

THE INHERENT EVILS

OF ALL

STATE GOVERNMENTS

DEMONSTRATED ;

BEING A REPRINT OF

EDMUND BURKE'S CELEBRATED ESSAY,

ENTITLED

"A VINDICATION OF NATURAL SOCIETY:"

WITH NOTES; AND

AN APPENDIX,

BRIEFLY ENUNCIATING THE PRINCIPLES THROUGH WHICH
"NATURAL SOCIETY" MAY BE GRADUALLY REALIZED.

"In vain you tell me that artificial Government is good, but that I
fall out only with its abuse: the thing—the thing itself is the abuse!"

BURKE.

London :

HOLYOAKE AND COMPANY, 147, FLEET STREET.

1858.

Price One Shilling.

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June 21, 1940

"Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king to rule over us."—2 SAM., viii., 19.

"Government is a necessity of undeveloped society."—S. P. ANDREWS.

"The least possible amount of governing must be the formula of the future."—VICTOR HUGO.

"Governments are the scourges of God to discipline the world; for them to create liberty, would be to destroy themselves."—PROUDHON.

"I own I have little esteem for Governments. In this country, for the last few years, the Government has been the chief obstacle to the common-
weal."—EMERSON.

P R E F A C E .

THE history of the remarkable Essay before us,—“Burke’s Vindication of Natural Society,”—presents one of the most extraordinary examples of literary repudiation to be met with in English literature. We have all heard the anecdote of the counsellor who, in a fit of absence of mind, or inadvertence, went on arguing a case, in a court of law, *against* his client, instead of in *defence* of him; and who, when reminded of his error, readily got himself out of the scrape by protesting that he had made no mistake at all, but that he was simply bringing forward the arguments which he knew his learned friend on the other side would adduce,—in order that he might shew to the Court their utter invalidity, which he then proceeded to do,—logically refuting every point which he had previously maintained!

Burke’s denial of the legitimacy of his own mental offspring is, however, more barefaced than the subterfuge of the counsellor in the anecdote; because, instead of attempting a logical refutation of what he had said before (which he knew was impossible), he took a shorter and easier mode of shirking the difficulty; he coolly pretended that his “Vindication” was simply a piece of irony! and, strange to say, the literary world has, up to this time, believed him, albeit, the only ironical passage in the Essay corroborates the *bona fide* character of the rest! It is, indeed, one of the soberest productions ever written,—in some parts bordering even on the trite and common-place. The real cause of Burke’s pretending that his Essay was written in an ironical spirit appears to have been an apprehension that the novel doctrines he had enunciated therein—

so utterly subversive of all old established opinions—would be an effectual bar to the realization of the ambitious plans which he had subsequently formed for his advancement in the political world of the day; and, as no other subterfuge was at all available, he adopted the very shallow one of irony, although, as every reader of his works will quickly perceive, irony was a branch of rhetoric quite foreign to his nature, and one to which he rarely had recourse. But Burke is not the only instance where the youthful worshipper of Truth has, in after life, become a renegade from her divine principles, and to his own moral sense of right and wrong, in deference to worldly and selfish interests.

The “Vindication of Natural Society” appears to have been Burke’s first printed effort, and was published anonymously in the year 1756, in the form of a letter to Lord * * * *. We do not learn when the author accepted its paternity, or how it came to be brought home to him. When reprinted, there was added to it a short, but elaborate preface, in which, after animadverting upon the mischievous tendencies of the anti-religious writings of Lord Bolingbroke, the “Editor” states that his design in the “Vindication” was to shew that “without the exertion of any considerable forces, the same engines which were employed in the destruction of religion might be employed with equal success for the subversion of Government;” and that “a mind which has no restraint from its own weakness; of its subordinate [P] rank in the creation; and of the extreme danger of letting the imagination loose upon *some* subjects, may very possibly attack everything, the most excellent

* The pamphlet was at first generally attributed to Lord Bolingbroke, being written in close imitation of his style and manner; but the doctrines it contained were so “ultra,” that his lordship and his friends appear to have been frightened, and took every means they could to disown the Essay. Peter Burke, in his “Life of Edmund Burke,” p. 22, says that “Mallet, who had ushered the *disgraceful* writings of Bolingbroke into public notice, actually went to Dodaley, the publisher’s shop, when crowded, to make an open disclaimer as to Bolingbroke or he being the author of the insidious production.”

and venerable; that it would not be difficult to criticise the creation itself; and that, if we were to examine the divine fabrics by our ideas of reason and fitness, and to use the same method of attack by which some men have assaulted revealed religion, we might, with as good colour, and with the same success, make the wisdom and power of God in his creation appear to be no better than foolishness."

Before concluding his Preface, Burke remarks that the subject of the "Vindication" is not so fully handled as obviously it might; it was not his design to say all that could possibly be said; it had been inexcusable to fill a large volume with the *abuse of reason*;* nor would such an abuse have been tolerated, even for a few pages, if some underplot of more consequence than the apparent design had not been carried out!

Burke's own apology to Mrs. Grundy for having once had the weakness to give way to the dictates of reason and conscience, in opposition to conventionalism and self-interest, is lame enough; but the excuses of his eulogists are still lamer. One of his biographers says that the only fault to be attributed to this "Vindication of Natural Society lies in its very cleverness, for so concealed is the irony throughout, that the reader runs the risk of taking the whole for earnest, and being led by the fascinating elegance, and energetic eloquence of the diction, to a conclusion very different from the one intended!"†

Treating the work, however, as what it really is,—a serious and earnest denunciation of State Governments, under whatever name or form they may exist, we shall occupy no further space or time in its

* This reminds us of a work, by Soame Jenyns, on the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion, published in 1776, the object of which is said to have been to prove the divine origin^o of Christianity *from its utter variance with the principles of human reason!* We believe it is still doubtful whether Jenyns wrote this work as a concerted enemy, or as a real friend to the Christian religion. However that may be, it is certain that if *priestcraft* can be defended on such grounds, *statecraft* is equally defensible by the same method!

† Peter Burke's "Public and Domestic Life of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke." London, 1853. P. 22.

mere literary history, but shall proceed at once to lay the text of the Essay before our readers, accompanied by such notes and comments as may occur to us in the reading; occasionally corroborating Burke's original opinions on State-craft by extracts from his subsequent writings and speeches, and from other authors who cannot, under any pretence, be accused of writing ironically. We shall also add an Appendix, in which we shall endeavour to supply an important deficiency in Burke's Essay, by offering some speculations as to how that "Artificial Society," the evils of which he so forcibly denounces, may be superseded by a "Natural Society," in which truth, peace, and happiness shall predominate over error, strife, and misery.

The text now given is reprinted from Bohn's edition of Burke's works, published in 1854, which has only a few verbal differences from the original edition,—such differences generally strengthening the arguments, originally adduced by Burke, in support of a theory, then, perhaps for the first time, formally broached in Europe, but which *now*, if we mistake not, is about to take its place *as one of the most important truths in moral and social science.*

London, 1858.

P.S.—Since the above was in type, there has appeared a new "Life and Times of Edmund Burke," from the able pen of Mr. T. Macknight. At page 92, vol. i., the author speaks of the "Vindication" as a "philosophical satire;" but he admits that "to some persons it has seemed too perfect, and to be, apparently, as unanswerable in argument as it is eloquent in expression." He also remarks that, "To us, who can look back with the light of experience on this little tract, every sentence of it reveals a deep and awful meaning, such as neither the reader nor author, in 1756, could fathom. It is not merely a playful imitation of Bolingbroke, but a solemn prophecy, in the form of a light satire."

*A Vindication of Natural Society; or, a View of the Miseries and Evils Arising to Mankind from Every Species of Artificial Society, in a Letter to Lord * * * *. By EDMUND BURKE. [Originally printed in 1796.]*

SHALL I venture to say, my Lord, that, in our late conversation, you were inclined to the party which you adopted rather by the feelings of your good nature, than by the conviction of your judgment? We laid open the foundations of Society; and you feared that the curiosity of this search might endanger the ruin of the whole fabric. You would readily have allowed my principle, but you dreaded the consequences; you thought, that having once entered upon these reasonings, we might be carried insensibly and irresistibly farther than at first we could either have imagined or wished. But for my part, my Lord, I then thought, and am still of the same opinion, that error, and not truth of any kind, is dangerous; that ill conclusions can only flow from false propositions; and that, to know whether any proposition be true or false, it is a preposterous method to examine it by its apparent consequences.*

These were the reasons which induced me to go so far into that inquiry; and they are the reasons which direct me in all my inquiries. I had, indeed, often reflected on that subject before I could prevail on myself to communicate my reflections to 'anybody. They were

* What can be sounder, or less like irony, than the reasoning contained in this, the opening paragraph? "Follow Truth, wheresoever she may lead;" "Tell the truth, and shame the Devil," are among the most wholesome maxims current amongst us. Even *The Times*, which is generally the most unscrupulous advocate of "expediency," not long ago confessed itself "no partizan of that school which talks of useful fictions, and beneficial anomalies, and which sneers at what is called logically accurate institutions." It believed "that every defect in theory produced a defect in practice;" that "the disease of the system will break out somewhere;" and that "they who do not know its real seat, will amputate and cauterize in vain."—(25th Oct. 1853.)

generally melancholy enough; as those usually are which carry us beyond the mere surface of things, and which would undoubtedly make the lives of all thinking men extremely miserable, if the same philosophy which caused the grief did not, at the same time, administer the comfort.

On considering political societies, their origin, their constitution, and their effects, I have sometimes been in a good deal more than doubt, whether the Creator did ever really intend man for a state of happiness. He has mixed in his cup a number of natural evils, (in spite of the boasts of stoicism they are evils,) and every endeavour which the art and policy of mankind has used from the beginning of the world to this day, in order to alleviate or cure them, has only served to introduce new mischiefs, or to aggravate and inflame the old. Besides this, the mind of man itself is too active and restless a principle ever to settle on the true point of quiet. It discovers every day some craving want in a body, which really wants but little. It every day invents some new artificial rule to guide that nature which, if left to itself, were the best and surest guide. It finds out imaginary beings prescribing imaginary laws; and then it raises imaginary terrors to support a belief in the beings, and an obedience to the laws. Many things have been said, and very well, undoubtedly, on the subjection in which we should preserve our bodies to the government of our understanding; but enough has not been said upon the restraint which our bodily necessities ought to lay on the extravagant sublimities and eccentric roving of our minds. The body, or, as some love to call it, our inferior nature, is wiser in its own plain way, and attends its own business more directly, than the mind with all its boasted subtlety.

In the state of nature, without question, mankind was subjected to many and great inconveniences. Want of union, want of mutual assistance, want of a common arbitrator to resort to in their differences. These were evils which they could not but have felt pretty severely on many occasions. The original children of the earth lived with their brethren of the other kinds in much equality. Their diet must have been confined almost wholly to the vegetable kind; and the same tree, which in its flourishing state produced them berries, in its decay gave them an habitation. The mutual desire of the sexes uniting their bodies and affections, and the children which are the result of these intercourses, introduced first the notion of society, and taught its conveniences. This society, founded in natural appe-

tites and instincts, and not in any positive institution, I shall call *natural society*. Thus far nature went and succeeded; but man would go farther. The great error of our nature is, not to know where to stop; not to be satisfied with any reasonable acquirement; not to compound with our condition; but to lose all we have gained by an insatiable pursuit after more. Man found a considerable advantage by this union of many persons to form one family; he, therefore, judged that he would find his account proportionably in an union of many families into one body politic.* And as nature has formed no bond of union to hold them together, he supplied this defect by *laws*.

This is *political society*. And hence the sources of what are usually called states, civil societies, or governments; into some form of which, more extended or restrained, all mankind have gradually fallen. And since it has so happened, and that we owe an implicit reverence to all the institutions of our ancestors, we shall consider these institutions with all that modesty with which we ought to conduct ourselves in examining a received opinion; but with all that freedom and candour which we owe to truth wherever we find it, or however it may contradict our own notions, or oppose our own interests. There is a most absurd and audacious method of reasoning avowed by some bigots and enthusiasts, and, through fear, assented to by some wiser and better men; it is this: They argue against a fair discussion of popular prejudices, because, say they, though they would be found without any reasonable support, yet the discovery might be productive of the most dangerous consequences. Absurd and blasphemous notion! as if all happiness was not connected with the practice of virtue, which necessarily depends upon the knowledge of truth; that is, upon the knowledge of those unalterable relations which providence has ordained that everything should bear to every other. These relations, which are truth itself, the foundation of

* And then, of course, it was concluded that as every family required a head to govern and direct it, so every body politic required a chief, or king, to whom the people owed implicit obedience. But the analogy is altogether false. Children are in duty bound to obey their parents, as their natural directors,—at any rate, while the parents bear all the cost of the children's maintenance; and parents are bound to take every possible care of their children, because they are responsible for their very being. But a king is a creation of the people, and should be considered as responsible to them, and not the people to him. They support him, and not he them.—[Ed.]

virtue, and, consequently, the only measures of happiness, should be likewise the only measures by which we should direct our reasoning. To these we should conform in good earnest; and not think to force nature, and the whole order of her system, by a compliance with our pride and folly, to conform to our artificial regulations. It is by a conformity to this method we owe the discovery of the few truths we know, and the little liberty and rational happiness we enjoy. We have something fairer play than a reasoner could have expected formerly; and we derive advantages from it which are very visible.

The fabric of superstition has in this our age and nation received much ruder shocks than it had ever felt before; and, through the chinks and breaches of our prison, we see such glimmerings of light, and feel such refreshing airs of liberty, as daily raise our ardour for more. The miseries derived to mankind from superstition under the name of religion, and of ecclesiastical tyranny under the name of church government, have been clearly and usefully exposed. We begin to think and to act from reason and from nature alone. This is true of several, but still is by far the majority in the same old state of blindness and slavery; and much is it to be feared that we shall perpetually relapse, whilst the real productive cause of all this superstitious folly, enthusiastical nonsense, and holy tyranny, holds a reverend place in the estimation even of those who are otherwise enlightened.

Civil government borrows a strength from ecclesiastical; and artificial laws receive a sanction from artificial revelations. The ideas of religion and government are closely connected; and whilst we receive government as a thing necessary, or even useful to our well-being, we shall in spite of us draw in, as a necessary, though undesirable consequence, an artificial religion of some kind or other. To this the vulgar will always be voluntary slaves; and even those of a rank of understanding superior, will now and then involuntarily feel its influence. It is, therefore, of the deepest concernment to us to be set right in this point; and to be well satisfied whether civil government be such a protector from natural evils, and such a nurse and increaser of blessings, as those of warm imaginations promise. *In such a discussion, far am I from proposing in the least to reflect on our most wise form of government; no more than I would, in the freer parts of my philosophical writings, mean to object to the piety, truth, and perfection of our most excellent church. Both, I am sensible, have their foundations on a rock. No discovery of truth can prejudice*

Æm. On the contrary, the more closely the origin of religion and government are examined, the more clearly their excellencies must appear. They come purified from the fire. My business is not with

*Æm.** Having entered a protest against all objections from these quarters, I may the more freely inquire, from history and experience, how far policy has contributed in all times to alleviate those evils which Providence, that perhaps has designed us for a state of imperfection, has imposed; how far our physical skill has cured our constitutional disorders; and whether it may not have introduced new ones, curable perhaps by no skill.

In looking over any state to form a judgment on it, it presents itself in two lights: the external and the internal. The first, that relation which it bears in point of friendship or enmity to other states. The second, that relation which its component parts, the governing and the governed, bear to each other. The first part of the external view of all states, their relation as friends, makes so trifling a figure in history, that, I am very sorry to say, it affords me but little matter on which to expatiate. The good offices done by one nation to its neighbour; the support given in public distress; the relief afforded in general calamity; the protection granted in emergent danger; the mutual return of kindness and civility, would afford a very ample and very pleasing subject for history. But, alas! all the history of all times, concerning all nations, does not afford matter enough to fill ten pages, though it should be spun out by the wire-drawing amplification of a Guicciardini himself. The glaring side is that of enmity. War is the matter which fills all history,†

* Here is the only bit of irony in the Essay, as is effectively proved by what Burke says in paragraphs 33 and 34, wherein he shews how "our most wise form of government" must, from its very nature, breed and foster all manner of moral and social evil.—[ED.]

† Burke, elsewhere, says:—"History consists, for the greater part, of the miseries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal, and all the train of disorderly appetites.

* * * These evils are the causes of those storms. Religion, morals, laws, privileges, prerogatives, liabilities, rights of men,—are the pretexts. The pretexts are always found in some specious appearance of real good. * * As these are the pretexts, so the ordinary actors and instruments in great public evils are kings, priests, magistrates, senators, parliaments, national assemblies, judges, and captains. * * *"—*Montgomery's First Principles of Burke*, p. 221.—[ED.]

and consequently the only, or almost the only, view in which we can see the external of political society is in a hostile shape; and the only actions to which we have always seen, and still see, all of them intent, are such as tend to the destruction of one another. "War," says Machiavel, "ought to be the only study of a prince;" and by a prince, he means every sort of state, however constituted. "He ought," says this great political Doctor, "to consider peace only as a breathing-time, which gives him leisure to contrive, and furnishes ability to execute military plans." A meditation on the conduct of political societies made old Hobbes imagine that war was the state of nature; and truly, if a man judged of the individuals of our race by their conduct, when united and packed into nations and kingdoms, he might imagine that every sort of virtue was unnatural and foreign to the mind of man.*

* This paragraph is admirably put. To show the change, however, which Burke's apostacy from Truth had produced in him, we extract the following piece of sophistry from one of his subsequent writings:—

"As to war,—if it be the means of wrong and violence,—*it is the sole means of justice among nations. Nothing can banish it from the world. They who say otherwise, intending to impose upon us, do not impose upon themselves.*"—*Montgomery's First Principles of Burke*, p. 39.

The last sentence of this paragraph is as malignant as it is false. Are we to assume, then, that all the great and good men who have advocated peace principles, and denounced warfare, are a set of shameless impostors? Besides, in what sense is war the *sole means* of justice among nations? Are there no unjust wars? And is victory always on the side of justice? "War," (as was well observed by Bronterre O'Brien, in *The Reformer*,) "does not make itself. War is not an accident. War is not the work of any *people*. War is always the work of ambition or rapine, and is always projected for class interests, and against the general interests. It is equally ruinous to the population of both the invading and invaded countries. The people are dragged into war without their consent; or else induced to bear its burthens and disasters through fraud and force, acting upon their ignorance, superstition, or folly." It is highly probable, too, as Mr. C. Hall says in his "Effects of Civilization, &c.," that "wars have been concocted privately by neighbouring kings for the sole purpose of gaining a pretence for increasing their forces, and keeping up a large standing army; the chief view in augmenting which was to keep their own people in greater subjection, and lay and enforce further restraints and impositions upon them." —

[Ed.]

The first accounts we have of mankind are but so many accounts of their butcheries. All empires have been cemented in blood; and, in those early periods when the race of mankind began first to form themselves into parties and combinations, the first effect of the combination, and indeed the end for which it seems purposely formed, and best calculated, is their mutual destruction. All ancient history is dark and uncertain. One thing, however, is clear. There were conquerors and conquests in those days; and, consequently, all that devastation by which they are formed, and all that oppression by which they are maintained. We know little of Sesostris, but that he led out of Egypt an army of above 700,000 men; that he overran the Mediterranean coast as far as Colchis; that, in some places, he met but little resistance, and of course shed not a great deal of blood; but that he found, in others, a people who knew the value of their liberties, and sold them dear. Whoever considers the army this conqueror headed, the space he traversed, and the opposition he frequently met, with the natural accidents of sickness, and the dearth and badness of provision to which he must have been subject in the variety of climate and countries his march lay through, if he knows anything, he must know that even the conqueror's army must have suffered greatly; and that, of this immense number, but a very small part could have returned to enjoy the plunder accumulated by the loss of so many of their companions, and the devastation of so considerable a part of the world. Considering, I say, the vast army headed by this conqueror, whose unwieldy weight was almost alone sufficient to wear down its strength, it will be far from excess to suppose that one half was lost in the expedition. If this was the state of the victorious, (and, from the circumstances, it must have been this at the least,) the vanquished must have had a much heavier loss, as the greatest slaughter is always in the flight; and great carnage did in those times and countries ever attend the first rage of conquest. It will, therefore, be very reasonable to allow on their account, as much as, added to the losses of the conqueror, may amount to a million of deaths; and then we shall see this conqueror, the oldest we have on the records of history, (though, as we have observed before, the chronology of these remote times is extremely uncertain,) opening the scene by a destruction of at least one million of his species, unprovoked but by his ambition, without any motives but pride, cruelty, and madness, and without any benefit to himself (for Justin expressly tells us he did not maintain his conquests); but

solely to make so many people, in so distant countries, feel experimentally how severe a scourge Providence intends for the human race, when he gives one man the power over many, and arms his naturally impotent and feeble rage with the hands of millions, who know no common principle of action, but a blind obedience to the passions of their ruler.

The next personage who figures in the tragedies of this ancient theatre is Semiramis; for we have no particulars of Ninus, but that he made immense and rapid conquests, which, doubtless, were not compassed without the usual carnage. We see an army of about three millions employed by this martial queen in a war against the Indians. We see the Indians arming a yet greater; and we behold a war continued with much fury, and with various success. This ends in the retreat of the queen, with scarce a third of the troops employed in the expedition—an expedition which, at this rate, must have cost two millions of souls on her part; and it is not unreasonable to judge that the country which was the seat of the war must have been an equal sufferer. But I am content to detract from this, and to suppose that the Indians lost only half so much, and then the account stands thus:—In this war alone, (for Semiramis had other wars,) in this single reign, and in this one spot of the globe, did three millions of souls expire, with all the horrid and shocking circumstances which attend all wars, and in a quarrel in which *none of the sufferers could have the least rational concern.*

The Babylonian, Assyrian, Median, and Persian monarchies must have poured out seas of blood in their formation, and in their destruction.* The armies and fleets of Xerxes, their numbers, the glorious stand made against them, and the unfortunate event of all his mighty preparations, are known to everybody. In this expedition, draining half Asia of its inhabitants, he led an army of about two millions to be slaughtered, and wasted by a thousand fatal

* The light recently thrown on the histories of these nations by the discoveries of Rawlinson, Layard, Hincks, and other learned archæologists, confirm the statements of ancient historians as to the devastating characteristics of their kings. Some of these learned authorities will, probably, eventually corroborate the statement of Herodotus, wherein he tells us that the Persian monarch Darius, upon taking the city of Babylon, inflicted the horrible torture of impalement upon 3,000 of the inhabitants. An inscription of the Assyrian king, Tiglath Pileser, deciphered last year, gives little else but a detail of the wholesale burnings and butcheries of that ruler.

accidents, in the same place where his predecessors had before, by a similar madness, consumed the flower of so many kingdoms, and wasted the force of so extensive an empire. It is a cheap calculation to say, that the Persian empire, in its wars against the Greeks and Scythians, threw away at least four millions of its subjects; to say nothing of its other wars, and the losses sustained in them. These were their losses abroad; but the war was brought home to them, first by Agesilaus, and afterwards by Alexander. I have not, in this retreat, the books necessary to make very exact calculations; nor is it necessary to give more than hints to one of your Lordship's erudition. You will recollect his uninterrupted series of success. You will run over his battles. You will call to mind the carnage which was made. You will give a glance at the whole, and you will agree with me, that, to form this hero, no less than twelve hundred thousand lives must have been sacrificed; but no sooner had he fallen himself a sacrifice to his vices, than a thousand breaches were made for ruin to enter, and give the last hand to this scene of misery and destruction. His kingdom was rent and divided; which served to employ the most distinct parts to tear each other to pieces, and bury the whole in blood and slaughter. The kings of Syria and of Egypt, the kings of Pergamus and Macedon, without intermission worried each other for above two hundred years; until at last a strong power, arising in the west, rushed in upon them and silenced their tumults, by involving all the contending parties in the same destruction. It is little to say, that the contentions between the successors of Alexander depopulated that part of the world of at least two millions.

The struggle between the Macedonians and Greeks, and, before that, the disputes of the Greek commonwealths among themselves, for an unprofitable superiority, form one of the bloodiest scenes in history. One is astonished how such a small spot could furnish men sufficient to sacrifice to the pitiful ambition of possessing five or six thousand more acres, or two or three more villages; yet, to see the acrimony and bitterness with which this was disputed between the Athenians and Lacedæmonians: what armies cut off; what fleets sunk, and burnt; what a number of cities sacked, and their inhabitants slaughtered, and captived; one would be induced to believe the decision of the fate of mankind, at least, depended upon it! But these disputes ended, as all such ever have done, and ever will do, in a real weakness of all parties; a momentary shadow and

dream of power in some one; and the subjection of all to the yoke of a stranger, who knows how to profit of their divisions. This at least was the case of the Greeks; and surely, from the earliest accounts of them to their absorption into the Roman empire, we cannot judge that their intestine divisions, and their foreign wars, consumed less than three millions of their inhabitants.

What an Aeldama, what a field of blood, Sicily has been in ancient times, whilst the mode of its government was controverted between the republican and tyrannical parties, and the possession struggled for by the natives, the Greeks, the Carthaginians, and the Romans, your Lordship will easily recollect. You will remember the total destruction of such bodies as an army of 300,000 men. You will find every page of its history dyed in blood, and blotted and confounded by tumults, rebellions, massacres, assassinations, proscriptions, and a series of horror beyond the histories, perhaps, of any other nation in the world; though the histories of all nations are made up of similar matter. I once more excuse myself in point of exactness for want of books; but I shall estimate the slaughters in this island but at two millions, which your Lordship will find much short of the reality.

Let us pass by the wars, and the consequences of them, which wasted *Grecia-Magna*, before the Roman power prevailed in that part of Italy. They are, perhaps, exaggerated; therefore I shall only rate them at one million. Let us hasten to open that great scene which establishes the Roman Empire, and forms the grand catastrophe of the ancient drama. This empire, whilst in its infancy, begun by an effusion of human blood scarcely credible. The neighbouring little states teemed for new destruction: the Sabines, the Samnites, the *Æqui*, the *Volsci*, the *Hetrurians*, were broken by a series of slaughters which had no interruption, for some hundreds of years; slaughters which, upon all sides, consumed more than two millions of the wretched people. The Gauls, rushing into Italy about this time, added the total destruction of their own armies to those of the ancient inhabitants. In short, it were hardly possible to conceive a more horrid and bloody picture, if that the *Punic wars* that ensued soon after did not present one that far exceeds it. Here we find that climax of devastation and ruin, which seemed to shake the whole earth. The extent of this war, which vexed so many nations, and both elements, and the havoc of the human species caused in both, really astonishes beyond expression, when it is

nakedly considered, and those matters which are apt to divert our attention from it, the characters, actions, and designs of the persons concerned, are not taken into the account. These wars, I mean those called the Punic wars, could not have stood the human race in less than three millions of the species. And yet this forms but a part only, and a very small part, of the havoc caused by the Roman ambition. The war with Mithridates was very little less bloody; that prince cut off, at one stroke, 150,000 Romans by a massacre. In that war Sylla destroyed 300,000 men at Cheronea. He defeated Mithridates' army under Dorilaus, and slew 300,000. This prince lost another 300,000 before Cyzicum. In the course of the war he had innumerable other losses; and, having many intervals of success, he revenged them severely. He was at last totally overthrown; and he crushed to pieces the king of Armenia, his ally, by the greatness of his ruin. All who had connections with him shared the same fate. The merciless genius of Sylla had its full scope; and the streets of Athens were not the only ones which ran with blood. At this period the sword, glutted with foreign slaughter, turned its edge upon the bowels of the Roman republic itself, and presented a scene of cruelties and treasons enough almost to obliterate the memory of all the external devastations. I intended, my Lord, to have proceeded in a sort of method in estimating the numbers of mankind cut off in these wars which we have on record; but I am obliged to alter my design. Such a tragical uniformity of havoc and murder would disgust your Lordship as much as it would me; and I confess I already feel my eyes ache by keeping them so long intent on so bloody a prospect. I shall observe little on the Servile, the Social, the Gallic, and Spanish wars; nor upon those with Jugurtha, nor Antiochus, nor many others equally important, and carried on with equal fury. The butcheries of Julius Cæsar alone are calculated by somebody else; the numbers he has been the means of destroying have been reckoned at 1,200,000. But to give your Lordship an idea that may serve as a standard, by which to measure, in some degree, the others,—you will turn your eyes on Judea, a very considerable spot of the earth in itself, though ennobled by the singular events which had their rise in that country.

This spot happened, it matters not here by what means, to become at several times extremely populous, and to supply men for slaughters scarcely credible, if other well-known and well-attested ones had not given them a colour. The first settling of the Jews

here was attended by an almost entire extirpation of all the former inhabitants. Their own civil wars, and those with their petty neighbours, consumed vast multitudes almost every year for several centuries; and the irruptions of the kings of Babylon and Assyria made immense ravages. Yet we have their history but partially, in an indistinct, confused manner; so that I shall only throw the strong point of light upon that part which coincides with Roman history, and of that part only on the point of time when they received the great and final stroke which made them no more a nation; a stroke which is allowed to have cut off little less than two millions of that people. I say nothing of the loppings made from that stock whilst it stood; nor from the suckers that grew out of the old root ever since. But if, in this inconsiderable part of the globe, such a carnage has been made in two or three short reigns, and that this great carnage, great as it is, makes but a minute part of what the histories of that people inform us they suffered; what shall we judge of countries more extended, and which have waged wars by far more considerable?

Instances of this sort compose the uniform of history. But there have been periods when no less than universal destruction to the race of mankind seems to have been threatened. Such was that, when the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns poured into Gaul, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Africa, carrying destruction before them as they advanced, and leaving horrid deserts every way behind them. *Vastum ubique silentium, secreti colles; fumantia procul tecta; nemo exploratoribus obvius*, is what Tacitus calls *facies victoriae*. It is always so; but was here emphatically so. From the north proceeded the swarms of Goths, Vandals, Huns, Ostrogoths, who ran towards the south, into Africa itself, which suffered as all to the north had done. About this time another torrent of barbarians, animated by the same fury, and encouraged by the same success, poured out of the south, and ravaged all to the north-east and west, to the remotest parts of Persia on one hand, and to the banks of the Loire, or farther, on the other; destroying all the proud and curious monuments of human art, that not even the memory might seem to survive of the former inhabitants. What has been done since, and what will continue to be done while the same inducements to war continue, I shall not dwell upon. I shall only in one word mention the horrid effects of bigotry and avarice, in the conquest of Spanish America; a conquest, on a low estimation, effected by the murder

of ten millions of the species. I shall draw to a conclusion of this part by making a general calculation of the whole. I think I have actually mentioned above thirty-six millions. I have not particularized any more. I do not pretend to exactness; therefore, for the sake of a general view, I shall lay together all those actually slain in battles, or who have perished in a no less miserable manner by the other destructive consequences of war from the beginning of the war to this day, in the four parts of it, at a thousand times as much; no exaggerated calculation, allowing for time and extent. We have not, perhaps, spoke of the five-hundredth part; I am sure I have not of what is actually ascertained in history; but how much of these butcheries are only expressed in generals, what part of time history has never reached, and what vast spaces of the habitable globe it has not embraced, I need not mention to your Lordship. I need not enlarge on those torrents of silent and inglorious blood which have glutted the thirsty sands of Africa, or discoloured the polar snow, or fed the savage forests of America for so many ages of continual war. Shall I, to justify my calculations from the charge of extravagance, add to the account those skirmishes which happen in all wars, without being singly of sufficient dignity in mischief, to merit a place in history, but which by their frequency compensate for this comparative innocence; shall I inflame the account by those general massacres which have devoured whole cities and nations; those wasting pestilences, those consuming famines, and all those furies that follow in the train of war? I have no need to exaggerate; and I have purposely avoided a parade of eloquence on this occasion. I should despise it upon any occasion; else in mentioning these slaughters, it is obvious how much the whole might be heightened, by an affecting description of the horrors that attend the wasting of kingdoms and sacking of cities. But I do not write to the vulgar, nor to that which only governs the vulgar—their passions. I go upon a naked and moderate calculation, just enough, without a pedantical exactness, to give your Lordship some feeling of the effects of political society. *I charge the whole of these effects on political society.* I avow the charge, and I shall presently make it good to your Lordship's satisfaction. The numbers I particularised are about thirty-six millions. Besides those killed in battles I have said something, not half what the matter would have justified; but something I have said concerning the consequences of war, even more dreadful than that monstrous carnage itself, which shocks our humanity, and

almost staggers our belief. So that allowing me in my exuberance one way for my deficiencies in the other, you will find me not unreasonable. I think the numbers of men now upon earth are computed at five hundred millions at the most. Here the slaughter of mankind, on what you will call a small calculation, amounts to upwards of seventy times the number of souls this day on the globe—a point which may furnish matter of reflection to one less inclined to draw consequences than your Lordship.*

I now come to show, that political society is justly chargeable with much the greatest part of this destruction of the species. To give the fairest play to every side of the question, I will own that there is a haughtiness and fierceness in human nature, which will cause innumerable broils, place men in what situation you please; but owning this, I still insist in charging it to political regulations, that these broils are so frequent, so cruel, and attended with consequences so deplorable. In a state of nature, it had been impossible to find a number of men, sufficient for such slaughters, agreed in the same bloody purpose; or allowing that they might have come to such an agreement, (an impossible supposition,) yet the means that simple nature has supplied them with are by no means adequate to such an end; many scratches, many bruises, undoubtedly, would be received upon all hands; but only a few, a very few deaths. Society and politics, which have given us these destructive views, have given us also the means of satisfying them. From the earliest dawns of policy to this day, the inventions of men have been sharpening and improving the mystery of murder, from the first rude essays of clubs and stones, to the present perfection of gunnery, cannoneering, bombarding, mining, and all these species of artificial, learned, and refined cruelty, in which we are now so expert, and which make a principal part of what politicians have taught us to believe is our principal glory.†

* The reader must remember that this calculation refers to the state of things one hundred years ago. It is now estimated that, since the creation of the world, at least fourteen billions of human beings have been destroyed by war; and that Europe alone has spent upwards of four thousand millions of pounds sterling in this courtly pastime!—[Ed.]

† “If there be anything,” says Mrs. Jameson, “more disgusting than war and its consequences, it is that perversion of all human intellect—that deprivation of all human feeling—that contempt or misconception of every Christian precept which has permitted the great, and the good, and the

How far mere nature would have carried us, we may judge by the example of those animals, who still follow her laws, and even of those o whom she has given dispositions more fierce, and arms more terrible, than ever she intended we should use. It is an incontestable truth that there is more havoc made in one year by men of men, than has been made by all the lions, tigers, panthers, ounces, leopards, hyenas, rhinoceroses, elephants, bears, and wolves, upon their several species, since the beginning of the world; though these disagree ill enough with each other, and have a much greater proportion of rage and fury in their composition than we have.* *But with respect to you, ye legislators, ye civilizers of mankind! ye Orpheuses,*

tender-hearted, to admire war as a splendid game—a part of the poetry of life, and to defend it as a glorious evil, which the very nature and passions of man have ever rendered, and ever will render necessary.” A notable instance of this horrible perversion of the moral sentiment was furnished in a letter, printed in *The Times*, in October, 1854, from an officer, then fighting in the Crimea, who records the fall of one of his comrades:—
 “* * * Poor Louis has gone to his rest! In a cavalry action, a few days ago, he bore an order from Lord Raglan to charge a battery of heavy field-pieces; and, in the act of delivering it, a piece of shell struck him in the breast, and passed through his body. Death, by the mercy of Heaven, was instantaneous. Poor Louis! He was a gallant soul. The day before his death, I am glad to think I met him, and he said:—‘*Well, Bob, is not this fun? I think it the most glorious life a man can lead!*’”—[ED.]

* Man is the only animal that makes war upon his own species:—

“The hunting tribes of air and earth
 Respect the brethren of their birth;
 Nature, who loves the claim of kind,
 Less cruel chase to each assigned.
 The falcon poised on soaring wing,
 Watches the wild duck by the spring;
 The fox-hound wakes the fox’s lair,
 The greyhound presses on the hare;
 The eagle pounces on the lamb,
 The wolf devours the fleecy dam;
 E’en tiger fell, and sullen bear,
 Their likeness and their lineage spare;
 Man only mars kind Nature’s plan,
 And turns the fierce pursuit on man!”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.—[ED.]

Moseses, Minoses, Solons, Theseuses, Lycurguses, Numas! with respect to you, be it spoken, your regulations have done more mischief in cold blood, than all the rage of the fiercest animals in their greatest terror, or furies, has ever done, or ever could do!

These evils are not accidental. Whoever will take the pains to consider the nature of society, will find they result directly from its constitution. For as *subordination*, or, in other words, the reciprocation of tyranny and slavery, is requisite to support these societies; the interest, the ambition, the malice, or the revenge—nay, even the whim and caprice of one ruling man among them, is enough to arraign all the rest, without any private views of their own, to the worst and blackest purposes; and, what is at once lamentable and ridiculous, these wretches engage under those banners with a fury greater than if they were animated by revenge for their own proper wrongs.

It is no less worth observing, that this artificial division of mankind into separate societies, is a perpetual source in itself, of hatred and dissension among them. The names which distinguish them are enough to blow up hatred and rage. Examine history; consult present experience; and you will find that far the greater part of the quarrels between several nations had scarce any other occasion than that these nations were different combinations of people, and called by different names; to an Englishman, the name of a Frenchman, a Spaniard, an Italian, much more a Turk, or a Tartar, raises of course ideas of hatred and contempt. If you would inspire this compatriot of ours with pity, or regard, for one of these, would you not hide that distinction? You would not pray him to compassionate the poor Frenchman, or the unhappy German. Far from it; you would speak of him as a *foreigner*; an accident to which all are liable. You would represent him as a *man*; one partaking with us of the same common nature, and subject to the same law. There is something so averse from our own nature in these artificial political distinctions, that we need no other trumpet to kindle us to war and destruction. But there is something so benign and healing in the general voice of humanity, that, maugre all our regulations to prevent it, the simple name of man, applied properly, never fails to work a salutary effect.

This natural unpremeditated effect of policy on the unpossessed passions of mankind appears on other occasions. The very name of a politician, a statesman, is sure to cause terror and hatred; it has always connected with it the ideas of treachery, cruelty, fraud, and

granny; and those writers, who have faithfully unveiled the mysteries of state-freemasonry, have ever been held in general detestation, or even knowing so perfectly a theory so detestable.* The case of Machiavel seems at first sight something hard in that respect. He is obliged to bear the iniquities of those whose maxims and rules of government he published. His speculation is more abhorred than their practice.

But if there were no other arguments against artificial society than this I am going to mention, methinks it ought to fall by this one only. All writers on the science of policy are agreed, and they agree with experience, that all governments must frequently infringe the rules of justice to support themselves: that truth must give way to dissimulation; honesty to convenience; and humanity itself to the reigning interest. The whole of this mystery of iniquity is called the reason of state. It is a reason which I own I cannot penetrate. What sort of a protection is this of the general right, that is maintained by infringing the rights of particulars? What sort of justice is this, which is enforced by breaches of its own laws? These paradoxes I leave to be solved by the able heads of legislators and politicians. For my part, I say what a plain man would say on such an occasion. *I can never believe that any institution, agreeable to nature, and proper for mankind, could find it necessary, or even expedient, in any case whatsoever, to do what the best and worthiest instincts of mankind warn us to avoid.* But no wonder, that what is set up in opposition to the state of nature should preserve itself by trampling upon the law of nature.

To prove that these sorts of policed societies are a violation offered to nature, and a constraint upon the human mind, it needs only to look upon the sanguinary measures, and instruments of violence, which are everywhere used to support them. Let us take a review of the dungeons, whips, chains, racks, gibbets, with which every society is abundantly stored, by which hundreds of victims are annually offered up to support a dozen or two in pride and madness, and millions in an abject servitude and dependence. There was a time when I looked with a reverential awe on these mysteries of policy; but age, experience, and philosophy, have rent the veil; and

* How exactly do these characteristics of statesmen apply to those of the present day—to Lord Palmerston, for example. "All the statesmen," says Emerson, "are sure to be found banded against liberty. They are sure to be found supporting liberty with their words, but crushing it with their acts."

I view this *sanctum sanctorum*, at least, without an enthusiastic admiration. I acknowledge, indeed, the necessity of such a proceeding in such institutions; *but I must have a very mean opinion of institutions where such proceedings are necessary.*

It is a misfortune, that in no part of the globe natural liberty and natural religion are to be found pure, and free from the mixture of political adulterations; yet we have implanted in us by Providence, ideas, axioms, rules, of what is pious, just, fair, honest, which no political craft, nor learned sophistry, can entirely expel from our breasts. By these we judge, and we cannot otherwise judge, of the several artificial modes of religion and society, and determine of them as they approach to, or recede from, this standard.

The simplest form of government is *despotism*, where all the inferior orbs of power are moved merely by the will of the supreme, and all that are subject to them directed in the same manner, merely by the occasional will of the magistrate. This form, as it is the most simple, so it is infinitely the most general. Scarce any part of the world is exempted from its power. And in those few places where men enjoy what they call liberty, it is continually in a tottering situation, and makes greater and greater strides to that gulf of despotism, which at last swallows up every species of government. The manner of ruling being directed merely by the will of the weakest, and generally the worst, man in the society, becomes the most foolish and capricious thing, at the same time that it is the most terrible and destructive, that well can be conceived. In a despotism the principal person finds, that, let the want, misery, and indigence of his subjects be what they will, he can yet possess abundantly of everything to gratify his most insatiable wishes. He does more. He finds that these gratifications increase in proportion to the wretchedness and slavery of his subjects. Thus encouraged both by passion and interest to trample on the public welfare, and by his station placed above both shame and fear, he proceeds to the most horrid and shocking outrages upon mankind. Their persons become victims of his suspicions. The slightest displeasure is death; and a disagreeable aspect is often as great a crime as high treason. In the court of Nero, a person of learning, of unquestioned merit, and of unsuspected loyalty, was put to death for no other reason than that he had a pedantic countenance which displeased the emperor.*

* Was not Leigh Hunt imprisoned for the *crime* of indulging in some harmless *badinage* upon the person of George the Fourth?—[ED.]

his very monster of mankind appeared in the beginning of his reign
 be a person of virtue. Many of the greatest tyrants on the
 cords of history have begun their reigns in the fairest manner.
yet the truth is, this unnatural power corrupts both the heart and the
understanding. And to prevent the least hope of amendment, a king
 ever surrounded by a crowd of infamous flatterers, who find their
 account in keeping him from the least light of reason, till all ideas of
 rectitude and justice are utterly erased from his mind.* When
 Alexander had in his fury inhumanly butchered one of his best friends
 and bravest captains, on the return of reason he began to conceive
 horror suitable to the guilt of such a murder. In this juncture, his
 council came to his assistance. But what did his council? They
 found him out a philosopher who gave him comfort. And in what
 manner did this philosopher comfort him for the loss of such a man,
 and heal his conscience, flagrant with the smart of such a crime? You
 have the matter at length in Plutarch. He told him, "*that let a sove-*
ign do what he will, all his actions are just and lawful, because they
are his." The palaces of all princes abound with such courtly philoso-
 phers. The consequence was such as might be expected. He grew
 every day a monster more abandoned to unnatural lust, to debauchery,
 to drunkenness, and to murder. And yet this was originally a great
 man, of uncommon capacity, and a strong propensity to virtue. But
 unbounded power proceeds, step by step, until it has eradicated every
 laudable principle. It has been remarked, that there is no prince so
 bad, whose favourites and ministers are not worse. There is hardly
 any prince without a favourite, by whom he is governed in as arbitrary
 a manner as he governs the wretches subjected to him. Here the

* For a modern instance of the truth of this statement, we need only
 point to the history of Louis Napoleon. In one of the letters of the renowned
 "Englishman," printed in *The Times* of the 2nd November, 1852, that
 graphic writer says:—"Prefect and priest vie in blasphemous servility.
 Louis Napoleon had long ranked as the official "Providence." The sacri-
 legious title had become stale. The Prefect of Perigux displayed, in a
 transparency, the likeness of his master, with the inscription beneath it,—
 "*Dieu fit Napoleon, et se repose!*" The Bishop of Chalons informs the
 faithful that Louis Napoleon is "The Man of God!" Mayors and prelates
 salute "The Messenger of Heaven!" The Lord's Prayer is parodied; the
 Creed travestied; Genesis burlesqued; and bishops listen without a blush
 while France is made to supplicate this "Father" for its daily bread, and
 stutter its belief in his divinity!"—[ED.]

tyranny is doubled. There are two courts, and two interests; both very different from the interests of the people.* The favourite knows that the regard of a tyrant is as inconstant and capricious as that of a woman; and concluding his time to be short, he makes haste to fill up the measure of his iniquity in rapine, in luxury, and in revenge. Every avenue to the throne is shut up. He oppresses and ruins the people, whilst he persuades the prince that those murmurs raised by his own oppression are the effects of disaffection to the prince's government. Then is the natural violence of despotism inflamed and aggravated by hatred and revenge. To deserve well of the state is a crime against the prince. To be popular, and to be a traitor, are considered as synonymous terms. Even virtue is dangerous, as an aspiring quality, that claims an esteem by itself, and independent of the countenance of the court. What has been said of the chief, is true of the inferior officers of this species of government; each in his province exercising the same tyranny, and grinding the people by oppression, the more severely felt, as it is near them, and exercised by base and subordinate persons. For the gross of the people, they are considered as a mere herd of cattle; and really in a little time become no better; all principle of honest pride, all sense of the dignity of their nature, is lost in their slavery.† The day, says Homer.

* This truth was admitted by the "leading journal of Europe," not long ago, so far as regards some of the continental governments; but, in our opinion, the remark applies equally to our own government. In an article referring to the Peace Society, on the 9th June, 1855, the *Times* says:—"Does Mr. Bright forget that, in almost all the countries concerned, the will of the nation goes for nothing, and that of the king, the emperor, or the camarilla, for everything? and that, in many of these States, the government has, and knows it has, an interest decidedly opposed to that of the people whom it governs?" Forty years ago, Jeremy Bentham made a similar remark:—"The heart is pierced through and through with the melancholy truth that all that rule—all that even think to rule—are against the people. Causes will have their effects; and, sooner or later, unless a change takes place, the people—the people, in their own defence, will be against *that rule!*" ("Essay on Parliamentary Reform," Lond., p. 123).—[ED.]

† The following lines, from WORDSWORTH'S "Excursion," may be aptly quoted here:—

"Our life is turned
 Out of her course, wherever man is made
 An offering, or a sacrifice; a tool,
 Or implement; a passive thing employed

which makes man a slave, takes away half his worth; and, in fact, he loses every impulse to action, but that low and base one of fear. In his kind of government, human nature is not only abused, and insulted, but it is actually degraded and sunk into a species of brutality. The consideration of this made Mr. Locke say, with great justice, that a government of this kind was worse than anarchy; indeed it is so abhorred and detested by all who live under forms that have a milder appearance, that there is scarce a rational man in Europe that would not prefer death to Asiatic despotism. Here then we have the acknowledgment of a great philosopher, that an irregular state of nature is preferable to such a government; we have the consent of all sensible and generous men, who carry it yet further, and avow that death itself is preferable;* and yet this spe-

As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
Of common right, or interest in the end :
Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
Say, what can follow for a rational soul
Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
And strength in evil? Hence an after call
For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
And oft'times death—avenger of the past,
And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
Entrust the future. Not for these sad issues
Was man created : but to obey the law
Of life, and hope, and action. * * *”—[ED.]

* If this sentence was written in irony, so must have been the following, which we extract from a volume, published in 1853, entitled “Edmund Burke; being First Principles selected from his Writings; by R. Montgomery.” We are convinced, however, that our readers will consider it only too true a picture of the horrors of the mercenary spy system, which exists in France at this day, (*vide The Times* of 15th March last,) and which, we fear, although not yet fully naturalized in England, bids fair to become so, unless the peoples peedily bestir themselves:—

“In this situation men not only shrink from the frowns of a stern magistrate, but they are obliged to fly from their own species. The seeds of destruction are sown in civil intercourse, and in social habitudes. The blood of wholesome kindred is infected; their tables and beds are surrounded with snares. All the means given by Providence to make life safe and comfortable, are perverted into instruments of terror and torment. This species of universal subserviency, that makes the very servant who waits

cies of government, so justly condemned, and so generally detested is what infinitely the greater part of mankind groan under, and have groaned under from the beginning. So that, by sure and uncontested principles, the greatest part of the governments on earth must be concluded tyrannies, impostures, violations of the natural rights of mankind, and worse than the most disorderly anarchies. How much other forms exceed this, we shall consider immediately.

In all parts of the world, mankind, however debased, retains still the sense of *feeling*; the weight of tyranny, at last, becomes insupportable; but the remedy is not so easy: in general, the only remedy by which they attempt to cure the tyranny, is to change the tyrant. This is, and always was, the case, for the greater part. In some countries, however, were found men of more penetration, who discovered, "that to live by one man's will, was the cause of all men's misery." They therefore changed their former method, and, assembling the men in their several societies, the most respectable for their understanding and fortunes, they confided to them the charge of the public welfare. This originally formed what is called an *aristocracy*. They hoped it would be impossible that such a number could ever join in any design against the general good; and they promised themselves a great deal of security and happiness, from the united counsels of so many able and experienced persons. But it is now found by abundant experience that an *aristocracy* and a *despotism* differ but in name; and that a people, who are in general excluded from any share of the legislation, are, to all intents and purposes, as much slaves, when twenty, independent of them, govern, as when but one domineers. The tyranny is even more felt, as every individual of the nobles has the haughtiness of a sultan; the people are more miserable, as they seem on the verge of liberty, from which they are for ever debarred. This fallacious idea of liberty, whilst it presents a vain shadow of happiness to the subject, binds faster the chains of his subjection. What is left undone by the natural avarice and pride of those who are raised above the others, is completed by

behind your chair, the arbiter of your life and fortune; has such a tendency to debase and degrade mankind, that I vow to God I would sooner bring myself to put a man to immediate death for opinions that I disliked, than fret him with a feverish being, tainted with the jail distemper of a contagious servitude; to keep him above ground, an animated mass of moral putrefaction, corrupted himself, and corrupting all about him" (p. 68).—[Ed.]

their suspicions, and their dread of losing an authority, which has no support in the common utility of the nation. A Genoese or a Venetian republic is a concealed *despotism*; where you find the same pride of the rulers, the same base subjection of the people—the same bloody maxims of a suspicious policy. In one respect the *aristocracy* is worse than the *despotism*. A body politic, whilst it retains its authority, never changes its maxims; a *despotism*, which is this day horrible to a supreme degree, by the caprice natural to the heart of man, may, by the same caprice otherwise exerted, be as lovely the next; in a succession it is possible to meet with some good princes. If there have been Tiberiuses, Caligulas, Neros, there have been likewise the serener days of Vespasians, Tituses, Trajans, and Antonines. But a body politic is not influenced by caprice or whim: it proceeds in a regular manner; its succession is insensible: and every man, as he enters it, either has, or soon attains, the spirit of the whole body. Never was it known, that an *aristocracy*, which was haughty and tyrannical in one century, became easy and mild in the next. In effect, the yoke of this species of government is so galling, that whenever the people have got the least power, they have shaken it off with the utmost indignation, and established a popular form. And when they have not had strength enough to support themselves, they have thrown themselves into the arms of *despotism*, as the more eligible of the two evils. *This latter was the case of Denmark, which sought a refuge from the oppression of its nobility, in the strong-hold of arbitrary power.* Poland has at present the name of republic, and it is one of the *aristocratic* form; but it is well known, that the little finger of this government is heavier than the loins of arbitrary power in most nations. The people are not only politically, but personally, slaves, and treated with the utmost indignity.* The republic of Venice is somewhat more moderate; yet even here, so heavy is the *aristocratic* yoke, that the nobles have been obliged to enervate the spirit of their subjects by every sort of debauchery. They have denied them the liberty of reason, and they have made them amends, by what a base soul will think a more valuable liberty, by not only allowing, but encouraging, them to cor-

* Doubtless it was the tyranny which the Polish aristocracy exercised over the mass of the people that prevented the latter from taking sufficient interest in their country to resist successfully the domination of Russia.

—[Ed.]

rupt themselves in the most scandalous manner. They consider their subjects as the farmer does the hog he keeps to feast upon. He holds him fast in his sty, but allows him to wallow as much as he pleases in his beloved filth and gluttony. So scandalously debauched a people as that of Venice is to be met with nowhere else. High, low, men, women, clergy, and laity, are all alike. The ruling nobility are no less afraid of one another than they are of the people; and, for that reason, politically enervate their own body by the same effeminate luxury by which they corrupt their subjects. They are impoverished by every means which can be invented, and they are kept in a perpetual terror by the horrors of a state inquisition. Here you see a people deprived of all rational freedom, and tyrannized over by about two thousand men; and yet this body of two thousand are so far from enjoying any liberty, by the subjection of the rest, that they are in an infinitely severer state of slavery; they make themselves the most degenerate and unhappy of mankind, for no other purpose than that they may the more effectually contribute to the misery of a whole nation. In short, the regular and methodical proceedings of an *aristocracy* are more intolerable than the very excesses of a *despotism*, and, in general, much further from any remedy.

Thus, my Lord, we have pursued *aristocracy* through its whole progress; we have seen the seeds, the growth, and the fruit. It could boast none of the advantages of a *despotism*, miserable as those advantages were, and it was overloaded with an exuberance of mischiefs, unknown even to *despotism* itself. In effect, it is no more than a disorderly tyranny. This form, therefore, could be little approved, even in speculation, by those who were capable of thinking, and could be less borne in practice by any who were capable of feeling. However, the fruitful policy of man was not yet exhausted. He had yet another farthing-candle to supply the deficiencies of the sun. This was the third form, known by political writers under the name of *democracy*. Here the people transacted all public business, or the greater part of it, in their own persons: their laws were made by themselves, and, upon any failure of duty, their officers were accountable to themselves, and to them only. In all appearance, they had secured by this method the advantages of order and good government, without paying their liberty for the purchase. Now, my Lord, we are come to the masterpiece of Grecian refinement, and Roman solidity, a popular government. The earliest and

most celebrated republic of this model was that of Athens. It was constructed by no less an artist than the celebrated poet and philosopher, Solon. But no sooner was this political vessel launched from the stocks, than it overset, even in the life-time of the builder. A tyranny immediately supervened; not by a foreign conquest, not by accident, but by the very nature and constitution of a *democracy*. An artful man became popular, the people had power in their hands, and they devolved a considerable share of their power upon their favourite; and the only use he made of this power was to plunge those who gave it into slavery. Accident restored their liberty, and the same good fortune produced men of uncommon abilities and uncommon virtues amongst them. But these abilities were suffered to be of little service either to their possessors or to the state. Some of these men, for whose sakes alone we read their history, they banished. others they imprisoned; and all they treated with various circumstances of the most shameful ingratitude. Republics have many things in the spirit of absolute monarchy, but none more than this. A shining merit is ever hated or suspected in a popular assembly, as well as in a court; and all services done in the state are looked upon as dangerous to the rulers, whether sultans or senators. The *Ostracism* at Athens was built upon this principle. The giddy people, whom we have now under consideration, being elated with some flashes of success, which they owed to nothing less than any merit of their own, began to tyrannize over their equals, who had associated with them for their common defence. With their prudence they renounced all appearance of justice. They entered into wars rashly and wantonly. If they were unsuccessful, instead of growing wiser by their misfortune, they threw the whole blame of their own misconduct on the ministers who had advised, and the generals who had conducted, those wars; until, by degrees, they had cut off all who could serve them in their councils or their battles. If at any time these wars had an happy issue, it was no less difficult to deal with them on account of their pride and insolence. Furious in their adversity, tyrannical in their successes, a commander had more trouble to concert his defence before the people, than to plan the operations of the campaign. It was not uncommon for a general, under the horrid despotism of the Roman emperors, to be ill received in proportion to the greatness of his services. Agricola is a strong instance of this. No man had done greater things, nor with more honest ambition; yet, on his return to court, he was obliged

to enter Rome with all the secrecy of a criminal. He went to the palace, not like a victorious commander who had merited and might demand the greatest rewards, but like an offender who had come to supplicate a pardon for his crimes. His reception was answerable: "*Exceptusque brevi osculo et nullo sermone, turbæ servientium immixtus est.*" Yet in that worst season of this worst of monarchial tyrannies, modesty, discretion, and coolness of temper, formed some kind of security even for the highest merit. But at Athens, the nicest and best studied behaviour was not a sufficient guard for a man of great capacity. Some of their bravest commanders were obliged to fly their country,—some to enter into the service of its enemies, rather than abide a popular determination on their conduct, lest, as one of them said, their giddiness might make the people condemn where they meant to acquit; to throw in a black bean even when they intended a white one.

The Athenians made a very rapid progress to the most enormous excesses. The people, under no restraint, soon grew dissolute, luxurious, and idle. They renounced all labour, and began to subsist themselves from the public revenues. They lost all concern for their common honour or safety, and could bear no advice that tended to reform them. At this time truth became offensive to these lords, the people, and most highly dangerous to the speaker. The orators no longer ascended the *rostrum*, but to corrupt them further with the most fulsome adulation. These orators were all bribed by foreign princes on the one side or the other. And besides its own parties, in this city there were parties, and avowed ones too, for the Persians, Spartans, and Macedonians, supported each of them by one or more demagogues pensioned and bribed to this iniquitous service. The people, forgetful of all virtue and public spirit, and intoxicated with the flatteries of their orators, (these courtiers of republics, and endowed with the distinguishing characteristics of all other courtiers;) this people, I say, at last arrived at that pitch of madness, that they coolly and deliberately, by an express law, made it culpable for any man to propose an application of the immense sums squandered in public shows, even to the most necessary purposes of the state. When you see the people of this republic banishing and murdering their best and ablest citizens, dissipating the public treasure with the most senseless extravagance, and spending their whole time, as spectators or actors, in playing, fiddling, dancing, and singing, does it not, my Lord, strike your imagination with the image of a sort of

complex Nero? And does it not strike you with the greater horror, when you observe, not one man only, but a whole city, grown drunk with pride and power, running with a rage of folly into the same mean and senseless debauchery and extravagance? But if this people resembled Nero in their extravagance, much more did they resemble and even exceed him in cruelty and injustice. In the time of Pericles, one of the most celebrated times in the history of that commonwealth, a king of Egypt sent them a donation of corn. This they were mean enough to accept. And had the Egyptian prince intended the ruin of this city of wicked bedlamites, he could not have taken a more effectual method to do it, than by such an insnaring largess. The distribution of this bounty caused a quarrel; the majority set on foot an inquiry into the title of the citizens; and upon a vain pretence of illegitimacy, newly and occasionally set up, they deprived of their share of the royal donation no less than five thousand of their own body. They went further; they disfranchised them; and, having once begun with an act of injustice, they could set no bounds to it. Not content with cutting them off from the rights of citizens, they plundered these unfortunate wretches of all their substance; and, to crown this masterpiece of violence and tyranny, they actually sold every man of the five thousand for slaves in the public market. Observe, my Lord, that the five thousand we here speak of were cut off from a body of no more than nineteen thousand; for the entire number of citizens was no greater at that time. Could the tyrant who wished the Roman people but one neck; could the tyrant Caligula himself have done, nay, he could scarcely wish for a greater mischief than to have cut off, at one stroke, a fourth of his people? Or has the cruelty of that series of sanguine tyrants, the Cæsars, ever presented such a piece of flagrant and extensive wickedness? The whole history of this celebrated republic is but one tissue of rashness, folly, ingratitude, injustice, tumult, violence, and tyranny, and indeed of every species of wickedness that can well be imagined. This was a city of wise men, in which a minister could not exercise his functions; a warlike people, amongst whom a general did not dare either to gain or lose a battle; a learned nation, in which a philosopher could not venture on a free inquiry. This was the city which banished Themistocles, starved Aristides, forced into exile Miltiades, drove out Anaxagoras, and poisoned Socrates. This was a city which changed the form of its government with the moon; eternal conspiracies, revolutions daily,

nothing fixed and established. *A republic, as an ancient philosopher has observed, is no one species of government, but a magazine of every species; here you find every sort of it, and that in the worst form.* As there is a perpetual change, one rising and the other falling, you have all the violence and wicked policy by which a beginning power must always acquire its strength, and all the weakness by which falling states are brought to a complete destruction.

Rome has a more venerable aspect than Athens; and she conducted her affairs, so far as related to the ruin and oppression of the greatest part of the world, with greater wisdom and more uniformity. But the domestic economy of these two states was nearly or altogether the same. An internal dissension constantly tore to pieces the bowels of the Roman commonwealth. You find the same confusion, the same factions, which subsisted at Athens—the same tumults, the same revolutions, and, in fine, the same slavery; if, perhaps, their former condition did not deserve that name altogether as well. All other republics were of the same character. Florence was a transcript of Athens. And the modern republics, as they approach more or less to the democratic form, partake more or less of the nature of those which I have described.*

* The American Republic seems fast verging into an oligarchy, if we take the evidence of some of the States' newspapers. In a leading article of the 29th April of last year, the *New York Tribune* asks:—"Can it be possible that the masses of the United States are on the point of making a total and final surrender of the administration of their national government into the hands of a little select aristocracy, with views and interests, or supposed interests, totally opposed to their own? Should such an event happen, it may well be set down as the most disgraceful occurrence in all history, enough to make one despair of human nature, and to disgust one with the very name of democracy." And the *Herald*, of the same city, on the 27th April of the present year, says:—"The State Legislature, which closed its session some days ago, will long be remembered as the most corrupt, rascally, unscrupulous body that has ever disgraced the Capitol of Albany. Sailing under the banner of philanthropy, republicanism, and hostility to southern institutions, they cared little or nothing for such principles as these. They were the mere canting hypocrites of political life, who used this outward devotion, and put on this pharasaical garb, to conceal the corrupt, selfish, aggrandizing motives which were the mainspring of all their actions. Or, if there were some elements of sincerity in the body, they only went to form a blending of fanatics and scoundrels—a combination of Puritans and blacklegs.—[ED.]

We are now at the close of our review of the three simple forms of artificial society; and we have shown them, however they may differ in name, or in some slight circumstances, to be all alike in effect; in effect, to be all tyrannies. But suppose we were inclined to make the most ample concessions: let us concede Athens, Rome, Carthage, and two or three more of the ancient, and as many of the modern, commonwealths, to have been, or to be, free and happy, and to owe their freedom and happiness to their political constitution. Yet, allowing all this, what defence does this make for artificial society in general, that these inconsiderable spots of the globe have for some short space of time stood as exceptions to a charge so general? But when we call these governments free, or concede that their citizens were happier than those which lived under different forms, it is merely *ex abundantia*. For we should be greatly mistaken, if we really thought that the majority of the people which filled these cities, enjoyed even that nominal political freedom of which I have spoken so much already. In reality, they had no part of it. In Athens there were usually from ten to thirty thousand freemen: this was the utmost. But the slaves usually amounted to four hundred thousand, and sometimes to a great many more. The freemen of Sparta and Rome were not more numerous in proportion to those whom they held in a slavery even more terrible than the Athenian. Therefore state the matter fairly: the free states never formed, though they were taken altogether, the thousandth part of the habitable globe; the freemen in these states were never the twentieth part of the people, and the time they subsisted is scarce anything in that immense ocean of duration in which time and slavery are so nearly commensurate. Therefore call these free states, or popular governments, or what you please; when we consider the majority of their inhabitants, and regard the natural rights of mankind, they must appear, in reality and truth, no better than pitiful and oppressive oligarchies.*

* We need scarcely remind the reader here of American slavery. In theory, the Declaration of the Republic says:—"All men are born free and equal;" in practice, the Americans keep some four millions of human beings in what they call "involuntary servitude;" and hosts of their clergy defend the "domestic institution" by plentiful references to Holy Writ!

The government of England, notwithstanding all the cant talked in praise of her representative system, is, in reality, nothing more nor less than an oligarchical despotism. The cabinet ministers of the day are the real

After so fair an examen, wherein nothing has been exaggerated; no fact produced which cannot be proved, and none which has been produced in any wise forced or strained, while thousands have, for brevity, been omitted; after so candid a discussion in all respects; *what slave so passive, what bigot so blind, what enthusiast so head-long, what politician so hardened, as to stand up in defence of a system calculated for a curse to mankind?—a curse under which they smart and groan to this hour, without thoroughly knowing the nature of the disease, and wanting understanding or courage to supply the remedy.**

governors of the country, especially as regards all international relations. In reference to this subject, the *Times*, on the 23rd May, 1855, remarked that the option of peace or war, "so unspeakably important, the nation does not exercise for itself, nor even delegate to its Parliament; the option resides entirely in the cabinet of the day. It is in their power, without recourse to any authority but their own, to conclude, for and on behalf of this country, any peace they please, and to pledge the national good faith to whatever conditions they may approve. *We will not stop to inquire whether this enormous power be necessary or not, and whether impeachment, and the penalty it implies, are a sufficient remedy for its abuse. This power our ministers undoubtedly possess, and may be, at this very moment, called upon to employ. What security have we that they employ it in a manner suitable to the honor of the nation, and agreeable to the wishes and interests of the people?*"
—[Ed.]

* It is most extraordinary that so few minds have ever *understood* the inherent evils of state governments. Among the still fewer number who have had the moral courage to publish them to the world, PROUDHON, unquestionably, stands at the head. The following passages are from one of his works:—

"All men are born free and equal. Society is, therefore, by nature, self-governing; and he who lays his hand on me, to *govern* me, is a usurper—my declared enemy. * * * All parties have been eager for the possession of power to work out their own ends. Give us power of life and death over your person and property, and we will make you free! — what kings and priests have repeated for 6,000 years. * * * When mankind shall have arrived at years of discretion, parties and governments will disappear. * * * Governments can only revolutionize according to the pleasure of a prince, or a party; but society,—the whole mass of the people, can alone revolutionize itself. St. Simon, Fourier, Owen, Cabet, Louis Blanc, are all for the organization of labour by means of the state, or by capital, instead of teaching the people to organize themselves. They say, 'Give us power!'—they are Utopians, like the despots. * * *"

I need not excuse myself to your Lordship, nor, I think, to any honest man, for the zeal I have shown in this cause; for it is an honest zeal, and in a good cause. I have defended natural religion against a confederacy of atheists and divines. I now plead for natural society against politicians, and for natural reason against all vice. When the world is in a fitter temper than it is at present to bear truth, or when I shall be more indifferent about its temper, my thoughts may become more public. In the mean time, let them repose in my own bosom, and in the bosoms of such men as are fit to be initiated into the sober mysteries of truth and reason. My antagonists have already done as much as I could desire. Parties in religion and politics make sufficient discoveries concerning each other, to give a sober man a proper caution against them all. The monarchic, and aristocratical, and popular partisans, have been jointly laying their axes to the root of all government, and have in their turns proved each other absurd and inconvenient. *In vain you tell me that artificial government is good, but that I fall out only with the abuse. The thing! the thing itself is the abuse! Observe, my Lord, I pray you, that grand error upon which all artificial legislative power is founded. It was observed that men had ungovernable passions, which made it necessary to guard against the violence they might offer to each other. They appointed governors* over them for*

"Governments are the scourges of God to discipline the world! For them to create liberty would be to destroy themselves. Every revolution in the world, from the crowning of the first king, down to the declaration of the rights of man, has been accomplished by the spontaneous will of the people. * * * Had our forefathers understood that Government was only acting in obedience to its own nature, instead of trying to improve it, they would have gone about seeing how they could *do without it!* * * *"—[ED.]

* It is remarkable, too, that these governors are generally chosen from alien races. "China," says Voltaire (*Philos. Dict. Art. Government*), "obeys Tartars of a mixed race, half Manchon, and half Hun. India always obeys Mogul Tartars. The Nile, the Orontes, Greece, and Epirus, are still under the yoke of the Turks. It is not an English race that reigns in England; it is a German family, which succeeded to a Dutch prince, as the latter succeeded an Angevin family, that had replaced a Norman family, which had expelled a family of usurping Saxons. Spain obeys a French family, which succeeded to an Austrasian race; that Austrasian race had succeeded families that boasted of Visigoth extraction. These Visigoths had

this reason! But a worse and more perplexing difficulty arises, how to be defended against the governors? Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? In vain they change from a single person to a few. These few have the passions of the one; and they unite to strengthen themselves, and to secure the gratification of their lawless passions at the expense of the general good. In vain do we fly to the many. The case is worse; their passions are less under the government of reason, they are augmented by the contagion, and defended against all attacks by their multitude.

I have purposely avoided the mention of the mixed form of government, for reasons that will be very obvious to your Lordship. But my caution can avail me but little. You will not fail to urge it against me in favour of political society. You will not fail to show how the errors of the several simple modes are corrected by a mixture of all of them, and a proper balance of the several powers in such a state. I confess, my Lord, that this has been long a darling mistake of my own; and that of all the sacrifices I have made to truth, this has been by far the greatest. When I confess that I think this notion a mistake, I know to whom I am speaking, for I am satisfied that reasons are like liquors, and there are some of such a nature as none but strong heads can bear. There are few with whom I can communicate so freely as with Pope. But Pope cannot bear every truth. He has a timidity which hinders the full exertion of his faculties, almost as effectually as bigotry cramps those of the general herd of mankind.* But whoever is a genuine follower of Truth keeps his eye steady upon his guide, indifferent whither he is led, provided that she is the leader. *And, my Lord, if it may be properly*

been driven out by the Arabs, after having succeeded to the Romans, who had expelled the Carthaginians. Gaul obeys Franks, after having obeyed Roman Prefects. The same banks of the Danube have belonged to Germans, Romans, Arabs, Slavonians, Bulgarians, and Huns, to twenty different families, and almost all foreigners." Since this was written, other changes of dynasty have taken place in most of these countries; but the principle acted upon is still the same; the rulers are almost invariably of different races from the ruled.—[ED.]

* "God," says Emerson, "screens us evermore from premature ideas. Our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare us in the face until the time arrives when the mind is ripened; then we behold them; and the time when we saw them not is like a dream."—[ED.]

considered, it were infinitely better to remain possessed by the whole region of vulgar mistakes, than to reject some, and, at the same time, to retain a fondness for others altogether as absurd and irrational. The first has at least a consistency that makes a man, however erroneously, uniform at least; but the latter way of proceeding is such an inconsistent chimera, and jumble of philosophy and vulgar prejudice, that hardly anything more ridiculous can be conceived. Let us, therefore, freely, and without fear or prejudice, examine this last contrivance of policy; and, without considering how near the quick our instruments may come, let us search it to the bottom.

First, then, all men are agreed that this junction of regal, aristocratic, and popular power, must form a very complex, nice, and intricate machine, which, being composed of such a variety of parts, with such opposite tendencies and movements, it must be liable on every accident to be disordered. To speak without metaphor, such a government must be liable to frequent cabals, tumults, and revolutions, from its very constitution. These are undoubtedly as ill effects as can happen in a society; for, in such a case, the closeness acquired by community, instead of serving for mutual defence, serves only to increase the danger. Such a system is like a city, where trades that require constant fires are much exercised, where the houses are built of combustible materials, and where they stand extremely close.

In the second place, the several constituent parts having their distinct rights, and these many of them so necessary to be determined with exactness, are yet so indeterminate in their nature, that it becomes a new and constant source of debate and confusion. Hence it is, that whilst the business of government should be carrying on, the question is, who has a right to exercise this or that function of it, or what men have power to keep their offices in any function? Whilst this contest continues, and whilst the balance in any sort continues, it has never any remission; all manner of abuses and villainies in officers remain unpunished; the greatest frauds and robberies in the public revenues are committed in defiance of justice; and abuses grow, by time and impunity, into customs; until they prescribe against the laws, and grow too inveterate often to admit a cure, unless such as may be as bad as the disease.

Thirdly, the several parts of this species of government, though united, preserve the spirit which each form has separately. Kings are ambitious; the nobility haughty; and the populace tumultuous

and ungovernable. Each party, however in appearance peaceable, carries on a design upon the others; and it is owing to this, that in all questions, whether concerning foreign or domestic affairs, the whole generally turns more upon some party-matter than upon the nature of the thing itself; whether such a step will diminish or augment the power of the crown, or how far the privileges of the subject are likely to be extended or restricted by it. And these questions are constantly resolved, without any consideration of the merits of the cause, merely as the parties who uphold these jarring interests may chance to prevail; and as they prevail, the balance is overset, now upon one side, now upon the other. The government is, one day, arbitrary power in a single person; another, a juggling confederacy of a few to cheat the prince and enslave the people; and the third, a frantic and unmanageable democracy. The great instrument of all these changes, and what infuses a peculiar venom into all of them, is party. It is of no consequence what the principles of any party, or what their pretensions, are; the spirit which actuates all parties is the same—the spirit of ambition, of self-interest, of oppression, and treachery. This spirit entirely reverses all the principles which a benevolent nature has erected within us; all honesty, all equal justice, and even the ties of natural society, the natural affections. In a word, my Lord, we have all *seen*, and, if any outward considerations were worthy the lasting concern of a wise man, we have some of us *felt*, such oppression from party government as no other tyranny can parallel. We behold daily the most important rights—rights upon which all the others depend—we behold these rights determined in the last resort without the least attention even to the appearance or colour of justice; we behold this without emotion, because we have grown up in the constant view of such practices; and we are not surprised to hear a man requested to be a knave and a traitor, with as much indifference as if the most ordinary favour were asked; and we hear this request refused, not because it is a most unjust and unreasonable desire, but that this worthy has already engaged his injustice to another. These and many more points I am far from spreading to their full extent. You are sensible that I do not put forth half my strength; and you cannot be at a loss for the reason. A man is allowed sufficient freedom of thought, provided he knows how to choose his subject properly. You may criticise freely upon the Chinese constitution, and observe with as much severity as you please upon the absurd

tricks or destructive bigotry of the bonzees. But the scene is changed as you come homeward, and atheism or treason may be the names given in Britain to what would be reason and truth if asserted of China.* I submit to the condition, and though I have a notorious advantage before me, I waive the pursuit. For else, my Lord, it is very obvious what a picture might be drawn if the excesses of party even in our own nation. I could show that the same faction has, in one reign, promoted popular seditions, and, in the next, been a patron of tyranny; I could show that they have all of them betrayed the public safety at all times, and have very frequently with equal perfidy made a market of their own cause, and their own associates; I could show how vehemently they have contended for names, and how silently they have passed over things of the last importance; and I could demonstrate that they have had the opportunity of doing all this mischief, nay, that they themselves had their origin and growth from that complex form of government which we are wisely taught to look upon as so great a blessing. Revolve, my Lord, our history from the conquest. We scarce ever had a prince, who by fraud, or violence, had not made some infringement on the constitution. We scarce ever had a parliament which knew, when it attempted to set limits to the royal authority, how to set limits to its own.† Evils we have had continually calling for reformation, and reformations more grievous than any evils. Our boasted liberty sometimes trodden down, sometimes giddily set up, and ever precariously fluctuating and unsettled; it has only been kept alive by the blasts of continual feuds, wars, and conspiracies. In no country in Europe has the scaffold so often blushed with the blood of its

* The state of things here ridiculed, applies pretty closely to the position of French publicists. They are nearly in the condition of *Figaro*, who, when about to establish his periodical, *Le Journal Inutile*, was informed, that, "provided he did not speak, in his writings, of the authorities,—nor of religion,—nor of people in office,—nor of public bodies,—nor of the opera,—nor of any other dramatic representation,—nor of any one who had anything to do with anything whatever, he might print everything freely—under the inspection of two or three censors!—[ED.]

† Governments and Parliaments never hesitate to break their own laws, when it suits the interests of the governing classes to do so. There is scarcely an instance in history of any constitution, treaty, or charter, being fully carried out, or maintained for any long period.—[ED.]

nobility. Confiscations, banishments, attainders, executions, make a large part of the history of such of our families as are not utterly extinguished by them. Formerly, indeed, things had a more ferocious appearance than they have at this day. In these early and unrefined ages, the jarring parts of a certain chaotic constitution supported their several pretensions by the sword. Experience and policy have since taught other methods.

At nunc res agitur tenui pulmone rubetæ.

But how far corruption, venality, the contempt of honour, the oblivion of all duty to our country, and the most abandoned public prostitution, are preferable to the more glaring and violent effects of faction, I will not presume to determine. Sure I am that they are very great evils.

I have done with the forms of government. During the course of my enquiry you may have observed a very material difference between my manner of reasoning and that which is in use amongst the abettors of artificial society. They form their plans upon what seems most eligible to their imaginations, for the ordering of mankind. I discover the mistakes in those plans, from the real known consequences which have resulted from them. *They have enlisted reason to fight against itself, and employ its whole force to prove that it is an insufficient guide to them in the conduct of their lives.* But, unhappily for us, in proportion as we have deviated from the plain rule of our nature, and turned our reason against itself, in that proportion have we increased the follies and miseries of mankind. The more deeply we penetrate into the labyrinth of art, the further we find ourselves from those ends for which we entered it. This has happened in almost every species of artificial society, and in all times. We found, or we thought we found, an inconvenience in having every man the judge of his own cause; therefore, judges were set up, at first, with discretionary powers. But it was soon found a miserable slavery to have our lives and properties precarious, and hanging upon the arbitrary determination of any one man, or set of men. We fled to laws as a remedy for this evil. By these we persuaded ourselves we might know with some certainty upon what ground we stood. But lo! differences arose upon the sense and interpretation of these laws. Thus we were brought back to our old incertitude. New laws were made to expound the old; and new difficulties arose upon the new laws; as words multiplied, opportu-

nitics of cavilling upon them also. Then recourse was had to notes, comments, glosses, reports, *responsa prudentum*, learned readings: eagle stood against eagle; authority was set up against authority. Some were allured by the modern, others revered the ancient. The new were more enlightened, the old were more venerable. Some adopted the comment, others stuck to the text. The confusion increased, the mist thickened, until it could be discovered no longer what was allowed or forbidden, what things were in property, and what common. In this uncertainty, (uncertain even to the professors, an Egyptian darkness to the rest of mankind,) the contending parties felt themselves more effectually ruined by the delay than they could have been by the injustice of any decision. Our inheritances have become a prize for disputation; and disputes and litigations have become an inheritance.

The professors of artificial law have always walked hand in hand with the professors of artificial theology. As their end, in confounding the reason of man, and abridging his natural freedom, is exactly the same, they have adjusted the means to that end in a way entirely similar. The divine thunders out his *anathemas* with more noise and terror against the breach of one of his positive institutions, or the neglect of some of his trivial forms, than against the neglect or breach of those duties and commandments of natural religion, which by these forms and institutions he pretends to enforce. The lawyer has his forms, and his positive institutions too, and he adheres to them with a veneration altogether as religious. The worst cause cannot be so prejudicial to the litigant, as his advocate's or attorney's ignorance or neglect of these forms. A law-suit is like an ill-managed dispute, in which the first object is soon out of sight, and the parties end upon a matter wholly foreign to that on which they began. In a law-suit the question is, who has a right to a certain house or farm? And this question is daily determined, not upon the evidence of the right, but upon the observance or neglect of some form of words in use with the gentlemen of the robe, about which there is even amongst themselves such a disagreement, that the most experienced veterans in the profession can never be positively assured that they are not mistaken.

Let us expostulate with these learned sages, these priests of the sacred temple of justice. Are we judges of our own property? By no means. You, then, who are initiated into the mysteries of the blindfold goddess, inform me whether I have a right to eat the bread

I have earned by the hazard of my life or the sweat of my brow? The grave doctor answers me in the affirmative; the reverend serjeant replies in the negative; the learned barrister reasons upon one side and upon the other, and concludes nothing. What shall I do? An antagonist starts up and presses me hard. I enter the field, and retain these three persons to defend my cause. My cause, which two farmers from the plough could have decided in half an hour, takes the court twenty years. I am, however, at the end of my labour, and have, in reward for all my toil and vexation, a judgment in my favour. But hold! a sagacious commander, in the adversary's army, has found a flaw in the proceeding. My triumph is turned into mourning. I have used *or* instead of *and*, or some mistake, small in appearance, but dreadful in its consequences; and have the whole of my success quashed in a writ of error. I remove my suit; I shift from court to court; I fly from equity to law, and from law to equity; equal uncertainty attends me everywhere; and a mistake in which I had no share, decides at once upon my liberty and property, sending me from the court to a prison, and adjudging my family to beggary and famine. I am innocent, gentlemen, of the darkness and uncertainty of your science. I never darkened it with absurd and contradictory notions, nor confounded it with chicane and sophistry. You have excluded me from any share in the conduct of my own cause; the science was too deep for me; I acknowledged it; but it was too deep even for yourselves; you have made the way so intricate, that you are yourselves lost in it; you err, and you punish me for your errors.

The delay of the law is, your Lordship will tell me, a trite topic, and which of its abuses have not been too severely felt not to be complained of? A man's property is to serve for the purposes of his support; and, therefore, to delay a determination concerning that, is the worst injustice, because it cuts off the very end and purpose for which I applied to the judicature for relief. Quite contrary in the case of a man's life; there the determination can hardly be too much protracted. Mistakes in this case are as often fallen into as many other; and, if the judgment is sudden, the mistakes are the most irretrievable of all others. Of this the gentlemen of the robe are themselves sensible, and they have brought it into a maxim. *De morte hominis nulla est cunctacio longa.* But what could have induced them to reverse the rules, and to contradict that reason which dictated them, I am utterly unable to guess. A point con-

cerning property, which ought, for the reasons I just mentioned, to be most speedily decided, frequently exercises the wit of successions of lawyers, for many generations. *Multa virum volvens durando secula vincit.* But the question concerning a man's life, that great question in which no delay ought to be counted tedious, is commonly determined in twenty-four hours at the utmost. It is not to be wondered at, that injustice and absurdity should be inseparable companions.

Ask of politicians the ends for which laws were originally designed; and they will answer, that the laws were designed as a protection for the poor and weak, against the oppression of the rich and powerful. But surely no pretence can be so ridiculous; a man might as well tell me he has taken off my load, because he has changed the burden. If the poor man is not able to support his suit, according to the vexatious and expensive manner established in civilised countries, has not the rich as great an advantage over him as the strong has over the weak in a state of nature? But we will not place the state of nature, which is the reign of God, in competition with political society, which is the absurd usurpation of man. In a state of nature, it is true, that a man of superior force may beat or rob me; but then it is true that I am at full liberty to defend myself, or make reprisal by surprise, or by cunning, or by any other way in which I may be superior to him. But in political society, a rich man may rob me in another way. I cannot defend myself; for money is the only weapon with which we are allowed to fight. And if I attempt to avenge myself, the whole force of that society is ready to complete my ruin.

A good parson once said, that where mystery begins, religion ends. Cannot I say, as truly at least, of human laws, that where mystery begins, justice ends? It is hard to say whether the doctors of law or divinity have made the greater advances in the lucrative business of mystery. The lawyers, as well as the theologians, have erected another reason besides natural reason; and the result has been another justice besides natural justice. They have so bewildered the world and themselves in unmeaning forms and ceremonies, and so perplexed the plainest matters with metaphysical jargon, that it carries the highest danger to a man out of that profession, to make the least step without their advice and assistance. Thus, by confining to themselves the knowledge of the foundation of all men's lives and properties, they have reduced all mankind into the most

abject and servile dependence. We are tenants at the will of these gentlemen for everything; and a metaphysical quibble is to decide whether the greatest villain breathing shall meet his deserts, or escape with impunity, or whether the best man in the society shall not be reduced to the lowest and most despicable condition it affords. In a word, my Lord, the injustice, delay, puerility, false refinement, and affected mystery of the law are such, that many who live under it come to admire and envy the expedition, simplicity, and equality, of arbitrary judgments. I need insist the less on this article to your Lordship, as you have frequently lamented the miseries derived to us from artificial law; and your candour is the more to be admired and applauded in this, as your Lordship's noble house has derived its wealth and its honour from that profession.

Before we finish our examination of artificial society, I shall lead your Lordship into a closer consideration of the relations which it gives birth to, and the benefits, if such they are, which result from these relations. The most obvious division of society is into rich and poor; and it is no less obvious, that the number of the former bear a great disproportion to those of the latter. The whole business of the poor is to administer to the idleness, folly, and luxury of the rich; and that of the rich, in return, is to find the best methods of confirming the slavery and increasing the burdens of the poor. In a state of nature, it is an invariable law, that a man's acquisitions are in proportion to his labours. In a state of artificial society, it is a law as constant and as invariable, that those who labour most enjoy the fewest things,* and that those who labour not at all, have the greatest number of enjoyments. A constitution of things this, strange and ridiculous beyond expression! We scarce believe a thing when we are told it, which we actually see before our eyes every day without being in the least surprised.† I suppose that

* In a paper, read at the recent meeting of the *Association for the Advancement of Social Science*, the author (Mr. Bray) argued that one-seventh of the population of this country were in possession of two-thirds of the whole income of the kingdom: and, that those dependant upon wages, had less than one-third.—[ED.]

† The "money-juggle" is the main cause of this popular blindness. An author who wrote many years ago, in relation to this subject, says:—"It is doubtful whether any power ever existed, in any kind of government whatever, that could impose on the people what is imposed on them by the power

there are in Great Britain upwards of an hundred thousand people employed in lead, tin, iron, copper, and coal mines; these unhappy wretches scarce ever see the light of the sun; they are buried in the bowels of the earth; there they work at a severe and dismal task, without the least prospect of being delivered from it; they subsist upon the coarsest and worst sort of fare; they have their health miserably impaired, and their lives cut short, by being perpetually confined in the close vapour of these malignant minerals. An hundred thousand more at least are tortured without remission by the suffocating smoke, intense fires, and constant drudgery necessary in refining and managing the products of those mines. If any man informed us that two hundred thousand innocent persons were condemned to so intolerable slavery, how should we pity the unhappy sufferers, and how great would be our just indignation against those who inflicted so cruel and ignominious a punishment! This is an instance—I could not wish a stronger—of the numberless things which we pass by in their common dress, yet which shock us when they are nakedly represented. But this number, considerable as it is, and the slavery, with all its baseness and horror, which we have

of wealth [money]. To condemn so many to the mines; to confine such numbers to such nauseous, irksome, unwholesome, destructive employments, is more than equal to any kingly power on earth. To enforce the execution of such punishments, would require an army almost equal in number to the people so punished. The punishments of tyrants are generally confined to those that are near to them; but the power of wealth [money] pervades the whole country, and subjects every poor man to its dominion. If there had been no intervention of money in the case, the matter would have appeared plain. The rich man could then give nothing to the poor, except he visibly received it from another [from some other *poor* man who had created it]; for he has no corn, or anything else, which his own hands produced, for the use of the poor. Money covers and conceals the action, as the case of a watch does the motions within. By giving the *money*, he seems to give the *corn*. *Money is, therefore, an instrument serving to deceive and delude the people.* * * * ("The Effects of Civilization, &c." By C. Hall, M.D. Reprinted, London, 1850.)

The word *money*, in the above paragraph, must be understood to mean gold and silver money, or bank notes based upon those metals. A correct money, the representative of wealth already created, or of labour available for the immediate creation of real wealth, would have no such baneful influences.—[Ed.]

at home, is nothing to what the rest of the world affords of the same nature. Millions are daily bathed in the poisonous damps and destructive effluvia of lead, silver, copper, and arsenic; to say nothing of those other employments, those stations of wretchedness and contempt, in which civil society has placed the numerous *enfants perdus* of her army. Would any rational man submit to one of the most tolerable of these drudgeries, for all the artificial enjoyments which policy has made to result from them? By no means. And yet need I suggest to your Lordship, that those who find the means, and those who arrive at the end, are not at all the same persons. On considering the strange and unaccountable fancies and contrivances of artificial reason, I have somewhere called this earth the Bedlam of our system. Looking now upon the effects of some of those fancies, may we not with equal reason call it likewise the Newgate and the Bridewell of the universe? Indeed, *the blindness of one part of mankind, co-operating with the phrensy and villany of the other, has been the real builder of this respectable fabric of political society*: and as the blindness of mankind has caused their slavery, in return, their state of slavery is made a pretence for continuing them in a state of blindness; for the politician will tell you, gravely, that their life of servitude disqualifies the greater part of the race of man for a search of truth, and supplies them with no other than mean and insufficient ideas. This is but too true; *and this is one of the reasons for which I blame such institutions.*

In a misery of this sort, admitting some few lenitives, and those too but a few, nine parts in ten of the whole race of mankind drudge through life. It may be urged, perhaps, in palliation of this, that, at least, the rich few find a considerable and real benefit from the wretchedness of the many. But is this so in fact? Let us examine the point with a little more attention. For this purpose the rich in all societies may be thrown into two classes. The first is of those who are powerful as well as rich, and conduct the operations of the vast political machine. The other is of those who employ their riches wholly in the acquisition of pleasure. As to the first sort, their continual care and anxiety, their toilsome days and sleepless nights, are next to proverbial. These circumstances are sufficient almost to level their condition to that of the unhappy majority; but there are other circumstances which place them in a far lower condition. Not only their understandings labour continually, which is the severest labour; but their hearts are torn by the worst, most

troublesome, and insatiable of all passions, by avarice, by ambition, by fear, and jealousy. No part of the mind has rest. Power gradually extirpates from the mind every human and gentle virtue. Pity, benevolence, friendship, are things almost unknown in high stations. *Vere amicitiae rarissimi inveniuntur in iis qui in honoribus reque publica versantur*, says Cicero. And, indeed, courts are the schools where cruelty, pride, dissimulation, and treachery, are studied and taught in the most vicious perfection. This is a point so clear and acknowledged, that if it did not make a necessary part of my subject, I should pass it by entirely. And this has hindered me from drawing at full length, and in the most striking colours, this shocking picture of the degeneracy and wretchedness of human nature, in that part which is vulgarly thought its happiest and most amiable state. You know from what originals I could copy such pictures. Happy are they who know enough of them to know the little value of the possessors of such things, and of all that they possess; and happy they who have been snatched from that post of danger which they occupy, with the remains of their virtue; loss of honours, wealth, titles, and even the loss of one's country, is nothing in balance with so great an advantage.

Let us now view the other species of the rich, those who devote their time and fortunes to idleness and pleasure. How much happier are they? The pleasures which are agreeable to nature are within the reach of all, and therefore can form no distinction in favour of the rich. The pleasures which art forces up are seldom sincere, and never satisfying. What is worse, this constant application to pleasure takes away from the enjoyment, or rather turns it into the nature of a very burdensome and laborious business. It has consequences much more fatal. It produces a weak valetudinary state of body, attended by all those horrid disorders, and yet more horrid methods of cure, which are the result of luxury on one hand, and the weak and ridiculous efforts of human art on the other. The pleasures of such men are scarcely felt as pleasures; at the same time that they bring on pains and diseases, which are felt but too severely. The mind has its share of the misfortune; it grows lazy and enervate, unwilling and unable to search for truth, and utterly incapable of knowing, much less of relishing, real happiness. *The poor by their excessive labour, and the rich by their enormous luxury, are set upon a level, and rendered equally ignorant of any knowledge which might conduce to their happiness.* A dismal view

of the interior of all civil society! The lower part broken and ground down by the most cruel oppression; and the rich by their artificial method of life bringing worse evils on themselves than their tyranny could possibly inflict on those below them. Very different is the prospect of the natural state. Here there are no wants which nature gives, (and in this state men can be sensible of no other wants,) which are not to be supplied by a very moderate degree of labour; therefore there is no slavery. Neither is there any luxury, because no single man can supply the materials of it. Life is simple, and therefore it is happy.

I am conscious, my Lord, that your politician will urge in his defence, that this unequal state is highly useful. That without dooming some part of mankind to extraordinary toil, the arts which cultivate life could not be exercised. But I demand of this politician, how such arts came to be necessary? He answers that civil society could not well exist without them. So that these arts are necessary to civil society, and civil society necessary again to these arts. *Thus are we running in a circle, without modesty, and without end, and making one error and extravagance an excuse for the other.* My sentiments about these arts and their cause, I have often discoursed with my friends at large. Pope has expressed them in good verse, where he talks with so much force of reason and elegance of language, in praise of the state of nature:—

Then was not pride, nor art that pride to aid,
Man walked with beast, joint tenant of the shade.

On the whole, my Lord, *if political society, in whatever form, has still made the many the property of the few; if it has introduced labours unnecessary, vices and diseases unknown, and pleasures incompatible with nature; if in all countries it abridges the lives of millions, and renders those of millions more utterly abject and miserable; shall we still worship so destructive an idol, and daily sacrifice to it our health, our liberty, and our peace? Or shall we pass by this monstrous heap of absurd notions and abominable practices, thinking we have sufficiently discharged our duty in exposing the trifling cheats and ridiculous juggles of a few mad, designing, or ambitious priests?** Alas! my Lord, we labour

* Voltaire, in his *Philos. Dictionary (Art. War)*, has vehemently denounced the impudent and ridiculous diatribes of both priests and philosophers on the minor evils of society, while they tacitly disregard the great

under a mortal consumption, whilst we are so anxious about the cure of a sore finger. For has not this leviathan of civil power overflowed the earth with a deluge of blood, as if he were made to disport and play therein? We have shown, that political society, on a moderate calculation, has been the means of murdering several times the number of inhabitants now upon the earth, during its short existence, not upwards of four thousand years in any accounts to be depended on. But we have said nothing of the other, and perhaps as bad, consequences of these wars, which have spilled such seas of blood, and reduced so many millions to a merciless slavery. But these are only the ceremonies performed in the porch of the political temple. Much more horrid ones are seen as you enter it. The several species of governments vie with each other in the absurdity of their constitutions, and the oppression which they make their subjects endure. Take them under what form you please, they are in effect but a despotism, and they fall, both in effect and appearance too, after a very short period, into that cruel and detestable species of tyranny; which I rather call it, because we have been educated under another form, than that this is of worse consequences to mankind. *For the free governments, from the point of their space, and the moment of their duration, have felt more confusion, and committed more flagrant acts of tyranny, than the most perfect despotic governments which we have ever known.* Turn your eye next to the labyrinth of the law, and the iniquity conceived in its intricate recesses. Consider the ravages committed in the bowels of all commonwealths by ambition, by avarice, envy, fraud, open injustice, and pretended friendship; vices which could draw little support from a state of nature, but which blossom and flourish in the rankness of political society. Revolve our whole discourse; add to it all those reflections which your own good understanding shall evils. Referring to martial victories, he says:—"A certain number of orators are everywhere paid to celebrate these murderous days. * * * But, in all these discourses, you will scarcely find two in which the orator dares to say a word against the scourge and crime of war—which comprises all other scourges and crimes. * * * The unfortunate orators speak incessantly against love, — the only consolation of mankind. * * * Philosophers, moralists,—burn all your books! While the caprice of a few men can order a part of mankind, said to be consecrated to heroism, to murder, loyally, millions of our brethren,—can there be anything more horrible throughout nature?"—[ED.]

suggest, and make a strenuous effort beyond the reach of vulgar philosophy, to confess that *the cause of artificial society is more defenceless even than that of artificial religion; that it is as derogatory from the honour of the Creator, as subversive of human reason, and productive of infinitely more mischief to the human race.*

If pretended revelations have caused wars where they were opposed, and slavery where they were received, the pretended wise inventions of politicians have done the same. But the slavery has been much heavier, the wars far more bloody, and both more universal by many degrees. *Show me any mischief produced by the madness or wickedness of theologians, and I will show you an hundred resulting from the ambition and villany of conquerors and statesmen. Show me an absurdity in religion, and I will undertake to show you an hundred for one in political laws and institutions.* If you say that natural religion is a sufficient guide without the foreign aid of revelation, on what principle should political laws become necessary? Is not the same reason available in theology and in politics? If the laws of nature are the laws of God, is it consistent with the Divine wisdom to prescribe rules to us, and leave the enforcement of them to the folly of human institutions? Will you follow truth but to a certain point?

We are indebted for all our miseries to our distrust of that guide, which Providence thought sufficient for our condition—our own natural reason, which rejecting, both in human and Divine things, we have given our necks to the yoke of political and theological slavery. *We have renounced the prerogative of man, and it is no wonder that we should be treated like beasts.* But our misery is much greater than theirs, as the crime we commit in rejecting the lawful dominion of our reason is greater than any which they can commit. If, after all, you should confess all these things, yet plead the necessity of political institutions, weak and wicked as they are, I can argue with equal, perhaps superior, force, concerning the necessity of artificial religion; and every step you advance in your argument, you add a strength to mine. So that if we are resolved to submit our reason and our liberty to civil usurpation, we have nothing to do but to conform as quietly as we can to the vulgar notions which are connected with this, and take up the theology of the vulgar as well as their politics. But if we think this necessity rather imaginary than real, we should renounce their dreams of society, together with their visions of religion, and vindicate ourselves into perfect liberty.

You are, my Lord, but just entering into the world; I am going out of it. I have played long enough to be heartily tired of the drama. Whether I have acted my part in it well or ill, posterity will judge with more candour than I, or than the present age, with our present passions, can possibly pretend to. For my part, I quit it without a sigh, and submit to the sovereign order without murmuring. The nearer we approach to the goal of life, the better we begin to understand the true value of our existence, and the real weight of our opinions. *We set out much in love with both; but we leave much behind us as we advance. We first throw away the toys along with the rattles of our nurses; those of the priest keep their hold a little longer; those of our governors the longest of all.* But the passions which prop these opinions are withdrawn one after another; and the cool light of reason, at the setting of our life, shows us what a false splendour played upon these objects during our more sanguine seasons. Happy, my Lord, if instructed by my experience, and even by my errors, you come early to make such an estimate of things, as may give freedom and ease in your life. I am happy that such an estimate promises me comfort at my death.

“The only sure foundation for just and harmonic human relations (in addition to the acknowledgment of the universal equality and reciprocity of all natural rights and duties) lies in the practical recognition by society, in all its religious, political, and social institutions, manners, and customs, of the natural, indefeasible, and indestructible individuality of every human being; because that individuality necessarily makes the thoughts, feelings, and convictions of each individual different, more or less, from those of every other individual, thereby rendering all governmental or educational attempts to impose uniformity of opinion, belief, or action upon the people, irritating, and futile; because that individuality constitutes each sane adult the sole judge of his or her own happiness, liberty, and responsibility; and because, finally, it confers the right of *self-sovereignty* upon every individual over his or her own person, property, time, and conduct, in so far as that sovereignty can be exercised at the individual's own expense, and not at the expense of others.”—ANON.

A P P E N D I X .

ALTHOUGH Burke, in the preceding Essay, has proved that he was fully convinced of the evil consequences of political institutions (or state-craft) upon the happiness of a people, he has not suggested any mode by which such institutions could be abrogated, and "Natural Society" established. We will endeavour to show how this deficiency could be supplied, premising that our readers must not expect us to do more than offer a very brief outline of the science involved,—the science of Equitable Human Relations, or Sociology. The minute details of its practical application cannot, perhaps, be definitively laid down until the results of a considerable number of experiments have been made known; but when the fundamental principles of any science are settled, the facts which corroborate that science, and the art of applying it to practical use, readily present themselves to us, if we search earnestly and diligently for them.

Burke appears to have taken rather a gloomy view of humanity and its destiny, and to have had little faith in the idea of its ultimate perfectibility. Nor was he warranted in treating of artificial governments as the *primary* causes of social evil,—governments being but *effects* arising out of the erroneous notions formed in the infancy of Humanity as to the true elements of human rights and duties; such erroneous notions being themselves attributable to that ordination of nature which has left the human race to acquire moral and social truth and wisdom, solely through the actual, and often painful, experiences of error and folly. We do not believe that human institutions depend upon any plan, preconceived and pre-ordained by an inscrutable power, for the progressive education of Humanity. We believe that the institutions of civil society are as much the work of man himself as is the mode of building his house, the cooking of his food, or the fashioning of his clothes. Reason and science are the true providence of man. The notion of a special providence, either for nations or for individuals, is a speculative faith, unsus-

ported by history, or by existing facts. Apparently the Great Power of the Universe cannot act independently of the necessary sequence of cause and effect, any more than man can. There seems to be a distinct sphere of action which belongs to man alone, with which no other power can interfere. If the theory of society, and the institutions which represent it, are found to be fallacious, and productive of evil, we are free to adopt new theories, and new practices; but we have no more right to expect supernatural aid in perfecting the moral and social sciences than we have in the physical sciences. If (as Voltaire remarks) God had been infinitely powerful, no reason can be assigned why he should not have made man infinitely happy. He has not done so: therefore, we ought to conclude that he could not do so. The only conclusion that can be securely reached is that God, acting always for the best, has done the best he was able to do. Nevertheless, there appears to be a necessitated progression of Humanity towards truth and wisdom; which progression, according to the German philosopher Fichte, may be divided into five distinct periods, as follow: and although this division must be taken in its very broadest sense, its general truth is fully corroborated by all history:—

‘*First Period.*—The domination of Instinct over Reason: this is the Primitive Age.

‘*Second Period.*—The general instinct gives place to an external dominant Authority: this is the age of Doctrines unable to convince, and employing force to produce a blind belief, claiming unlimited obedience: this is the period in which Moral Evil arises.

‘*Third Period.*—The authority, dominant in the preceding epoch, but constantly attacked by Reason, becomes weak and wavering: this is the epoch of scepticism and licentiousness.

‘*Fourth Period.*—Reason becomes conscious of itself; truth makes itself known; the science of Reason developes itself: this is beginning of that perfection which Humanity is destined to attain.

‘*Fifth Period.*—The science of Reason is applied; Humanity fashions itself after the ideal standard of Reason: this is the epoch of Art—the last term in the history of our species.’*

‘Humanity exists,’ says Fichte, ‘for the successive and constant realization of the dictates of Reason. But sometimes Humanity has a knowledge of what it performs, and why it performs it; sometimes

* Lewes’s Biog. Hist. Philosophy, 2nd ed. (1857), pp. 589-90.

it obeys but a blind impulse. In this second case, that is to say, in the first epochs of the terrestrial existence of Humanity, Reason, though not manifesting itself distinctly and consciously, nevertheless exists. It manifests itself as an Instinct, and appears under the form of a natural law; it exhibits itself in the intelligence only as a vague and obscure sentiment. Reason, on the contrary, no sooner manifests itself as Reason, than it is gifted with consciousness of itself and its acts. This constitutes the second epoch.

‘But Humanity does not pass at once from the first to the second epoch. At first reason only manifests itself in a few men — the great men of their age, who thereby acquire authority. They are the instructors of their age. Their mission is to elevate the mass to themselves. Instinct diminishes, and Reason supervenes. Science appears. Morality becomes a science. The relations of man to man become more and more fixed in accordance with the dictates of Reason.’

Every epoch, according to Fichte, has its *dominant idea*; and this idea will be determined by the ideas of the epochs which have preceded it; and he asks, ‘*What is the fundamental idea which Humanity has to realize?*’ The answer is: ‘*The idea of Duty. This, in its concrete expression, is, to fix the relations of man to man in such order that the perfect liberty of each be compatible with the liberty of the whole.*’

Fichte’s ideal of liberty, as expressed in the above proposition, appears to comprehend the entirety of the ‘social problem;’ but he has not told us how it is to be solved. Like the generality of philosophers, publicists, and reformers, he has been content to give an abstract definition of liberty, without offering any suggestions for its practical realization.

The nearest approach to a satisfactory solution of this great problem, theoretically and practically, has, we confidently believe, been made by a man who is at present but little known to the world,—JOSIAH WARREN, now of Long Island, United States. In 1852, this gentleman published, in New York, a small volume entitled “Equitable Commerce; or, A New Development of Principles as Substitutes for Laws and Governments, and for the Harmonious Adjustment of the Pecuniary, Intellectual, and Moral Intercourse of Mankind.” This edition (for the main part of the work had been published in 1846) was edited by a friend of the author, Mr. S. P. Andrews, who, in his preface, says:—‘I do not

hesitate to affirm that there is more scientific truth, positively new to the world, and immensely important in its bearings upon the destiny of mankind, than was ever consigned to the same number of pages. . I am conscious that I am guilty of no extravagance in predicting that such will be the estimate placed by posterity upon the discoveries of Mr. Warren.*

Mr. Andrews, nevertheless, deprecates the idea that in thus eulogizing Mr. Warren, he has any intention to disparage the labours of other reformers, who, though failing to solve the problem of Harmonious Society, have done other, and most useful work. The cause of their failure was their attempt to 'regulate men by legislation, instead of trusting them to regulate themselves, and their relations to each other, by a knowledge of principles.' 'They have resorted to contrivances, instead of discovering natural laws. They have overlaid and smothered the individual in the multiplicity or complexity of institutions. Before any of their schemes of liberty could be begun, individuality had to be crushed, and freedom had to be abrogated; and hence their essential, self-defeating impracticality. It was like attempting to build a chimney by beginning at the top !'

We shall now proceed to give Mr. Warren's programme of Social Reform, taking the liberty somewhat to amplify it from the original, in the hope of making it more readily understood.

What we desire to accomplish is :—

1. To give the greatest amount of freedom to each individual.
2. To make person and property secure.
3. To give to labour its just, proper, and legitimate reward.
4. To facilitate the way for each individual to use or possess land, and all other kinds of natural wealth.
5. To adopt the most economical modes of producing and consuming wealth.

* In addition to this work, Mr. Warren has published "Practical Details in Equitable Commerce, shewing the working, in actual Experiment, during a Series of Years, of the Social Principles propounded, &c., &c." New York, 1852. 12mo. 25cts.

Also, "Periodical Letters on the Principles and Progress of the Equity Movement." Monthly (since 1844). 12mo.

Mr. Andrews has published :—"The Science of Society," in two parts. Part 1. The True Constitution of Government in the Sovereignty of the Individual, as the Final Development of Protestantism, Democracy, and

6. To make the general interests of all compatible and coincident.

7. To remove the elements of war, distrust, discord, and repulsion among men; and to establish a prevailing spirit of peace, order, and social sympathy.

The means for the accomplishment of the above ends may be thus stated:—

1. The recognition and practical acknowledgment of a natural and indestructible individuality, peculiarity, or particularity, in every person, thing, and event.

2. The acknowledgment, as the first principle of moral justice, and social harmony, of the natural and indefeasible *self-sovereignty* of every individual; and of the right and duty of every person to the free exercise of that sovereignty whenever it can be done at his or her own cost, without trespassing upon the same right in others.

3. The regulation of all commercial transactions, or other interchanges between individuals, upon the just and equitable principle of making the cost to the seller or giver, the measurer of price, or consideration, to the buyer or receiver; and not, as at present, making price dependent upon the incidental value of the commodity, or service, to the buyer or receiver. In other words, to make all exchanges of wealth or service on the principle of equal labour for equal labour—time for time—cost for cost—burthen for burthen.

4. The adaptation of the supply of wealth or service to the demand for it; that is, making all wants known beforehand, and regulating the supply accordingly; so that there may neither be excess or paucity of production in any branch of useful industry; nor any portion of the population educated for pursuits; left to follow occupations; or be engaged in producing anything, the demand for which has afterwards to be created or encouraged, principally for their benefit.

The word "Individuality," when applied to human beings, comprehends all those physical and mental qualities which constitute the peculiar *one-ness* of every person; for although the whole race possess the same general characteristics, they are so modified in each individual, that no two beings ever lived who did not materially differ from each other,—a fact which is in perfect harmony with all

Socialism. Part 2. Cost the Limit of Price; a Scientific Measure of Honesty in Trade, as one of the Fundamental Principles in the Solution of the Social Problem. New York, 1853. 12mo. 50cts.

the other departments of nature, throughout whose realm there exists the most comprehensive general analogies, co-existing with infinite particular varieties. This infinite diversification of natural archetypes, and their analogues, is predicable of the entire universe,—of, in fact, everything comprised in the metaphysical categories of form, time, place, quantity, quality, and relation. The laws to which these diversifications are subservient, alone appear to possess the attribute of unchangeableness. Principles are eternal; but the materialities on which they operate are ever varying. There appears to be no absolute cycle in the universe; all is change and progression. No planet ever revolves twice precisely in the same orbit. And, in the moral and social world, the occurrences of to-day can never be absolutely repeated.

‘If Individuality is a universal law which must be obeyed, if we would have order and harmony in every sphere; and if we would have a true constitution of government, then the absolute sovereignty of the Individual necessarily results’—limited only by the ever-accompanying condition, resulting from the equal sovereignty of all others, that the onerous consequences of his actions be assumed by himself.

The law of progress in human society is identical with the tendency to individualize. ‘In ecclesiastical affairs, it is the breaking-up of the Church into sects; and, finally, a disintegration of the whole mass into individuals; at which point every human being becomes his own sect, and his own church.’ Man is characteristically a religious animal. He is naturally prone to form opinions and speculations as to his origin and destiny, and as to his relation to the mysterious power which created him. And these opinions will always exercise a considerable influence upon his conduct, and upon his happiness, either for good or evil. But this religious sentiment is purely individual or personal. Whatever may be the nature of the responsibility of the created to the Creator, it cannot be transferred from one individual to another. Each of us can only be answerable for himself.

Protestantism already concedes the right of private judgment in all matters of religion; and as regards morals, there is no power higher than the individual himself to determine what constitutes an immoral act. ‘It is (says Andrews) self-righteousness and spiritual despotism for me to assume that you have not a conscience as well as I; and that if you regulate your own conduct in the light of that

conscience, it will not be so well regulated, in the sight of God, as it would be if I were to impose the decision of my conscience upon you.'

Nothing less than the full power to exercise individual sovereignty can realize true liberty. 'What is liberty?' asks Mr. Warren: 'Who will allow me to define it for him, and agree beforehand to square his life by my definition? * * * Liberty defined and limited by others is slavery. Liberty is the sovereignty of the individual; and never shall man know liberty until each and every individual is acknowledged to be the only legitimate sovereign of his or her own person, time, and property, each living and acting at his own cost.'

The sovereignty of the individual is also true equality—equality of rights; for when each is sovereign, none can be privileged. The sovereignty of the individual is also true fraternity, because, when recognized, no one would be able to hold another in bondage of any kind. A state of dependence destroys all fraternal feeling. It is only in a condition of life where the law of liberty is duly circumscribed by the law of equal rights, that a fraternity of interests can exist; and, in such a state, the desire to infringe upon the natural rights of others would be both revolting in theory, and impossible in practice.

And not only does the sovereignty of the individual involve the fruition of all rights; it necessitates the performance of all duties. In a word, it makes the individual a responsible, an accountable being! The man, or woman, whose will is subjected to the will of another, is not a free agent; and cannot, therefore, be justly made responsible for the general results of his or her position in the universe. But when the individual shall be permitted by the institutions and arrangements of society to assume the regal mantle of self-sovereignty, much will be required of him, because much will have been given.

Responsibility! there is something almost awful in the word, when properly understood! Did we seriously reflect that the consequences of all human action are, by the fiat of an inexorable necessity, projected into infinity, how careful should we be in satisfying our awakened consciences before we acted! How persevering are we in our endeavours to find out who is responsible for this or that social evil which is daily being brought to light: and how rarely are we able to put the saddle on the right horse! And how anxious are all

the implicated parties to shift the burthen of responsibility from their own shoulders! But were the sovereignty of the individual duly provided for by the institutions of society, each of us would have to bear no more than our due share of responsibility. 'Responsibility,' as Mr. Warren observes, 'must be individual, or there is no responsibility at all.' But did mankind know and feel the full import of the word, could they act so recklessly as they often do now? Could the crowned heads of the earth,—in the preservation of their really *dishonorable* privilege of "governing"—could they dare to incur the dread responsibility of being answerable for the moral and physical degradation* which they inflict upon a large portion of the human race, when, under false pretences, they entrap God's creatures, and turn them into hired assassins to fight in defence of their usurpations? Did the manufacturing speculator know and feel how this word could be applied to him, would he, in his pursuit of Mammon, build up large factories, and tempt the poor to become his wageslaves in them, where he knows they will become mere animated machines to produce wealth for him; and where they can enjoy little more freedom than to breed children who will become slaves like their parents? Would the libertine take upon himself the onerous responsibility of keeping up female prostitution, and all the moral and physical diseases which are its concomitants? And, indeed, would not many a man, who now heedlessly follows his instincts in marriage, hesitate before he became the means of bringing offspring into a world, where, as at present, the chances of happiness are so few, and of misery so many, that his children might have cause to curse him in their hearts for having given them a place in it?

'In the higher condition of society (says Mr. Andrews) to which mankind is unconsciously advancing, men will shun all responsibility for, and arbitrary control over, the conduct of others, as sedulously

* The physical deterioration of the people, caused by war, is forcing itself upon the attention of all who take an interest in the condition of humanity at large. The recent lowering of the standard height for recruits in this country is a convincing proof that the great losses from our population in the absurd Russian campaign is beginning to tell upon us. But in France, the deterioration is still greater. We learn that although the military standard in that country has been lowered to something less than 4ft. 9in., more than half the conscripts levied are found unfit for service!

as, during past ages, they have sought them as the chief good. Washington declined to be made a king, and the world has not ceased to make the welkin ring with laudations of the disinterested act. The time will yet come when the declinature, on all hands, of every species of governmental authority over others, will not even be deemed a virtue, but simply the plain dictates of enlightened common-sense.' * * *

'The doctrine of the sovereignty of the individual, while the most ultra-radical doctrine in theory and final purpose ever promulgated in the world, is, at the same time, eminently conservative. While it teaches, in principle, the prospective disruption of every existing institution, it also teaches, concurrently, as a matter of expediency, a patient and philosophical endurance of the evils around us, while we labour assiduously for their removal. So far from quarrelling with existing government, when it is put upon the footing of temporary expediency, as distinguished from abstract principle, and final purpose, it sanctions and confirms it. It has no sympathy with aimless and fruitless struggles; the recrimination of different classes in society; nor with merely anarchical and destructive onslaughts upon existing institutions. It proposes no abrupt and sudden shock to existing society; but it points to a scientific, gradual, and perfectly peaceable substitution of new and harmonious relations for those which are confessedly beset—to use the mildest expression—by the most distressing embarrassments.'

'Harmonious society,' says Warren, 'can be created on no other ground than the strictest individuality of interests and responsibilities; nor can the liberty of mankind be restored upon any other principle or mode of action. How can it be otherwise? If my interest is united with yours, and we differ at any point of its management, one must yield, the other must decide, or we must leave the decision to a third party. This third party is government; and thus, in united interests, government originates. The more business there is thus committed to governmental management, the more must each of the community surrender his liberty, and the greater must be the amount of power delegated to government. When this power becomes unlimited, or indefinite, the government is absolute, and the liberty and security of the governed are annihilated. And experience has proved that power cannot be delegated to rulers of states and nations in sufficient quantities for the management of business, without its becoming an indefinite quantity; and,

in this *indefiniteness*, mankind have been cheated out of their legitimate liberty.*—*Equit. Com.*, p. 58.

But the idea of the right of man to individual sovereignty, is utterly at variance with all that has hitherto been practised in the world. The philosophers, law-givers, and rulers, of ancient times, never hinted at such a theory. The subordination of man to man was, doubtless, the dominant principle of their policy, whether public or domestic. It is not until we come down to the Christian era that we find the idea nominally recognised by Jesus, who tells his disciples to call no man master, and not to be called masters. We know, however, that the Christianity of the New Testament has never been practically followed; the very essence of the Church's system being to inculcate the necessity, and even the beauty and harmony of the principle of graduated subserviency—that all should obey their pastors and masters, fear God, and honour the king!

Nevertheless, out of the Church, the Christian idea of the sovereignty of the individual has not been altogether lost sight of. Towards the end of the last century, there appears to have existed in Germany a philosophical sect, known as the *Illuminati*, a kind of free-masons, in whose lodges there was a degree called the *man-king*, to which, when a member ascended, he was considered to be in a fit condition for *kinging* himself, without the expense and trouble of maintaining, honouring, and obeying any other king. And it is not improbable that these opinions had some influence on the publicists and philosophers of France, who lived at the period of the great revolution of 1789, and from whom emanated that sublime dogma of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, which thenceforward became the expressive watchword of the French reformers.

But, alas! this beautiful abstraction, expressive of all religious, moral, and social good, remained a mere phrase, because the means

* All centralized state powers, or governments, by whatsoever names they may be called,—supported, as they necessarily must be, by force, or fraud, or by both,—are, ever have been, and ever must be, more or less destructive of the liberty, happiness, and prosperity of the mass of the governed. And if the existence of such powers has been unavoidable in the past, the necessity for them has now gone by; and they may be gradually superseded by municipal executives, freely elected by the adult population of each locality, to do the public work of the people; but to have no power of opposing that will by the brute force of paid retainers.

of its realization had not been propounded with it. As a mere sentiment, however, it doubtless had a considerable influence on the side of liberty. It led to the divine right of kings being voted a fiction; to the abolition of many of the privileges of the aristocracy; and to the vague assertion of natural justice, right, and duty, independent of, and antecedent to, all human law, which afterwards became current in the literature of the age, and indelibly fixed in the popular mind.

In 1848, these sublime watchwords were revived; but the means of realising them were again lost sight of in the illusion of a republic of delegated authorities,* who were to be endowed with almost omnipotent power; to find resources for every emergency, and remunerative labour for all who applied for it;—and to do this, moreover, without making any radical change in the existing laws on land-tenure, commerce, and money. Large numbers of the people had become infected with communistic notions, and the provisional government was, therefore, expected to do everything for the people. The wildest social schemes were consequently fostered; every class, and every department of industry, besieged the ministers for exclusive privileges; and the right to labour being adopted as a principle, national workshops were organized to carry it out. The result soon proved what had been apprehended by the best friends of the republic. The magnitude and complication of the state-undertakings at length frightened, and even paralysed, the members of the government; dissensions became rife among them; the workmen in the national workshops were disappointed and dissatisfied; they were abruptly dismissed; and a counter revolution was speedily fomented. What followed we need not here recount: suffice it, that the people's "representatives" basely betrayed the confidence reposed in them; and, by their intrigues, quickly paved the way for the empire. The words Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, were erased from the political and social programme of France, and the rights of the French people were once more trampled under the jack-boots of a military despotism.

And thereby another confirmation was afforded to the world of the great truth which is now only beginning to be understood and appreciated, namely, *that State Governments will never give real free-*

* See Victor Considerant and Rittinghausen on the fallacy and danger of representative governments.

dom to their subjects. True liberty cannot, indeed, be given to a people by Governments; perhaps not even by Deity himself, who could not interfere in human, political, and social arrangements, without degrading man into a mere puppet. When a people know what real liberty is, *and what it is worth*, they will assume it as their natural inheritance; and will resist any attempt to rob them of it, under the pretence of "governing" them, as they would resist a band of robbers who attempted to take away their property from them under the pretence that the rightful owners did not know how to use it.

Nothing but the realization of the sovereignty of the individual can give freedom to a people. If the individual be not free, how can the nation be free? But not until the property-relations of man shall be placed on a foundation of Equity, can the sovereignty of the individual be realized; nor can any other of the human relations be just or harmonic. 'Pecuniary affairs,' says Mr. Warren, 'are the very basis of society. When we change these, we change all institutions; for all are built, directly or indirectly, upon property considerations. The great excuse for laws and governments, is the protection of person and property; but, were it not for the scramble for property, persons would not be in danger. I have ventured here to assert what is not self-evident to any but those who are practised in tracing out the remote connection of things. Crimes against persons are not always committed to obtain property; but all violations of personal rights will be found, on analysis, to proceed either from a desire to obtain property, or from ignorance which might, and would, long since have been dispelled, but that it was perpetuated by those who wish to throw their pecuniary burthens on others, or by those who wield the press, and other influential powers, for pecuniary profit. When we change the mode of acquiring property, so that every one can obtain an abundance with less trouble than it will cost him to invade his neighbour; one can then dispense with the services (the protection!) of rulers, who, under the pretext of securing person and property, have been enabled, time out of mind, to prey undisturbed upon both.'

The correct definition of property, and the true distinction between public and private property, is here of great importance. All the raw materials of wealth, or the natural sources of them, which are not the production of human labour, cannot legitimately be made into private property. In other words, what nature has

provided for the benefit of all her children, cannot justly be turned to the exclusive, or even to the predominating advantage of a portion of them.* It is at once evident that the soil of the earth, its minerals and fossils, its forests, seas, lakes, and rivers, are not legitimate objects of private property, any more than air or sun-light would be, were it possible, by any ingenuity, to effect a monopoly of them. But all those materialities, whether used for subsistence, comfort, or luxury, which are created and preserved by human labour and care—as well as all wild animals captured in the fields, forests, or waters—are proper objects of private property; and the possessor of them has a perfect right to refuse to cede their possession, except in exchange for what he himself may consider an equivalent.

Nothing can be more thoroughly inequitable, and indeed immoral, than the private monopoly of land. Every human being born into the world is subject to the same natural wants and requirements; and, therefore, possesses an equal natural right to his or her share of the materials, which nature has provided for the supply of those wants in the localities around them; and also, when needed, to the free use of an adequate portion of the soil for the artificial production of food, and other necessaries of life; but, in the history of the world, this primary natural right has been fully *acknowledged* by any government, much less practically conserved. Portions of society have been allowed to turn the earth into private property, thereby excluding the remainder from the use of it, except by paying a heavy tax to the landlord.† The more dense the population of a country

* “All Nature’s elements are common rights,
The Light, the Air, the Ocean, and the Soil:
Who’s cheated of his Rights can owe no Duties;
Him whom no Law protects, no Law can bind;—
The social compact was not made for him;
And just resistance is the right of slaves.”

W. HEIGHTON.

† ‘If this claim of the landlords be well-founded, then is creation but a spun-out mockery. The earth to which God sends men, generation after generation, is, in truth, not God’s earth, but belongs to landlords! Let poets cease their singing, or raise only protests against fate. And you—O, ye landless, lower classes, whose position is so ignominious that those above you not unfrequently commit suicide in order to avoid it—to be related to whom is a disgrace—cease to perpetuate your degraded kind! If you have no right to terminate the curse of landlessness, you can at least refuse to beget its victims.’—E. JONES on “Land Monopoly.”

is, the heavier this tax becomes; and it is, probably, higher in England than in any other part of the world. The only practical remedy for this social wrong, and moral evil, is the purchase, by the municipal authorities of the country, of all lands, as they come into the market, or as the landlords die off; the lands so purchased to be then let out to the people in small farms, on lease, the rentals of which would ultimately become adequate for all the expenditure required for public purposes, and thereby render any other species of taxation unnecessary.*

Of equal and coincident importance to the question of equitable land-tenure, are the questions of equitable commerce, and equitable money. The interchange, or the buying and selling of wealth or service, constitutes industrial wealth and commerce; and this commerce cannot be carried on with facility without the use of some conventional medium of exchange which shall serve as a measurer of price. This medium is money; and, in all ages, money has almost universally consisted of the precious metals, or of paper money representing them. But these metals can never furnish all the conditions necessary to constitute a true and scientific system of currency, for various reasons. There is a great waste of labour involved in procuring them; they can never denote, with anything like accuracy, the quantity of wealth already created, nor the amount of available labour applicable to the production of fresh supplies. They are perpetually varying in quantity, and, therefore, their purchasing power is always fluctuating; and as they are capable of being monopolised, and let out at hire, they offer unusual facilities for the baneful practices of usury. They are, in fact, not real money at all, and all commerce carried on with them is merely barter. Abstractedly considered, *time* is the true measurer of price. All man-made wealth is the result of labour; which means, in reality, that a certain quantity of human life has been devoted to its production; and, as every individual has a right to consider his or her

* Had the Indian Government been wise enough to make themselves virtually (as they are nominally) the paramount landlords of the country, instead of endeavouring to create an aristocracy like that of England, there would have been no revolts there. But their 'permanent settlement,' as it is called, by raising up an extortionate and tyrannical class of middlemen, has turned India into another Ireland; and thence, we believe, has arisen the main source of the present disaffection.

life as valuable as that of any other person, the primary measurer of price may be correctly said to be time. But as time is not a tangible reality, we cannot make a circulating medium of it. We must, therefore, make some article of material wealth stand as its representative, a definite portion of which must form our unit of price. And this material basis should be something which is *in universal request*; which is *not likely to be produced in excess of demand for it*; which is *capable of almost indefinite increase as population increases*; and which is *always of the same utility to man*. Among such articles, wheat appears to take (in Europe at least) the first rank. To ensure equitable commerce, therefore, the prices of all commodities or services would have to be measured by wheat; consequently, instead of naming prices by pounds, shillings, and pence, it would be estimated by cwts., lbs., and oz. of wheat, flour, or bread, of a definite quality and fineness. Stated equivalents for these values of breadstuffs would gradually become recognized in every locality, and would be readily exchangeable for a specified quantity of any other articles of human sustenance or comfort; and even for a certain weight of gold, silver, or copper, especially in the conduct of international exchanges, for which, perhaps, these metals would always be the most convenient mediums. In short, after we had taken our unit of measure from some of the most indispensable materials of human sustenance, no difficulty would be found in providing numerous equivalents for it. But while that unit of price is composed of any of the precious metals, the wealth of a country can never be correctly represented; because these metals can never be increased in proportion to the continued increase of wealth and population.*

With the full recognition of the equality and reciprocity of all rights and duties; with the use of land, and all other natural wealth, easily attainable; with a circulating medium of exchange, expanding and contracting precisely as wealth, or *bona fide* credit was created or consumed; and with the moral belief current in society that the prices of all commodities or services should be regulated by their absolute cost—the vicious system of profitism or profit-mongering, which now prevails, would cease; because those who now are compelled to resort to this nefarious mode of getting a living, would have other and more legitimate sources of livelihood. Profitism adds

* The late monetary panics in America and England afford ample evidences of the unsound nature of the existing currency.

nothing to the value of the articles upon which it is levied. It is in fact, the taking of something from the buyer, and giving him a proportionate benefit in return, and is as much a tax upon the consumer as any governmental tax can be. 'All just price,' says Andrews, 'is in the nature of indemnification for damages;' and can only be equitable when regulated by the principle that 'every individual should sustain just as much of the common burthen of life as has to be sustained by any body on his account'—a principle violated, however unconsciously and unwittingly, by all who live merely by profit-mongering, usury, landlordism, or by any other occupation which does not add, either directly, or indirectly, something to the common stock of wealth produced in a country, and which does not give back to society some positive equivalent for what such parties take from society. All persons who are mentally or physically incapacitated from making this equivalent, are, of course, not included in this category; and are legitimate subjects for the benevolent consideration of the community. 'Equity,' says Mr. Warren well observes, 'demands labour for labour. Love may be returned for love; but that is another subject.' Benevolence is not excluded from equitable society; but it must not supersede equity.

We trust that the foregoing arguments will be adequate to convince the reader that the dogma of the sovereignty of the individual exercised at the individual's own cost, is adequate to regulate harmoniously all the departments of life, whether religious, moral, social, pecuniary, commercial, or industrial. What is equity in the relations of creator and created; parent and child; master and servant; husband and wife, kings and people; may easily be discovered by this test, and, we verily believe, *by no other*.

Equitable Society (an imperfect outline of the principles of which we have now presented), it will be seen, demands nothing impossible of humanity. It is *human intercourse only* that has to be scientifically regulated, and not *human nature* that requires (as the priests tell us) to be regenerated. If human nature has any defect, it is that, in the masses, it is *too good*, too confiding, too generous,—a knowledge of which weakness has enabled the cunning and unscrupulous few to tyrannize over, and enslave the simple and credulous many. Nor do we stipulate, that before our *beau-ideal* of society can be commenced, mankind must become prodigies

knowledge, or paragons of self-denial. All that is required of men is that they should seek fully to know their true and reciprocal rights, duties, and interests; and how best to secure, enforce, and protect them. The principles upon which equitable society is based are easily understood. All who run may read them; and they present no insuperable difficulties in practice. The impossibility, too, of introducing equitable society by any other than the most gradual process, would prevent any anarchical results, which might otherwise ensue from a too hasty overthrow of existing institutions. The first desideratum of any projected social reform is a consistent, satisfactory, and invulnerable theory. We believe that such a theory has at last been discovered, and not only discovered, but developed into a science, the vast importance of which cannot fail to be duly appreciated when it becomes known to the world.* Sophists, and

* We must not omit here to notify, for the benefit of readers unacquainted with the fact, that attempts are now being made in America to put this new science of equitable society into actual practice — at least so far as is possible by small numbers of persons, possessing little money-capital, and exposed to the vulgar prejudices of the surrounding population. In Ohio, a settlement has existed for more than ten years. Another, on Long Island, more than four years old, comprises about 80 families, who, from recent accounts, are making favourable progress. These “Equity Villages,” as they are called, originated in the personal efforts of Mr. Warren. We believe they were first made known to the English public by Chambers’ Journal of the 18th of December, 1852; and in 1855, an elaborate paper on the same subject was read before the British Association, at Glasgow, by Mr. W. Pare. The paper was afterwards printed in full in the Journal of the Statistical Society of London.

In reference to the settlement on Long Island, the following extract from a letter to a friend of ours will give an idea of the progress made there:—
 “* * * You have been here, and I ask you, considering the material obstacles to be overcome, if you ever saw greater success attained in so short a time, by the same number of people, without capital, and with only their hands and brains to operate with, under all the disadvantages of habits formed by a false education and training? * * * And can you say that there are anywhere to be found, in any city, town, or county, so many men and women who so well understand the science of life? And, as regards individual and social happiness, and the entire absence of what is denominated vice and crime, I am confident the settlement cannot be equalled. * * * Additions will gradually be made to the numbers here; and although it

the selfishly-interested in things as they are, may try to make the people believe that the present institutions of society—especially in England, are, at all events, right in theory, even if defective in practice. But these sophisms and assertions will not much longer avail them. An age of relentless criticism—fearless, accurate, logical—is fast approaching. Reason is about to assume her sway; and all principles and practices which will not abide her ordeal will be ruthlessly denounced. If, after so many centuries of trial, the political and social institutions even of the most advanced nations of the earth have fallen far short of the legitimate aspirations of man; if they have shewn their potency for evil rather than good, the theory on which they are based must be pronounced a fallacy. And, as Warren says,—‘The cry of misery, and the cry for remedy, are heard from all quarters. We have contemplated suffering in different forms till the heart is sick; and unless a speedy and effectual remedy be applied, we would fly from the scenes, and shut our eyes upon them for ever. We are not alone in this feeling; the same spirit is abroad, calling for aid—for sympathy—for remedy.’ But, as he remarks elsewhere, — ‘*it must be remedy.* Words, words alone, will no longer suffice. And the remedy is,—homes for the homeless—food for the starving—**EQUITY FOR ALL!**’

Yes! *Equity*—universal justice—alone can give peace, prosperity, and happiness to mankind. ‘As long as our civilization is essentially one of property, of fences, of exclusiveness, it will be mocked by delusions. Only that good profits which serves all men.’*

has been pronounced a failure, and has been a failure in the sense alluded to before, it cannot fail ultimately. * * * Individual sovereignty will be triumphantly established on this ground, and, from this, will radiate to all parts of the world. * * * Tens of thousands of acres of land can here be secured at a very cheap rate; and, with facilities for clearing it up, and putting it into cultivation, it could immediately be made remunerative and profitable. * * *”—Sept., 1857.

* Emerson.