and fodder the cattle, while others should fetch fire-wood from the nearest thicket, and others, water from the spring: some in the mean time would be occupied in pitching the tents, or erecting sheds of boughs; others in preparing food for the whole party; while some again, with their arms in readiness, would be posted as sentinels in suitable spots, to watch that the rest might not be surprised by bands of robbers. It would be evident to them that but for such an arrangement, each man would have to go both to the spring for water, and to the wood for fuel—would have to prepare his own meal with almost as much trouble as it costs to dress food for the whole—and would have to perform all these tasks encumbered with his arms, and on the watch against a hostile attack. Of course, if some of our supposed party chanced to be by nature or by practice peculiarly qualified for some particular task, and others for another, these would be respectively allotted to them in preference; but if there were no

such inequality, the division would still take place, and the *chief* advantage of it would still be felt.

Such a case as this exhibits an instance of what may be called a temporary Community, containing a distribution of labourers into several departments, which have a considerable correspondence with the different trades and occupations that are permanently established. One portion of the members of a community are employed to protect the rest from violence; another, to provide them with food; another, to construct their habitations; and so of the rest.

But in order to the existence of such a state of things, it is necessary (as I have said) that property should be recognised, and should be tolerably well secured. "It is this main spring," (says Bp. Summer, in the second volume of the Records of the Creation,) "which keeps the arts and civilized industry in motion. 'The first, who having enclosed a spot of ground, has taken upon himself to assert, *This is mine*, and has remained undisturbed in the possession of it, gives a new aspect to the society,' and lays the foundation, not of crimes, and wars, and murders, as Rousseau proceeds to say, as if these were unknown to the savage; but of improvement and civilization.

"Man is easily brought and quickly reconciled to labour; but he does not undertake it gratuitously. If he is in possession of immediate ease, he can only be induced to relinquish that present advantage by the allurements of expected gain. Gratification, which in some degree or other forms the chief excitement of civilized life, is almost unknown to the savage. The only stimulus felt by him, is that of necessity. He is impelled by hunger to hunt for subsistence, and by cold to provide against the rigour of the seasons. When his stock of provision is laid in, his rude clothing prepared, and his cabin constructed, he relapses into indolence; for the wants of necessity are supplied, and the stimulus which urged him is removed. However experienced he may be in the preparation of skins for clothing or of reeds for building, beyond the wants of his own family he has no demand for ingenuity or skill; for the equality of property has confined each man's possessions to the bare necessaries of life; and though he were to employ his art in providing for his whole tribe, they have nothing to offer him in exchange. As long as this state of things continues, it is plain that we can expect neither improvement of art nor exertion of industry. Whatever is fabricated, will be fabricated with almost equal rudeness, whilst each individual supplies his own wants; and he will continue to supply them, as long as the wants of the society are limited to the demands of nature. An intelligent traveller who had an opportunity of observing this on the spot, remarks exactly to the

point, that 'the Indians of Guiana have no interest in the accumulation of property, and, therefore, are not led to labour in order to attain wealth. Living under the most perfect equality, they are not impelled to industry by that spirit of emulation, which in society leads to great and unwearied toil.'

"But as soon as it has been agreed, by a compact of whatever kind, that the property before belonging to the community at large, shall be divided among the individuals who compose it, and that whatever each of them shall hereafter obtain, shall be considered as his exclusive possession; the effect of this division will shew that industry requires no other stimulus than a reward proportioned to its exertion.

"We have an instance in the natives of the Pelew Islands, who, deprived as they were of all external advantages, afford a most decisive contrast to the inactivity of the American tribes. Before their accidental discovery in 1783, they had enjoyed no intercourse with civilized nations, had no acquaintance with the use of iron, or the cultivation of corn, or regular manufacture. But they had been fortunate in the establishment of a division of ranks, ascending from the servant to the king; and a division of property, rendering not only 'every man's house, furniture, or canoe, his own, but also the land allotted to him as long as he occupied and cultivated it.' The effect of this is distinguishable in habits so different from those hitherto represented, that 'the portion of time each family could spare from providing for their natural wants, was passed in the exercise of such little arts, as, while they kept them active and industrious, administered to their convenience and comfort.' Here also were no traces of that want of curiosity, which all travellers remark as so extraordinary in America. Industry had sharpened their minds. The natives were constantly interested in obtaining every information respecting the English tools and workmanship."

I need not cite more from a book probably so well known to most of you; and will therefore only observe, that the whole chapter [22](#) is well worth a re-perusal, with a view to the point now before us.

When then this distribution of employments had been established, the benefits resulting from it would be so obvious, that it would tend towards a continual increase: the benefits, I mean, to each individual; who would discover, without any extraordinary sagacity, that he could much more amply supply his own wants, by directing his whole or his chief attention to one, or to a few, kinds of employment, and receiving from his neighbours in return the fruits of their industry, than by himself providing directly for all his own wants. As for the benefit to the *community* thence resulting, *that*, as I remarked in a former Lecture, is a provision of Divine Wisdom:

it is not necessary, nor is it usually the case, that each who labours in his own department, should be stimulated to do so by public-spirit, or should even perceive and contemplate (as in the case of our supposed little party of travellers) the benefit he is conferring on the rest.

In proportion then as the division of labour was extended, *exchanges* would become more and more frequent. For, diversity of production is evidently the foundation of exchange; since, as long as each individual provides for all his own wants, and only for them, he will have nothing to part with, and nothing to receive. Barter then having become a customary transaction, would naturally be superseded, in the progress of society, by the employment of some kind of Money.

I do not design to enter at present on the multifarious and important inquiries which pertain to the subject of Money. It will suffice for our present purpose to state, that by Money, I mean, any commodity in general request, which is received in exchange for other commodities, not for the purpose of being directly used by the party receiving it, (for *that* is Barter,) but for the purpose of being again parted with in exchange for something else. It is not the very commodity which the party wants, or expects hereafter to want; but it is a security or pledge

ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλαι

(according to Aristotle) that he may obtain that commodity whenever he wants it, from those who have it to spare. The Herdsman who needed, or expected hereafter to need, a supply of corn, might, if he could not otherwise arrange an exchange, be willing to part with some of his cattle for cloth of which he had no need, in the expectation of being able to exchange that again for corn, with some one who either needed it, or would accept it in the same manner as he had done. The cloth would serve the purpose of money, till it should reach the hands of one who designed to keep it for his own use. And there are some parts of Africa it appears, where pieces of cloth of a certain definite size and quality constitute the current coin, if I may so speak, of the country. In other parts again of Africa, wedges of salt are said to be applied to the same purpose.

But the herdsman would probably prefer receiving in this manner, instead of any articles of food or clothing which he did not himself need, some *ornamental* article in general request, such as a bracelet or necklace, of gold, silver, or valued shells or stones; not only as less bulky and less perishable, but because these could be *used* by him in the only way they can be used, viz. for the purpose

of display, till he should have occasion to part with them; and could then be parted with without any inconvenience. Accordingly the prevailing tendency has always been to adopt as a medium of exchange, in preference to all others, articles of an ornamental character, prized for their beauty and rarity; such as the silver and gold which have long been much the most extensively used for this purpose—the cowry-shells, admired for making necklaces, and very generally used as money throughout an extensive region in Africa—the porcellane shells employed in like manner in some parts of the East Indies, and the wampum of some of the native American Indians, which consists of a kind of bugles wrought out of shells, and used both as an ornament and as money.

Articles of this kind, as traffic increased, would come to be collected and stored up in much greater quantities than their original destination for purposes of ornament could have called for; but it is from *that*, no doubt, that they must originally have been in demand; since it is inconceivable that all the members of any one community, much less, various nations, should in the first instance have made a formal agreement arbitrarily to attach a value to something which had not been before at all regarded by them. It is said, that at this day among some half-civilized nations, the women adorn themselves with strings of gold coins. But silver plate, and gold or gilt ornaments, are I believe in use, and that, to a very large amount, among all nations who employ those metals as money. Some years ago I remember hearing an estimate of the gold consumed in gilding alone, in the one town of Birmingham, as amounting to one thousand pounds weight, or about £50,000 worth.

When then property was secured, and when exchanges were facilitated by the intervention of money, the use of this medium would react on the division of labour, and extend it; because, then, any one who could produce any commodity in general request, would be sure of employing himself beneficially in producing it, even though the particular persons who wanted that commodity, could not supply him in return with the precise articles he had need of. They would now be able to purchase it of him for that in exchange for which he might procure from others what he wanted.

As wealth increased, the continued stimulus of emulation would make each man strive to surpass, or at least not fall below, his neighbours, in this. I say "the *continued* stimulus of emulation," because it is important to keep in mind, that the selfishness—the envy—the injustice and baseness of every kind, which we so often see called forth in the competitions of worldly-minded men, are not to be attributed to the increase of national wealth. Among poor and barbarous nations, (as I formerly remarked,) we may find as much

avarice, fraud, vanity, and envy, called forth, in reference perhaps to a string of beads, a hatchet, or a musket, as are to be found in wealthier communities.

The desire of wealth (which has no name, except those denoting its vicious excess, Avarice or Covetousness,) and Emulation,—the desire of equalling or surpassing others, are, neither of them, in themselves, either virtuous or vicious. A desire of gain, which is either excessive, or has only selfish gratification in view, is base and odious: when the object is to keep one's family from want and dependence, it is commendable; when wealth is sought as a means of doing extensive good, the pursuit is noble. Emulation, again, when it degenerates into Envy, is detestable;—when directed to trifling objects, contemptible;—when duly controlled, and directed to the best objects, though it does not of itself furnish the noblest and purest motive, it is a useful and honourable ally of virtue. And, in both cases, there are, between the highest and the basest motives, almost infinite gradations and intermixtures. But the point to which I wish to call your attention, as most pertinent to the present inquiry, is, that by the wise and benevolent arrangement of Providence, even those who are thinking only of their own credit and advantage, are, in the pursuit of these selfish objects, led, unconsciously, to benefit others. The public welfare is not left to depend merely on the operation of public-spirit. The husbandman and the weaver exert their utmost industry and ingenuity, to increase the produce of the earth and of the loom; each, that he may be enabled to command for himself a better share of other productions; but in so doing, they cause the community to be better fed, and better clothed. And the effort of each man, with a view to his own credit, to rise, or at least not to sink, in society, causes, when it *becomes general*, the whole Society to rise in wealth.

And the progress thus occasioned by *emulation*, is indefinite; because the object aimed at by each of a great number, viz. *superiority* to the rest, can never be *attained* by all of them. If men's desires were limited to a supply of the necessaries and commonest comforts of life, their efforts to attain this would indeed bring the society up to a certain point, but would not necessarily tend to advance it any further; because it is conceivable that this object might be attained by *all*; and if it were, the society might thenceforward continue stationary; but when a great proportion of its members are striving, each, to attain, not merely an absolute, but a comparative, degree of wealth, there must always be many, who, though they do advance, will yet remain in the same position relative to their neighbours, who are equally advancing; and thus the same stimulus will continue to operate from generation to generation. The race never comes to an end, while the competitors are striving, not to reach a certain fixed goal, but, each, either

permanently to keep a-head of the rest, or at least, not to be among the hindmost.²³

All this, it may be said, is but a melancholy though true description, of the mean and silly ambition of mankind.

It would be more suitable to an Ethical treatise, than to these Lectures, to discuss the question as to the degrees of attention to worldly objects which maybe allowable, or, more or less, foolish, or sinful. Nor is a decision of these questions at all necessary with a view to the particular point now more immediately before us. For that, it is sufficient if we keep in mind, what has been already observed, that a devotedness to temporal objects is no characteristic of a more wealthy and civilized, as distinguished from a more barbarous, state of society. Emulation, though directed to different objects, is found among savages, except when they are indulging in apathetic indolence or gross sensuality. But there is this important difference; that in civilized life it is frequently directed (however seldom in comparison of what it should be) to many nobler objects, of which the savage can not even form any conception; and again, that even when merely selfish, it tends (without design on the part of the individual) to produce many beneficial results to the Society, which it does not produce, or in a far less degree, among savages.

The same may be said of the desire of gain. The savage is commonly found to be covetous, frequently rapacious, when his present inclination impels him to seek any object which he needs, or which his fancy is set on. He is not indeed not so *steady* or so *provident*, in his pursuit of gain, as the civilized man; but this is from the general unsteadiness and improvidence of his character; not from his being engrossed by higher pursuits. What keeps him poor, in addition to want of skill and insecurity of property, is, not a philosophical contempt of riches, but a love of sluggish torpor and of present gratification. The same may be said of such persons as constitute the dregs of a civilized community; they are idle, thoughtless, improvident; but thievish. Melancholy as it is to see, as we may, for instance, in our own country, multitudes of Beings of such high qualifications and such high destination as Man, absorbed in the pursuit of merely external and merely temporal objects—occupied in schemes for attaining wealth and worldly aggrandizement, without any higher views in pursuing them, we must remember that the savage is not *above* such a life, but *below* it. It is not from preferring virtue to wealth—the goods of the mind to those of fortune—the next world to the present—that he takes so little thought for the morrow; but, from want of forethought and of habitual self-command. The civilized man, too often, directs these qualities to an unworthy object; the savage, universally, is deficient

in the qualities themselves. The one is a stream flowing, too often, in a wrong channel, and which needs to have its course altered; the other is a stagnant pool.[24](#)

But I am so far from attributing to Man, as a merit, the benefits which, in an advanced stage of society, he confers on the community, that, on the contrary, the very point I am especially dwelling on is, the bountiful wisdom of Providence, in directing towards the public good the conduct of those, who, even when not basely selfish, are yet not impelled to the course they pursue by patriotic motives.

A man, for instance, who has accumulated wealth, as in the progress of Society naturally takes place, more and more, may be so selfishly disposed, that he would willingly consume his whole revenue himself, without a thought of benefiting others. But though there are various modes of expenditure, some more and some less beneficial to the public, in which he may employ it, it is hardly possible for him to keep it entirely to himself. Directly or indirectly he will always be feeding labourers with it. He may employ them in producing something which will add to the stock of national wealth; in which case he will be enriching the community; but if he employ them in making lace, or diving for pearls, to add to the splendour of his dress, or in pulling down his house; and rebuilding it after some fancy of his own, or in waiting at his table, still he maintains them. And though it is a mistake (a very common one, by the way, and which hereafter it will be necessary to treat of) to suppose, that, in all this, he is a benefactor to the community, by furnishing employment, still he is at least no more consuming his revenue himself, than if he had thought fit to give it away to the same number of persons;—to bestow on those, who are now employed in labouring for him, the bread they eat, leaving them to sit idle. The only difference is, that they are at work instead of doing nothing, and that they feel that they earn their own bread, instead of being fed by charity. It is only when a rich man lays down in forest, like William the Conqueror, a quantity of fertile land, or in some such way diminishes human subsistence, that his wealth is detrimental to the community.

And this is one of the points connected with our present subject, which is at once so simple, as to be easily explained to the labouring classes, and of high importance for them to understand. For at the first glance, they are apt to imagine, when they see a rich man whose income is a hundred times as much as suffices to maintain a poor man's family, that if he were stripped of all, and his wealth divided, a hundred poor families additional might thus obtain subsistence; which, it is plain, would not be the case, even

when the income was spent in such ostentatious and selfish vanity, as I have been alluding to.

But, in fact, a very large portion of the wealth that exists in a country, is employed in procuring a further increase of wealth; in other words, is employed as Capital.

It would be premature to enter at present on a discussion of the nature of Capital, and the various questions connected with it. But it is sufficiently evident for our present purpose, that wealth is employed, and is a most important agent, for the production of wealth: so important indeed, that the first beginnings of it must have been attained with extreme difficulty, since labour is comparatively inefficient without it. Corn is raised by labour; but corn is needed both to sow the land, and to support the labourer till the harvest is ripe: the tools with which he works are produced by other tools: the handle of the axe with which he fells the wood, came from the wood; and the iron of it was dug from the mine with iron implements. We hardly know how to estimate the impediments to the few first steps, when stakes and sharp stones were the tools, and the labourer's subsistence consisted in the spontaneous products of the earth, and the flesh of wild animals. But it is plain, that each succeeding step must have been easier, and at the same time more effective; till at length the various contrivances for abridging labour, that is, rendering labour incomparably more productive, at length enabled a large portion of the community to live exempt from all share in the labour of producing the necessaries of life; while yet the whole population, though immensely increased in numbers, were better fed, clothed, and lodged, than any had been, in that earlier stage, when every one without exception was compelled to labour for his daily food.

And it is remarkable, that the tendency which the conduct of individuals in pursuing their own private ends, even when these ends are purely selfish, has, towards promoting the interest of the community, is more and more developed, as society advances. Take, for example, the case of a Miser; one whose selfishness takes the turn of a love of hoarding. Such a person, though his individual character is of course every where the same, is yet, in respect of the effects of his conduct on others, very different in different stages of society. You will perceive, on a little reflection, that in a community where commercial transactions are yet in a rude state, the conduct of a miser is detrimental to the public; while in one that is in a more advanced stage, he is rather benefiting others by the sacrifice of his own comforts.

In former times, the Miser *withdrew from use* such articles as constituted the wealth of the community; such as corn, clothing,

implements and furniture of various kinds, and above all, as the least perishable and least bulky, gold and silver and jewels. All these things, even if not kept till spoilt, or hidden so as to be permanently lost, were at least withdrawn during his life-time from the enjoyment of the community; which would supply the deficiency either directly by the labour of its own members, or by exchanging with other nations the produce of that labour.²⁵

Some few instances occur, even in such a state of society as ours, of this kind of hoarding; but they are very rare, and generally on a very small scale, being chiefly found among the lowest orders.

On the other hand, in countries as far advanced in commercial transactions as almost the whole of Europe is, it may be said that, with hardly any exceptions, hoarding withdraws nothing from the public use. If the miser is engaged in any kind of business; he lives himself indeed (as in the other case) on a miserable pittance; but his desire of gain naturally prompts him to add continually his profits to his capital; which is a part of the capital of the country, viz. of the stock that is employed profitably, in producing more commodities; which are used by others, though the owner will not indulge himself with them. If he is not himself engaged in business, it comes to the same thing; for in that case he *lends* to others, for the sake of increasing his store; and continues to invest in like manner the interest they pay him. And it makes no difference whether he lends to individuals, or invests his money in government-securities; for since, in the latter case, the total amount of government-securities is not increased, (the national debt remaining the same,) every purchase he makes sets free an equal amount, which is sure to find its way into the hands of some private borrower; and, generally speaking, of one who will employ this borrowed capital *productively*, in trade, agriculture, and manufactures. Whereas if he had lived in what is called a liberal style, most of what he has thus laid by would have been expended unproductively, in sumptuous dinners, the services of menials, race-horses, hounds, and the like; all of which would have left behind no increase of the capital of the country.

The individuals, however, who borrow the miser's money, not only owe him no thanks, as he had not their benefit in view, but are in most instances unable even to refer that benefit to him. We can no more trace the actual progress of each sum that is thus thrown into the general capital of the country, than of the drops of water of each shower that falls into the ocean; though it is demonstrable that the whole mass of waters must be increased by just so much.

Some points connected with the subject I have now briefly touched on, may, perhaps, present difficulties to such as have not been in

the habit of pursuing such inquiries. I shall take occasion to advert to these points hereafter in their proper place. But this slight notice of the subject was introduced here, merely as affording a striking instance of the manner in which, by the wise arrangements of Providence, not only self-interest, but in some instances even the most sordid selfishness, are made, in an advanced stage of society, to conduce to public prosperity.

I am indeed far enough from holding with Mandeville, that on the whole, private vices conduce to public prosperity. The Spend-thrift diminishes it; and even the Miser, though his evil disposition is generally turned by an over-ruling Providence to a good end, yet might lay out his money much *more* beneficially still, if he were to receive the endowment of judicious public-spirit.

But the circumstance to which I wish to direct your attention, is, the general tendency—a tendency often interrupted and impeded indeed by human faults and follies—but not wholly or chiefly depending for its operation on human virtue and wisdom—towards the advancement of national wealth. The disturbing forces, as they may be called, of wars, and tumults, and misgovernment, I have not thought it necessary to dwell upon in the outset. The character and direction of the moving principle of a machine, should be first understood generally, before we attend to the impediments of friction and the resistance of the air. And that in spite of all impediments, the tendency I have been speaking of does exist, and produce immensely important results, every one must perceive, who contemplates, for instance, the present condition of this island, as compared with what it was when our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were first settled in it.

As to the connexion of what is usually called national *prosperity*, with the advancement of *civilization*, in the highest and most proper sense—and as to the question, how far Dr. Mandeville's doctrine, or its opposite, is true, that Virtue is unfavourable to national Wealth, and national Wealth to Virtue— although I have slightly adverted to the subject already, and shall from time to time recur to it as occasion may require—this, is the subject which will occupy the next Lecture.

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Lecture VII

It appears that Society, when once placed in a position removed a certain degree above utter barbarism, has a tendency, so far as wars, unwise institutions, imperfect and oppressive laws, and other such obstacles, do not interfere, to advance, in Wealth and in the Arts which pertain to human life and enjoyment.

How far such an advancement is favourable or unfavourable to that higher and better kind of Civilization which consists in moral elevation and improvement, is a digressive indeed, but a very important, inquiry, and one intimately connected at least, with the subject before us.

At first, the division of labour would be but imperfect, and mutual intercourse between different parts of the country, difficult and limited. In each of the scattered villages, several different arts would be exercised, with a very humble degree of skill, by the same person. Much labour would be wasted, through the want of tools, the clumsiness of implements, and the unskilfulness of workmen; and though the total produce of labour would be far less in proportion than in such a country, for instance, as ours, there would be a much smaller proportion of persons who could enjoy an exemption from bodily labour; and the leisure again which some *would* enjoy, would conduce, but in a comparatively small degree, to their intellectual advancement; from their living within a confined circle, and wanting, in great measure, the excitement and the help of mutual communication.

Subsequently, the advances which would be made in respect of each of these points, would all re-act on each other. Increasing division of labour, would lead to an increase of exchanges, and this, to the employment of money; and these latter improvements would, in turn, promote the first. All of these causes would tend to produce and to improve, roads, canals, and also navigation, and other means of conveyance for goods and persons; and this facilitation of intercourse again, both within the country, and with foreign nations, would re-act upon its causes, and accelerate that increase of capital from which it had sprung.

And thus a larger proportion of the Community, and that of a much more numerous Community, would be at leisure from mere mechanical toil, and would be enabled to turn their attention to some more refined sources of enjoyment than mere sensual indulgence; while their mutual intercourse would at once facilitate the improvement of their faculties by mutual collision, and at the

same time direct the emulation of many of them into a new channel. Some, indeed, of the wealthier members of the Community would vie with each other merely in sumptuous feasts, and splendour of dress, or in the most frivolous accomplishments: but others again would be incited to direct, either their chief attention, or, at least, some part of it, towards the pursuit of knowledge; either with a view to some practical end, or for its own sake.

And here, again, we may perceive the benevolent wisdom of Providence, in not making the public good dependent on pure public-spirit. He who labours to acquire, and then to communicate, important knowledge, solely, or principally, with a view to the benefit of his fellow-creatures, is a character more admirable than it is common. Knowledge would not have made the advances it has, if it had been promoted only by such persons. Far the greater part of it may be considered as the gift, not of human, but of divine, benevolence; which has implanted in man a thirst after knowledge for its own sake, accompanied with a sort of instinctive desire to impart it. For I think there is in man, independent of the desire of admiration, (called, in its faulty excess, *Vanity*,) which is a most powerful stimulus to the acquisition and propagation of knowledge—independent of this, I say, there is, connected with the desire of gaining knowledge, a desire (founded, I imagine, on Sympathy) of communicating it to others, as an ultimate end. This, and also the love of display, are, no doubt, inferior motives, and will be superseded by a higher principle, in proportion as the individual advances in moral excellence. These motives constitute, as it were, a kind of scaffolding, which should be taken down by little and little, as the perfect building advances, but which is of indispensable use till that is completed. To these inferior motives then, (which those who delight in degrading human nature, by applying to each propensity a name implying something faulty or contemptible, would call, *Curiosity* and *Vanity*,)—to these, with an intermixture greater or less of higher motives, we owe the chief part of the progress of society in knowledge.

Ulterior objects of utility do also contribute to supply motives. It is proverbial, that "Necessity is the Mother of Invention:" but the inventions thence originating will usually be of a simple and rude character. The barbarous and semi-barbarous nations, which are the most necessitous—the most frequently impelled to exert their faculties under this harsh instructress, have little to boast of in their contrivances, compared with those which arise in a more advanced stage of society. On those, however, who are not under the pressure of mere necessity, the desire of gain has often operated to sharpen their faculties and to extend their knowledge. But it is not solely, or even chiefly, by an ulterior view to profit, that

men have been incited to the pursuit of knowledge. On the contrary, it is, as Cicero observes, when men are released from the avocations of necessary business, that they are especially led to fix their desires on the hearing, the learning, the investigating, of whatever is attractive through its intrinsic grandeur or its novelty. "Cum sumus necessariis negotiis curisque vacui, tum, avemus aliquid videre, audire, ac discere; cognitionemque rerum aut occultarum, aut admirabilium, ad beate vivendum necessariam ducimus."

Accordingly, many of the discoveries which have proved the most useful, were probably the result of investigations not conducted with a view to utility. Those who first watched the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites, had probably no thought of the important aid to navigation to which their observations were to lead. But *indirectly*, and as subsidiary to the thirst for knowledge, the desire of gain has led to very important results in this branch of improvement. The most important, perhaps, of all inventions, is that of a paper, sufficiently cheap to allow of its general use; for the introduction of printing would speedily spring from this, to meet the demand for books; and indeed, some contrivance of the nature of printing is extremely obvious, and, though in an imperfect state, was known long before; but could never be extensively applied, till a sufficiently cheap material for books should be invented. Now these arts were probably devised with a view to the profit of the inventors; but it was the demand for literary productions that must have held out the hope of this profit.

Knowledge then, and intellectual cultivation and refinement, being thus advanced, would, from the nature of the case, continually tend, as well as national wealth, towards a still further increase, without any limits that we are able to assign.

And such a state of things one would certainly, at the first glance, expect to be, on the whole, favourable rather than not, to the moral improvement of mankind. The presumptions are manifestly on the affirmative side. For in the first place, there is one antecedent presumption, from what we know of the divine dispensations, both natural and supernatural. I am aware, what caution is called for in any attempt to reason *à priori* from our notions of the character and designs of the Supreme Being. But in this case there is a clear *analogy* before us. We know that God placed the Human Species in such a situation, and endued them with such faculties and propensities, as would infallibly tend to the advancement of Society in wealth, and in all the arts of life; instead of either creating Man a different kind of Being, or leaving him in that wild and uninstructed state, from which, as we have seen, he could never have emerged. Now if the natural consequence of this advancement be a continual

progress from bad to worse—if the increase of wealth, and the development of the intellectual powers, tend, not to the improvement, but rather to the depravation, of the moral character—we may safely pronounce this to be at variance with all analogy;—a complete reversal of every other appointment that we see throughout creation. And it is completely at variance with the revealed will of God. For, the great impediments to the progress I am speaking of are, war and dissension of every kind, insecurity of property—indolence and neglect of providing for ourselves, and for those dependent on us. Now God has forbidden Man to kill, and to steal; He has inculcated on him gentleness, honesty, submission to lawful authority, and industry in providing for his own household: if therefore the advancement in national wealth, which is found to be, by the appointment of Providence, the result of obedience to these precepts—if, I say, this advancement naturally tends to counteract that improvement of the moral character, which the same God has pointed out to us as the great business of this life, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that He has given contradictory commands;—that He has directed us to pursue a course of action, which leads to an end the very opposite of what we are required to aim at.

In the next place, it may be observed, that, as the tendencies towards selfishness and rapacity—cruelty—deceit—sensuality—and all other vices; exist in all mankind in every state of society; so, the counteracting and restraining principles, of Prudence, Morality, and Religion, will have the less or the more sway, (speaking generally, and taking a society in the mass,) according as each society is less or more advanced from a state of rude and barbarian ignorance. Savages, it should be remembered, and all men in proportion as they approach the condition of savages, are *men* in respect of their passions, while, in *intellect*, they are *children*. Those who speak of a state of nature, i.e. of uncultivated nature, as one of pure and virtuous simplicity, and regard vice as something introduced, imported, and artificial, are ignorant of what they might learn from observation, and even from consciousness, as well as from Scripture—the corruption of human nature. The actual existence of this—the proneness, i.e. of Man to let the baser propensities bear rule over Reason and Conscience, and to misdirect his conduct accordingly—this corruption, or original-sin, or frailty, or sinfulness, or whatever name it may be called by, is, I say, in respect of its actual existence, not a matter of Revelation, (any more than that the sun gives light by day,) but of experience. What Revelation does teach us is, that it is not to be accounted for merely by bad education, unwise laws, excess of artificial refinement, or any such cause, but arises from something inherent in the human breast; inasmuch as we have before us the recorded

case of those who fell from a state of innocence, when none of those other causes existed.

Human nature then being such, it is idle to expect that it will remain pure by being merely left uncultivated;—that noxious weeds will not spring up in it, unless the seeds of them are brought, and artificially sown. The contrivance mentioned by Herodotus of that Queen of Babylon, who removed every night the bridge over the Euphrates, that the inhabitants of the opposite sides might not pass over to rob each other, was not more preposterous than the idea of maintaining virtue among men by precluding them from mutual intercourse, and keeping them secluded from each other, in a state of barbarian rudeness and ignorance.

If it be true that Man's duty coincides with his real interest both in this world and the next, the better he is qualified by intellectual culture, and diffusion of knowledge, to understand his duty, and his interest, the greater prospect there would seem to be (other points being equal) of his moral improvement. For, that Integrity, Temperance, and other Virtues, which often require us to forego present gratification, do, in the long run, conduce to our temporal prosperity and enjoyment, is a truth which is perceived more and more as our views become enlarged; and cannot be comprehended at all by those who are so dull and unthinking as hardly to look beyond the passing moment.

If again our religion be true, and be important for the amelioration of mankind, it must be important that the knowledge of it should be diffused, and enlightened views of it entertained. Now as a very poor Community is likely to be a comparatively ignorant one, (since men universally occupied in a difficult struggle to subsist, must have little leisure and little inclination for intellectual culture,) so, the religion of a very ignorant people must always be a gross and debasing superstition, either *inoperative* on their conduct, or mischievous in its operation. Christianity is designed, and is calculated, for all mankind, except savages and such as are but little removed above the savage state. Men are not indeed (unhappily) always the better Christians in proportion as they advance in refinement and intellectual cultivation: these are even compatible with utter irreligion. But all experience shews, that a savage (though he may be trained to adore a crucifix or an image of the Virgin) cannot be a Christian. In all the successful efforts of Missionaries among savages, *civilization* and conversion have gone hand in hand.

In the next place it may be observed, that, agricultural improvement, accumulation of capital, commercial resources, and the other results of national wealth, afford the best preservative

against the calamity of occasional *famines*;—such extremities, I mean, of famine, as (with all the distresses occasioned among us by unfavourable seasons) we have no notion of but by description:—such famines as, if you look back to the history of ruder times, you will see noticed as of no unfrequent occurrence. Now nothing, perhaps, tends more to deteriorate the human character than the pressure (especially a *sudden* pressure) of severe distress;—"*malesuada* famines," as the Poet calls it. Even great part of the corruption of morals induced by War, is through the medium of the sudden *indigence* to which men are reduced by its ravages. "In peace and *prosperity*," says Thucydides, "men are better disposed; from their not being driven into distressing difficulties, but War is a severe instructor,

οἶον ἐγγύημα

(nearly answering to Virgil's "*malesuada* famines,") and, depriving them of the abundant supply of their daily wants, tends to make the *moral character* of the generality conformable to the existing state of things²⁶ ."

βίαιος διδάσκαλος

In the last place, you may observe what a security is afforded to a Community advanced in wealth, in the use of artillery, and the science of the engineer, against that most *demoralizing*, as well as otherwise frightful, calamity, the overrunning of a civilized nation by hordes of Barbarians; which happened to the Roman Empire, and led to that dismal and degraded period known by the name of the Dark Ages. From the recurrence of precisely such an event, the civilized world is secured, through the arts connected with the use of gunpowder. These arts, as experience has shewn, have not rendered wars more frequent or more destructive; and though wars still occur, to the disgrace of rational Beings and of Christians, their ravages, frightful as they are, produce no effect comparable to the subjugation of a civilized nation by a tribe of Huns. It may be observed, however, in addition, that commerce between different nations, (which is both an effect and a cause of national wealth,) by making them *mutually dependent*, tends to lessen their disposition to go to war. Many wars have indeed been occasioned by commercial jealousy; but it will be found, that in almost every instance this has arisen, on one side, if not on both, from unsound views of Political-Economy, which have occasioned the general interests of the community, to a very great amount, to be sacrificed for a much smaller advantage to a few individuals. The ruinous expensiveness also of war (which will never be adequately estimated till the spread of civilization shall have gained general

admission for just views of Political-Economy) would alone, if fairly computed, be almost sufficient to banish war from the earth.

On the whole, then, there seems every reason to believe, that, as a general rule, that advancement in National Prosperity which mankind are, by the Governor of the universe, adapted, and impelled, to promote, must be favourable to moral improvement. Still more does it appear evident, that such a conclusion must be *acceptable* to a pious and philanthropic mind: If it is not probable, still less is it desirable, that the Deity should have fitted and destined Society to make a continual progress, impeded only by slothful and negligent habits, by war, rapine, and oppression, (in short, by violations of divine commands,) which progress inevitably tends towards a greater and greater moral corruption.

And yet there are some who appear not only to think, but to *wish* to think, that a condition but little removed from the savage state—one of ignorance, grossness, and poverty—unenlightened, semi-barbarous, and stationary, is the most favourable to virtue. You will meet with persons who will be even offended if you attempt to awaken them from their dreams about primitive rural simplicity, and to convince them that the spread of civilization, which, they must see, has a tendency to spread, does not tend to increase depravity. Supposing their notion true, it must at least, one would think, be a melancholy truth.

It may be said, as a reason, not for wishing, but for believing this, that the moral dangers which beset a wealthy community are designed as a trial. Undoubtedly they are; since no state in which Man is placed is exempt from trials. And let it be admitted also if you will, that the temptations to evil, to which civilized Man is exposed, are, *absolutely*, stronger than those which exist in a ruder state of society; still, if they are also *relatively* stronger—stronger in proportion to the counteracting forces, and stronger than the augmented motives to good conduct—and are such, consequently, that, as Society advances in civilization, there is less and less virtue, and a continually decreasing prospect of its being attained—this amounts to something more than a state of trial: it is a distinct provision made by the Deity for the moral degradation of his rational creatures.

This can hardly be a desirable conclusion: but if it be nevertheless a true one, (and our wishes should not be allowed to bias our judgment,) those who hold it, ought at least to follow it up in practice, by diminishing, as far as is possible, the severity of the trial. There is no virtue in exposing ourselves to temptations which may be avoided;—in cultivating, or neglecting to extirpate, the poisonous nightshade with its tempting and deadly berries. Let

Mandevillians read the Fable of the Bees, and advocate the measures which the Author, in conclusion, (I myself am inclined to think, sincerely, but at any rate, consistently,) recommends. Let us put away from us "the accursed thing." If national wealth be, in a moral point of view, an evil, let us, in the name of all that is good, set about to diminish it. Let us, as he advises, burn our fleets, block up our ports, destroy our manufactories, break up our roads, and betake ourselves to a life of frugal and rustic simplicity; like Mandeville's bees, who

"flew into a hollow tree, Blest with content and honesty."

Ἐν μὲν Εἰρήνῃ, καὶ ἀγαθοῖς πράγμασιν, αἴ τε πόλεις,
καὶ οἱ ἰδιῶται ἀμείνουζ τὰς γνώμας ἔχουσι, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐξ
ἀκουσίους ἀνάγκας πίπτειν ὁ δὲ πόλεμος, ὑφελόν τὴν
εὐπολοίαν τοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν, βίαιοζ διδάσκαλος, καὶ πρὸς τὰ
παρόντα τὰς ὀργὰς τῶν πολλῶν ὁμοιοῖ.

I will conclude this Lecture with some brief remarks, intended merely to suggest matter for your own consideration, on the principal causes which have led to an erroneous estimate of the superior virtue of a poor and half-civilized condition of society.

One powerful, but little-suspected cause, I take to be, an early familiarity with poetical descriptions, of pure, unsophisticated, rustic life, in remote, sequestered, and unenlightened, districts;—of the manly virtue and practical wisdom of our simple forefathers, before the refinements of luxury had been introduced;—of the adventurous wildness, so stimulating to the imagination, of savage or pastoral life, in the midst of primæval forests, lofty mountains, and all the grand scenery of uncultivated nature. Such subjects and scenes are much better adapted for Poets than thronged cities, work-shops, coal-pits, and iron-foundries. And Poets, whose object is to please, of course keep out of sight all the odious or disgusting circumstances pertaining to the life of the savage or the untutored clown, and dwell exclusively on all the amiable and admirable parts of that simplicity of character which they feign or fancy. Early associations are thus formed; whose influence is often the stronger and the more lasting, from the very circumstance that they are formed unconsciously, and do not come in the form of propositions demanding a deliberate assent. Poetry does not profess to aim at conviction; but it often leaves impressions which affect the Reasoning and the Judgment. And a false impression is perhaps oftener conveyed in other ways, than by sophistical argument; because *that* rouses the mind to exert its powers, and to assume, as it were, a reasoning mood.²⁷

The very senses, again, in such as possess a taste for rural scenery, aid in such associations. A thatched cottage on a flowery heath, on the border of a fine wood, or the bark-covered sheds of Indians, amidst the noble forests and rivers of America, are more picturesque objects, than a comfortable brick-house near a turnpike-road, and surrounded with corn-fields. And the imagination is led to suggest the connexion of what is morally, with what is physically beautiful. In the account of a youth who was born blind, and couched by Mr. Chesselden, it is mentioned, that he was greatly astonished at not finding, as he had expected, that the persons and other objects, which had been the most agreeable to him in other respects, were also the most pleasing to the sight. The converse of this mistake may, in a certain degree, be found in many. Not a few who have passed good part of their lives in the country, and travelled through regions celebrated for wild and romantic scenery, know in fact very little of the character of men in any class of life but their own, except from the descriptions of poets; but take for granted that the picturesque hovels of mountaineers must be the abode of nothing but peaceful innocence and felicity and must have much the advantage in this respect of a smoky and bustling town. "We give you joy of your innocence, but covet not your silliness."²⁸

Μακαρίσαντεζ ὑμῶν τὸ ἀπειρόκακον, οὐ ζηλοῦμεν
τὸ ἄφρον.

Moreover, travellers have sometimes, without any design to deceive, given very overcharged pictures of the moral state of savage or half-civilized nations; whom they have perhaps chanced to see under favourable circumstances; and then, reporting faithfully what came under their observation, have supplied the rest from their own conjectures.

Another cause which powerfully cooperates with the foregoing, is, that those who are themselves members of a wealthy and civilized community, *know* all the vices and other evils which prevail in such a community; while, of those existing in a different state of things, they are ignorant. And when vexed and mortified at the evils we see among ourselves, the feeling which Horace describes in reference to a different point, the disposition to imagine others better off than ourselves, (*laudet diversa sequentes*,) induces us to think that another state of society may be exempt from such evils; inasmuch as we are sure it cannot have the very same. Avarice, for instance, we commonly denote by the phrase, "love of *money*;" and hence we are led to imagine, that a people among whom there is no *money*, must be free from avarice: and so in other points. In other instances again it will be found, that the vices to which civilized

men are liable, are really different in kind from those of the uncultivated; and, though the latter are not the less in reality vices, or, necessarily, of the less magnitude, they are more likely to be overlooked by those whose attention has been habitually directed to a different class of faults.

It is wonderful what an apparently strong case may, on this principle, be made out against any given form of Society, by dwelling, in a style of eloquent declamation, on all the follies and crimes existing in it, described according to the particular shape they assume in that particular society; thus leading the unreflective reader to forget, that faults substantially the same, or equivalent ones, may exist no less in other forms of Society also. A beautiful specimen of this kind of artifice may be found in Burke's "Defence of Natural Society," written in the assumed person of Lord Bolingbroke, to expose the same kind of sophistry, employed by that author against revealed religion.

There is also probably much error occasioned by a fallacy so obvious as soon as noticed, that hardly any one ever suspects himself of a liability to be misled by it; that, I mean, of neglecting to take into account in our calculations, the relative *numbers* of the persons we are speaking of. Since increase of national wealth is, I believe I may say, always, accompanied by an increase of population, it is evident that unless allowance be made for this, when we are computing the amount of crime in two countries, the result will always be unduly favourable to the poorer community.

We must be improved incredibly, if the absolute amount of crime in this island is not greater than when its population was, perhaps, one-fifth of what it now is. In any one of the United States of America, the number of persons tried and convicted of offences, probably equals or exceeds the whole population of the tribes of wild Indians, who formerly wandered over the same district. In the same way, men are liable to form an over-estimate of the purity of morals in the Country, as compared with a Town; or in a barren and thinly peopled, as compared with a fertile and populous, district. On a *given area*, it must always be expected, that the absolute amount of vice will be greater in a Town than in the Country; so also will be that of virtue: but the *proportions* of the two must be computed on quite different principles. A physician of great skill and in high repute, probably loses many more patients than an ordinary practitioner; but this proves nothing, till we have ascertained the comparative numbers of their patients. Yet this, which is as clear when stated as any arithmetical proposition can be, is often, through inadvertency, overlooked in other cases as well as this; and important practical mistakes are frequently the result.

It should be observed also, that in large towns, and in populous districts intersected by roads which furnish a rapid conveyance of intelligence from place to place, and where newspapers are in common use, much more in proportion is *known* of every enormity that is perpetrated, than in remote country-districts, thinly peopled, where there is less facility of mutual communication, and where the natural appetite for news is compelled to limit itself to the gossip of the nearest hamlet. Much *apparent* increase of crime (I will not undertake to say how much) consists, I am convinced, in the increase of newspapers. For crimes, *especially* (be it observed) *such as are the most remote from the experience of each individual*, and therefore strike him as something *strange*, always furnish interesting articles of intelligence. I have no doubt that a single murder in Great Britain has often furnished matter for discourse to more than twenty times as many persons as any twenty such murders would in Turkey. We should remember, that there are not more particles of dust *in the sunbeam* than in any other part of the room; though we *see* them more where the light is stronger.

On the whole then, I think we may conclude, that the notions of those who consider a poor and imperfectly civilized community as possessing, *cæteris paribus*, superior or even equal advantages in point of moral improvement, are as much opposed to reason and to experience, as they are to every rational wish: and that as the Most High has evidently formed Society with a tendency to advancement in National Wealth, so, He has designed and fitted us, to advance, by means of that, in Virtue, and true Wisdom, and Happiness.

But every situation in which Man can be placed has, along with its own peculiar advantages, its own peculiar difficulties and trials also; which we are called on to exert our faculties in providing against. The most fertile soil does not necessarily bear the most abundant harvest; its weeds, if neglected, will grow the rankest. And the servant who has received but one talent, if he put it out to use, will fare better than he who has been entrusted with five, if he squander or bury them. But still, this last does not suffer *because* he received five talents; but because he has not used them to advantage.

I am far from thinking, that any nation has realized as fully as it might have done, and may yet do, the picture I have drawn of the apparent design of a bountiful Providence;—that men have availed themselves of the advantages which increased and increasing national wealth holds out, in respect of moral advancement, to the extent to which they would, if these advantages had been duly contemplated, as such.

Almost every one, when a state of "civilization" is spoken of, understands by that phrase, *our own* state, and that of the other most refined European nations. No doubt we are *more* civilized than our ancestors, and than the mass of mankind at the present day. But I hope and trust that our posterity five centuries hence will look back on us as semi-barbarians.

Some remarks on the difficulties and dangers most peculiar to a wealthy community, and on the faults which its members are most apt to commit, in not rightly availing themselves of its peculiar advantages—in not rightly estimating those duties, and guarding against those dangers, which are especially connected with such a state of things—in short, in not acting conformably to the situation in which they are placed—will form the subject of the next Lecture.[29](#)

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Lecture VIII

I have all along spoken of the possession of National Wealth, as more favourable than poverty, to moral improvement, *supposing other points equal*. For there *are* several other points in which such inequalities may exist as shall affect the result. Wise or unwise Laws and Customs,—a better or worse Religion,—and other such variations of circumstances, do indeed tend to make a great difference as to the advancement of a society in wealth; but they also make a difference as to the results of its wealth; so that National Prosperity is not every where in an exact ratio to intellectual culture and refinement of manners; nor these, again, to the moral condition of the society. Two nations may be equal in wealth, yet unequal in the higher and better part of civilization; or the superiority may even be on the side of the poorer. But when this is the case, that superiority must be attributed to some other cause rather than to poverty; if, at least, the general conclusion be just, which, I have endeavoured to shew, is deducible, both from a consideration of the nature of Man, and from a wide observation. To argue hastily from a scanty induction, leads to the fallacy described by Logicians under the title of "non causa pro causa;" by which the incautious are often brought to mistake even an impediment in spite of which some effect has been produced, for the very cause of that effect.

And such would be our procedure, if, on observing some poorer community to be more moral and enlightened than a richer one, we should attribute this difference to their comparative degrees of wealth, and should advise, as Mandeville does, a voluntary impoverishment, as the expedient for improving morals.[30](#)

But it is necessary here to premise, that when I speak of national wealth as an advantage with a view to moral improvement, I mean, wealth in *proportion to the population*. This seems sufficiently obvious; but it is yet necessary to be mentioned, because other views of the comparative wealth of different communities are often taken; and that, very suitably, when the questions at issue are different. If any one, for instance, were speaking of the wealth requisite for the building and maintenance of a Navy, or the erection of some public edifice, or other national work, he would place the Russian Empire far above such States as Hamburgh, or Geneva; though they are, in proportion to their population, much richer.

Again, for other purposes, the wealth of a nation would be computed according to that of the *richest individuals*. A dealer, for

instance, in the most costly pictures, statues, or jewels, might find, that in a given Country he could not dispose of his most valuable articles: this or that People, he would say, is too poor to purchase such things; and he might find a ready sale for these in another country, whose collective wealth, in proportion to its population, might be much less, but great part of it distributed in larger masses among a few individuals. It is evident, that for our present purpose, it is the wealth of the people generally, not of a few individuals, that is to be considered.

With equal wealth however, and in the same sense of the phrase, different communities may be considerably unequal in the most important points of civilization, from various causes; most of which do indeed exert a considerable influence, even in respect of wealth itself, but yet have, besides this, a direct effect also on the national character, and tend to promote, or retard, or entirely stop, the advancement of a people in intelligence, or in morality, or in both.

The character of their religion, for instance, makes a great difference: and in this respect the most eminent nations of antiquity laboured under a great disadvantage, as compared with those of Christendom; and of these, such as are more or less enthralled by various superstitions, are far from being on a level with those who have approached nearer to the religion of the Bible. To the diffusion of knowledge, in particular, a narrow-minded and timid bigotry,—a system of pious fraud,—or spiritual tyranny, disguised in the garb of Christianity, are even more opposed than Paganism itself; which (as a religious system) may be considered as neutral and indifferent to it; while evangelical religion absolutely requires it, since it cannot be really embraced without a certain degree of education. The direct effects of religion on national character, few will be disposed to deny, even of those who believe in no religion; since of several different forms of superstitious error, supposing all religions to be such, one may at least be more compatible with moral improvement than another.

Not however that religion has not an indirect effect also, through its influence on national Prosperity. To take one point out of many: War, which, if Christianity were heartily and generally embraced, would be wholly unknown, has been, even as it is, much mitigated by that humanizing influence. Now War is, in the present day, generally regarded, though to a far less degree than it really is, as a great destroyer of wealth. But the direct demoralizing effect of War is probably still greater than its impoverishing effect. The same may be said of Slavery, in its various forms, including the serfship of the Russians, and, I believe, the Hungarians. If both Slavery and War were at an end, the wealth of nations would

increase, but their civilization in the most important points would increase in a still greater ratio.

If again there be a community whose foundation has been laid with a population chiefly consisting of the worst kind of slaves—transported criminals, the scum and refuse of another country, (which Lord Bacon long ago proclaimed to be "a wicked and unblessed thing,") and if, from time to time, fresh supplies be poured into it, of the sweepings of jails—such a community, though its natural advantages of soil, climate, and situation, may enable it nevertheless to advance in wealth, must have but a wretched prospect in respect of moral improvement.³¹ And if a colony, so constituted, prove, not so much a place of dreaded punishment to the convicts sent out to it, as a nursery of vice, sending back, from time to time, such as have become the most thorough proficient in villainy, the moral condition of the mother-country also, must suffer from the operation of the system.

A community, again, would, *cæteris paribus*, labour under a great disadvantage in respect of advancement in virtue at least, whose institutions were such as tended to arm against the laws large bodies of such persons as were not, in the outset, destitute of all moral principle, but whose mode of life was a fit training to make them become so. Such are, Poachers and Smugglers. An excessive multiplication of the latter class is produced by the enactment of laws, whose object is, not revenue, but the exclusion of foreign productions for the supposed benefit of domestic industry. Whatever may be thought of the expediency of those laws, with a view to national wealth, all must agree, that the extension of smuggling must produce the most demoralizing effects.

Again, among nations equal in wealth, the greatest and most important varieties may exist in respect of its *distribution*. If a large proportion of the wealth of a community consist of the enormous and overgrown fortunes of a few, that community has by no means such promising prospects in respect of the intellectual and moral advancement of the rest of the people, or even of the possessors of those fortunes, with one which enjoys a greater diffusion of wealth. "That state of society," (says the late Professor in his Introductory Lecture,) "in which the productiveness of labour, and the mode in which it is applied, secure to the *labouring classes* all the necessaries and some of the conveniences of life, seems to be, not merely conducive, but essential, both to their morals and their happiness."

Again, it is a point of the highest importance in many respects, what course the prevailing current of *expenditure* takes, in a nation of considerable wealth. And in this point different ages and

countries exhibit great diversities. In some, the favourite, and, in short, most fashionable style of expenditure shall be in masques and pageants, feasts, and fire-works, and things of that nature, which perish in the very act of using; in others, in sumptuous dress, which is but a little less perishable; in others again, in furniture; or again, in buildings, paintings, libraries, gardens and museums. It will be apparent on a detailed and extensive survey, that every advance from a more gross or puerile, to a more refined and tasteful, and at the same time more rational and useful, style of expenditure, is both the effect, and again also a cause, of a general advance in civilization. A coarse profusion in the most perishable articles, and again, the delight in tawdry kind of splendour, and shewy ornament, are characteristics of a semi-barbarous people.

These however, and several other circumstances which tend to produce inequality in different communities in respect of moral advancement, it will be sufficient to have thus, generally and briefly, pointed out to your notice.

The points which more particularly claim our attention at present, are, those circumstances more immediately *connected with national wealth*, which may prove unfavourable to national morality.

The first of these is, one result of the division of labour when carried to a great extent;—the evil of reducing each man too much to the condition of a mere machine, or rather of one part of a machine; the result of which is, that the mind is apt to be narrowed—the intellectual faculties undeveloped, or imperfectly and partially developed, through the too great concentration of the attention on the performance of a single, and sometimes very simple, operation.

With respect to this point, I cannot perhaps do better than to cite the remarks of A. Smith on the evil in question, and on the remedy proposed for it. "In the progress of the division of labour, the employment of the far greater part of those who live by labour, that is, of the great body of the people, comes to be confined to a few very simple operations; frequently to one or two. But the understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. The torpor of his mind renders him, not only

incapable of relishing or bearing a part in any rational conversation, but of conceiving any generous, noble, or tender sentiment, and consequently of forming any just judgment concerning many even of the ordinary duties of private life. Of the great and extensive interests of his country he is altogether incapable of judging; and unless very particular pains have been taken to render him otherwise, he is equally incapable of defending his country in war. The uniformity of his stationary life.... renders him incapable of exerting his strength with vigour and perseverance, in any other employment than that to which he has been bred. His dexterity at his own particular trade seems, in this manner, to be acquired at the expense of his intellectual, social, and martial virtues. But in every improved and civilized society this is the state into which the labouring poor, that is, the great body of the people, must necessarily fall, unless government takes some pains to prevent it.

"It is otherwise in the barbarous societies, as they are commonly called, of hunters, of shepherds, and even of husbandmen in that rude state of husbandry which precedes the improvement of manufactures, and the extension of foreign commerce. In such societies the varied occupations of every man oblige every man to exert his capacity, and to invent expedients for removing difficulties which are continually occurring: Invention is kept alive, and the mind is not suffered to fall into that drowsy stupidity, which, in a civilized society, seems to benumb the understanding of almost all the inferior ranks of people.... In such a society indeed, no man can well acquire that improved and refined understanding, which a few men sometimes possess in a more civilized state. Though in a rude society there is a good deal of variety in the occupations of every individual, there is not a great deal in those of the whole society. Every man does, or is capable of doing, almost every thing which any other man does, or is capable of doing. Every man has a considerable degree of knowledge, ingenuity, and invention; but scarce any man has a great degree. The degree, however, which is commonly possessed, is generally sufficient for conducting the whole simple business of the society. In a civilized state, on the contrary, though there is little variety in the occupations of the greater part of individuals, there is an almost infinite variety in those of the whole society. These varied occupations present an almost infinite variety, of objects to the contemplation of those few, who, being attached to no particular occupation themselves, have leisure and inclination to examine the occupations of other people. The contemplation of so great a variety of objects necessarily exercises their minds in endless comparisons and combinations, and renders their understandings, in an extraordinary degree, both acute and comprehensive. Unless those few, however, happen to be placed in some very particular situations, their great abilities,

though honourable to themselves, may contribute very little to the good government or happiness of their society. Notwithstanding the great abilities of those few, all the nobler parts of the human character may be, in a great measure, obliterated and extinguished in the great body of the people.

"The education of the common people requires, perhaps, in a civilized and commercial society, the attention of the public more than that of people of some rank and fortune.... The common people have little time to spare for education. Their parents can scarce afford to maintain them even in infancy. As soon as they are able to work, they must apply to some trade by which they can earn their subsistence. That trade too is generally so simple and uniform as to give little exercise to the understanding; while, at the same time, their labour is both so constant and so severe, that it leaves them little leisure and less inclination to apply to, or even to think of, any thing else.

"But though the common people cannot, in any civilized society, be so well instructed as people of some rank and fortune, the most essential parts of education, however, to read, write, and account, can be acquired at so early a period of life, that the greater part even of those who are to be bred to the lowest occupations, have time to acquire them before they can be employed in those occupations. For a very small expense the public can facilitate, can encourage, and can even impose upon almost the whole body of the people, the necessity of acquiring those most essential parts of education.

"The public can facilitate this acquisition, by establishing in every parish or district a little school, where children may be taught for a reward so moderate, that even a common labourer may afford it; the master being partly, but not wholly, paid by the public; because, if he was wholly, or even principally paid by it, he would soon learn to neglect his business. In Scotland the establishment of such parish schools has taught almost the whole common people to read, and a very great proportion of them to write and account. In England the establishment of charity-schools has had an effect of the same kind, though not so universally, because the establishment is not so universal. If in those little schools the books, by which the children are taught to read, were a little more instructive than they commonly are; and if, instead of a little smattering of Latin, which the children of the common people are sometimes taught there, and which can scarce ever be of any use to them; they were instructed in the elementary parts of geometry and mechanics, the literary education of this rank of people would perhaps be as complete as it can be. There is scarce a common trade which does not afford some opportunities of applying to it the

principles of geometry and mechanics, and which would not therefore gradually exercise and improve the common people in those principles, the necessary introduction to the most sublime as well as to the most useful sciences.

"The public can encourage the acquisition of these most essential parts of education by giving small premiums, and little badges of distinction, to the children of the common people who excel in them.

"The public can impose upon almost the whole body of the people, the necessity of acquiring those most essential parts of education, by obliging every man to undergo an examination or probation in them before he can obtain the freedom in any corporation, or be allowed set up any trade, either in a village, or town corporate."[32](#)

On this passage I need hardly remark, that the *religious* education (to which our Author does not advert) of the children of the poor, and that, up to a much higher point than is at present generally thought of among us, ought to occupy a prominent place. And instruction on several other points also might, I am convinced, be very easily and very advantageously added. There are some very simple but important truths belonging to the science we are now engaged in, which might with the utmost facility be brought down to the capacity of a child, and which, it is not too much to say, the Lower Orders cannot even safely be left ignorant of. One of them I adverted to in a former Lecture. Can the labouring classes, (and that too in a country where they have a legal right to express practically their political opinions,) can they safely be left to suppose, as many a demagogue is ready, when it suits his purpose, to tell them, that inequality of conditions is inexpedient, and ought to be abolished—that the wealth of a man whose income is equal to that of a hundred labouring families, is so much deducted from the common stock, and causes a hundred poor families the less to be maintained;—and that a general spoliation of the rich, and equal division of property, would put an end to poverty for ever?"[33](#)

"If a horse" (says Mandeville, in his treatise against Charity-schools) "knew as much as a man, I should not like to be his rider." There is a reason for this beyond what was in the author's mind. It would be not only *unsafe*, but *unjust*, to treat a *rational* Being (which, on that supposition, the horse would be) as a *slave*; governed, not for his own benefit, (however humanely,) but for his master's. If in any country it is the settled plan to keep the Lower Orders in this kind of brutish subjection, it is at least consistent to keep them in brutish ignorance also. But where they are admitted not only to freedom, but also, many of them, to a share of political power, it is the height of inconsistency to neglect any means of

instructing them how to make a good use of their advantages. It seems preposterous to reckon a man fit to take a part in the management of a ship, and yet unfit to learn anything of navigation.

Much of that kind of knowledge to which I have been alluding, might easily be embodied, in an intelligible and interesting form, not merely in regular didactic treatises, but in compilations of history, or of travels, and in works of fiction, which would afford amusement as well as instruction. For, amusement, of one kind or another, men *will* seek, and find: and it is therefore a great point gained in respect of morality, if the mass of the people can be provided with such as shall be, even merely not hurtful. He who advertised a reward for any one who should discover a new pleasure, would have deserved well of mankind, if he had stipulated that it should be innocent. It is not enough to teach the people to read, and then merely to put the Bible into their hands. Books should be written expressly for their use, (and how can men of education be more laudably occupied?) not merely of grave instruction, but also such as may form in them a taste that shall tend to withdraw them, in their hours of recreation also, from all that is gross and corrupting.

To the workmen in large manufactories in particular, assistance of such a kind as A. Smith speaks of, is, from the peculiarly monotonous character of their employment,³⁴ the most needed, and, from their being collected in such large bodies, the most easily afforded. Some large manufacturers have accordingly established schools and chapels, appropriated to the use of their enormous families. It is, I cannot but think, a disgrace to the nation, that this procedure is not, and has not been long since, universal. Since A. Smith wrote, much has been done in England in regard to the education of the people. But much remains to be done. If we compare our present condition in this point, not with what it was thirty years ago, but with what it ought to be, we shall find less reason for self-satisfied exultation, than for increased exertion.

As for the danger apprehended from overeducating the labouring classes, I shall offer some observations presently, on the true character of that danger, and on the means of averting it.

I wish first to call your attention to another inconvenience which may result from a high degree of division of labour: I mean, the additional liability to the evil of being thrown out of employment. I cannot describe this better than in the words of the late Professor.

After adverting to the remark of M. Garnier, in his notes to the French translation of A. Smith, that in France no man of health and

strength need be without employment, which that Author attributes to the absence of such restrictions as our poor-laws impose, Mr. Senior observes, that nevertheless the common people in France are worse fed, and incomparably worse clothed, than in England; and adds, that "the French labourer being employed in more capacities than the Englishman, has more trades to turn to, and for that very reason is less efficient at any one. The Russian is probably more seldom out of employ than the Frenchman, and the Tartar, less frequently than either. But I believe nothing to be more clearly established than that, *cæteris paribus*, the productiveness of labour is in proportion to its subdivision; and that, *cæteris paribus*, in proportion to that subdivision must be the occasional suffering from want of employment."

"A Savage may be compared to one of his own instruments, to his club, or his adze, clumsy and inefficient, but yet complete in itself.³⁵ A civilized artificer is like a single wheel or roller, which when combined with many thousand others in an elaborate piece of machinery, contributes to effects which seem beyond human force and ingenuity; but alone is almost utterly useless."

The inconvenience here described is both an evil in itself, and also (what is more especially to our present purpose) tends towards a demoralizing effect through the medium of the occasional distress resulting from it. It is an inconvenience which, though it may be greatly mitigated, cannot, I think, be *entirely* obviated, in an advanced state of Society, without not only foregoing the advantage of the division of labour, but introducing the most oppressive compulsory enactments; since, where there is a free competition, that workman will always obtain a preference, who, from having chiefly confined himself to one kind of operation, possesses superior skill. It is proverbial, that the man of many trades does not thrive, being, in each department, surpassed by others; and resembling Homer's Margites, who practised many arts, but all, unskilfully:

³⁶

Πολλ' ἡπίστατο ἔργα, κακῶς δ' ἡπίστατο πάντα.

But there are means by which the evil in question may be much alleviated. A small degree of care in education will diminish the extreme helplessness which is often found in manufacturing labourers. The women in particular are often so improvident, in devoting themselves exclusively and unremittingly to a single operation, for the sake of earning higher wages *for the present*, that they grow up ignorant of the common domestic offices; and when they marry, are wholly dependent on such as they hire for those purposes; so that a fall of wages, or want of work, reduces

their families to a state of much greater discomfort, than others, with the same absolute poverty, have to encounter. The plan has been adopted accordingly in many schools, of teaching the children, even of both sexes, both needlework and several other little manual arts, which at all times may be a convenience to them, and, in emergencies, may materially alleviate the pressure of distress.

Another expedient which provident good-sense would suggest as a safeguard against the worst extremities of this evil, is, that the several members of a family should betake themselves, as far as that is possible, to *different occupations*; by which means, as it will very seldom happen that a stagnation of trade will equally affect all at the same time, they will be enabled to assist each other. Each family may thus in some degree combine within itself the variety of employments which exists in the whole community; in which, now one, and now another class, will be comparatively depressed, though the whole may be prosperous and advancing.

It is true, the proposed expedient can be but very imperfectly adopted in a town that is the seat of some great manufacture which absorbs perhaps four-fifths of the inhabitants; and even in other cases, there is generally some little advantage in point of convenience and of *present* gain, in the opposite procedure: but it is the very province of prudence, to sacrifice a smaller immediate, to a greater future, benefit.

But the great resource is, in habits of forethought and frugality. The Savings-Banks, which Bishop Sumner recommended with such philanthropic zeal, and, which he has happily lived to see very generally established, have done, and are doing, incalculable good in this way; though, if they had become general some ten or twenty years earlier, at the time when wages were at the highest, they would have saved probably much moral degradation, resulting from the distress which followed. It happens as a fortunately countervailing circumstance, that in those very employments which are the most liable to fluctuation, wages are, generally speaking, the highest: so that in prosperous times, the workman of steady habits, and not, like the savage, a slave to present gratification and thoughtless of the future, may accumulate a little store, which, when employment falls short, may either enable him to subsist till times improve again, or till he shall have acquired a competent skill in some other kindred art; or else, to remove with his family to some place where he can earn support.

Of the two evils then, which are connected with the division of labour, the contraction of the faculties and consequent debasement of mind, resulting from a too limited range of occupation, and, the

danger of being thrown out of work, the appropriate remedies are, I think, to be found in judicious education, and habits of provident frugality. That advanced state of Society, which is the most exposed to the evils, is also the most favourable to the application of the remedies.

The other danger to which a community may be exposed, through great and increasing wealth, is connected with that augmentation and diffusion of knowledge, and of intellectual culture, to which it naturally leads. Many apprehend mischief from what they call overeducation of the mass of the people; the too *great* amount, or too *sudden* increase, of the knowledge placed within their reach—of their taste for intellectual pursuits—and their disposition to think and judge for themselves. They are thence, it is said, disposed to be puffed up with conceit at their superiority to their unenlightened forefathers, arrogant, and averse to subordination—deeming themselves competent to decide on every question—rashly embracing crude theories, and craving after innovation, from an idea that all ancient institutions must be either obsolete remnants of a state of general barbarism and darkness, or contrivances of fraudulent oppressors for imposing on the simple.

I am far from thinking that serious dangers of this kind do not arise as accompaniments of the Progress of Society, in wealth, and in knowledge, and intelligence. But I am convinced they do *not* arise from the too great amount, or too great diffusion, of mental cultivation, but from *misdirected* and *disproportionate* cultivation. And this misdirection does not consist so much in the imparting of knowledge which had better be withheld from a particular class, or the exercise of faculties which, in them, had better be left dormant, as in the violation of *proportion*—the neglect of preserving a due *balance* between different studies and different mental powers. No illustration will better explain my meaning than that of the bodily growth. A child neglected at the period of growth, will become rickety and deformed, from some of the limbs receiving perhaps no absolutely undue increase, but a disproportioned increase; while others, do not indeed shrink, nor perhaps cease to grow, but do not increase at the same rate. In such a case, we sometimes say that the head or the trunk is grown too large for the limbs; meaning, however, not absolutely, but relatively;—not that the growth of one part is in itself excessive, but that the other parts have not kept pace with it. And though such a distortion is worse even than a general dwarfish and stunted growth, it is obvious that a full and regular development of all the parts, is far preferable to either; and also, that it is, when Nature is making an effort towards growth, not only more desirable, but more practicable, to make that an equable and well-proportioned growth, than to repress it altogether. We should endeavour rather to strengthen the weak

parts, than to weaken the strong. But if we take no pains to do either the one or the other, it is plain that both the corporeal, and also the intellectual and moral, expansion, must lead to disease and deformity.

As far as relates to Religion, the most important point of all, both in itself, and as far as relates to the question now more immediately before us, I will avail myself of the words of a recent publication, which express sentiments in which I wholly coincide.

"A vast and momentous moral crisis is rapidly approaching—the rise of Education throughout the mass of the People. Amidst pretensions to sensible spiritual communion on the one hand, and a careful avoidance of recognizing any divine interposition on the other—amidst theories invented or imported, that would subject the sacred volume to the rules of mere ordinary criticism, opposed only in partial and personal controversy—a large portion of the community, which has been hitherto uneducated, is suddenly roused into free inquiry, and furnished with ability to perceive all that darkens and deforms the subject; but—it must be owned and lamented—not furnished with that spiritual training, which alone enables the inquirer to see his way through it. "It is not that the people at large are without any religious and moral instruction—it is not that they have *absolutely* less now than heretofore—they have probably more. But the progress of spiritual and worldly knowledge is unequal; and it is this inequality of progress that constitutes the danger. It is a truth which cannot be too strongly insisted on, that if the powers of the intellect be strengthened by the acquisition of science, professional learning, or general literature—in short, secular knowledge, of whatever kind, without being *proportionately* exercised on spiritual subjects, its susceptibility of the objections which may be urged against Revelation will be increased, without a corresponding increase in the ability to remove them. Conscious of having mastered certain difficulties that attach to subjects which he has studied, one so educated finds it impossible to satisfy himself about difficulties in Revelation; Revelation not having received from him the same degree of attention; and, forgetful of the unequal distribution of his studies, charges the fault on the subject. Doubt, discontent, and contemptuous infidelity, (more frequently secret than avowed,) are no unusual results. It seems indeed to have been required of us by the Author of Revelation, that his Word should have *a due share* of our intellect, as well as our heart; and that the disproportionate direction of our talents, no less than of our affections, to the things of this world, should disqualify us for faith. What is sufficient sacred knowledge for an uneducated person, becomes inadequate for him when educated; even as he would be crippled and deformed, if the limb which was strong and well-proportioned when

he was a child, should have undergone no progressive change as his bodily stature increased, and he grew into manhood. We must not think to satisfy the divine law, by setting apart the same *absolute* amount as the *tithe* of our enlarged understanding, which was due from a narrower and more barren field of intellectual culture. "Nor let it be imagined that this is true only of minds highly gifted, and accomplished in science, elegant literature, or professional pursuits. It is not the *absolute* amount of worldly acquirements, but the proportion that they bear to our religious attainments, be these what they may, that is to be dreaded. If the *balance* of intellectual exercise be not preserved, the almost certain result will be, either an utter indifference to religion; or else, that slow-corroding scepticism, which is fostered by the consciousness, that difficulties corresponding to those that continue to perplex our view of Revelation have, in our other pursuits, been long surmounted and removed."[37](#)

It may be added, that with respect to another matter also of high importance in itself, and (as I trust has been shewn) not unconnected with religion,—Political-Economy,—as ignorance, or erroneous views concerning it, are in themselves to be deprecated, so, there is here also, an especial danger in a *disproportionate* neglect. For since men who regard themselves as generally well-educated, will always, however uneducated they may in fact be in respect of these subjects, reckon themselves, though they may shun the *name* of Political-Economy, competent judges of the questions pertaining to it, which appear to be every one's business, the consequence must be, that their education on other points will only serve to superadd to their ignorance, the rashness of confident self-conceit.

How far either in respect of these or of other points any given community may be exposed to the dangers resulting from an ill-regulated and disproportionate growth, must depend on the rapidity of its increase in wealth and intelligence, combined with the negligence, or the obstinacy, with which its members forget, or refuse, to conform themselves to the situation in which they are placed:—to the degree of prevalence (to speak more precisely) of two opposite errors: one, that of such as deprecate the increase and spread of intellectual culture, as in itself an evil, though an evil which, after all, they can only murmur at, but not effectually repress; and look back with vain regret on those ages of primitive rudeness and torpid ignorance, which they cannot recall; the other, that of those whose views, though more cheerful, are not more enlightened—who hail with joy every symptom of any kind of advancement, without at all troubling themselves to secure an equable and well-balanced advancement; or apprehending, or ever thinking of, any probable mischief from the want of it. The one

party sighs for the restoration of infancy; the other exults in the approach of a distorted maturity.

This subject, if fully developed, would alone occupy a considerable volume. It will be sufficient for our present purpose, to have merely pointed out to you the considerations which deserve your attention, and to have slightly hinted at the circumstances which may occasion one community to avail itself better, and another worse, of the advantages which wealth and civilization afford, with a view to moral improvement.

It is plain, that if, of two communities equal in wealth, the one were to make the wisest, the other the most unwise, use of this advantage, their moral conditions would be immensely different; though it would be not the less true, that a real advantage had been placed within the reach of both.

Let it be supposed, for instance, that in the one, the higher classes were anxiously occupied in diffusing the blessings of education among the people, and had provided adequately for the instruction both of children and adults; taking care that the *most essential* points of education should occupy the foremost place, and the next to them, the next; and exercising the judgment of a cultivated understanding as to the relative importance of each, and as to the best modes of conveying instruction in each: let us suppose their wealth to be employed in making an adequate provision for a sufficient number of respectable religious teachers, and of places of worship, to meet fully the wants of their population: let the schools again, for the education of the children of their own class, be conducted on a similar principle; making sound religious instruction, and the cultivation of sincere and practical religious habits, the primary object of attention, and placing every other branch of education in its proper order; taking especial care not to let shewy accomplishments become a readier path to distinction than substantial cultivation of the understanding; and guarding most sedulously against that besetting danger, the introduction into their schools of a wrong code of morality—a *false point of honour*, distinct from, or at variance with, Christian principle: let their Universities, again, and other institutions for ulterior education, be so regulated as to exhibit in the disposition of their endowments, the full efficiency of well-directed wealth, in carrying on a plan of manly instruction, of which the foundations should have been laid in earlier years; not sending forth into the world, to assume the office of legislators and directors of public affairs, such as shall have completed their education without having ever even begun the study of the subjects with which they are to be conversant, except so far as they may have taken upon trust some long-venerated prejudices; but men qualified for the high profession they are to

follow, by a preparation analogous to what is required even of the humblest artisan:—let these objects, and such as these, occupy the attention, and employ the resources of an enlightened and opulent community—let these be, I do not say, *perfectly attained*, (since perfection is not to be expected of man,) but at least sedulously *aimed at*,—proposed *as* objects—thought of; (and this surely is no impossibility:)—and let the other community, perversely or negligently, pursue, in all or in many of these points, an opposite course; and it is easy to pronounce which of the two is employing its wealth with the better prospect of success, in attaining superior objects;—which is likely to improve, and which, to stand still or fall back, in respect of true national greatness;—which is the more advanced, and has the fairer prospect of advancing towards a higher and better kind of civilization than any nation has hitherto exhibited. And yet each party shall have received perhaps the very same number of Talents, though the one promises fair to double them, and the other is in danger of having them taken away.

I have thought it best thus to introduce the subject of Political-Economy, by directing your attention to some of the topics by which the current prejudices against the study may be removed, and its importance evinced, because I feel certain that you will often have occasion to encounter such prejudices, and will often meet with persons who underrate that importance.

In my next Lecture, I shall endeavour to explain some practical principles relative to the mode in which the Science should be studied, which I think ought to be kept in view by those who are engaged in, and especially by those who are first entering on, the pursuit.

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Lecture IX

It is not my design, either now or hereafter, to attempt delivering a complete and detailed system of Political-Economy. It seems to me, for several reasons, more desirable to endeavour to suggest (as I propose to do in the present Lecture,) such general principles of procedure as may be of service to the student in his pursuits, and as may serve to facilitate, not to supersede, his profitable perusal of works already before the public. It may be desirable also from time to time to suggest refutations of prevailing errors relative either to Political-Economy generally (such as I have noticed in the preceding Lectures) or to particular questions in it;—to comment on the several doctrines maintained by various writers; and to discuss any particular points of an interesting character, which they may have either omitted, or not sufficiently dwelt on.

But a complete course of Political-Economy, which should discuss every question of importance that properly comes under the province of the science, would (unless so much compressed as to be with difficulty followed by the hearer) occupy a space far beyond what is allotted to any single professor; and at the same time would comprise much of what the student might find well treated of in books already extant; not to mention the late Professor's Lectures, which I hope will within two or three years be added to the catalogue. Add to which, that, even if such a complete course were to be delivered by any one professor, it is not likely that the majority of his class would remain, throughout, the same.

I propose then in the present Lecture (which will conclude this course) to offer, chiefly for the use of those who are entering on the study, some general observations on the character of it, and on the method in which it should be pursued.

It is a rule as important in this as in most other studies, though here more frequently violated, "to begin at the beginning:"—not to rush at once to the discussion of insulated questions, however interesting; but to approach these with the advantage of a systematic and familiar acquaintance with the leading principles. In no study is the opposite procedure more common. One may frequently hear persons who have never taken the pains to bestow any regular attention on the science, proceed to the discussion of some of the most complicated questions pertaining to it; and, giving an opinion, or perhaps asking the opinion of some one who is supposed to have made those matters his study, as to the nature and effects, for instance, of the national debt, or the operation of the poor-laws,—or of absenteeism; without having ever settled in

their own minds what they consider Wealth to consist in, or what are the fundamental laws that regulate its distribution. And perhaps they will be dissatisfied if the grounds of the opinion given are not made perfectly clear and satisfactory to their minds; and will attribute this, either to some defect in the science itself, or to some incapacity in him whom they are consulting. But this is as if one who declined entering on the regular study of Geometry, and had no acquaintance with the definitions of Euclid, should consult some mathematical professor as to the measurement of altitudes, or the squaring of the circle; and complain that the explanation and proof given him were not satisfactory; or as if one who had not learned the rudiments of Chemistry, should find fault with a chemist for not making perfectly clear to him the decomposition of the alkalies.

There is "*no royal road*" to Political-Economy, any more than to Geometry. But the error I am speaking of is much more frequent in this than in other subjects; because men are apt to suppose that questions relating to *common* life, and which are involved in transactions in which almost every one takes some share, must be capable of being settled by a *common* degree of attention, and without need of systematic study. Whereas this circumstance adds to the difficulty, on account of our liability, in any subject, to mistake *familiar acquaintance* for accurate *knowledge*;—from our having, in addition to all that is to be learnt, much also to unlearn, of prejudices insensibly imbibed,—and from the influence of personal interests and feelings in biassing the judgment, on almost every question that can arise. Had this been the case with mathematical questions, the demonstrations of Euclid (as was long ago observed) would not have commanded universal assent.

It may be asked, however, with respect to the subject before us, what *is* the *beginning*? It is a science which professes to have its foundation on *facts*; are we then to begin the study by collecting from all quarters,—from History—Statistical accounts—Travels, and all other sources, as great an amount as possible of all the facts that we can conceive to have any kind of bearing on the subject? And, after spending some years in accumulating a variety of information, are we, then only, to proceed to arrange the materials, and deduce from them some general principles? I mention this, because I have heard such a procedure as this recommended by a very intelligent man; and because I believe notions approaching to his, to be not very uncommon. But the character of the study in question I conceive to be totally different from what these would imply.

Political-Economy, is indeed a science which is founded on facts, and which has a practical application in reference to facts; but

which yet requires for the establishment of its fundamental principles very little information beyond what is almost unconsciously, and indeed unavoidably, acquired by every one. And in this respect it is distinguished from many other sciences.

Every branch of study, it should be observed, which can at all claim the character of a science (in the widest acceptation,) requires two things: 1. A correct *ascertainment of the data* from which we are to reason; and, 2. Correctness in the process of *deducing conclusions* from them. But these two processes, though both are in every case indispensable, are, in different cases, extremely different in their relative difficulty and amount;—in the space, if I may so speak, which they occupy in each branch of study. In pure mathematics, for instance, we set out from arbitrary definitions, and postulates, readily comprehended, which are the principles from which, by the help of axioms hardly needing even to be stated, our reasonings proceed. No facts whatever require to be ascertained; no process of induction to be carried on; the reasoning-process is nearly every thing. In Geology, (to take an instance of an opposite kind) the most extensive information is requisite; and though sound reasoning is called for in making use of the knowledge acquired, it is well known what erroneous systems have been devised, by powerful reasoners, who have satisfied themselves too soon with observations not sufficiently accurate and extensive.

Various branches of Natural-philosophy occupy, in this respect, various intermediate places. The two processes which I have elsewhere³⁸ endeavoured to describe, under the titles of "Physical investigation" and "Logical investigation," will, in different cases, differ very much in their relative importance and difficulty. The science of Optics, for instance, furnishes an example of one approaching very near to pure mathematics; since, though the foundation of it consists in facts ascertained by experiment, these are fewer and more easily ascertained than those pertaining to other branches of Natural-philosophy. A very small number of principles, comprehensible even without being verified by the senses, being assumed, the deductions from them are so extensive, that, as is well known, a blind mathematician, who had no remembrance of seeing, gave an approved course of lectures on the subject. In the *application*, however, of this science to the explanation of many of the curious natural phenomena that occur, a most extensive and exact knowledge of facts is called for.

In the case of Political-Economy, that the facts on which the science is founded are few, and simple, and within the range of every one's observation, would, I think, never have been doubted, but for the error of confounding together the theoretical and the practical branches of it;—the *science* of what is properly called Political-

Economy,—and the practical *employment* of it. The theory supplies principles, which we may afterwards apply practically to an indefinite number of various cases; and in order to make this application correctly, of course an accurate knowledge of the circumstances of each case is indispensable. But it should be remembered that the same may be said even with respect to Geometry. As soon as we come to the practical branch of it, and apply it in actual measurements, a minute attention to facts is requisite for an accurate result. And in each practical question in Political-Economy that may arise, we must be prepared to ascertain, and allow for, various disturbing causes, which may more or less modify the results obtained from our general principles; just as, in Mechanics, when we come to practice, we must take into account the thickness, and weight, and the degrees of flexibility, of ropes and levers.

The facts then which it may be necessary to ascertain for the practical decision of any *single* case that may arise, are, of course, in Political-Economy (as in respect of the *application* of the principles of *any* science), indefinite in number, and sometimes difficult to collect; the facts on which the general principles of the science are *founded*, come within the range of every one's experience.

"By practical men," (says the late Professor, in his introductory Lecture,) "are meant, I suppose, those who have had experience in the matters which Political-Economy considers. But who has not had that experience? The revenue of all men must consist of rent, profit, or wages; they must all exchange it for commodities or services. They all know, or have equally the means of knowing (for it can be discovered only by reflection), why they set a high value on some things, a low one on others, and disregard a third class.

"An academical body is not very commercial; but probably there is no one present who does not make twenty exchanges every week. If this experience is not enough to enable him to understand how the human passions act in buying and selling, he would be unable to comprehend it though his transactions equalled in number and amount those of Baring or Rothschild. It is in fact as impossible to avoid being a practical Economist, as to avoid being a practical Logician."

If then any one should attempt the plan of collecting extensive historical and statistical details, as preparatory to his entering on the study of this science, he would be burdening his memory with an immense, and (as far as relates to the particular study before us) *confused* mass of materials; out of which he would afterwards

have to select such facts as bear on the subject, from a multitude of others, which, for that purpose, would be quite irrelevant.

But such a procedure would not merely imply a needless labour; it would be worse probably than a mere waste of time and toil; for two reasons:

1st. The student would be likely to bestow least attention on the facts which, for the present purpose, demand the most; and, *ice versâ*, 2dly. He would be likely to form, unconsciously, an erroneous theory.

1st. He would be liable to be misled by the circumstance, that historians and travellers occupy themselves principally (as is natural) with the relation of whatever is *remarkable*, and different to what commonly takes place in their own time or country. They do not dwell on the ordinary transactions of human life (which are precisely what furnish the data on which Political-Economy proceeds), but on every thing that appears an exception to general rules, and in any way such as could not have been anticipated. The sort of information which the Political-Economist wants, is introduced, for the most part, only incidentally and obliquely, and is to be collected imperfectly from scattered allusions. So that if you will give a rapid glance, for instance, at the history of these islands from the time of the Norman conquest to the present day, you will find that the differences between the two states of the Country, in most of the points with which our science is conversant, are but very imperfectly accounted for in the main outline of the narrative.

If it were possible that we could have a full report of the common business and common conversation, in the markets, the shops, and the wharfs, of Athens and Piræus, for a single day, it would probably throw more light on the state of things in Greece at that time, in all that Political-Economy is most concerned with, than all the histories that are extant put together.

There is a danger, therefore, that the mind of the student, who proceeds in the manner I have described, may have been even drawn off from the class of facts which are, for the purpose in question, most important to be attended to.

For it should be observed, that, in all studies there is a danger to be guarded against, which Bacon, with his usual acuteness, has pointed out: that most men are so anxious to make, or seek for, some application of what they have been learning, as not unfrequently to apply it improperly, by endeavouring, lest their knowledge should lie by them idle, to bring it to bear on some question to which it is irrelevant; like Horace's painter, who being

skilful in drawing a cypress, was for introducing one into the picture of a shipwreck. Bacon complains of this tendency among the logicians and metaphysicians of his day, who introduced an absurd and pernicious application of the studies in which they had been conversant, into Natural-Philosophy: "Harum artium sæpe pravus fit usus, *ne sit nullus*." But the same danger besets those conversant in every other study likewise, (Political-Economy of course not excepted) that may from time to time have occupied a large share of each man's attention. He is tempted to seek for a solution of every question on every subject, by a reference to his own favourite science or branch of knowledge; like a schoolboy when first intrusted with a knife, who is for trying its edge on every thing that comes in his way.

Now in reference to the point immediately before us, he who is well read in history and in travels, should be warned of the danger (the more on account of the real high importance of such knowledge) of misapplying it;—of supposing that because Political-Economy is conversant with *human transactions*, and he is acquainted with so much greater an amount of *human transactions* than the generality of men, he must have an advantage over them in precisely the same degree, in discussing questions of Political-Economy. Undoubtedly he *has* a great advantage, if he is careful to keep in view the true principles of the science; but otherwise, he may even labour under a disadvantage, by forgetting that (as I just now observed) the kind of transactions which are made most prominent, and occupy the chief space, in the works of historians and travellers, are usually not those of every-day-life,³⁹ with which Political-Economy is conversant. It is in the same way that an accurate *military survey* of any district, or a series of sketches accompanying a *picturesque* tour through it, may even serve to mislead one who is seeking for a knowledge of its *agricultural* condition, if he does not keep in mind the different objects which different kinds of survey have in view.

An injudicious study of history, then, may even prove an hindrance instead of a help to the forming of right views of Political-Economy. For not only are many of the transactions which are, in the historian's view, the most important, such as are the least important to the Political-Economist, but also a great proportion of them consists of what are in reality the greatest *impediments* to the progress of a society in wealth: viz. wars, revolutions, and disturbances of every kind. It is not in consequence of these, but in spite of them, that society has made the progress which in fact it has made. So that in taking such a survey as history furnishes of the course of events, e.g. for the last 800 years (the period I just now alluded to), not only do we find little mention of the causes which have so greatly increased national wealth during that period, but what we chiefly do read of is, the *counteracting* causes;

especially the wars which have been raging from time to time, to the destruction of capital, and the hindrance of improvement. Now if a ship had performed a voyage of 800 leagues, and the register of it contained an account chiefly of the contrary winds and currents, and made little mention of favourable gales, we might well be at a loss to understand how she reached her destination; and might even be led into the mistake of supposing that the contrary winds had forwarded her in her course. Yet such is History!

In the second place, it is hardly possible, however carefully any one may have abstained from setting out on his course of study with any principles of Political-Economy in his mind, that he should not, in the course of his reading, form to himself, insensibly and undesignedly, some kind of crude theory which will bias his future speculations. For as I remarked in a former lecture, Man is so formed as to theorize unconsciously; facts *will* arrange themselves in his mind under certain classes, without his having any such design; and thus the materials he has been heaping together, will have been, as it were, building themselves up, into some, probably faulty, system, while he was not aware of the process going on in his own mind.

Some persons complain, not altogether without reason, of the prevailing *ignorance* of facts, relative to this and to many other subjects; and yet it will often be found that the parties censured, though possessed of less knowledge than they ought to have, yet possess more than they know what to do with. Their deficiency in arranging and applying their knowledge,—in combining facts,—and correctly deducing and employing general principles, shall be greater than their ignorance of facts. Now to attempt remedying this fault by imparting to them additional knowledge,—to confer the advantage of wider experience on those who have not the power of profiting by experience,—is to attempt enlarging the prospect of a short-sighted man by bringing him to the top of a hill.

In the tale of Sandford and Merton, where the two boys are described as amusing themselves with building a hovel with their own hands, they lay poles horizontally on the top, and cover them with straw, so as to make a flat roof: of course the rain comes through; and Master Merton then advises to *lay on more straw*: but Sandford, the more intelligent boy, remarks that as long as the roof is flat, the rain must, sooner or later, soak through; and that the remedy is to make a new *arrangement*, and form the roof sloping. Now the idea of enlightening incorrect reasoners by additional knowledge, is an error similar to that of the flat roof; it is merely laying on *more straw*: they ought first to be taught the right way of raising the roof. Of course knowledge is necessary; so is straw to

thatch the roof: but no quantity of materials will supply the want of knowing how to build.

I believe it to be a prevailing fault of the present day, not indeed to seek too much for knowledge, but to trust to accumulation of facts as a *substitute* for accuracy in the logical processes. Had Bacon lived in the present day, I am inclined to think he would have made his chief complaint against unmethodized inquiry and illogical reasoning. Certainly he would *not* have complained of *Dialectics* as corrupting Philosophy. To guard *now* against the evils prevalent in *his* time, would be to fortify a town against battering-rams, instead of against cannon. But it is remarkable that even that abuse of Dialectics which he complains of, was rather an error connected with the reasoning-process than one arising from a want of knowledge. Men were led to false conclusions, not through mere ignorance, but from hastily assuming the correctness of the data they reasoned from, without sufficient grounds. And it is remarkable that the revolution brought about in philosophy by Bacon, was not the *effect*, but the *cause*, of increased knowledge of physical facts: it was not that men were taught to think correctly by having new phenomena brought to light; but on the contrary, they discovered new phenomena in *consequence* of a new system of philosophizing.

In fact mere ignorance, of itself, *never can do any positive harm*; it can only prevent good. The evil is done when men act on *mistaken* views;—when they *imagine themselves to know* what they do not, whether their actual knowledge be little or much; or when they are compelled to *take some step* without adequate information.

And it should be added that *false steps* are also taken by those whose knowledge of facts *is not* deficient, if they have what may be called a *logical* deficiency. Whereas mere want of information, (and it is a want which *all* must labour under in some points; since no one can know all things) only compels us to *stand still*. A clear, logical, accurate mind, is always useful *as far as it goes*; though in this or that class of subjects it may be hampered by ignorance of facts. Whereas, with an inaccurate reasoner, the greatest accumulation of knowledge only serves to lead him the further astray. He who knows how to build, but is short of materials, must build but a *small* house, till he can collect more materials: but to one who knows not how to build, the greatest abundance of materials either lies useless in a heap, or is so put together as to fall down and crush the inhabitant.

Let the student then, while he is careful not to let his judgment be biassed by any theory not borne out by facts, begin, and proceed, by making *use of* the knowledge he possesses and acquires, and

carry with him in his inquiries such principles as he shall have been enabled satisfactorily to establish; and the ground-plan, as it were, of the building being thus correctly laid out, he will be enabled to employ profitably all the materials that from time to time come to hand, in carrying on the superstructure.

If the view which has been taken of this study be correct, it will be plain that the prominent part, and that which demands the principal share of our attention, in Political-Economy, strictly so called (i.e. considered as to the *principles* of the science), must be the reasoning-process;—the accurate and dexterous application of Logical principles, in combining, and drawing inferences from, those few and simple data from which we set out;—in short, the Logical, not the Physical investigation.

And in this, a great, and almost peculiar difficulty presents itself, in the want of a well-constructed and established nomenclature. The terms which may be considered as forming the technical language of Political-Economy, being all taken from common discourse, in which most of them are used with great laxity of signification, stand more in need, than those of almost any science, of accurate definition, and rigid confinement to their defined sense; and yet they have (probably for that very reason) seldom been defined at all by the writers who employ them.

I have said, that the very circumstance which makes a definition the *more* necessary, is apt to lead to the *omission* of it: for when any terms are employed that are *not* familiarly introduced into ordinary discourse, such as "parallelogram," or "sphere," or "tangent;" "pencil of rays," or "refraction,"—"oxygen," or "alkali,"—the learner is ready to inquire, and the writer to anticipate the inquiry, what is meant by this or that term? And though in such cases it is undoubtedly a correct procedure to answer this inquiry by a definition, yet, of the two cases, a definition is even more necessary in the other, where it is not so likely to be called for;—where the word, not being new to the student, but familiar to his ear, from its employment in every-day discourse, is liable to the ambiguity which is almost always the result. For in respect of words that sound "something new and strange," though it is, as I have said, much better to define them in the outset, yet even without this, the student would gradually collect their meaning pretty correctly, as he proceeded in his study of any treatise; from having nothing to mislead him,—nothing from which to form his notions at all, except the manner in which the terms were employed in the work itself that is before him. And the very desire he had felt of a definition would lead him in this way to form one, and generally a sufficiently correct one, for himself.

It is otherwise with terms to which we are familiarly accustomed. Of these, the student does not usually crave definitions, from supposing, for that reason, that he understands them well enough: though perhaps (without suspecting it) he has in reality been accustomed to hear them employed in various senses, and to attach but a vague and inaccurate notion to them. If you speak to an uninstructed hearer, of any thing that is *spherical*, or *circular*, or *cylindrical*, he will probably beg for an explanation of your meaning; but if you tell him of any thing that is *round*, it will not strike him that any explanation is needed; though he has been accustomed to employ the word, indiscriminately, in *all* the senses denoted by the other three.

I have dwelt thus fully on points which may be thought almost self-evident to an academical audience, because I know that you will be not unlikely to meet with some persons, not only who have overlooked, but even who openly oppose these principles;—who honestly avow their dislike of accurate and precise language on this subject, and object to "the pedantic practice of defining terms." Many of them probably speak thus from really knowing no better;—from having a superficial and ill-cultivated mind. Others perhaps know well enough what they are doing, and are engaged by interest or prejudice on the side of some doctrines which they are conscious cannot abide the test of clear and accurate reasoning. The thief, according to Homer's allusion, rejoices in a fog:

κλεπτοῦ δὲ τε νυκτοῦ ἀμεινω

The only effect which declamations against the absurdity of using precise language in Political-Economy will have on a man of well-trained understanding, will be to put him on his guard against such declaimers; well knowing what description of persons are usually foremost in a mob that is clamouring against Police and Gas-lights.

Definitions then (such I mean as shall serve to preclude ambiguity)⁴⁰ are most wanted in those very cases where (as in Political-Economy) both the reader and the writer are the most apt not to perceive the want, from the terms being such as are in common use. And there is this additional difficulty; that here it is necessary to define and to use each term in some sense corresponding as nearly as possible to common use;—agreeably to some *one*, and, if possible, the most usual of the several popular meanings. Else, there will be some justice in the complaint (which at any rate we must expect *will* be made, whether justly or unjustly) against our making innovations in language, and endeavouring to attach a new sense to words. This complaint I say will most likely be made, because it really is, to a certain degree, an innovation in

language (though for scientific purposes indispensable) to confine to a precise and definite sense an expression which in ordinary discourse is used loosely and in various senses. But still we should endeavour to innovate as little as possible.

Moreover, even after a definition shall have been fully comprehended and admitted, there will be need of continual care to avoid sliding insensibly into ambiguity by employing the term occasionally in some different sense, at variance with the definition, but, conformable to one of the popular meanings.

For a specimen of the popular ambiguity of the terms most employed in Political-Economy, and of the tendency to neglect the defining of them, or to depart in practice from the defined sense, I may refer you to the late Professor's account (placed in Appendix to Elements of Logic) of the different definitions or employments by political-economists, of some of the commonest, and most important terms: viz. Value, Wealth, Labour, Capital, Rent, Wages, Profit. There is no one of these in the use of which all the most eminent writers have agreed with each other; and hardly one of them in the use of which some one or other of these writers has not occasionally disagreed with himself. Mr. Senior remarks in his introductory Lecture, "I almost regret now that I did not suggest in each place the definition which appeared to me the most convenient." That he did not, however, I am inclined to think better on the whole; because objections might have been raised against each of his definitions; the discussion of which would have had the effect of drawing off attention from that which is perhaps, in the outset, the most essential point; viz. a full perception both of the *importance* of accurate definitions, and of the existing *want* of them. When the reader is brought to perceive clearly the discrepancy of writers on a scientific subject in their use of language, and to reflect on the confusion and inaccuracy which must be the result, the first and perhaps most essential step is made. The existence, and the character, of the disease being ascertained and fully admitted, it is then time enough to propose a remedy. The difficulties in the study of Political-Economy, will appear much less disheartening, when it is distinctly perceived in what they principally consist; and the uncertainty often complained of in the study will be traced to its true cause;—a cause which it is in our power to remove, since it lies, not in the subject-matter itself, but in the inaccurate and inattentive reasoning of those who have written on it.

Let the student then consider correctness of the reasoning-process, and (with a view to this) a clear definition of technical terms, and careful adherence to the sense defined, as the first—the most important—and the most difficult point, in the science of Political-

Economy. Let him by all means collect facts to the greatest possible amount, that are likely to throw light on any of the questions to be discussed; but let him be prepared to state and to reason upon these in the most precise language; otherwise he will only be encumbering himself with a confused heap of materials, which will be rather an impediment than an assistance.

And when much doubt has been thrown over any question that arises, let him apply the utmost attention to ascertain, both from the existing discussions of it, and from the nature of the case, whether the difficulty springs from the mistatement or ignorance of facts, or (as will much oftener happen) from some ambiguity of language, or other fault of reasoning. The latter is not only, as I have said, a more common source of error in the present subject, but also in itself more important; because a mistake as to the facts of any particular case, leads merely to an erroneous conclusion as to *that* case, and does not interfere with the correctness of the results obtained in other cases where we may be better informed; whereas the ambiguous use of a term may vitiate a whole train of reasoning, and thus establish an unsound general principle, which will lead to an indefinite number of errors in particular cases.

If, for instance, Mr. Ricardo (to take one of the instances Mr. Senior has introduced) had merely been under a mistake as to the existing rate of wages in some particular Country, this would indeed have vitiated his conclusions relative to that Country, but need not have affected the general principles of his work: but by speaking of wages sometimes (in the ordinary sense) as a certain *amount*, and sometimes (in the sense he introduced) as a certain *proportion*, he has involved the whole subject in perplexity. He, and several who have followed him,⁴¹ have spoken of *high or low wages*, sometimes in reference to the labourer's receiving so much *per day*, sometimes to his receiving so much *per cent.* of the price of the commodity he produces: and thus a vein, as it were, of ambiguity and confusion, runs through all the discussions connected with the subject.

Dr. Hamilton, in his work on the "Progress of Society,"—which I mention, both because when Mr. Senior's statement was written of the various uses of terms by Political-Economists, this author's were not included, the work not having been then published; and also because, notwithstanding the laxity I complain of in his employment of language, there is much in the book to repay the perusal,—Dr. Hamilton, I say, uses "Wealth" in one part of his work, in the ordinary sense; and censures writers on Political-Economy, for treating of that too exclusively, and not enough considering human welfare in general, which is not wholly dependent on wealth; while in other places he employs wealth as synonymous with welfare.

Again, the doctrine, as mischievous as it is, I conceive, unfounded, that since there is a tendency in population to increase faster than the means of subsistence, hence, the pressure of population against subsistence may be expected to become greater and greater in each successive generation, (unless new and extraordinary remedies are resorted to,) and thus to produce a progressive diminution of human welfare;—this doctrine, which some maintain in defiance of the fact that all civilized countries have a greater proportionate amount of wealth, now, than formerly,—may be traced chiefly to an undetected ambiguity in the word "tendency," which forms a part of the middle term of the argument. By a "tendency" towards a certain result is sometimes meant, "the existence of a cause which, if *operating unimpeded*, would produce that result." In this sense it may be said, with truth, that the earth, or any other body moving round a centre, has a *tendency* to fly off at a tangent; i.e. the centrifugal force operates in that direction, though it is controlled by the centripetal; or, again, that man has a *greater tendency* to fall prostrate than to stand erect; i.e. the attraction of gravitation and the position of the centre of gravity, are such that the least breath of air would overset him, but for the voluntary exertion of muscular force: and, again, that population has a *tendency* to increase beyond subsistence; i.e. there are in man propensities which, if unrestrained, lead to that result.

But sometimes, again, "a tendency towards a certain result" is understood to mean "the existence of such a state of things that that result *may be expected to take place*." Now it is in these *two* senses that the word is used, in the two premisses of the argument in question. But in this latter sense, the earth has a greater tendency to remain in its orbit than to fly off from it; man has a greater tendency to stand erect than to fall prostrate; and (as may be proved by comparing a more barbarous with a more civilized period in the history of any Country) in the progress of society, subsistence has a tendency to increase at a greater rate than population. In this Country, for instance, much as our population has increased within the last five centuries, it yet bears a far less ratio to subsistence (though still a much greater than could be wished) than it did five hundred years ago.

Inaccuracies of this kind lead of course to those discrepancies and occasional absurdities from which some persons infer that Political-Economy is throughout a chimæra; and that to decide all the questions of which it treats, by random guesses, and without any attempt to gain fixed principles, is preferable to all thought of systematic study: in the same manner as the errors and the bitter contests of theologians have led some to decry or deride all religion; under the name of which indeed, yet more, and more

mischievous absurdities have been broached than even Political-Economists can be charged with.

It may be worth observing that, in examining, framing, or altering, definitions in Political-Economy, you will find in most persons a tendency (as in other subjects also) to introduce *accidental*, along with, or instead of, *essential* circumstances: I mean, that the notion they attach to each term, and the explanation they would give of it, shall embrace some circumstances, *generally, but, not always*, connected with the thing they are speaking of; and which might, accordingly, (by the strict account of an accident) be "absent or present, the essential character of the subject remaining the same." A definition framed from such circumstances, though of course incorrect, and likely at some time or other to mislead us, will not unfrequently obtain reception, from its answering the purpose of a correct one, at a particular time and place.

Another source of difficulty connected with language, is, that, in respect of any subject concerning which the generality of men are accustomed to speak much and familiarly, in their conversation relative to that, they usually introduce ELLIPTICAL expressions; very clearly understood in the outset, but whose elliptical character comes, in time, to be so far lost sight of, that confusion of language, and thence, of thought, is sometimes the result. Thus, the expression of a person's possessing a fortune of 10,000*l.* is an elliptical phrase; meaning, at full length, that all his property if sold would exchange for that sum of money. And in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred, no error or confusion of thought arises from this language; but there is no doubt that it mainly contributed to introduce and foster the notion that Wealth consists especially of gold and silver (these being used to *measure* and *express* its amount); and that the sure way to enrich a country is to promote the importation, and prevent the export, of the precious metals; with all the other absurdities of what is commonly called "the mercantile System."

Again, when a man complains of being "out of *work*,"—is "looking out for employment,"—and hopes for subsistence by labour, this is elliptical language; well enough understood in general. We know that what man lives on, is food; and that he who is said to be looking out for work, is in want of food and other necessaries, which he hopes to procure in exchange for his labour, and has no hope of obtaining without it. But there is no doubt that this elliptical language has contributed to lead those who were not attentive to the character of the expression, to regard every thing as beneficial to the labouring classes which *furnishes employment*, i.e. gives trouble; even though no consequent increase should take

place in the Country, of the food and other commodities destined for their support.

What has been said may serve sufficiently to explain my meaning in laying down as the most essential circumstance, and that which demands the most diligent care, in this science, an attention to the accuracy of the logical processes, and particularly to the precision of the language employed, with a perpetual watchfulness against the ambiguities to which it is, in this subject, especially liable.

I need only remark, in conclusion, that, this being the case, you must be prepared to encounter occasionally in any treatise on the subject that is really worth studying, a good deal of somewhat repulsive logical *dryness* of style; which in fact is unavoidable in a course of rigidly-accurate reasoning on abstract subjects. The discussion of them may indeed be more or less enlivened by appropriate and interesting illustrations; and more or less skill may be employed in making the language terse and luminous, and the arrangement easy to be followed; but eloquence, in the sense of what is called *fine writing*, is not to be looked for in the treatment of scientific subjects; nor consequently is much scientific instruction to be gained from the works of those who are ambitious of writing finely. There is a neatness indeed, and a sort of beauty resulting from the appearance of healthful vigour, in a well-tilled corn-field; but one which is overspread with blue and red flowers, gives no great promise of a crop.

Those therefore who, as writers or as readers, can take no interest in anything but brilliant description and impassioned declamation, should be exhorted to occupy themselves on some other subject, better adapted for the display of eloquence, and in which such a display is less likely to lead to mischievous results.

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Appendix

Extracts from the Evidence of His Grace the ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN as taken before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, appointed to inquire into the collection and payment of Tithes in Ireland.

What is your opinion of the permanent system upon which the provision for the Church should be placed in Ireland?

I should mention that I think it would be a very dangerous thing to legislate in a way that should carry on the face of it the appearance of relief for Ireland, without holding out a prospect, at least, of some, if not the same, system of relief in England; because if it were understood that relief from what has been lately and is still, in many instances, complained of as a grievance in England, was given in Ireland, in consequence of violent and turbulent measures, it seems to me that that would be a bonus on insurrection in England, and I have no doubt the most fearful results would follow.

Does not the Tithe in England stand upon a very different footing from that in Ireland?

It does; but though *all* the causes which occasion it to be unpopular in Ireland do not exist in England, yet I think that many of them do; and the fact is, that it has been complained of as a grievance in many instances in England; partly on just grounds, and partly on others which are imaginary; but still it is felt as a grievance. There is, I am convinced, so much disposition to oppose Tithe, dormant, as it were, in England, that if in Ireland resistance were rewarded by concession, many persons in England would immediately try the experiment whether Tithes could not be diverted to the purpose of providing a substitute for the poor-rates. One of the topics which has been the most strenuously resorted to by many of the leaders of the opposition to Tithe, is, that a fund by that means would be provided for the relief of the poor. Now in England, perhaps, that might be urged with quite as great force; for many are ignorant enough to believe that the sacrifice of the Tithes for the maintenance of paupers would not only prevent all distress in the country, but remove entirely the burden of poor-rates; and I have no doubt that resistance would be generated by a relief held out to Ireland, accompanied by no prospect or promise of any thing being done with respect to the mode of collecting church-revenue in England.

Without reference to that consideration, what would you propose in Ireland?

I had contemplated a plan of commutation for England long before I had any thoughts of being settled in Ireland; and I have not found the circumstances of that country sufficiently different from those of England to make it less desirable in Ireland; but rather even more so; though perhaps some greater difficulties may be incurred in the details. I will shortly state the outline of that plan, after a few prefatory remarks.

The measure which in any case may be the first in point of importance may not always be the first to be considered in point of time. Those whose main object is to commute Tithes, may perhaps find that that object will be the most easily accomplished through some preliminary arrangements, which they may think in themselves insignificant. With respect to the desirableness of such an arrangement, I would premise another remark; that an apparent advantage or disadvantage may be in effect a real one in proportion as it is *believed* to be such. If a sick man's mind is soothed or is irritated by some application which is in itself inert, that soothing or that irritation may produce a real effect upon the disorder; a grievance may be imaginary, and yet the complaint founded upon it may lead to consequences by no means imaginary.

There are many reasons (with which I will not trouble your Lordships at present) which induce me to think that Tithes are a disadvantageous kind of church property generally. And I would propose, as a preliminary step to commutation, (preliminary, I mean, in order, not necessarily in time; because both may be simultaneously introduced,) that the whole of the church-property, in each diocese, or archdeaconry, or district that may be selected, should be thrown into a common stock, in the hands of a dean and Chapter, or a Board or College, or whatever else it might be called; which should be constituted a Corporation, and should distribute, according to a valuation, the share due to each incumbent, in proportion to the value of the Tithes of his benefice; exactly in the same manner as each College at Oxford or Cambridge, manages, through its bursars, the joint property, and allots to each fellow, scholar, exhibitioner, &c. his proper share out of the common fund. A very small per-centage, compared with what is paid by many incumbents to their agents, would afford sufficient remuneration to the commissioner, since it would be far less trouble in proportion to collect the revenues of fifty parishes than of one. There would then, even if no commutation at all took place, be a removal or alleviation of almost all the evils which are complained of. There would be an end of the frauds which take place in the collection of Tithes and other church-dues; of the bickerings about Tithes; of refusing to go

to church on account of personal enmity with the clergyman, and the like; and leases of the church property might be granted without any more difficulty than now occurs in respect of the property of colleges and chapters. But no plan would so much facilitate commutation. One of the commonest objections to a commutation for land is, "Where, in some parishes, can you find land to serve the purpose?" and "you will have to build farmhouses and barns, and so forth, and to keep them in repair; and if a good tenant could not be found, the parson must become a farmer," &c. Now, on the proposed plan, Tithe might be commuted by the Corporation, for land, wherever land could be most easily found. It might be done, if precipitate changes were thought inexpedient, as gradually as could be wished, by private arrangement in each particular instance; that is, by allowing the Tithes to be redeemed, if not for land, for money, to be laid out in the purchase of land; and if any disputes arose, the pastor might remain perfectly at peace with his people, quite unconnected with the business, as much as a fellow of any College, residing in a parish where his College holds property of any kind. If any farmer should come to complain to a fellow of a College, under those circumstances, about rents or tithes, he would at once explain to him that he must apply to the bursar of the College.

Do you consider the rent of land to be a more advantageous provision for the Clergy than Tithe?

Very much so. I have heard persons, not deficient in intelligence, express an apprehension that if Tithes were commuted for land, the Clergy might hereafter not be able, in the progress of national wealth, to maintain their present place in society. But this proceeds from a view which I conceive is just the reverse of the truth. As national wealth increases, Tithe-property, generally speaking, *diminishes* in its relative value, as compared with land. In a new Country, Tithe may greatly exceed rent; indeed in many young Colonies uncleared land will fetch absolutely no rent at all. And there are probably many districts in which an acre of land, whose gross produce, we will say, is worth 50*s.*, might be rented for 2*s.* 6*d.*, subject to a payment of Tithe (supposing Tithe established there,) which would of course be double the rent; there would remain 42*s.* 6*d.* for the expenses and farmer's profit. Now, if we suppose the gross produce of this land to become of the value of 100*s.*, through the increase of population, and the construction of roads, &c., while (by improvement in agricultural skill and implements, and diminution of the wages of labour) the expense of cultivation remained the same, the result would be (supposing no unoccupied land to remain in the country) an enormous disproportion between Rent and Tithes; for the farmer would be content to receive, as before, (since if he was not, others would be,)

42s. 6d. for his expenses and profits. The Tithe would be 10s.; only double of what it was before; and the remaining 47s. 6d. would go to the landlord as rent; which would consequently be increased nineteen times. This instance may serve to explain my meaning as to the comparative tendency to increase of Tithes and of Rent.

It may be answered that this reasoning applies only so far as the increased value of the produce is not caused by increased *expenditure*. Garden ground, it may be said, in the neighbourhood of a large town, though letting for a high rent, will often yield, especially through the aid of artificial heat, and other expensive processes, a gross produce of which the actual tenth would far exceed the rent. I will not deny that in some (though I apprehend few) instances, the Tithe actually paid may approach to, or even exceed the Rent; but in most cases of highly cultivated ground I have found that a fallacy is very apt to prevail in the computation of the comparative value of Rent and Tithe. Rent is always computed according to what the landlord actually *receives* or *could* obtain; whereas Tithe is often computed as the actual tenth of the gross produce, even in cases where nothing approaching to that either is, or possibly *could* be, obtained. In many cases of very expensive cultivation the tithe-owner (however covetous) must, from regard to his own interest, be content with much less than a tenth, because if he were to insist on a full tenth, that high cultivation would cease to be profitable, and would be abandoned. The Tithe of nursery-grounds in the parish of Kensington is half a guinea an acre; the gross annual value of the produce of each acre must far exceed five guineas; in all probability it exceeds one hundred guineas. Indeed I am convinced, that in the majority of instances at least, the tendency of Tithes, even if estimated according to the utmost that *can actually be obtained*, is, to diminish in value as compared with Rent, in the progress of wealth. The circumstance which probably has chiefly contributed to keep this tendency out of sight is, that in a great many instances Land has been *subdivided*, while Livings have not. The incumbent therefore of a given parish shall not be much worse off, as compared with the neighbouring land owners, than the incumbent of the same parish three hundred years ago; but then these land owners shall be perhaps three or four times more *numerous*; and all the parishioners increased in proportion. And indeed it is one great additional evil of the endowment of Tithes, that the provision for the maintenance of the Clergy diminishes in many instances precisely in proportion as the call for clerical labour increases. Several of the Livings near large cities, for example, were formerly worth more than double their present value, when much of the land which is now covered with houses consisted of corn-fields.

According to your Grace's knowledge and experience, are the landed properties of colleges managed pretty beneficially for the parties interested, and for the community at large?

I have had experience of only one college; which I have had reason to believe is in some respects better managed than the average; but, from all I can learn, it appears to me that they are much better managed than those belonging to a *Corporation-sole*; I mean, than in the case where the endowment is in the hands of a single individual who has a life interest, and only a life interest, in it, and has nothing to do with the appointment of his successor.

Are they as well managed as the property of individuals?

Not so as to produce the same absolute rent, I should think, in any instance; but I conceive that upon the whole the lands in most instances that have come under my knowledge are not worse cultivated, nor the people that live upon them, either as farmers or as labourers, less happy. And the charity-schools and hospitals, and institutions of that kind, that are upon them or connected with them, are supported, I should say, in many instances with more liberality than if they were in the hands of individuals. But I have no doubt that the rent paid to those colleges has in all instances fallen short of the rent which would have been paid to individuals.

Do you consider that the same objections that might be made to a commutation of Tithe into land in England would apply equally, under all the circumstances of their state, to the Clergy in Ireland, if so provided for?

I have no doubt that a great many of the Clergy in Ireland, who, if they were as well off as those in England, and had as good a security for their revenues at the present time as the Clergy in England, would be opposed to any kind of commutation, would *now* accept this gladly. Many of them have expressed to me their willingness, if they thought their property was not to be confiscated, to accept any thing they could depend upon, instead of having their lives in perpetual insecurity in endeavouring to obtain any portion of their property, and in many cases obtaining nothing at all.

The question was not with reference merely to the feelings of the Clergy themselves, but with reference to the general expediency of such a provision for the Church; whether the same objections that might be entertained by some persons in England to the Clergy being made landed proprietors, would apply in the same degree to Ireland?

I am not aware of any objection that could be applied in one country that would not apply to the other.

Supposing it to be, not in the hands of the commissioners, but in the hands of the incumbent, would not the Irish incumbent be in a better situation for the purpose of deriving his income from the land than the English?

I cannot say whether he would be *absolutely* in a better situation than the English; the *exchange* would be more for his advantage; he would be much more a gainer by the exchange, considering how obnoxious Tithes are in Ireland to the Roman-Catholics.

Would not the circumstance of the great bulk of the population being Roman Catholic, and the circumstance of the limited religious duties which the clergyman of the Protestant Church in Ireland would have to perform, make his occupation of land less objectionable than it would be in a parish entirely Protestant?

It is possible it might; but I should be sorry that the clergyman should become, in either country, principally a farmer. In fact, however, if the clergyman takes his Tithes in kind, he must be occupied in the very worst parts of the business of farming; because he must become a general small dealer in a great variety of commodities; which seems to me to be, for a clergyman, the most objectionable part of a farmer's life. He must collect the Tithes from a great many individuals, and then have numerous transactions to sell again the different kinds of produce to different purchasers.

Have you a knowledge of any instances, or have any been stated to you, in which any difficulty has been experienced in obtaining the rent for glebe land being the property of the Church?

I have heard some instances; I have none in the papers before me; but there have been instances mentioned to me in conversation which I cannot precisely detail. There are, however, a vast number of instances in Ireland, in which it is to be easily ascertained that there was glebe land originally belonging to the minister. There are fields actually bearing the name of glebe-fields, although they have been irrecoverably alienated. There are now many parishes without any, or with a very small portion of glebe. Many hundred instances have been brought to my knowledge of that alienation. My objections are very strong against the investment of land in an individual who is a Corporation-sole, and has a life interest, and no more than a life interest, having no share in the appointment of his successor. It appears to me to lead to much loss of church-property, and to a great deal of injustice of various kinds.

Was your Grace correctly understood to state that Tithe is ultimately paid by the landlord in all instances, and that it operates solely as a reduction of rent?

I conceive that it operates solely as a reduction of rent, except so far as it may prevent improvements which were not contemplated when the lease was granted and the rent adjusted. In such cases the farmer may not extend his cultivation to the high degree of exactness which he otherwise would; and thus some degree of loss incurred; or rather, some gain prevented.

Is not the Tithe upon land, where the produce has been augmented by the application of increased capital by the tenant, a reduction from the profits of that tenant, during the continuance of his lease?

I apprehend that the tenant does not usually make such improvements, except in cases where he thinks he is pretty well secured as to a moderate demand of Tithe; but, undoubtedly, there are cases in which he is mistaken; and in those cases, during the continuance of the lease, undoubtedly the Tithe falls in part on the tenant. For, a *Tenant* may be considered, *during the continuance of his lease*, as a *Land-owner*.

I mentioned, however, before, that a common fallacy occurs in computing the comparative value of Tithe and of Rent; that Tithe is usually computed to be the actual tenth of the gross produce, not only in cases where it *is not* actually received, through *forbearance* and kind feeling in the incumbent, but where it *could* not be received; because the expensive cultivation would be immediately discontinued if it were claimed; whereas Rent is always computed at what might *actually* be obtained.

Would not the check which would be thereby given to improved cultivation in consequence of the Tithe, during the occupation of such tenant, prevent the application of capital, and be a check therefore to production?

Without doubt it does operate in that way, to a certain extent; but principally with respect to those improvements which return a remote profit. Since it is not the interest of the incumbent himself to claim a Tithe when the claim would diminish production, I am inclined to think that in operations completed within a moderate period, the incumbent and the farmer usually come to an arrangement; but even those operations may sometimes be prevented, from the mere apprehension that the claim would be advanced.

In arable land, would not your Grace estimate the value of the Tithe as about a fifth of the tithe-free rent?

I cannot speak as to that; since it is so extremely variable upon land of different qualities. Even portions of land that produce very nearly the same crops will, in one district, through the natural richness of the soil, and the facility of obtaining manure, &c., produce these crops at so much less expense than in another, that the *gross produce* of the two districts will be far more nearly on a level than the *net produce*; on which last depends the *rent* to be obtained.

You have stated that there is considerable opposition to the payment of Tithe in the hands of lay impropiators; would you include, in the relief you propose to extend to the Clergy, the same measure to be adopted with regard to the holders of lay Tithes?

I should be apt to say (so far as I have considered that point) that they must be left to themselves to make their own bargain, if they found Tithe an inconvenient kind of holding.

Do you not conceive, that if the kind of measure you have suggested were adopted with respect to clerical Tithes, and Tithe were to be so far extinguished, that the objection to the payment of lay Tithe would be very considerably increased?

I think very likely it might, and might probably lead to the same result,—an arrangement between the holder and the payer for redeeming the Tithe. The chief difficulty of arranging it, in the case of the Clergy, is, that they, being merely tenants for life, of course cannot make a bargain which shall affect their successors. This inconvenience must be remedied, either in the way I have proposed, or by some similar contrivance, so as to secure the permanency of the endowment. But a lay-impropiator may sell or lease his Tithes, like any other property.

Would you extend the arrangement you have proposed to the Land as well as to the Tithes?

I am convinced of the utter inexpediency of leaving any endowment in land in the hands of a single individual, who has himself a life interest, and only a life interest, in it. In the first place, he is exposed to a strong temptation to seek for his own immediate benefit at the expense of a much greater injury to his successors. The present system of letting the bishop's lands in Ireland is an instance of this; and when such a system has once been begun, others, who never would have thought of introducing it, are forced to continue it in self-defence. Moreover, a person who enters upon

any preferment, especially if vacated by the death of his predecessor, will often be able to obtain only a very imperfect and confused knowledge of the state of the revenues of the Benefice or See. Advantage will often be taken of this to encroach upon its lands or other property; and when maps or other documents are wanting, or are imperfect, as is often the case, church-property is often irrecoverably lost; and in other, cases, where it might be recovered by legal means, the incumbent is frequently deterred from resorting to these by a dread of law-expenses; expenses much less perhaps than the value of the land *in fee*, yet greater than his *life-interest* in it. Accordingly, I have ascertained that there are many hundred parishes in Ireland, in which portions of land actually exist, bearing the very title of glebe-land, yet irrecoverably lost to the Church. There are many persons, I am aware, who do not regret the impoverishment of the Church, and would even gladly see a further portion of its endowments withdrawn, and appropriated to other *national* purposes; but they should remember that this spoliation of the Church by *individuals*, confers no benefit whatever on the Public, and only holds out a bounty upon fraud. I would, therefore, place all church-endowments, without exception, in the hands of Boards of Commissioners, to be administered by them as trustees.

In your Lordship's last examination you referred to certain grounds which had satisfied you as to the inexpediency of Tithe as a mode of endowment for the Clergy; have you any further ground which you wish to state as the foundation of your opinion upon that subject?

There are some additional considerations which have long since occurred to my mind in support of that opinion. In the first place, an association is created between the ideas of religion and compulsory payment, most injurious to the minds of the parishioners. It is true that the farmer pays only in the sense in which a man *pays* an annuity charged on an estate left to him; and that his landlord allows for Tithes in the rent; but it is equally true, that during the continuance of the lease, whatever he can succeed in withdrawing from the minister, by flattery, by deceit, or by intimidation, goes into his own purse. For when I speak of Tithe falling on the Landlord, it should be observed that, during the current lease, I regard the Tenant as being, to all practical purposes, the Landlord; it is he who is burdened by any augmentation, and benefited by any diminution of the Tithes; and he is therefore tempted to feel and call a grievous burden whatever he cannot succeed in withholding from the right owner. He is tempted, in short, to hate the minister if he cannot succeed in defrauding him, and to despise him, if he does. It will be remembered that I am not bringing a charge against individuals, but against the tendency of the system.

Secondly, an incumbent, who may be in many respects different from what a Christian minister should be, but who, from indolence, ignorance, timidity, or any other cause, accepts a grossly inadequate composition, is likely to be more popular than, perhaps, a successor who may be a model for pastors, but who will not, or cannot, perhaps, in justice to his family, afford to forego his just claim. This must be not only a hardship to the individual, but a great detriment to the cause of religion.

Thirdly, the existing system leaves an opening for multifarious frauds: for instance, a man is presented to a Living by the 'squire of the parish, on an understanding that he is to accept such and such a composition; the landowner lets his land tithe-free, paying, himself, perhaps, less than half the value of the Tithes; and the incumbent (as Paley observes) not only buys the Living, but robs the succession to pay for it. Again—a clergyman is leading a scandalous life, and several of the parishioners are disposed to present him, but they are almost all of them tenants of one great proprietor, who, for good and weighty reasons, shuts his ears to every such representation, and will not allow any complaints to be made. How many cases of this kind have occurred I cannot of course pronounce; but one has come under my own observation. Again—I have known an instance of an incumbent compelled to take a very inadequate composition, by a threat from the sole proprietor of planting the whole parish with wood. And a loss, again, is often unavoidably incurred of revenue which fairly belongs to the incumbent, especially of a vicarage: small scattered Occupations lying at a great distance from the Parsonage are not of unfrequent occurrence, to a very considerable amount; and the occupiers know well enough that if the Tithes were to be set out, the expense of collecting them would exceed their worth; they consequently pay just what they please.

Lastly, the trouble and vexation to which an incumbent is often exposed in obtaining even a small part of his due may be regarded as a serious deduction from his income; since (as A. Smith observes) every thing of this kind may be estimated at as much money as a man would give to be exempted from it. But this vexation, though a loss to one party, is no gain to the other, except when it gratifies a malignant and spiteful feeling.

You stated an opinion, in your former examination, that Tithe falls upon Rent; are you of opinion, then, that the landlord is not able to remunerate himself for that charge by the increased price of produce arising out of it?

I believe that when Tithes have long existed they have no influence on the price of corn. Their effect in this respect appears to me to be

no greater than would follow if we suppose the Country in which they exist to have been originally somewhat *smaller* than it is; or to have had lakes covering certain districts which are actually fertile valleys. If England, again, had been larger than it is—if, for instance, the Godwin Sands were, and always had been, corn-fields, no one will maintain that corn would have been cheaper. We should have had rather more corn, absolutely, and a rather larger population, and rather a larger aggregate amount of rent; but the price of corn and the rate of rent would have been just what they are. So, if Kent had never existed, the people of England would have been less by the amount of the people in Kent; the total rental of the kingdom would have been less by the rental of Kent; but the price of corn would have been just what it is.

Without doubt, if Tithes were *suddenly imposed* on a Country whose population had grown up in their absence, or if they were *suddenly removed* from a Country in which they had previously existed, the price of corn would be affected. So, if the people of Kent were to be removed into the remainder of England, and the whole county, with all its corn, immediately sunk into the sea, the price of corn would rise; or if, again, the Godwin Sands were to be suddenly left bare by the sea, in a state fit for immediate cultivation, the price of corn would fall; but by the time the population had adjusted itself to the new state of the supply of corn, the price would again rise to its ordinary level.

I apprehend that the opinion that Tithes fall on the consumer is founded on a confusion of the immediate effects of the *sudden* imposition of Tithes, or sudden removal of Tithes, with the ultimate and *permanent* effects of Tithes after they have long existed.

Have you any means of stating, from the information you have received in Ireland, what are the ultimate objects of those who have taken an active part in promoting the resistance to the payment of Tithes?

The ultimate object of many is, I have no doubt, simply to get rid of the Protestant-establishment: some without even a wish, others without a hope, of transferring its revenues to the Roman Catholic Church, but thinking only of gratifying hostile feelings. And others contemplate, or profess to contemplate, the application of these revenues to the establishment of a fund for the relief of the poor. Some, perhaps, hold out the prospect of this supposed benefit merely as a lure in order to induce Protestants to join in the opposition to Tithes; but many, probably, are persons of sincere but mistaken benevolence, who, having never witnessed the effects of the pauper-system in England, look only to the bright side of the question, and do not perceive the tendency of the system to

produce far more distress than it alleviates, by diminishing *industry, forethought, and charity*; and by degrading the pauper into a condition approaching that of a Slave, fed, not according to the *value* of his exertions, but to his *wants*, and accordingly impelled to labour only by the fear of punishment. I am convinced that if a fund for providing legal relief for the poor could be raised even without robbing the Establishment or instituting poor-rates,—if, for example, a rich gold mine were discovered in Ireland, and appropriated to that purpose,—the distress in that country would be increased many fold.

Your Grace will observe that your plan of a Corporation would not embrace any provision for the Tithes in the hands of lay impropiators: do you think that any mode of arrangement of the tithe system would be satisfactory unless it embraced the lay impropiators?

I think it would. I do not see the same necessity of interfering with the lay-impropiators, since *they* can help themselves. They can make permanent arrangements. The inability of the clerical tithe-owner to do this is, next to their moral evils, the principal inconvenience of clerical Tithes. It occasions the necessity of forming a new agreement with every new incumbent; and the farmers often suffer from the very circumstance of a clergyman having long received much less than his due. When that has been the case for a considerable period, there is a tendency to a rise of Rent; not quite equal indeed to the diminution of Tithe, but still bearing some relation to it. A change occurs in the incumbency; a much larger Composition for Tithe is required; and the farmer finds himself engaged to pay a Rent which, under the altered circumstances of the case, has become excessive. And the misfortune is, that in nine cases out of ten he casts the blame, not on his own imprudence, or on the exactions of his landlord, or on the carelessness of the former rector, but on the avarice of the new rector; who is in fact the only person perfectly blameless.

I do not mean to infer from all this, that, except in getting rid of the evils and inconveniences which have been mentioned, no advantage would arise from Commutation of Tithe; for though, where Tithes have *long existed* they do not influence the price of corn, or its abundance in proportion to the number of the people, yet, as I have already said, their removal would unquestionably produce *present* relief. It would for a time occasion food to be more abundant and cheaper; and would increase the effectual demand for agricultural labour. In the present state of England this temporary relief might be turned to inestimable advantage; it might be made use of for the purpose of amending both the provisions and the administration of our poor-laws; amendments essential, not

merely to the welfare, but almost to the continuance among us of civilized society.

But it is to be observed that this relief would in great measure be afforded by the adoption of the first part of my plan, the constituting the different Benefices in each District into Corporations-aggregate, with powers of leasing for long periods, and of binding themselves and their successors by their contracts. It is the impossibility of doing this, that principally, if not solely, occasions Tithes to interfere with the progress of agriculture. No tax on the mere Rent of land has any such effect; nor do Tithes (as I have before observed) differ much from a tax on Rent, when they are held in fee simple. It is the interest of the tithe-owner to take, and to bind his successor to take, whatever the landholder can afford, (however less than an actual tenth) rather than impede cultivation, and thus kill the hen that lays the golden eggs. Sufficiently long leases could be granted by an impropiator; and the same could be done by a Corporation-aggregate, empowered to grant long leases; though it cannot be done by a rector or vicar under our existing institutions, or under any other safe modification of them that I can think of. It is for this reason that I do not propose legislating in respect to lay-impropriators.

Your Grace has stated, as one of the objections to Tithes being in the hands of individual incumbents, the jealousies which are created in different parishes on account of the greater or less strictness with which the tithes are collected?

Not merely between different parishes, but between different individuals in the same parish. If one man happens to have a better crop, and another a worse, some particular year, when there is a general rate of Composition laid down, the one who has the worse crop complains of paying at the same rate with his neighbour, though it may not be in itself an exorbitant payment, but perhaps even much below the legal rate.

Do not the same causes of discontent exist, not only between the tenants of different landlords, but between the different tenants of the same landlord, with respect to the payment of their rent?

Something of the kind may take place.

Is not this therefore equally an objection to the collection of all rent by all persons?

It is an objection to bringing the clergyman and his parishioners in any way in contact in pecuniary transactions.

Is there any peculiar objection upon this ground in the case of the clergyman, which does not apply to the case of the landlord and his tenant?

Yes certainly; because the *tenant*, if he has any cause to complain, when his lease is out may *throw up his farm*; whereas the tithe-payer *must* pay his tithe. The tenant has accepted his lease as a benefit; and he pays a rent which he himself *voluntarily offered* to pay. The case of the tithe-payer is very different. I may complain that my landlord has not abated the rent as he should, but I have originally offered to pay it.

Do not you think that the proposal to add to the landed possessions of the Church, by commuting the Tithe for land, would be liable to much odium and unpopularity?

I should wish to see some plan devised of putting the bishops' lands upon a different footing, so as to avoid the evil that has arisen from vesting land in a Corporation-sole. The result of the system of leases for twenty-one years, renewing every year, has been, that though the land is very great, the income derived from it is comparatively small. I conceive that if the lands of the bishops were properly managed, the same amount of income which they now enjoy might be derived from a much smaller extent of land, and would not, consequently, be open to the same misrepresentation. It appears to me, that there might be an actual division of the estates of each See between the bishop and the tenants, in proportion to the value of their respective interests; and that the bishop might release to his tenants the reversion in one portion, on receiving from them a surrender of the leasehold interest in the other part. The objections raised against the great extent of lands held by the bishops might in this way be diminished.

Do not you think that making so much more land as would be taken in exchange for Tithes inalienable in the hands of perpetual corporations, would be liable to the same objections?

I am well aware that there would be many objections to the proposed scheme.

Would not that be a solid objection?

To make more land inalienable would certainly be liable to a solid objection; but the proposed Corporations might have powers of sale and exchange, on the terms of investing the purchase-money in the purchase of other lands to be held upon the same trusts. And as I formerly remarked that the effect of Tithe is the same as would have resulted from the extent of fertile territory in the Country

having been originally less than it actually is, it follows that the proposed commutation, by removing Tithe, would virtually be equivalent to the creation of so much new land. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that not only apparent but solid objections to my proposal might be found; but I conceive there are more and weightier objections, both to the existing system and to every other substitute for it that could be devised.

Have you ever considered any advantage that might arise from substituting a corn rent, charged upon the proprietor, instead of the investment in land?

I have considered that plan, and I think it would be an improvement upon the present system.

Do not you think it would be an improvement even upon the plan of investment of land?

I think it would be acceptable for a few years; and then, I have not the least doubt that the next generation, at the latest, would raise a complaint, saying, "It is very hard that the landlords are alone to pay the Clergy; they ought, if they are to bear this burden, to be allowed such and such privileges and advantages, in the shape of corn-laws or bounties; or the burden ought to be in part taken from them and laid upon other classes of society." It would be quite forgotten, in the course of one or two generations, that they had in fact received an *equivalent*;—that their lands had been disburdened of the onus of Tithes. And it would be represented, perhaps before the middle of this century, but certainly before the end of it, that the landlords were unjustly burdened by alone paying the Clergy, who were of equal benefit to all classes. I think the church-revenues would in consequence be in great danger; but for the present I think it would be of great advantage.

How would the operation of an arrangement of this sort affect the interests, as well of the landlords as of the Clergy, if a power were given to the landlords gradually to redeem this rent, charged at a certain number of years' purchase, to be invested in detached lands as glebe land for the different incumbents?

I have contemplated that as one of the modes of proceeding which might be adopted by those district corporations. I think it would be impossible, with any prospect of securing justice, that this should be done by an *individual* incumbent; but if there were a Board, such as I have spoken of, established in each district, that mode might probably be adopted with great advantage.

Does your Grace contemplate the operation of the Board you propose to be simply to invest the amount of the Tithes in land for the purpose of supplying glebes to the separate incumbents, or to retain the aggregate amount of Tithe in Ireland constantly in the hands of the board, to distribute to the different incumbents in their proper proportions?

The latter was my intention; but I should prefer the former to the present system.

You stated you think it would not be advisable to appropriate any part of the present Tithe to a provision for the poor; and that a provision for the poor, generally speaking, would not be a remedy for the present sufferings of the people in Ireland?

I believe it would be a great augmentation of them.

Have you turned in your mind any method of bettering their condition?

I have thought of many; to enter into which now would occupy the time of this Committee at too great length: but I am convinced that to encourage *industry*, and *frugality*, and *forethought*, among them, by whatever means it can be effected, would be most important; and that providing them with a *certainty of relief*, on even the lowest scale, whenever they were out of work, would tend to *extinguish* what there is among them of industry and frugality; in short, that, with the prospect of such a provision, they would work as little as they could, and lay by nothing.

Are you aware that, notwithstanding the great prevalency of mendicity in Ireland, the savings of a portion at least of the lower orders, as evidenced by the increased amount deposited in the savings' banks, has been latterly considerably increased?

I have every reason to suppose, from what I have heard from various parts of Ireland; and from comparing their present state with what I observed when I was there fourteen years ago, that the condition of the poor in Ireland has rather improved than deteriorated in that interval; though it is still so much short of what we see in all the best parts or even the tolerable parts of England, that many new comers are apt (erroneously as it appears to me) to think they are in a sinking state. I am quite convinced that a system of poor-rate would throw them back more than any thing that could be devised.

Do you allude to the poor-laws as they operate in this Country?

I mean, as poor-laws, on our principle, *must* operate in every Country, even if administered as well as that principle will admit.

Do you conceive there might not be some modified plan of poor-rate adopted in Ireland that might be productive of benefit to the country?

The name of "poor-law" of course might be extended to systems of a very different nature. A great distinction is to be drawn between legal relief of that kind which tends to *increase* the distress that it designs to relieve, and that which has no such tendency. The relief afforded to cripples, idiots, blind, or deaf-and-dumb, does not intend to increase those evils. The relief that is afforded to mere *want*, as want, tends to increase that evil. That is the sort of relief which I deprecate;—a relief to those that are in distress, but able-bodied.

And you think that any legislative enactment of relief for that purpose would be injurious to industry, forethought, and charity?

Undoubtedly. It would tend to make them leave their parents and their children to parish-support, instead of attending to them as they now do; and to prevent them from laying by any thing for a time of distress. They would work as little as possible, and get all they could from the parish. I have seen that operate a great deal in England, and I think it would operate with much more rapid and destructive effect in Ireland. But what I have said does not apply to the relief of the blind, the permanently infirm, cripples, idiots, and the like.

[1.] See Dr. Chalmers' excellent Work on Endowments.

[2.] It is also printed separately, for the convenience of purchasers of the first edition.

[4.] This instance, by the way, evinces the impropriety of limiting the term Wealth to *material* objects.

[5.] I had not thought it necessary to observe that, in speaking of exchanges, I did not mean to limit myself to *voluntary* exchanges;—those in which the whole transaction takes place with the full consent of both parties to all the terms of it. Most exchanges, indeed, are of this character; but the case of taxation,—the revenue levied from the subject in return for the protection afforded by the sovereign, constitutes a remarkable exception; the payment being compulsory, and not adjusted by agreement with the payer. Still, whether in any case it be *fairly* and reasonably adjusted, or the contrary, it is not the less an exchange.

And it is worth remarking, that it is just so far forth as it is an exchange,—so far forth as protection, whether adequate or not, is afforded in exchange for this payment,—that the payment itself comes under the cognizance of this science. There is nothing else that distinguishes *taxation* from *avowed robbery*.

Though the generality of exchanges are voluntary, this circumstance is not essential to an exchange: since otherwise the very expression "voluntary exchange," would be tautological and improper. But it is a common logical error to suppose that what *usually* belongs to the *thing*, is implied by the *usual* sense of the *word*. Although most noblemen possess large estates, the word "nobleman" does not imply the possession of a large estate. Although most birds can fly, the ordinary use of the term "bird" does not imply this, since the penguin and the ostrich are always admitted to be birds. And though, in a great majority of cases, wealth is acquired by labour, the ordinary use of the word "wealth" does not include this circumstance, since every one would call a pearl an article of wealth, even though a man should chance to meet with it in eating an oyster.

The logical error I have been adverting to has, in various instances, led to confusion of thought in many subjects, and not least in Political-Economy.

[6.] See Hinds on Inspiration, p. 152.

[7.] Arist. Eth. b. iii. c. 5.

[8.] Vol. I. p. 545-547, and 553-555.

[9.] Arist. Rhet. ii. 3.

[10.] Logic, p. xiv—xvi.

[11.] says Aristotle.

[12.] Rhetoric, p. 73.

[13.] Rhetoric, part ii. ch. iii. § 5.

[14.] Eth. Nicom. book viii.

[15.] The present Bishop of Chester has treated at large of the subjects here considered, in the third part of his "Records of the Creation;" to which I have much pleasure in referring the reader, though I do not entirely coincide with every thing that the author has there said.

In the Notes and Appendix to Archbishop King's Discourse I have stated my own view of some of the most important of the questions now alluded to.

[16.] Yet how many, in almost every past age, (and so it will be, I suppose, in all future ages,) have shewn a tendency towards such presumption as that of our First Parents, in seeking to pass the limits appointed for the *human* faculties, and to "be as *Gods*, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL!"

[17.] Whence the name "Savage," *Silvagio*.

[18.] i.e. The "Provident."

[19.] The Heathen Mythology contains, among a chaos of wild fables, some broken and scattered fragments, as it were, of true history; like the organic remains of an ancient world, found dispersed, and often hard to be ascertained, in the midst of the strata formed from the deposits of a deluge.

[20.] I hardly know what to conjecture respecting the domestication of some of the larger quadrupeds, such as the Ox and Buffalo, which, in a wild state, are so formidable, that the idea of making them servants seems unlikely to have occurred to a rude nation. In the Sandwich islands there are wild cattle, descended from those brought by Europeans, which none of the natives, though aware of this descent from domestic animals, have ventured to attempt reclaiming. They regard them with terror, on account of their fierceness.

[21.] See the passage above cited (p. 113) from the Account of the New-Zealanders.

[22.] Chap. iii. part ii.

[23.] Hence Mandeville calls "Content, the bane of industry;" playing on the double meaning of the word "content." He who has attained the power of commanding with ease a supply of all that he wishes for, and is *content*, in the sense of desiring nothing further, is not likely to be industrious. But one who is exerting himself all his life in the pursuit of fresh and fresh advancement, whether in Wealth, Learning, Fame, Virtue, or any other object, is not necessarily *discontented* and unhappy. On the contrary, a *pursuit* seems a main ingredient in happiness.

[24.] Errors are often committed in the estimate either of national or of individual character, by those who confound together qualities that are in some respects similar; or at least suppose them to imply each other. They imagine, for instance, that one who is recklessly

profuse must be free from sordid cupidity;—that credulity and incaution imply a frank, open, sincere character, incapable of falsehood, and of crafty and deliberate treachery; and that a liability to violent ebullitions of passion, must be accompanied with something of generosity, and is at least incompatible with insidious malice. All such expectations however are contradicted by the character of most savages, and of such persons as have in them something of the barbarian character.

[25.] This, by the way, suggests a sure method of obtaining, what was so long sought by legislators, a general "favourable balance of trade" in the country. If a quantity of gold and silver be annually *buried*, a constant importation will ensue, of these metals, in exchange for other commodities, to supply the demand for bullion thus created.

Such is supposed to have been the condition, till within these few years, of the Peninsula of India; which was constantly receiving and absorbing a vast amount of silver; the insecurity of property (till lately) leading to the practice of this kind of hoarding.

In this way, or again, by an immense annual consumption of gold and silver in gilding and plating, &c. (and in no other way,) it is possible for a country to maintain a permanently "favourable balance of trade" with all the world: i.e. to import every year, on the whole, a less amount of other articles than it exports, receiving the difference in gold and silver. See "Senior on the Transmission of the precious Metals."

[26.]

[27.] In a very recent publication I have seen mention made of a person who discovered the falsity of a certain doctrine (which, by the way, is nevertheless a true one) *instinctively*. This kind of instinct, i.e. the habit of forming opinions at the suggestion rather of feeling than of reason, is very common.

[28.]

[29.] The views here taken are greatly at variance with a theory which, I regret to think, has obtained considerable currency; chiefly, I conceive, on the supposed authority of Mr. Malthus; in whose work however I have never myself been able to find this doctrine.

"Population having," it is said, "a tendency to increase in geometrical, and subsistence, only in arithmetical progression, it follows that, in each successive generation, the pressure of

population on the means of support, and the consequent misery which is the result, must, unless new and extraordinary remedies be adopted, become greater and greater."

On this theory, our own country, and almost every other in the civilized world, ought to possess scantier means of subsistence in proportion to the population, now, than some centuries ago.

But we know that the reverse is the fact; and that our population, though so greatly increased since the time, for instance, of Henry VIII., is yet better off, on the average, in point of food, clothing, and habitations, than then.

It is urged, however, that since want and misery do exist among the lower classes, this is a proof that their numbers have gone on increasing at *too great* a rate. So it is: but the *existence* of an *excess* does not prove that that excess is *increasing*; or that it is not diminishing. What would be thought of one who should reason thus;—the flood is increasing, and must be expected to extend further and further; for though it is lower to-day than yesterday, still there are fields under water, which ought to be dry:—There is, in February, a progress towards total darkness; for though each day is longer than the last, still the nights are too long in proportion to the days!

But we are to expect, it seems, that the same causes which have *always* been in operation, are henceforth to lead to results opposite to all that have taken place hitherto. "Xanthe retro propera, versæque recurrere lymphæ!"

To any one who will steadily stand by his theory in the face of notorious *facts*, all *arguments* would be vain. But as an illustration of the importance of a careful employment of language, I have, in the Ninth Lecture, traced the error in question to its origin, in the ambiguity (that common source of confusion of thought) in the word "tendency."

[30.]The lady who was exhibited some time ago, who being born without arms or legs, practised needlework, painting, and other arts, notwithstanding the deficiency, did indeed absolutely excel many whose bodily conformation is perfect: but those who are conscious of inferiority to her in those arts, would not be therefore recommended to throw away their natural advantages, but to make the most of them;—to aim at greater proficiency by *learning to employ* their hands, not by cutting them off.

[31.] See article "Transportation," in No. I. of the London Review, and since appended to a "Letter to Earl Grey on Secondary Punishments."

[32.] Vol. iv. p. 182-188. The Author has not perhaps much exaggerated the stupid narrow-mindedness of the labouring classes where their education is totally neglected: but he appears to have very greatly over-rated the intelligence, the thoughtfulness, and the mental activity of Barbarians.

[33.] See Sermon "on Education," preached at Halesworth.

[34.] As a set-off against this, however, it should be remembered, that manufacturers who are collected in large bodies have the advantage of mutual intercourse to sharpen their faculties, to a much greater extent than agricultural labourers. In most instances they may even during their work be engaged in conversation; which, however unprofitable and even hurtful in other respects, at least affords some intellectual exercise. And if their conversation be on the whole of a hurtful or frivolous character, must not this be attributed in great measure to the want of a well-conducted education?

[35.] It is curious to contrast the case of Alexander Selkirk, who was left for some years on the Island of Juan Fernandez, with that of a Musquito-Indian mentioned in Dampier's voyages, who was also left (but by accident) on the very same Island, for about as long a time. The savage cheerfully exercised all the little ingenuity possessed by his tribe, in providing himself with such implements, clothing, and habitation, as he had been accustomed to; and was found living in much the same style as prevails among the nation of Indians. The European was overwhelmed with melancholy, and seems scarcely to have exerted any of his powers.

[36.] Plato, in his *Erastæ*, represents Socrates ridiculing one who represented a Philosopher as this kind of person, having a slight knowledge of various arts, but perfect in none, and like the Pentathlete in the Games. When, says he, good artists are to be had, such a one is useless.

[37.] Hinds on Inspiration, p. 4-6.

[38.] Logic, Book IV. ch. ii. § 1.

[39.] Geologists, when, commissioning their friends to procure them from any foreign country such specimens as may convey an idea of its geological character, are accustomed to warn them against sending over collections of *curiosities*; i.e. specimens of spars,

stalactites, &c., which are accounted, in that country, curious, from being *rarities*; and which consequently convey no correct notion of its general features. What they want is, specimens of the *commonest* strata;—the stones with which the roads are mended, and the houses built, &c. And some fragments of these, which in that country are accounted mere rubbish, they sometimes, with much satisfaction, find *casually adhering* to the specimens sent them as curiosities, and constituting, for their object, the most important part of the collection. Histories are in general, to the Political-Economist, what such collections are to the Geologist. The casual allusions, to common, and what are considered insignificant matters, convey, to him, the most valuable information.

[40.] See Logic, Book IV. ch. ii. § 3.

Mr. Jones objects to the procedure of *founding our reasonings* (in Political-Economy) *on definitions*. He did not enough consider that in Mathematics the Definitions answer *two* purposes: 1st, so far forth as they are *nominal*, to *remove ambiguity* (which is the purpose required in Political-Economy); 2dly, so far forth as they are *real*, to serve as the *basis of our reasonings*: and with such reasonings we should of course never rest satisfied in any subject except Mathematics or other *pure* science;—never in short, where matters of FACT are concerned.

See Burke's Essay on Taste, prefixed to his Treatise "On the Sublime and Beautiful." See also D. Stewart's Philosophy, Vol. II.

[41.] Among the rest, the interesting writer, Miss Martineau, in the "Manchester Strike." The *lowest* rate of wages is there defined (in the sense of the *lowest amount*) as the lowest that will enable the labourer to subsist: the highest rate is defined (in the sense of the highest *proportion*) as the utmost that will leave a reasonable profit to the capitalist. According to this definition, it may, and often does happen, that a labourer shall be receiving at once the highest and the lowest wages. A hand-loom weaver will often receive for the produce of a week's labour, hardly enough for a week's scanty subsistence, and yet within a very little of what the capitalist afterwards sells the web for; so that it is scarcely worth while, for so low a profit, to employ him.