

LABOUR'S WRONGS
AND LABOUR'S REMEDY;

OR,

THE AGE OF MIGHT
AND THE AGE OF RIGHT.

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BY J. F. BRAY.  
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"We are a numerous people, and we want strength! We have an excellent soil, and we are destitute of provision! We are active and laborious, and we live in indigence! We pay enormous tributes, and we are told that they are not sufficient! We are at peace without, and our persons and property are not safe within! What, then, is the secret enemy that devours us?"—*Ruins of Empires.*

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PREFACE.

Whenever any crisis in the affairs of men is about to take place, there is ever to be found a number of people ready to preach up things as they are. These champions fight stoutly and cunningly against the innovation of existing institutions and modes of acting; and they endeavour to reason the sensible and alarm the timid into remaining quiet, and enduring meekly whatever evils they may be afflicted with. Belonging to one class, and having in view a common object, these alarmists attempt to convince the people that everything is almost as well as it can be—that few evils are endured by them which are not necessary consequences of existence—that their governmental burthens may be alleviated by gradual and imperceptible reforms—that the present gradations of society, which cause so much discontentment among the poor and the oppressed, have always existed, and therefore ever must exist—and that any attempts of the productive classes to better themselves by interfering with this “natural arrangement of society,” will be attended with the most disastrous results to themselves.

Notwithstanding the sage advice and the gloomy forebodings of these friends of the people, the latter are perpetually endeavouring to the utmost of their power, by means of political and trades’ unions, to alter the present state of things, and keep to themselves that vast amount of wealth which is annually taken from them by existing usages. But, conscious of having justice on their side, the productive classes have hitherto regarded the end more

and the eternity of existing usages. As men, and apart from their present position as a poor governed class, oppressed by a rich governing class, the producers have nothing to do with the alleged sacredness of established institutions: they have merely to determine whether it be not possible to change *that social whole which keeps them poor*, as well as that governmental part which oppresses them because they are poor. The requisite knowledge can be obtained only by going at once to first principles. In the words of one who has made many efforts to uphold the present system, we are now in "the very condition, if the people could but see it, for the exercise of faith in principles. With a dark and shifting near future, and a bright and fixed ultimate destiny, what is the true, the only wisdom? Not to pry into the fogs or thickets round about, or to stand still for fear of what may next occur in the path; but to look from Eden gate behind to heaven gate before, and press on to the certain future. In his political as in his moral life, man should, in the depth of his ignorance and the fallibility of his judgment, **THROW HIMSELF, IN THE FULL SENSE OF SECURITY, UPON PRINCIPLES;** and then he is safe from being depressed by opposition, or scared by uncertainty, or deprived by responsibility."

INTRODUCTION.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

If it were ever possible to predict what shall be, from a consideration of what has been—if ever the signs of the times gave warning of great troubles or changes—there is that in the present which tells us, in a manner not to be misunderstood, that the hour for the final conflict between Right and Might cannot be far distant. That it is time the event took place, let the wrongs of man for forty centuries testify—that it is time to put an end to the bondage of labour, let the sufferings of the millions of her martyred children bear witness!

From the nature of things there must be a cause for every effect, however concealed or inscrutable that cause may be; and of all causes, none are of so much importance as those from which emanate the wide-spread poverty and discontentment which exist at the present time throughout the whole world—and, more especially, in those nations calling themselves civilised. The numerous remedies proposed, tried, and rejected, one after the other, do not prove that it is impossible to change, for the better, this unnatural state of things; such ill success merely shews that the world at large—nations as well as governments—are as yet ignorant of the origin and the nature of the great wrong which has preyed upon man for so many ages.

Of all nations on the face of the earth, the people of the United Kingdom suffer the most severely, and are, therefore, the most in want of a remedy. Throughout the country, distrust or dissatisfaction is universal. Not one class of society is at rest; but a troubled and uneasy sensation—a kind of forerunner of evil or of change—per-

vades alike the bosoms of both the rich and the poor—the trampers and the trampled upon.

Whatever may be the condition in which society now is, it could not, from the very nature of its component parts, and the circumstances which have for ages operated upon and influenced those parts, be different from what it is; and however alarming the present state of things may appear to the unjust man and the extortioner, there is in the prospect nothing that can terrify the honest and the industrious, wherever they may be.

The productive classes are bewildered amidst the multiplicity of remedies offered for their consideration. They have as many remedies as wrongs—one contradicting another, and most of them equally valueless; for they are alike based merely on passing events, instead of resting on the broad foundation of some great principle. That which appears to be a remedy in one year, turns out, in the next year, to be no remedy whatever; for the particular evil which such remedy applied to, is found to have shifted its locality, or changed to some secondary evil.

There is wanted, not a mere governmental or particular remedy, but a general remedy—one which will apply to all social wrongs and evils, great and small. The productive classes want a remedy for their incessant toil—they want a remedy for their compulsory idleness—they want a remedy for their poverty—they want a remedy for the misery, and ignorance, and vice, which such toil, such idleness, and such poverty produce.

Although it may appear difficult to obtain such a remedy, it will be seen, hereafter, that it is anything but impossible. All sciences are more or less imperfect; but of all sciences, politics, or the science of human government, is the least understood, although its great book has been open to the inspection of man for four thousand years. Man has made so little progress, because it is in the nature of good or bad forms of government, and institutions, and states of society, to perpetuate themselves, and keep successive generations in one continuous mode of thinking and of acting. Men, in general, go not to the first principles of things; they take the world as they find it, and look only to the state of society, the form of government, or the religion of their country, for the time being. But the nonage of intellect is passing away, and

the mind of man will soon take a wider and a bolder flight than any it has yet dared to contemplate. Had the landmarks of Europe always been kept in sight, America would still have been unknown to us; and, unless we boldly overleap the boundaries which custom and precedent has placed around us—boundaries which shut man out from all but the lower and baser portions of intellectual and physical existence—we shall never behold nor possess that vast and beautiful region of human felicity, which, from the nature of things, cannot but have existence.

All other sciences are but as steps to the science of government. They all add something to man's knowledge of himself, his capabilities, and his true position in reference to external objects. What is it that the mind of man, if properly directed, cannot accomplish? What other finite being has attributes so mighty—and yet, what other thing existing is so helpless and so wretched? We can roam through the universe with the astronomer, and look on solar systems, and behold planets and their satellites rolling in ponderous majesty through the illimitable ocean of space: we can, with the geologist, go back to times when history was not—when our earth, occupying a different position in space, and peopled by widely different modifications of being to any now existing, knew not man, nor his crimes, nor his follies: we can progress, with the historian, from as far back as human records extend, up to the present time, and survey man under the innumerable systems of religion and forms of government which have cursed him from his creation—making the earth one vast slaughter-yard, and defiling it with execrable pollution: we can, with the chemist, dissolve the chains which bind together the elements of existing forms of matter, and, from their wreck, produce a new creation, and bestow on things new properties and appearances: we can, with the anatomist and the metaphysician, study the nature of our own corporeal and mental being, and observe the inseparable dependency of mind on matter, and the influence of external circumstances upon both: we can view every variety of human action, and can discover the various incentives to such action: we can, as it were, live over again the times that are past—ourselves committing the crime, and judging the offender, and meting out

the award. And thus, having the accumulated knowledge and experience of all past ages to guide him, and the accumulated errors and miseries of all past ages to warn him—imbued with the spirit, as well as acquainted with the letter, of history—what is man not prepared to achieve?

The untiring mind of man is ever in search of what it has never yet found—happiness; but because this ultimate end of all human exertion has not hitherto been attained, it does not follow that man should give up his search, and die. His physical organization is as perfect as that of any other being with which he is acquainted, while his mental powers far exceed those of any other known intelligence. It would, then, be an unseemly gap in the harmonious adaptation and continuous perfection which runs through all creation, if the powers and attributes possessed by man could do nothing towards removing that misery and dissatisfaction which has for so many ages been the portion of his race. To assert that, amidst a universe of joy, man alone is born to sorrow and to trouble, is to commit a foul libel upon the Almighty and perfect disposer of all things!

Were man a stationary being, like the beasts and birds by which he is surrounded—had he a fixed and unchangeable instinct, instead of a progressive and improvable reason—any change in his social institutions would be unnecessary. Society would have been the same at the beginning as it is at present; and it would continue in one uniform state as long as man should exist. But man is not thus stationary; he is a reasoning, and therefore a progressing, being. The knowledge and experience of one generation can be transmitted to the next; and, as a man at forty years of age must possess more knowledge than he did at twenty, so also must the world at large possess a greater accumulation of knowledge at the end of four thousand years from the creation of man, than was possessed at the end of four hundred. Knowledge is merely an accumulation of facts; and wisdom is the art of applying such knowledge to its true purpose—the promotion of human happiness. Although men may have much knowledge, and no wisdom, there can only be little wisdom where there is but little knowledge. The present generation have the accumulated knowledge and experience

of four thousand years to work upon; and therefore they have it in their power to act wiser, in respect to the establishment of social and political institutions, than any generation that has preceded them.

Such being the nature of man, and such his powers, the consideration of a social change need excite no more surprise or apprehension than a simple political movement. If a social change be a gigantic one, so, likewise, are the evils mighty which require to be removed. Throughout the whole universe, from the most stupendous planet to the individual atom, changes are perpetual—there is nothing at rest—nothing stationary; to affirm, therefore, that governmental institutions require no reformation—that social systems need no alteration—is just as absurd as to say that the man shall wear the swaddling clothes which befitted his infancy; and be pleased, in maturity, with the rattle which charmed his childhood.

States of society and forms of government have always been forced upon men by the common march of events; and that state of society or form of government which existed at one period of a nation's history, and was sufficient for all its wants, will never be tolerated at a later period. Who, at the present day, would wish to return to a state of society, with its accompanying manners, and form of government, and religious institutions, such as existed in Great Britain in the time of the Druids, or the Romans, or the Saxons, or the Normans? How many Protestants would wish to revive the days when Catholicism was in its glory and its power, and the brand of persecution dried up the blood of the martyrs? All these changes were but manifestations of the common progress of things; and they all happened naturally and unavoidably, independent of the control of governments or individuals. Catholicism succeeded Paganism, then Protestantism came after Catholicism, and both are now being superseded by Dissent; and all the evils which these changes brought upon the people of other days, as well as all the miseries that have befallen nations in our own times, are solely attributable to the insane and blasphemous endeavours of human rulers to set up their authority against the fiat of the Almighty, and tell man he shall go no further. And have all the treasures wasted, and the blood spilled—all the persecutions, and punishments

and revolting crimes which have taken place to keep man and his institutions stationary, effected the object for which they were intended? Turn to history for an answer—look back from our days to the days of our forefathers, and ask if any of the many powerful endeavours to prevent changes ever yet succeeded.

At no period since the creation of the world has man been so well prepared, as he is at present, to effect a change in the very constitution of society; and no other nation possesses so many facilities for commencing such a change, and carrying it forward successfully, as do the people of the United Kingdom. A variety of circumstances, which have not had so much influence on other countries, have tended to induce this ripeness in ourselves. We suffer greater burthens than any other people on earth—burthens which our unceasing industry only just enables us to bear up against, and live. We have a greater amount of fixed capital, or accumulated labour, in the form of roads, railways, canals, manufactories, and machinery of every description, than is possessed by any other nation. We are collected together in large masses, and have excellent means of communication. As a people, we have as much political knowledge, and as much incipient union among ourselves, as any other nation. The entire mass of the producers, with a great portion of the distributors of wealth, are groaning under the accumulated wrongs of centuries of misgovernment and mismanagement. They have tried almost every conceivable means to obtain relief and redress, but they have ever been betrayed, and disappointed, and cheated with a shadow. Men have at length, however, begun to look from the tyrant to the tyranny—from the effect to the cause. Thus our present position augurs well for a social change, and for the advancement of man's highest destiny.

It is only when men suffer great wrongs, that they look about for great remedies. So long as they are satisfied with their worldly condition, whether it be good or bad, they will not think of changes: they will not give up a certain moderate good for an uncertain great benefit. While the people of the United Kingdom were thus comparatively contented with their means of enjoyment, they thought neither of states of society, nor forms of government, nor the rights of man: as the present social system

produced its natural effects—as toil grew more and pay grew less—men began to think upon the matter, and to devise remedies: but now, when the condition of the productive classes is so bad that no change can make it worse, they are ready to adopt almost any remedy which promises relief.

We have at length arrived at the exact time when a mighty change can take place with the greatest benefit to the mass, and the least injury to individuals. The people are so much enlightened as to be capable of proceeding to remedy their disorders calmly and dispassionately; and, as yet, they are not so maddened by long suffering and hopelessness of relief, as to rush blindly upon the unfortunate authors of their wrongs, and hurl down all in indiscriminate destruction. At an earlier period we were unripe for a great social change; and, if we permit existing evils to go on unredressed, an ultimate movement will be not the less certain, while, instead of being conducted in peace and order, it will be fearfully convulsive, and will bury alike, in one common grave, the good and the bad—the patriot and the despot.

On the broad principle of equal rights will Labour now take its stand,—not Labour in the United Kingdom only, but in France, and the United States, and the world at large. This principle will apply equally to men of all countries, all colours, and all creeds. We will survey undisguised and uncovered, that Great Enemy which has devoured the people of all nations, in all times; and we shall find out the manner, and the only manner, in which the power of this enemy may be subdued and annihilated. Let Labour, then, come to the battle fearlessly.

CHAPTER I.

THE WRONGS OF MAN, AND THEIR ORIGIN.

"We are a numerous people, and we want strength! We have an excellent soil, and we are destitute of provision! We are active and laborious, and we live in indigence! We pay enormous tributes, and we are told that they are not sufficient! We are at peace without, and our persons and property are not safe within! What, then, is the secret enemy that devours us?"

Thus have asked, for ages, the toil-worn and the oppressed people of all so-called civilised countries. Numerous have been the answers given to this question; but we, as one people who have made the inquiry, are still overworked and indigent—still burthened with enormous taxation—still the slaves and the prey of a secret enemy; a remedy for this state of things, therefore, has not been discovered, or, if discovered, we have by some means been prevented from making use of it. Before we can determine whether such a remedy has yet offered itself, it will be necessary not only that we should be acquainted with our wrongs, but likewise with the nature and origin of those wrongs. Unless we thus go to the cause of the evil, we shall never do more than remove one wrong to make way for another.

The whole history of man, from his creation to the present day, is but one long record of crime, and bloodshed, and suffering. Man has always been wronged by his fellow-man, and has always been in search of remedies; but, no matter where he has lived, or what religion he has professed, or what form of government he has established, the result of his search has always been the same—the means employed have ever failed to accomplish the end desired. All history tolls the same funereal knell to human hopes and human happiness.

Amongst the many political and theological institutions which have at times been established, not one form of government or system of religion can be found, which has not been subject to frequent alteration and revision. There have always been revolutions, or occasions for them. But these changes and revolutions have never yet touched the social system; they have only alleviated or modified the minor wrongs which the system itself brought into existence. Man has been operated upon by almost every variety of circumstance which this system can give rise to; he has been at one time an ignorant and ungoverned savage—at another, a citizen of a republic of civilised and highly polished barbarians—and, again, the trembling slave of a despot: he has been without religion, and with religion, and by turns all religions—yet still, though all this time and all these changes, man has been the same restless and dissatisfied being—he has been any thing and every thing but THE MAN which the faculties given by the Creator will render him capable of becoming. The masses of all nations have been alike poor, and persecuted, and miserable, under republics as well as monarchies—under every known modification of government by the few and government by the many—which cannot but lead men to suspect that a mere form of government is not the secret enemy which devours them; and that, therefore, no governmental change can destroy this enemy.

But there are those who deny that we have any wrongs to be removed, or that the productive classes suffer any ills which are not necessary consequences of existence, and which are therefore irremediable. Where is the man whose honest hands toil for his daily bread, that is unconscious that he bears with wrongs and injuries which ought to be, and which may be, removed? Are not such engraved upon the hearts and minds of men as with a pen of iron? What are the working classes of every nation but beasts of burthen, without hearts and without souls, whose doom it is to labour and to die! Has not every epithet of scorn and hate which brainless pride could call to mind, been heaped upon them? What is the garb of labour but a sign of ignorance, or infamy, or political nonentity? If taxes are to be levied, the workers must pay them—if a war be undertaken, they must go out to fight—if unjust laws be enacted, they must obey without murmuring—if

they complain of tyranny, and dare to resist, they are slaughtered like wild beasts! The very marrow of their bones, and the life-blood of their children, is drunk up with excessive toil!

How comes it to pass, that those who are the very life and soul of this great nation, are thus trampled upon, and despised, and defied? They have heads to think, and hearts to feel, and hands to execute—they form, conjointly, a mighty mass—their capability of doing either good or evil is bounded only by their will. With such gigantic powers, how is it that they are thus weak? The reasons are these: they are weak because they are disunited—they are disunited because there is a diversity of opinion as to what is the enemy which devours them—they are ignorant of a remedy for their wrongs because they have not themselves sought for one. They have ever looked for relief where it could not possibly be found. They have sought for council and assistance from classes and castes who had a direct though mistaken interest in misleading, dividing, and oppressing them. They have idly chimed in with the opinion of this or that non-producer, or the opposite opinion of this or that member of parliament, or the again differing opinion promulgated in this or that newspaper; and they have thus been led to hope for benefit from measures which, as they have no connection with the cause of their wrongs, are necessarily powerless and worthless. They must be no longer thus led like children; but proceed at once, with cool heads and determined hearts, to obtain that political and social salvation which can be theirs only through their own exertions.

What, then, is the secret enemy which devours us? It stands before us as a mighty tree, whose wide-spread roots, deep seated in the soil of Labour, draw up the dew of life and health, and leave the parent and the creator powerless and impoverished. We would remove this enemy; and what are the means recommended and adopted for the purpose? Are we endeavouring to destroy its barrenising influence for ever, by tearing it up? No; some advisers cry out—"Cut off this root"—others, "Cut off that"; some tell us to tear away a branch which is high up, and others, again, point to another branch lower down. The productive class thus become lost amidst the conflicting opinions they daily meet with, and are ever seeking, never

finding. The narrow views and baneful prejudices which a contracted system of education has compelled us to adopt, have almost rendered us incapable of seeing or comprehending Labour's enemy *as a whole*, although each of us feels the blighting influence or sees the deformity of some particular part; for our enemy, like the triple god of the Hindoo, shews us a different face from every side on which we view it. The only way to arrive at truth is to go at once to First Principles. Instead, then, of confining our inquiries to the benefits and the evils resulting from particular forms of government, and regarding monarchies and aristocracies alone as the Great Enemy, and the prime originators of wrong,—let us take a wider range, and go at once to the source from whence governments themselves have arisen; and we shall soon discover that all of them are but as boughs of the great tree of human evil—that they are only as the claws with which the Great Enemy seizes upon Labour's substance—and that, although we may distinguish them by the names of monarchies and republics, yet the attributes of each are the same, the ends of each are the same, the wrongs inflicted upon the working classes by each are the same. By thus going to the origin of the thing, we shall find that every form of government, and every social and governmental wrong, owes its rise to the existing social system—to *the institution of property as it at present exists*—and that, therefore, if we would end our wrongs and our miseries at once and for ever, **THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS OF SOCIETY MUST BE TOTALLY SUBVERTED**, and supplanted by those more in accordance with the principles of justice and the rationality of man.

"Equal rights and equal laws," has long been the war-cry of the working classes of Great Britain; and they have all hoped and expected to obtain this one thing needful by mere governmental changes. What is meant by Equal Rights and Equal Laws? The words themselves plainly express their own meaning; and yet there is scarcely a sentence to be found which has been interpreted so many different ways, and made to signify such a variety of meanings. Some men, when they speak of equal rights, mean thereby simply that there should be universal suffrage, vote by ballot, and free admission to Parliament; while others, again, advancing rather nearer to first principles, call for the complete subversion of the monarchy,

and the establishment of a republic. By some of these professed advocates of justice, the political institutions of the United States are held up to us as models of perfection; and we are told that it is only under such a form of government that true liberty and equality of rights can be enjoyed. But an examination of the subject will convince us, that if the working classes of the United Kingdom should obtain any or all of the political changes just mentioned, they would remain in almost the same condition of poverty and ignorance and misery as they are at present. Indeed, all history proves, by the unfailling test of experience, that such would be the case. Let us turn to the records of former ages—let us look at either ancient or modern republics—at all nations, in all times—and inquire if, under any of their varied forms of government and systems of religion, equal rights and equal laws were ever enjoyed! They never were, for such equality is utterly incompatible with inequality of possessions and the gradation of classes—and this state of society has always prevailed. Equality and inequality cannot, from their nature, be reconciled.

The possession of political power by a people, although in accordance with the *principle* of that equality which all good men wish to see established and enjoyed, does not of itself constitute the equality of rights; for although no equality of rights can be enjoyed by a nation without the accompaniment of universal suffrage, yet universal suffrage is neither necessarily accompanied with, nor productive of, equal rights. Equal political power and equal rights are by no means synonymous terms. There is between them all the difference that can exist between a thing and the word by which it is represented.

In considering governmental institutions, we must always judge of their utility by the effects which are seen in connection with them, as we judge of their justness by the principles on which they are established. If the institutions founded on the acknowledgment of human equality be productive of bad effects, and inflict wrong or suffering on any part of the community, it is certain either that the principle of equality is a bad one, or else that it is not allowed fair play. The political institutions of the United States are based on the broad principle of equality of rights; which principle, as it is in accordance with the

nature of things, must necessarily be good. But it does not follow that a principle is acted upon, simply because the justice of it is acknowledged. The equality of rights which is thought to be enjoyed by the people of the United States, is so enjoyed only in imagination. There is the same inequality of rights amongst them as amongst us; for they, like ourselves, are divided into rich and poor—into capitalists and producers—and the last are there, as they are here, at the mercy of the first. The class to which the indispensable belong—the working class—is in the same condition throughout the whole world; for society is upon the same principle in all countries; and it is solely from the present social system—from the division of society into employers and employed—into idlers and workers—that the wrongs of the working classes take their rise. The American working men, like the English working men, form a foundation for the whole social pile to rest upon: they are each crushed into the earth by the accumulated weight of an aristocracy and a trading class—by livers on plunder and livers on profit—and as no mere change of government prevents the division of society into these various classes, nor alters the relation in which they stand with regard to each other, all such changes must necessarily fail to correct the evils and wrongs with this division and relation naturally call into existence. The vulture money-monger is the same, whether he be called a monarchist or a republican—the gorge of the one is just as wide and as deep as that of the other.

The citizens of the United States, it is true, are exempted, by their republican form of government, from some of the grievous burthens and restrictions which the monarchical form imposes upon the people of the United Kingdom; but these are merely trifles in comparison with that vast social burthen which the working class has sustained in all countries for so many ages,—and even these advantages, trivial as they are, will not always be enjoyed by the Americans. Their present exemption arises from the peculiar circumstances by which they are surrounded, in respect to place and to time, and has but little connection with the form of their government. The nascent germ of monarchy exists in the very constitution of American society—its black and bloody stem is already shooting upwards from the social soil—and it may confidently be predicted,

from the common course of events, that the United States republic will merge into a monarchy or an oligarchy before the end of the present century, unless the movement be stopped by a change in the constitution of society. Such has invariably been the ultimate fate of all republics, in ancient and modern times; and such ever must be their fate while one man is rich and another is poor—while one man works and another does nothing.

Tyranny is the same thing throughout the whole world; and it all arises from the same source—the division of society into classes and castes. This all-pervading curse blights alike the happiness of the civilised and the savage man; for in all countries there are what are called superiors and inferiors—the first created to order, and the last to obey. At one time this principle of inequality of rights rears its brazen front in the form of governmental oppression by “right divine,” and takes, openly, the lives and the fortunes of the governed: at another time it exists covertly, as it now does in the United States of America, and in Great Britain, and France, where it enables one or two classes of the community to suck into their own substance, unobserved, unceasingly, and unmercifully, the wealth which has been created by the toils and privations of the working class.

This is the great wrong for which a remedy is wanted; and it will shortly be seen that universal suffrage, or even the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic, will not be this remedy. There is a stubbornness in facts which theory will in vain strive to overcome; and however much may be admired the justice and excellence of the principles of equality on which the great republic of the west is founded, yet the experience of every day incontestably proves, that these principles are totally unheeded by the Americans. There are no greater tyrants in existence than the moneyed republicans of the United States. Liberty, and equality of rights, are words which they do not yet know the meaning of; for, apart from the tyranny which the present constitution of society enables one white man to exercise over another, these republicans—in total disregard of their Declaration of Independence, which says that “men are born, and ought always to continue, *free and equal* in respect of their rights”—these republicans, disregarding even the appearance of conform-

ing to the spirit of their constitution, now hold in undisguised and abject slavery upwards of two millions of their coloured fellow-men, who are bought and sold, or flogged and slain, like cattle. This glaring contradiction between principle and practice is but a natural result of inequality of wealth; and such tyranny and slavery will invariably be found to exist, either openly or disguisedly—upon black men or upon white men—in every nation, whatever its form of government may be, where inequality of possessions and the division of society into employers and employed has existence.

If the free institutions of the Americans were acted up to, no slavery, whether of black men or of white, could exist in that country. But the spirit of equality, on which these institutions are founded, is unfeeling and unknown by the people,—and why is it so? Because there are two classes—a class to labour, and a class to *control* labour—the first poor, and the last rich. The outrage upon principle—the glaring injustice—there observable, is produced by the relative situation of the parties; and this difference of situation originates from, and is maintained by, the present arrangements of society,—which, independent of all inequality of mental or physical powers in men, inevitably produce inequality of condition, and divide society into those who labour and those who set labour in motion, and thus give the last dominion over the first. The same iniquitous system prevails not only in the United Kingdom, but in France, and the European republics, and throughout the whole world; and that tyranny and slavery should exist so palpably under the free institutions of the United States, only tends to enforce still stronger upon us this indisputable and overwhelming truth,—that neither these free institutions, nor any other political institutions having for their object the bestowment of equal rights upon a people, can be acted up to, or their advantages be universally enjoyed, under our present social arrangements. Slavery in nature, if not in name, has ever been, is now, and ever will be, the portion of the working classes, in every country where inequality of property exists in connection with the gradation of classes.

Let the people of the United Kingdom, then, pause in their efforts to catch the bubbles which have hitherto charmed them; for should they acquire all that they are now strug-

gling for, in respect to the attainment of what are called their political rights, they will only grasp a shadow—they will but obtain the letter, not enjoy the spirit, of that great law of equality of rights which has been instituted by the Creator. They have before them, as an example of failure, one of the most enlightened and powerful republics of ancient or modern times—a nation whose form of government is all that politicians wish for, and far more than the oppressed people of Britain hope to obtain—and yet this great nation, in cold-blooded cruelty, and disregard of human rights, sinks below England herself, king-ridden and priest-ridden as she has been for centuries!

As, then, sufficient proof is afforded us, by times past and times present, that no form of government can insure to a people the enjoyment of equal rights—that no form of government, whether republican or monarchical, can protect the productive classes from the exactions and the tyranny of the useless classes, nor guarantee to the former the enjoyment of the fruits of their industry—what plan must be adopted to overthrow and destroy the secret enemy which devours us?

It requires no arguments to prove that man was intended, by his Creator, to live in a state of society, or communion with his kind; and if society, in its present state, inflicts upon any of its members as many wrongs as it confers benefits, it cannot from hence be inferred that the principle of communion is necessarily attended by these wrongs and sufferings: it is far more rational, and more in accordance with the perfect adaptation of other means to other ends, to conclude that we do not act properly upon this principle of communion; for man is much more likely to err in following, than Nature in directing.

Equality of rights is the very soul of society; but equality of rights cannot exist unallied with equality of duties. This is the sum and substance of equality. Thus, if three men be placed upon a desert island, and they each give an equal portion of labour for the common good, and receive an equal reward, the communion is *equally* beneficial to all the three. But if one of the party, by force or fraud, obtain *double* allowance of produce for only *single* work, the union cannot longer be *equally* beneficial to all the three. If, again, the same man compel his fellows to give him double allowance of produce for *no labour*

whatever, every shadow of equality and justice vanishes at once; and no law nor regulation can restore the equilibrium of right, unless it compel this receiver of an unearned share to give his labour for such share; for the very essence of the inequality and the wrong consists in the inequality of the duties rendered and the rewards received by the several parties. There is no exponent of equal rights but that which also stands for equal duties; and if duties be unequal, or equal duties be unequally rewarded, the very principle of justice is at once invaded, and equality of rights destroyed.

In all civilised countries, as they are called, society is thus divided into idlers and producers—into those who obtain double allowance for doing nothing, and those who receive only half-allowance for doing double work; and so long as this difference of position and inequality of condition is suffered to exist, inequality of rights and laws and enjoyments will also exist. It matters not how society came to be in its present state. It is sufficient that it is found thus, and that it may be altered and amended. Why *should* some men receive double allowance for doing only single work, or quadruple allowance for rendering no service whatever? All the excessive toil, and poverty, and misery of the working classes of all countries arise solely from this most unjust and iniquitous manner of apportioning the labour and the reward; and never, until we alter the social arrangements which produce and perpetuate this injustice, can we obtain relief. What arguments are needed to prove to common sense, that, if ten men have to maintain twenty, the ten must work harder or longer than if they had only themselves to keep? What kind of *equality of rights* can there possibly be between the keepers and the kept? There is neither equality of service rendered nor received; for the one party *gives all*, and the other party *takes all*—and herein lies the essence and spirit of all inequality.

It does not follow, merely because society is now divided into productive and unproductive classes, that the division is either natural or inevitable, as the political economists have asserted. A very cursory examination of the causes which render men rich and poor, and maintain the inequality of condition after it has been created, will shew us that this inequality, so far from being dependent

on inequality of bodily and mental powers in individuals, exists in *defiance* of any such inequality of powers, and is in no way connected with these powers—that it arises from causes which no individual can properly command or control, whatever may be the superiority or inferiority of his mental and corporeal faculties.

It may be consistent with the ignorance and the false notions of things which the present social system fosters, to contend for the excellence and the propriety of this system, and to decry all improvement and all change; but those from whom the thick veil of the present has been lifted up—who can survey the bright and the glorious prospect contained within the future—such favoured ones, wherever they may be, will not regard the gross injustice and depravity which now exist in the world, as things intended for perpetuity by an immaculate and perfect Creator.

If the advocates of the present system, with its black catalogue of crimes and vices—if the wealthy and the self-styled high and mighty of the earth—can conceive of no other system, and do not know more of the nature of man than that he may be enslaved and degraded, they know but the half, and the worst half, of his capabilities. Awful, to such, will be the blast of that coming tempest, which the strongest must bend to, and the highest fall down before!

CHAPTER II.

FIRST PRINCIPLES RELATING TO SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT.

AN acquaintance with the first principles of things is the end of all knowledge; and the proper application of these principles is the end of all wisdom. Of all principles, none are of so much importance to man as those which influence and regulate society; and none are so little inquired into, or so little understood. The false views of himself, his position, and his relation to things, which the present system of society and the contracted education connected with it, compel man to entertain, render it almost impossible for him either to become acquainted with his real nature, or to form any conception of the high destiny which may be his even upon the globe he now inhabits.

Like all other bodies, man is governed by certain principles, or influences, which he obeys necessarily; and these influences take their rise from the circumstances in which the individual is placed. The various institutions by which man is surrounded, trace out the orbit in which his thoughts, and feelings, and actions are to move; and on he goes, for centuries, the same old beaten round of crime and folly. Social systems, like solar systems, contain within themselves but few disturbing forces; and it is the nature of the same institutional circumstances, whether good or bad, to give a general uniformity of character, in respect to actions and opinions, to all who are exposed to their influence. The institutions act upon the man, and the man, in turn, re-acts upon the institutions. Thus the aristocracy of to-day thinks and acts almost the same as aristocracies have always thought and acted; and the working classes of the present time cringe to their op-

pressors, and kiss the hand that smites them, the same as their order did three thousand years since.

The world at large have not chosen the present social system, and the particular mode of thinking and acting connected with it, because it was good, nor have they rejected another because it was bad; but men have blindly taken both good and bad, as they happened to turn up, without knowing the one from the other. We of the present day, in like manner, take principles and institutions, and act upon them, simply because they were so taken and acted upon by those who have gone before us. Although a gradual movement is ever going forward, yet society, as a whole, has hitherto had no more inherent power within itself to change at once the direction of its actions and opinions, than have the planets of our solar system a power to change their courses. Whenever a new direction is given to the opinions and pursuits of men, the motion is occasioned by the accumulation of disturbing forces, or by the unwelcome pounce of some cometary spirit on whom no continuity of every-day circumstance has acted,—but whose course, directed by peculiarity of position and singularity of circumstance, lies directly across or against that of the whole of which he forms a part. And when the current of human events is thus broken in upon, it takes necessarily, whether good or bad, the new direction which is given; and this course is maintained until again changed by new influences and new disturbances.

There always have been, in all countries and under all forms of government, individuals in mental advance of, and apparently in opposition to, the main body of a people. They are the pioneers to the march of mind—the first to give battle to prejudice, and the first to fall before it—and, although they make the road to knowledge, to freedom, and to happiness, practicable and easy, they do so only by paving it with their own bones. The vocation of these invaders of the dark empire of ignorance and tyranny renders them the especial dread of despots, and all other upholders of usurped power and unjustly-acquired wealth; and they are therefore always persecuted with a horrible malignancy which no other being but man can feel and exercise.

When we take into consideration the various circumstances which have retarded human advancement, we can-

not be surprised that the disenthralment of man from man has not yet been achieved. Under despotisms—and the majority of governments are little else than despotisms—the knowledge of truth and liberty progresses slowly; for the gibbet and the dungeon are of too easy access to be neglected by the governors, especially where custom has made the immolation of a victim a matter of but little moment. Should the ruling few think fit to give a reason for their bloody acts, they fabricate some black and odious lie, calculated to mislead the multitude, and work upon their passions and their prejudices; and the unhappy and enslaved people are made to gloat upon the sufferings and decry the principles of him who would have made them enlightened and happy: they are taught to regard him as one of the deadliest enemies of the human race, and, believing him to be such, they exult at his discomfiture and glory in his downfall. The governors cry “Crucify him!” and the deluded governed loudly echo “Crucify him!” Should the fearless champion of truth escape for a time with life, it makes but little difference in favour of his cause. Everything is against him. The great body of those who are oppressed, and who stand most in need of deliverance, are perhaps unable to read; and the oral communication of political knowledge, even in countries professing to enjoy the liberty of thought and speech, is almost as slow and unsafe a method as that adopted by means of books. Wherever the body is enslaved, the mind is still more tyrannized over; for the anathema of the priest is ever at the call of the despot; and the hereafter of the first is always more dreaded, by an ignorant people, than the present tyranny of the last. The minds alike of the oppressed and the oppressor are warped and confined from infancy to manhood; and thus, benighted and enslaved, does generation follow generation; and those simple truths and principles which, under certain circumstances, might have become universally known and acted upon during the passing of one generation, are, under other circumstances, almost unknown and unregarded at the end of centuries.

It is time that man went to first principles—it is time that he broke through those conventional cobwebs which, spun by his own ignorance, and fastened upon him by his own hands, have for ages bound his body and his soul

as firmly as if they had been fetters of adamant, and had been imposed upon him by the unalterable decree of a Creator. Past and present events afford ample demonstration that there is something inherently wrong in our social arrangements—something which inevitably tends to generate misery and crime, and to exalt worthlessness at the expense of merit. We are acquainted with justice only by name. Our whole social fabric is one vast Babel of interests, in which true charity, and morality, and brotherly love, have no existence. The hand of every man is more or less raised against every other man—the interest of every class is opposed to the interest of every other class—and all other interests are in opposition and hostility to the interest of the working man. This unnatural state of things was originally induced, and is now maintained, by man's ignorance of, or inattention to, First Principles; and these principles, as promulgated in the great book of Nature, may be thus interpreted:—

1. All men are alike, in regard to their substance, their creation, and their preservation; therefore the nature of all is the same, and the absolute wants of all are the same.

2. The materials requisite for the preservation of life—food, clothing, and shelter—exist everywhere around us, but they are naturally valueless to man, and cannot be obtained by him, except through the medium of labour; therefore, as the life of no human being can be maintained without a due provision of food, clothing, and shelter, and as these cannot be procured without labour, it follows that every human being ought to labour.

3. As the nature and wants of all men are alike, the rights of all must be equal; and as human existence is dependent on the same contingencies, it follows, that the great field for all exertion, and the raw material of all wealth—the earth—is the common property of all its inhabitants.

These simple principles contain within themselves the essence of that fundamental equality of rights which men have for so many ages been endeavouring to establish; and all social and governmental institutions must be in accordance with their dictates, if man would escape from all or any of the evils which he now suffers. Such principles offer the only foundation on which human happiness

can be permanently established; and they naturally suggest a mode of action, in respect to social institutions, which will enable man to enjoy all the pleasures and escape from all the ills which his nature can be cognisant of. It is not rational to suppose that the present inequalities in society must always exist, merely because they exist for the time being; nor is it in accordance with experience to infer that, because a mode of action is invariable under certain influences and circumstances, it will continue unalterable under all influences and circumstances. Man is man at the pole as well as at the equator, but the diet and the clothing of the one will never be adopted by the other; nor will the selfish principle exert itself so vilely and so evilly, in a state of society where the rights and the duties of all are equal, as it does under the present social system, where there is no equality either in respect to rights or to duties, to services or to rewards.

That all men are precisely equal in their mental and bodily powers, or that they all require the same quantity of sustenance, no one will attempt to assert; for absolute equality prevails not between any two created beings. But the inequality of powers which at present exists amongst men, has been induced, in a great degree, by the favourable or unfavourable circumstances in which individuals have been placed, in respect to position in society and means of development; and, in most cases, if the circumstances and influences had been reversed, the inequality would also have been reversed.

The proud and pampered aristocrat, who has possessed every advantage which circumstances could afford for the development of his tiny brains, possesses, perhaps, knowledge and acquirements which fall not to the son of labour; but, forgetful of how much circumstances of position have done for him—forgetful that it was the toil and privation of the working man which gave him leisure and means—he tells us, sneeringly and insultingly, that he is a wiser and a higher being than the man whose honest hands procure his bread. But this assumption of superiority has almost had its day, and will soon be neither heeded nor conceded; and the unnatural barriers which ignorance and fraud have reared to separate men into classes and castes, like cattle in a public market, will be broken through and trodden under foot.

As nature has made the preservation of life dependent on the fulfilment of the same conditions, and has given to every human being the powers adequate to maintain existence, strict equity requires not only that these powers should be duly exercised, but likewise that the exertion should be rewarded with success; and that it is not so rewarded, is not the fault of nature, but of man. Nature never commits errors—never inflicts injustice; and when she made man the slave of circumstances, and left him at the mercy of events, she gave him faculties adequate to control the one and direct the other. That he might do this more effectually, and have dominion over most things relating to his existence, man has been taught to institute society; which, if it be wisely regulated, will enable him to accomplish, by a proper union and direction of forces, that which no isolated exertion of human power could ever achieve. This is the intention and end of society; and the first step to the attainment of the wished-for power is the establishment of institutions which will destroy or neutralise the trifling inequalities that nature has created, and at the same time remove all the uncertainty connected with the future welfare of man, and insure him, until death, an abundance of all those things which make life desirable. Society, thus constituted and regulated, will draw the whole human family into one common bond of fellowship and union; for its very principles, by showing to all men their dependence on all, prove to them that man has no pre-eminence above his fellow-man; as the wisest and the strongest are but as broken reeds when placed beyond the pale of society, and shut out from the communion and co-operation of their kind.

Thus, from a consideration of the nature of man and the object of society, a principle may be deduced, which, although now unacted upon, and its justice unacknowledged, will ultimately unite the two jagged and far-separated ends of the social chain—forming it into a circle, and putting the last finish upon man and his institutions, namely:—

4. As self-preservation is the end of all labour, and as a general natural equality of powers and wants prevails amongst men, it should follow, that all those who perform *equality of labour* ought likewise to receive *equality of reward*.

However unpalatable may be these principles, they are not only in strict accordance with justice, but they are the only principles capable of destroying the manifold ills and miseries which a departure from them, in the present constitution of society, necessarily engenders.

Some of those who feed upon the produce of the workman's industry, and yield him no service in return, may boldly assert that equality of condition can never have existence; they may endeavour to prove that society is like a human body—that there must be a head, a belly, and members—some to govern and some to obey, some to produce that others may consume. But this simile will not support the cause it is brought to subserve; for all men are of one nature—they are similar powers, or quantities, or qualities—and, as such, there can be no diversity of attributes amongst them. We must liken men to each other, and bellies to each other, and limbs to each other: we cannot compare an arm to a belly or a head, for they are not similar powers, and the one can by no possibility perform the functions of the other, place them in whatever circumstances we may. But what *one man* can do, *another man* may do,—whether it be to rule as king or obey as subject—they are similar powers—and therefore there never can be a natural or a just division of society into belly and members—into mere consumers and producers. All men are of one substance and one nature, they all have the like attributes, and they are all, therefore, equal in respect of their rights.

When we have arrived at the first principles of any thing, we can almost see, as it were, the end of our journey, and have only to march forward upon a straight and open road. We no longer wander about in a labyrinth of doubt and conjecture, perpetually suffering wrongs and devising and rejecting remedies; but we know exactly where we are, and the course which we ought to pursue. Thus we know that life is dependent upon food, and that food is dependent upon labour. We see at once, that, from the very nature of things, these dependencies are absolute; and that, therefore, if labour be evaded by any human being, it can be thus *evaded by individuals* only on the condition of *increased labour by the mass*. It requires no arguments, when we view for one moment the poor toiler and the rich idler, to prove that the exemp-

tion from labour which the latter enjoys, is attributable to the inequality of possessions which exists between the two parties; and it is equally apparent, that inequality of possessions must have been originally induced, as it is now partly maintained, by the exclusive possession, by certain individuals and classes, of that earth which rightly and equally belongs alike to every created being. Thus the conviction is naturally and imperatively forced upon us, that individual possession of the soil has been one cause of inequality of wealth—that inequality of wealth necessarily gives rise to inequality of labour—and that inequality of wealth, and labour, and enjoyments, constitute the wrong as a whole. This, as well as the deprivation of political power connected with it, is the state of things to be remedied; and if the wrong is to be removed, it must be done by removing the inequality of condition which creates and perpetuates it. Equality of rights can never exist in connection with inequality of labour and inequality of wealth. The mere fact that men have heretofore always been governed by unequal laws—that these laws have been based on assumed inequality of rights—and that the idea of inequality of rights has been derived from inequality of possessions—ought to convince us of the unimprovable nature of a social system allowing of the distinctions in society which now exist; for so long as we hear of rich and poor—of superior and inferior—of master and man—there can be no equality of rights, no justice, no cessation of discontent and crime.

From the nature and position of man, and the principles which have relation to his existence, it cannot be denied that the natural rights of all human beings are equal. These rights, therefore, can never be given up or taken away, for they are attributes—conditions of existence—and they are limited, in every man, only by the equal rights of every other man. Thus, it may be said that every man has a right to do what he likes—*provided the so doing interferes not with the EQUAL rights of his fellow-man*. This definition, broad as it may appear, is in reality extremely circumscribed, and will allow neither of licentiousness nor tyranny. It is an indisputable right of man to live upon that earth on which he has been placed by his Creator; and this right to existence must from its nature be accompanied, in every man, by the right of

appropriating to himself the various necessities of life which he can, by his labour, compel the earth to yield him. The exercise of these rights, in a well-regulated society, can neither cause collision nor inflict injury; for the acting upon them by one man does not necessarily interfere with the same action on the part of every other man. Human rights must all, and at all times, be tested by this principle of interference; and whenever any man, or body of men, or government, commits an action or makes a claim which interferes with the equal rights of others, a wrong is committed upon all who are thus interfered with.

Men preceded us, and others will continue to come after us. Generations arrive within the confines of existence before their predecessors have departed; and, as the lives of all are held by the same tenure, and are dependent upon the same contingencies, the absolute rights of all to life and sustenance must necessarily be equal. But, from the peculiar position in which we are placed, by the rising and the passing generations being always mixed up together, it is impossible to maintain this natural equality of right to subsistence, unless the earth be COMMON PROPERTY, and the earth cannot be common property, nor can its blessings be either universally or equally enjoyed, under any system which admits individual appropriation of the soil.

It is labour alone which bestows value; for labour, as it has been truly said, is the purchase money which is paid for everything we eat, or drink, or wear. Every man has an undoubted right to all that his honest labour can procure him. When he thus appropriates the *fruits* of his labour, he commits no injustice upon any other human being; for he interferes with no other man's right of doing the same with the produce of *his* labour. But if any individual appropriate to himself the *field* on which all labour is exercised—if he attempt to set up a claim to any particular part of the earth—he clearly does that which is unjust, and contrary to the common equality of rights, *for he interferes with the equal right of every human being to appropriate that same particular spot*. Priority of possession gives no title whatever; nor can any duration of enjoyment establish a right, where a right did not originally exist. From the very nature of the thing, and the position in which man stands with regard to his fellows, he never did, and never can, individually, possess any

exclusive right to one single inch of land. Wherever such an assumed right is set up and acted upon, there will always exist injustice, and tyranny, and poverty, and inequality of rights, whether the people be under the monarchical or the republican form of government; for all the wrongs and the woes which man has ever committed or endured, may be traced to the assumption of a right in the soil, by certain individuals and classes, to the exclusion of other individuals and classes. Equality of rights can never be enjoyed until all individual claims to landed property are subverted, and merged in those of the nation at large.

The next step which man has ever taken, after having claimed property in land, has been to claim *property in man*; and wherever one man possesses land, and another has none, the latter must always be the slave of the former. From this prolific source of evil—exclusive possession of the soil—have arisen semi-civilized despotisms, and governmental power of every description; for an infringement upon one of the rights of man soon leads to a disregard of all his other rights. But we have seen, from the very nature of things, that no man can ever possess a *right* to the obedience of another, nor claim property in him; and therefore, wherever such a pretension is set up, it must be denounced and resisted, for it is contrary to the letter and the spirit of Nature's great charter of equality. The Creator of man only is the owner of man; and the assumption of power and dominion by one man or one class over other men and other classes, simply because the one claims land and the other does not, is as unjust as the inequality of property is unjust upon which such claim to exclusive authority is founded.

Man, as an individual, is both weak and poor, and he will always continue thus while isolated and alone. But he enters society—an aggregate of weak threads produce a powerful rope—an aggregate of individuals compose a nation. If man be weak and poor when left to himself, he must necessarily continue weak and poor, as an individual, in any and every state of society; for society alters neither his physical constitution nor his attributes—he is still no more than one thread of the rope. By what principle, then, does any individual *claim* power and authority over his fellows? If weakness and insignificance be inherent in one man, they will likewise be inherent in all men—

they will differ in degree only, not in kind. A thing is equal to itself, and a whole is greater than its part; and there is nothing in nature or in language that can give us an idea of *one equal* being superior to *another equal*, or greater than a thousand or a million of itself. Therefore all such assumption of superiority—such toad-blown affectation of supremacy—merits only derision and contempt. There cannot, perhaps, exist a state of society without a form of government and laws of some kind: but there never was, and there never can be, in any person, a *right* to govern; nor can one individual ever justly make laws for another, and call upon him for obedience. Human rights are equal; and human rights are the true foundation for human laws, and the correct definers of man's authority over man.

Laws, if properly considered, are no more than contrivances to promote the welfare of society; and therefore they should be so framed as to afford the greatest security to the whole body politic, with the least restraint upon the actions of individuals. Such being the nature and intention of laws, it is evident that all those must be both prejudicial and unjust, which tend to circumscribe the rights of individuals, without at the same time affording additional protection to the community. With respect to the institution of laws, *no minority can ever possess the RIGHT of imposing laws upon the majority*; and therefore, wherever laws have been thus imposed, a manifest tyranny has been committed upon the majority. Nor can a majority ever possess the right of imposing laws upon the minority, except such laws have for their object the *equal protection of general social rights*; for the protection of persons and property being the chief end for which men institute laws—and as every man who respects the rights of others, ought also to have his own rights held sacred—it follows, that all laws instituted by either majority or minority, *for such equal protection of rights*, are binding upon all. But if, from ignorance of the nature of right, or from any other cause, the majority or minority think fit to enact laws which *interfere with the rights of all* without at the same time affording *equal protection to all*, they clearly do that which is unjust. Of this indefensible and tyrannical character are the laws now existing in England and other countries, which, under pain of fine or imprisonment, render it compulsory *on all persons* to perform certain

religious observances on a stated day. In regard to England, these laws were enacted by an insignificant minority of the nation; but had they been passed with the consent of the majority, they would have been equally unjust and tyrannical in principle, and equally worthy of detestation and resistance; for they trespass upon the right of one part of the nation to enjoy their free will in the matter, without affording any additional protection to the other part. Those who enacted the laws, not only protected their own right to perform certain services—which no one could dispute—but they, at the same time, infringed on the equal rights of others *to dispense with their observance*. There is not one law in existence in Great Britain, which is not more or less contaminated by this tyrannical principle of interference with private and public right, under the guise of protecting such right.

The rights of man, from their very nature, are independent of, and unconnected with, majorities and minorities; for such can neither give them nor take them away. From the very principle of equality by which they are regulated, it must follow, that the natural rights of any aggregation of individuals cannot outweigh the rights of a single individual; and although any nation, or combination of men, have an undoubted right to institute any laws they please *relating to themselves*, yet such laws cannot justly operate upon any non-consenting party, except the principle of equality of rights be invaded by such party.

All the forms of government at present existing are in a greater or less degree tyrannical and irresponsible. The wrongs which emanate from them operate upon the people, generally, in an indirect manner, through the medium of laws; and such laws are always necessarily imbued with the spirit of inequality which pervades the government from which they spring. Might and Right have long been, with rulers, synonymous terms; and right and wisdom and virtue are supposed to be inherent in certain persons and classes of the community, independent of other persons and classes. But all these ideas of superior and inferior—of master and man—may be traced to the neglect of First Principles, and to the consequent rise of inequality of possessions; and such ideas will never be eradicated, nor the institutions founded upon them be subverted, so long as this inequality is maintained. Men have hitherto blindly hoped to remedy the present unna-

tural state of things, and to institute equality of rights and laws, by removing one rich tyrant and setting up another—by destroying *existing inequality*, and leaving untouched the *cause* of the inequality; but it will shortly be seen, that it is not in the nature of any mere governmental change to afford permanent relief—that misgovernment is not a cause, but a consequence—that it is not the creator, but the created—that *it is the offspring of inequality of possessions*; and that inequality of possessions is inseparably connected with our present social system. From this it will follow, that the present state of things cannot be remedied, unless we change at once our whole social system; for, alter our form of government as we will, no such change can affect the system—no such change can prevent inequality of possessions, and the division of society into employers and employed—and therefore, as a necessary consequence, no such change can remove the evils which this system and this division of society engender.

We do not act, and never yet have acted, upon those First Principles which the Creator has instituted for the guidance and the welfare of man; nor do we keep the broad principle of equality in view, either in our rights or our duties, our labours or our rewards. With us, almost everything is unequal, and unnatural, and unjust. And why are things thus? How is it that some men receive only half allowance for doing double work, while others receive double or quadruple allowance merely for looking on? There is no principle in numbers which will make one man to be fifty, or a hundred—there is no principle in production which will enable one unaided man, with powers only equal to those of any other man, to perform the united labour of one hundred—and there is no principle of reason or of justice which will allow one man to appropriate the fruits of the labour of one hundred. And yet this unjust appropriation has been practised and tolerated, in defiance of every principle of numbers and of justice, from the creation of man to the present day. Such is the operation of the present social system—on fraud and robbery legalised stand all its power, and wealth, and glory—and until this system be overthrown, and the immutable principles of truth established, let no man speak of peace, or look for justice, or hope for happiness!

CHAPTER III.

THE CONDITIONS REQUISITE FOR INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL PROSPERITY.

WERE we, apart from the feelings and the prejudices which conventional and educational circumstances have impressed upon us, to take a survey of the whole human family, we might compare them to shipwrecked men, thrown upon an almost desert island. There is sufficient room for all to live and move, and plenty of the mere elements of everything necessary to support existence; but nothing can be done without labour. It requires labour to gather even the wild fruits from the trees, or the shell-fish from the sea-shore. Without labour, we die.

Surely, the most rational mode of action for men so circumstanced would be, to unite together in parties, work and share alike, and render to each other mutual assistance and protection; for, by acting thus, the labour of each person would be infinitely lightened, and his security be much increased. The strong could defend the weak, and the wary advise the strong: all might be of service.

But men have heretofore done nothing of the kind. The motto of almost every member of the human family has been, and still is—"Each for himself." We have pursued different tracks, and have moved on alone, although we have all been in search of the same object.—an object, too, which could by no possibility be obtained by one man except through the instrumentality of his fellows. We have been weak when we might have been strong—we have been naked and hungry when we might have been clothed and fed—we have been bitter and implacable enemies when we might have been kind and steadfast friends.

We have suffered and sinned thus on account of our ignorance, and our inattention to First Principles. No common bond of sympathy and fellow-feeling has ever drawn the hearts of men together, for there has been among them no common interest. We have always left both the end and the means to chance—to uncontrolled circumstance—which has apportioned to each man his labours, and his rewards, and his punishments, almost independent of either capability, or exertion, or desert. One man has found an oyster and another has met with a shell—one man has been filled to repletion, and another has starved.

This chance-way of maintaining life, although it may be agreeable to the nature of brutes, was never intended to be acted upon by rational beings. Notwithstanding that we have ever claimed superiority over all other earthly beings—and have assumed such pre-eminence solely on account of our reason—yet hitherto, in respect to our social institutions, we have made little or no use of this great distinctive attribute. Man has a reasonable as well as an instinctive nature—each given him as a means to attain a certain end—and each being intended to accomplish that which the other cannot effect. When man grovels among the instincts, he has no pre-eminence above a beast—he becomes not man until he reasons, and obeys the dictates of that reason.

The present social system is based upon the instinctive, and not the reasonable, nature of man. It gives development and strength only to our brute perceptions and propensities. It leaves our self-love to be guided by our instinct instead of by our reason, in the formation of institutions; and consequently, as the instinct of man is less perfect than that of any other animal, so is the state of society founded upon that instinct more imperfect than the community which nature has taught the very bees and beavers to institute. Man has ever been in an unnatural position; and therefore, of necessity, he has always been unhappy or discontented—always seeking for change. This restlessness—this eternal yearning after we know not what—is not an inherent principle or faculty in man, which must operate in all circumstances and under all influences; for, had this universally prevalent discontent been rightly reasoned upon, and analysed, it would have been found to

proceed,—not from the nature of man, and the incompetency of earthly things to make him happy—but from the unnatural position in which man has ever existed with respect to his fellows, and the little use and ill use which he has made of his higher faculties.

Unhappiness is not felt by any created being, so long as such being is in the position which nature intended it to occupy ; and it is manifested equally by all, when removed from such position. The Creator intended all creatures to be happy, and therefore placed them in proper situations, or gave them attributes and faculties calculated for their preservation and enjoyment. Experience teaches us, that if we remove any animal from its proper position into one alien to its nature, it immediately exhibits all that restlessness and discontentment which has so long been the characteristic of man. Man now exists in an unnatural state—as an instinctive rather than a rational being—and he is therefore necessarily restless and dissatisfied ; and so he must remain, until he alters his position. Shall we, then, by the aid of those gigantic powers which we possess, create around us circumstances congenial to our nature, and thus become contented and joyful ; or shall we stupidly continue to tax the Great Giver of life—that Almighty Power whose every law is immutably just—with partiality or tyranny ? Let us cease our maudlin lamentations, and our outcries, that we only, in a universe of adaptation and perfectibility, are lost and forsaken and miserable beings. Let us, for once, make some use of our much-boasted but much-neglected reason ; and take that station—create those circumstances—fulfil that end—for which existence was bestowed upon us.

The poverty and misery of the masses of all nations have for ages been notorious. It was easy to make the oppressed believe, ere Mind had touched them with its quickening spark, that their condition in society, as the slaves and the inferiors of their fellow-men, was a necessary consequence of their existence, and therefore unavoidable and irremediable. But, as time progressed, knowledge spread ; and the sons of labour began not only to disbelieve the story of their inferiority, but likewise to attempt to throw off the yoke of the merciless enemy which had so long held them in thralldom. The frequent and vigorous efforts which have been made for this purpose

during the last half-century, have not been unheeded by the opposite party ; and they have discovered the necessity of supporting their pretensions to supremacy and wealth by stronger proof than mere assertion. To this end have certain individuals examined the ground-work and tendency of the existing system ; and their labours have ended in the erection of what is called the science of Political Economy. The founders of this science have gone to first principles—they have reasoned from indisputable facts—and they have proved, clearly and convincingly, that, under the present system, there is no hope for the working man—that he is indeed the bondman of the man of money—and that he is kept so by circumstances which neither his enemy nor himself can immediately control.

But let not the unjust man and the extortioner, wherever he may be, exult in the immensity of his wealth and the unconquerableness of his power—let not a toil-worn and an impoverished people, wherever they may be, think that their doom is fixed, and that deliverance will never come. That which is true of particular principles under certain influences, is not necessarily true of the same principles under all circumstances ; nor is that degradation and poverty, which is the portion of the working man under the present social system, a necessary concomitant of his existence under any and every social system. This shall be proved by the same principles and the same mode of argument by which the political economists, from not going far enough, have proved the contrary. By thus fighting them upon their own ground, and with their own weapons, we shall avoid that senseless clatter respecting “visionaries” and “theorists,” with which they are so ready to assail all who dare move one step from that beaten track which, “by authority,” has been pronounced to be the only right one. Before the conclusions arrived at by such a course of proceeding can be overthrown, the economists must unsay or disprove those established truths and principles on which their own arguments are founded.

“Society,” it has been affirmed by a political economist, “both in its rudest form, and in its most refined and complicated relations, is nothing but a system of exchanges. An exchange is a transaction in which both the parties who make the exchange are benefited ;—and, consequently

society is a state presenting an uninterrupted succession of advantages for all its members."

It has been to make society what it is here represented to be—"an uninterrupted succession of advantages for ALL its members"—that the efforts of the truly great and good in all ages have been directed. Society is *not* thus universally advantageous to all within its pale, nor has it ever yet been so. Ask the producers of wealth—the despised, the toil-worn, the oppressed working men, of any age or any nation,—if society was ever for them an "uninterrupted succession of advantages." Could their voices arise from the grave—could they tell us the sickening tale of their wrongs and their miseries—how wild would be their wailings!—how terrible their imprecations! But even were history silent as to their fate, experience is a perpetual remembrancer to the men of the present day; and they cannot change their situation for a better one, nor will they ever have a proper hold upon society, until First Principles are universally acted upon—until we attend to those conditions which the political economists themselves have confessed to be "necessary for the production of Utility, or of what is essential to the support, comfort, and pleasure of human life;"—and these conditions are:—

"1. *That there shall be labour.*

"2. *That there shall be accumulations of former labour, or capital.*

"3. *That there shall be exchanges.*"

These three conditions, be it remembered, are those laid down by the economists. There is no reservation made—no distinction of any particular persons or classes with respect to whom these conditions shall or shall not have reference. They are applied to society at large, and, from their nature, cannot exempt any individual or any class from their operation. We must, therefore, take the conditions as they are, and apply them, with their advantages and their disadvantages, to all alike.

Had these conditions been fulfilled by men, as they ought to have been, there would now be no occasion for forming associations to obtain political rights, or trades' unions to protect the employed from the merciless exactions of the employers. But these conditions have been neglected, or only partially observed, and the present con-

dition of the working man and society at large is the consequence. From our habits and prejudices, it is difficult to discover truths or First Principles, but it is still more difficult to apply these principles properly, or even to conceive that they may be acted upon. First Principles are always general in their application—not partial. The ban—"THOU SHALT LABOUR"—rests alike on all created beings. To this great law, from the minutest animalcule in a drop of water, to the most stupendous whale which dives beneath the waves of ocean, there are naturally, and there should be artificially, no exceptions. Man only can escape this law; and, from its nature, it can be evaded by one man only at the expense of another. The law itself is never destroyed or abrogated—it naturally and perpetually presses equally upon all men—upon the capitalist as well as the working man—and if one man or one class escape its pressure, the sum total of its force will bear up some other man or class. It is an absolute condition of existence "that there shall be labour."

The word "Labour," with most men, has unpleasant ideas associated with it. To many, it signifies raggedness, or ignorance, or degradation—aching bones, mental and bodily lassitude, a gnawing dissatisfaction with every thing around them, and a half-weariness of life. To destroy the inexplicable feelings which excessive labour thus creates, the over-wrought working man wants, and he must have, some mental or bodily restorative to supply this waste of vital energy. But the present institutions of society offer *him* nothing of the kind. There is nothing around him to raise up his prostrated soul, and enlarge and purify the noble germ within him; for everything he hears and sees and feels, tends to enforce upon him a sense of inferiority and abasement. No wonder that his manhood droops and withers—that he seeks for the momentary relaxation afforded by debauchery—that he soon loses even the desire to improve his very few hours of leisure, and becomes content to plod through life, not as a man, but as an animal—eating, drinking, and working, to the end of his days. The almighty principle of Mind, if unused and unimproved, sickens, and degenerates, and dies.

Labour, like everything else, is good when used legitimately, but becomes prejudicial when abused. It has hitherto been regarded as a curse—and it has to many

been an actual curse—only because men have not used it rightly. The great mass of mankind has laboured to excess ; and, like every other excess, labour has excited little else than aversion and loathing.

Labour ought to raise none of these unpleasant emotions ; nor would it do so if taken in moderation. If we understood things rightly, we should consider labour a blessing rather than a curse, for it is the one great preservative of intellectual and corporeal health. But, with strange inattention to the nature and uses of things, the world at large stamps labour, which is the parent of every enjoyment, as not only unpleasant, but derogatory. The working man must not sit with the idler or the capitalist, nor must he eat with them, or associate with them. The pot-house and the hovel are allotted to the one—the ball-room and the palace are usurped by the other. To have ever honestly earned a shilling, is, under the present system, and by those who have perched themselves upon the pinnacles of that system, considered almost as a moral stain upon a man, which can be wiped away only by successive generations of idlers. Those are now the most regarded who can point back to the longest list of ancestors who never did one useful thing, and who have therefore lived for ages upon the industry of the productive classes, by what can only be called tolerated robbery. But all labour must come from some parties ; and the advocate for justice and for equal rights cannot but exclaim—“ Let those only cry out against working who can live without eating and drinking, for none but such were intended to be idle.”

Labour is neither more nor less than labour ; and one kind of employment is not more honourable or dishonourable than another, although all descriptions of labour may not appear of equal value to society at large. Such inequality of value, however, is no argument for inequality of rewards ; and when we have examined the subject in all its bearings and relations, we shall find that it is as just and reasonable that equal labour of all kinds should be equally remunerated, as it is just and reasonable that labour should be universal. Man, properly constituted, requires not the low stimulant of superior pecuniary reward to spur him on to do his duty to his fellow-man.

All kinds of labour are so mixed up together, and so

dependent on each other that the institution of inequality of rewards involves more actual pecuniary injustice than can possibly have existence under a system which rewards all men and all trades alike, for a similar application of labour ; whilst the moral and physical evils which experience has proved to be inseparable from the present system of inequality—the uncharitableness, the insatiable greediness, the bloodshed, the wrongs of every kind which the records of three thousand years are filled with—can have little or no existence in connection with equality of reward for equal labour.

Not only are the greatest advantages, but strict justice also, on the side of a system of equality. It must be confessed by all men, that the most important discovery or invention, unless labour be applied to bring forth its results, is just as useless to us as the merest trifle. Thus, although it may be said that he who invents a steam-engine confers a greater benefit upon society than the man who makes it,—and that he who makes it does a greater service than he who merely fills it with water and kindles the fire under it,—yet, in reality, the labour of the last man is just as necessary, to produce the effects desired, as the labour of the first. The drawing or model of the inventor is of no value until seconded by the labour of the engine-maker ; and the perfected engine, until it be put in motion by fire and water, is as worthless as the mere model. The results to be produced by the instrumentality of the engine are thus dependent, and equally dependent, upon the labour of all the parties concerned. Every man is a link, and an indispensable link, in the chain of effects—the beginning of which is but an idea, and the end, perhaps, the production of a piece of cloth. Thus, although we may entertain different feelings towards the several parties, it does not follow that one should be better paid for his labour than another. The inventor will ever receive, in addition to his just pecuniary reward, that which genius only can obtain from us—the tribute of our admiration.

Under the present social system, with its individualized and opposing interests, and its high and low employments, equal remuneration for equal labour would be both impracticable and unjust. Some professions and trades, to obtain a mastery over them, require quadruple the time

all equality of rights and laws, whatever may be the form of government established, and whatever may be the merely political power placed in the hands of the working man.

Under the present social system, the capitalists and employers are not only distinct from, but they are in a manner independent of, the working class. They have the whole control of all the operations of trade—at their fiat production goes forward, or languishes, or ceases altogether—the working man is made comparatively comfortable, or he starves by inches. In all trades and professions the capitalist or employer receives double or quadruple remuneration for single work, or for no work whatever. This is the great source of Labour's wrongs. The essential principle of a well-constituted social system—**EQUAL EXCHANGES**—is now unheeded, and the working men of all trades are exposed to every wrong and every injustice which the rapacity of their fellow-men can inflict upon them. There is no social or governmental wrong which is unconnected with the neglect of the great principle of **Equal Exchanges**, or equal remuneration for equal labour; so long as there is inequality of remuneration there must be inequality of exchanges—there will be inequality of wealth and condition—there will be evasion of labour by some classes at the expense of other classes—there will be rich and poor—there will be tyrants and slaves. The whole question of remuneration and exchanges resolves itself simply thus:—Shall fifty men receive two pounds sterling each for a week's labour; or shall they receive only one pound each, and give the remaining fifty to the capitalist? The producers at large can surely have but one opinion on this question; and they will not for ever tolerate the glaring injustice which gives to one man, for one man's labour, the same sum as is given to fifty men for their whole united labour.

When the term "universal labour" is used, it is merely meant to imply that all persons shall, at some period of life, render society a proper equivalent for the benefits which society has conferred upon them. This just principle has never yet been acted upon; for, one class has conferred all benefits, and another class has received all. Wealth will ever be created by the working class, and be appropriated and enjoyed by the capitalists and proprietors, until equal exchanges shall compel the latter to

labour, and at the same time prevent them from obtaining possession of the fruits of the labour of others. The word "labour" applies not only to bodily and mental exertion in the business of direct production, but likewise to services of any kind which have a tendency to increase man's knowledge and happiness. We have faculties calculated for high as well as for low enjoyments; but the production and proper distribution of wealth is the first thing to be considered, because it forms the foundation on which the superstructure of pleasures essentially human must be based. The mind must be provided for as well as the body, or we fulfil but half the end of our existence, and enjoy but half the happiness of which that existence may be made susceptible. To this end there must always be division of labour—there will always be some whose mental superiority will qualify them to be the directors of their fellows—there will always be some who are pre-eminent in letters, and the arts and sciences—but all such are only parts of the great whole, and are as dependent on their fellows, as their fellows are upon them. As the dependence, therefore, is equal, the labour should be equal; and, whether the labour be equal or unequal, the remuneration should ever be in proportion to the labour, whatever may be the character or the results, or the end of that labour. Division of labour must never be lost sight of, for it is the lightener of man's toils, and the first step to civilization and refinement.

In defence of the present social system, the capitalists and employers, when they hear of dissatisfaction, tell us that the working class of the united kingdom have little or nothing to complain of—that they live under institutions comparatively free—that they can either work or let it alone—and that they are better fed, and clothed, and educated, than even kings were in times of old. To render yet more striking the contrast between the present and the past condition of the producers, old records are brought forth to show that the working men of former times were bought and sold, like so many horses, along with the estate to which they were attached—that their houses were but assemblages of sticks and stones, with windows destitute of glass—that they slept upon rushes strewed upon a damp clay floor, and had a log of wood for a pillow—that they lived upon the coarsest food, and scarcely tasted flesh a

note represents the gold, there is no earthly reason why the bank-note should not at once represent the capital, without the intervention of the gold.

The greater part of the commercial transactions of the United Kingdom have for many years been carried on by means of a paper medium—by bank-notes, bills, &c., which are regarded as representative of gold or capital. But if all the money now in the country—the gold, silver, and bills of every kind—were by any means to be suddenly destroyed, the nation would be very little less rich than it is at present, although it would lose nominal wealth, or money, of the value of many hundred thousands of pounds sterling. The loss would soon be replaced by the manufacture of bank-notes and bills of various amounts; and in a short time business would go on as usual, and the exchange of commodities would be effected by paper money alone, instead of by a mixed medium of paper and gold. Were the real capital, however—the buildings and implements—to disappear or be destroyed, we should be in a state of greater impoverishment than any beggars now to be found, even if every man in the country had ten thousand sovereigns in his pocket. We should be, in the common acceptance of the term, the richest people in the world, but, in reality, we should be more poverty-stricken and miserable than the poorest nation of savages existing. There would be but one wide picture of want and desolation to be seen among us.

Here it may be seen how utterly valueless are gold and silver coin and bank-notes, when separated from those things which only and truly are real wealth. It is this wealth which gives value to the coin and notes, and not the money which confers value on the produce created by labour. It will not for a moment be denied, that if every working man in the United Kingdom had one hundred sovereigns put into his pocket, it would make a wonderful difference in the general appearance of society, in respect to the attainment of work and food. Every man in need would at once provide himself with necessaries, and the present gloom would give place to hilarity and cheerfulness. And yet such an influx of gold would not, at the moment, make the real wealth of the country greater by the value of one loaf of bread. But it would give a vast stimulus to trade, *for it would set thousands to work to*

replace the commodities of every kind which their sovereigns would enable them to purchase and consume. Parties, also, might combine together and form joint-stock companies, and set themselves to work at once; and thus production would receive an impetus such as it has never yet known. Precisely the same effects would be produced, if, instead of gold, every man had a like amount of Bank of England notes. Were there, however, no buildings, or machinery, or real capital of any kind in the country, by means of which men might be set to work, any such issue or possession either of gold or bank-notes would effect no good whatever. As we are at present situated, such an increase of money would simply be an increased representation of *wealth already in existence*, and it would enable those who now have nothing, to obtain, by exchange, a portion from those who have a superfluity. But in case of the non-existence of real capital, the proper foundation for money, the gold and bank-notes would alike be utterly worthless, for they would only be, as it were, representatives of *wealth to be created*.

Thus, then, in regard to those social evils dependent on the existing scarcity of money—it cannot be denied or disproved that there is a universal desire for the comforts and conveniences of life—that all these things must be produced by labour—that there is a sufficiency of raw material to absorb the labour of all—that there is likewise a sufficiency of food for the support of all while they are engaged in the production of other food, and of all the other things desired—that labour can be set to work only by the assistance of capital—that capital may be effectually represented and brought into operation by a paper medium,—and therefore there is abundant demonstration, that an indefinite increase of the circulating medium, under particular circumstances, would instantly set labour in motion, and thus incalculably increase the production of wealth, and universally diffuse the advantages of such production. Thousands are now idle and poor because no person can set them to work—they cannot be set to work simply because themselves and others are destitute of the requisite money. There is and there can be no other cause, so long as there is plenty of labour, an abundance of the raw material, a sufficiency of machines and implements, and a universal desire for the necessaries and luxuries of life.

