

been before. Paying us off is a very rare operation; borrowing from us a very frequent one.

There are also other proofs patent to every one who looks around him that, far from England's living on her capital, that capital is yearly increasing at a rapid rate; for it is accumulating before his eyes. Every year the fixed capital of the country is, visibly and tangibly, receiving a vast accession by the construction of new dwelling-houses, new ships, new factories, new railways, new harbours, new docks, new warehouses, &c., &c., of which the aggregate value is enormous. Every year vast sums are invested in new commercial enterprises, both at home and abroad. Every year our population increases at the rate of about 1,000 a day; while food, clothing, lodging, &c., are more easily and abundantly supplied to them than ever, for pauperism has decreased 19 per cent. since 1870. And it is in the face of these facts that we are told that England is living on her capital! Out of what fund, then, if not from our annual savings (excess of income over expenditure), does the money come to provide these enormous annual additions to our national wealth? To sum up, the truth is that UNDER FREE TRADE ENGLAND HAS ACCUMULATED WEALTH WITH UNPRECEDENTED RAPIDITY, AND IS YEARLY MAKING VERY LARGE ADDITIONS TO HER CAPITAL.

We might indefinitely prolong this list of Protectionist fallacies, but we will rest content with those given as being the most important, the most plausible, and the most frequently used. These once clearly understood, refuted, and put on one

side, with the label "errors for the avoidance of mankind" affixed thereto, the remaining numerous but minute fry of Protectionist mistakes will lose their significance and wither away, as leaves do when the branch that bears them is lopped off. Truth alone is undecaying and eternal.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Why Free Trade is not yet universally adopted—Ignorance and Immorality—Their connection with Poverty.

WE have now said enough to show how grievous an impediment to the process of wealth-creation is that "commercial isolation" which the theory of protection recommends, and which its practice enforces. We do not contend that, by such isolation, production is totally arrested, but only that it is seriously checked—just as we do not contend that grain cannot be threshed by a flail, but only that it will be far more quickly and thoroughly threshed by a machine. But this check to production, arising as it does from the mis-direction (and therefore waste) of human energies, largely curtails the creation, and therefore the distribution among us all, of those "objects of human desire as are obtained or produced by human exertions" which we call wealth. Man's productive energies properly directed, or, what is the same thing, self-directed, achieve their *maximum* results; whereas, when state-directed

their natural aptitudes are ignored, they are set to state-supported, not self-supporting, tasks, and their efficiency is largely impaired. Hence a heavy deficiency in wealth-production, by which the people, and especially the labour-sellers, are the chief sufferers. How it is that this pernicious impediment to wealth-creation is still suffered to exist we have elsewhere explained, but the topic deserves a few further remarks. Why is a removable evil not removed?

The only country, so far, that has substituted Free Trade for Protection is England; and as the experiment has there proved successful beyond all anticipation, it was natural to expect that other countries would follow her example. At present they have not. Why? Certainly not because those men in every country who have studied the subject entertain the least doubt of the truth of Free Trade principles. There is universal *consensus* among the experts. There does not exist a single serious and argumentative work on the other side. Science is unanimous. Now and then there appear a few newspaper articles, speeches, and short, scanty pamphlets, in which political economists are reviled but not refuted; but there is no systematic treatise in which the principles of Protection are explained and demonstrated. Why, then, this practical adherence to exploded errors? Simply because the few protected producers object to have their monopolies disturbed, while the many injured consumers are not sufficiently alive to the fact that these monopolies are maintained at their expense. If the mass of the people did but

know that each family in every protected country is paying a heavy tax to support a vicious system, both the system and the tax would speedily disappear together. Their continued existence depends on that ignorance, and consequent indifference, on the part of the public, which cannot last for ever; and it is only until knowledge shall shed its full light on the subject that, meanwhile, Protectionism prevails.

It is to enlightened democracy that we must look to make an effectual move in the matter. No effort must be spared to rouse the attention of the people in all countries to a subject which is of such material interest to them. If they were asked in an overt manner to hand over a certain portion of their weekly earnings, they would naturally wish to know for what purpose. And if told that it was to help to maintain A. B. and Co.'s silk factory situated ten miles off, because without such help it could not compete with C. D. and Co.'s silk factory situated a thousand miles off, is it likely that the demand would be voluntarily acceded to? As it is, that same portion of their weekly earnings is taken from them for that same purpose, not only without their consent but without their knowledge. It is slyly subducted from them in the shape of import duties which compel them to pay enhanced prices for their food, their clothes, and their lodging. Every mouthful they swallow, or every garment they wear, contributes its little dribble towards making up the sum total. Did they but know it, they would strongly object. They ought therefore be made to know it. It must be clearly

shown to them that their money is taken to support A. B. and Co.'s silk factory. At present the system goes on because A. B. and Co. shriek loudly against any change, while the people, in their ignorance, remain silent. Naturally, governments pacify the shriekers and neglect the silent. It was ever thus. Those who, wanting a thing, do not ask for it must not be surprised if they do not get it. But the first step must be for the bulk of the people to know what it is that is wanted.

In every country there is a certain number of thinking men who, having studied the subject, know the truth, and seek to promulgate it. Theirs is a noble task, but to overcome the *vis inertiae* of ignorance and apathy requires vigorous and prolonged efforts. We call on all thinkers in all countries to co-operate in these efforts. Every one can do something, either by his tongue or by his pen. Each pupil, when he is taught, may in his turn become a teacher, and thus, in the same way that many torches may be lighted at one torch, one mind may be the means of enlightening many; and the truth received may be handed on to others.

Meanwhile, the matter briefly stands thus. The protected class is active and clamorous; the victimised classes (which form the bulk of the nation) are, through ignorance, inert and dumb; and the ruling class sides with the active and clamorous. And that is why the removable evil is not yet removed.

We now proceed to consider the last of the five chief impediments to wealth-creation, of which we had proposed to treat, viz. :—

B5. IGNORANCE AND IMMORALITY. By bracketing these two evils together, we by no means intend to convey the notion that they are inseparable companions. Far from it. Of the ignorant, it is but a small proportion that are vicious, while, of the vicious, a considerable number are not ignorant. There is, however, a certain connection between them, inasmuch as ignorance is sometimes the cause, and, quite as frequently, the effect of immorality. But, whether combined or apart, they are very prejudicial to the true interests of mankind in various ways, and among others, by checking and impeding the creation of wealth. Ignorance neither discerns the right thing to do, nor the best way to do it. Vice may or may not discern the right thing to be done, but deliberately prefers to do the wrong thing. Both seek immediate fruition, at the expense of permanent future enjoyment—the one not knowing, the other not caring how bad a bargain it really is. Those who do know and do care, owe that knowledge and discrimination to their having been educated, partly perhaps by direct tuition, and partly by attendant circumstances and surroundings. They certainly do not owe them to any innate superiority of intellect. Apart from some special tendencies due to blood or race, the children born to every class of society in a country, exhibit the same average conformation of the brain—the same average impressibility to the operation of external influences.

The great mass of the peasantry and labour-sellers throughout Europe remain more or less plunged in ignorance, hence many of them are

rough and vulgar, some of them are intemperate and addicted to low pursuits, and few of them are other than homely and unpolished in their address and manners. But you, Sir, who read these lines, elegant, refined, and cultured as you are, would doubtless have exhibited the same deficiency of elegance, refinement, and culture, had you been subject to the same depressing influences. And, on the other hand, most of those who have been kept down by poverty and ignorance, would doubtless, had they possessed your advantages of education, leisure, and pecuniary competence, have risen to your level. Is then the possession of these advantages irrevocably confined to the favoured few, and by a fatal necessity, interdicted to the great bulk of mankind? Is it one of the conditions under which civilisation exists that its blessings shall be unequally distributed—many of them to the few—few of them to the many? Is this all that civilisation can do for man? Not only we do not think so, but we consider that there is a certain amount of moral cowardice in so readily yielding to the belief, and so tamely sitting down helpless under its influence. It is not the laws of nature, but the laws of man which are at fault. Let us vigorously set to work to amend them. The endowment of all men as equally as is practicable, with the advantages derivable from human progress, should be the aim and endeavour of every law-maker and of every book-writer. We believe this to be in a great degree practicable, chiefly by waging war against ignorance through extended education, and against poverty through extended wealth-creation.

It is true that the education supplied either gratuitously or cheaply by the State can only be elementary and introductory, and that without the leisure and opportunity to use it afterwards for continuous improvement, it loses its chief value, but it is precisely in order universally to provide that requisite leisure and opportunity that we so forcibly urge the adoption of all possible aids and the removal of all possible impediments to wealth-creation. For we are in these pages endeavouring to show that if all men were to contribute their fair quota to the production of wealth, if all this work were intelligently directed, through universal division of labour, to the attainment of the *maximum* results, and if no part of these results were wasted on useless or mischievous objects, then the burden of producing wealth enough for all would fall very lightly on each, and to each there would be afforded sufficient leisure and opportunity for mental development and culture. If that end should be, in the fulness of its extent, immediately unattainable, yet every effort tending in its direction would bring us nearer to it. "Chimerical!" will you say? Not at all; it is far more chimerical to fancy that the world will remain stagnant or move backwards—a state of things that is quite inconceivable. No! It does and must continue to move forward, and therefore in the direction to which we point.

In all countries efforts have been made to some extent to lessen ignorance by more or less of popular education, and to curb certain forms of immorality by legal repression. But these efforts have only been partially successful. The education

afforded has been slight and superficial—by no means generally diffused—and from want of after-leisure it has remained unimproved and undeveloped. As to immorality, prevention is a far more effectual corrective than repression. It must be attacked at its source, and the causes of it and the temptations to it must be removed by moral influences. Penal repression does not interfere with it till its growth has reached a certain stage. Up to that point, it leaves it unchecked and uncurbed, and meanwhile it has become habitual and almost ineradicable.

We have shown (see p. 63) that education and morality promote, and are at the same time promoted by, wealth-creation. The converse is equally true. Ignorance and immorality both counteract, and are counteracted by, the abundant production and consequent abundant distribution of wealth. This latter agency by dispelling abject poverty dispels ignorance, and removes from immorality its chief incentives and temptations. Thus does it subdue its two opponents: ignorance, which, even if industrious, does not direct its industry in the best way to the best ends, and immorality, of which the work is directed to evil.

These instances are exemplifications of the mode in which moral progress comes to be the result of material well-being. School learning is not education; it is only the ground-work and preparation for it. Education, in its truest and widest sense, is the formation of opinions and beliefs from study and experience, both which founts of instruction are inexhaustible, and hence

no man ever lived whose education was complete. All men, some passively and slowly, others diligently and fruitfully, continue, throughout their lives, collecting data affecting their opinions and beliefs. But the great bulk of the human race, from absence of leisure, and the pressure of incessant physical toil, have but few opportunities for useful study and suggestive observation. For want of books, and of time to read them, they are debarred from a full and correct knowledge of facts, and from the means of comparing the thoughts of deep thinkers with their own. Nor can they, from want of practice, acquire that habit of thinking logically which so copiously fructifies the teachings of personal experience. They are compelled to reason, and draw their conclusions, from incomplete and possibly erroneous data; and their convictions are moulded, not on the high standard of the best thinkers, but on the low standard of those minds with which they habitually come into immediate contact.

As long, therefore, as there is an insufficiency of the wealth requisite to meet the wants of all, whether it proceeds from causes that impede wealth-creation and distribution, or from the waste of wealth on useless or pernicious objects, so long must poverty continue to exist, and, as deplorable but necessary consequences, ignorance and the prevalence of those conditions which favour the growth of immorality. But while ample wealth-creation is the best cure for poverty, on the other hand, poverty repels that cure and prolongs its own existence by helping to impede the creation

of wealth. It does so in a variety of ways, of which we will only quote one as an example. The ignorance which poverty fosters prevents the bulk of the world's people (the labour-sellers) from appreciating, requiring, and insisting on, as they otherwise might and would, a system of free interchanges for the produce of their labour. This submission to, and complicity with, a great economic fallacy costs them dear. The hands, brains, and capital of a state are compelled by the Government to cease producing what they can produce cheaply and abundantly, and to work instead at what they can only produce expensively and sparingly; which destructive system is called the protective system. What is the consequence? Far less is produced than might be produced by the same expenditure of capital and labour, and there is less to distribute among the same number of human beings. It is the poor who suffer from this deficiency. It is they and not the wealthy whose rations are curtailed, when the supplies run short. Thus do poverty and ignorance, by their silence, support and virtually promote, the very system by which their own existence is prolonged.

In a similar manner the poverty-begotten ignorance of the people allows the war system to tear them from their families and occupations—from the plough and the loom—in order to convert them into unproductive and sometimes destructive consumers. Were the people enlightened, the war system, which not only wastes wealth but arrests its production, would soon come to be deemed, as the late practice of duelling is in England, absurd

and illogical. Thus do poverty, ignorance, and immorality act and re-act on each other. They form an unholy alliance to which they staunchly adhere, and one is rarely found isolated from the others. Instances are no doubt to be met with of wealthy ignorance, of learned poverty, and of criminal wisdom and opulence, but they occur only as exceptions, which tend to prove how general the rule is.

CHAPTER XIX.

Utilisation of Female Labour.—Competition; its Uses and Abuses.
—Communism.—Waste on Intoxicants and Narcotics.

WE have now gone through the list which we had sketched out at p. 14 of the chief aids and impediments to wealth-creation, and have endeavoured to trace their influence, favourable or adverse, on the progress of human welfare. But that list only professes to embrace the most prominent of those influences, for, indeed, their number is infinite. There hardly lives a civilised man whose overt deeds and spoken thoughts have not some bearing, infinitesimal though it may be, directly or indirectly, by action, example, or precept, for good or for evil, on the course of human events; and it is the sum total of these influences that finally determines the destinies of mankind. In free and comparatively enlightened communities, each individual exercises more—while under despotic governments each individual exercises less—of this