The Online Library of Liberty

A Project Of Liberty Fund, Inc.

Jane Haldimand Marcet, ***John Hopkins's Notions on Political Economy*** [1833]

The Online Library Of Liberty

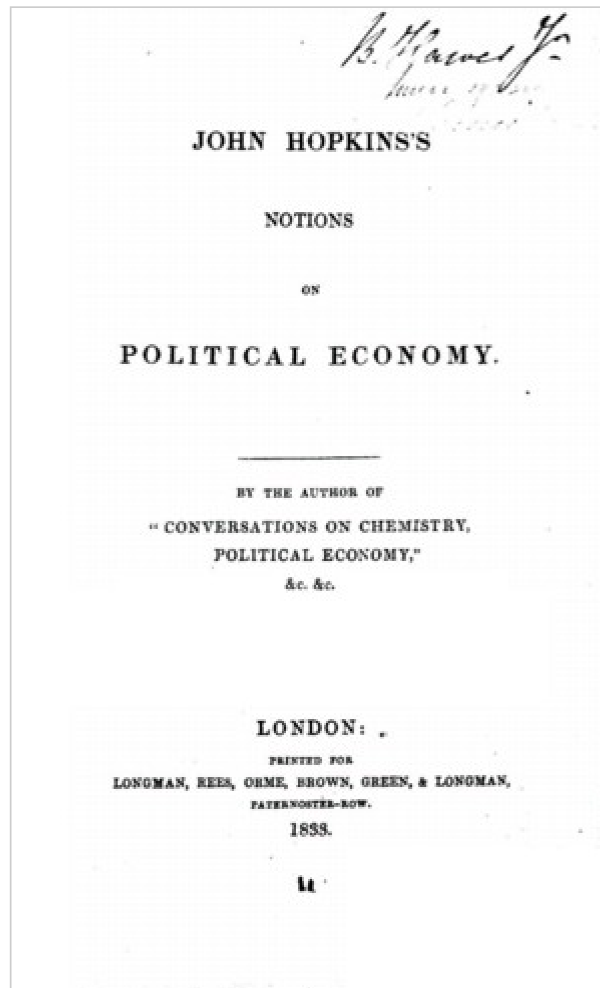
This E-Book (PDF format) is published by Liberty Fund, Inc., a private, non-profit, educational foundation established in 1960 to encourage study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals. 2010 is the 50th anniversary year of the founding of Liberty Fund.

It is part of the Online Library of Liberty web site http://oll.libertyfund.org, which was established in 2004 in order to further the educational goals of Liberty Fund, Inc. To find out more about the author or title, to use the site's powerful search engine, to see other titles in other formats (HTML, facsimile PDF), or to make use of the hundreds of essays, educational aids, and study guides, please visit the OLL web site. This title is also part of the Portable Library of Liberty DVD which contains over 1,000 books, audio material, and quotes about liberty and power, and is available free of charge upon request.

The cuneiform inscription that appears in the logo and serves as a design element in all Liberty Fund books and web sites is the earliest-known written appearance of the word "freedom" (amagi), or "liberty." It is taken from a clay document written about 2300 B.C. in the Sumerian city-state of Lagash, in present day Iraq.

To find out more about Liberty Fund, Inc., or the Online Library of Liberty Project, please contact the Director at oll@libertyfund.org.

LIBERTY FUND, INC.
8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Suite 300
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250-1684


JOHN HOPKINS'S

NOTIONS

ON

POLITICAL ECONOMY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"CONVERSATIONS ON CHEMISTRY,
POLITICAL ECONOMY,"
&c. &c.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1833.

Edition Used:

John Hopkins's Notions on Political Economy (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1833).

Author: Jane Haldimand Marcet

About This Title:

Marcet was self-taught in many fields and became a successful popularizer of several demanding fields (such as chemistry and economics) in spite of being discriminated against as a women. This book is one of her works of popularizing economic theory, as seen through the eyes of honest John Hopkins, a poor laborer on low wages.

About Liberty Fund:

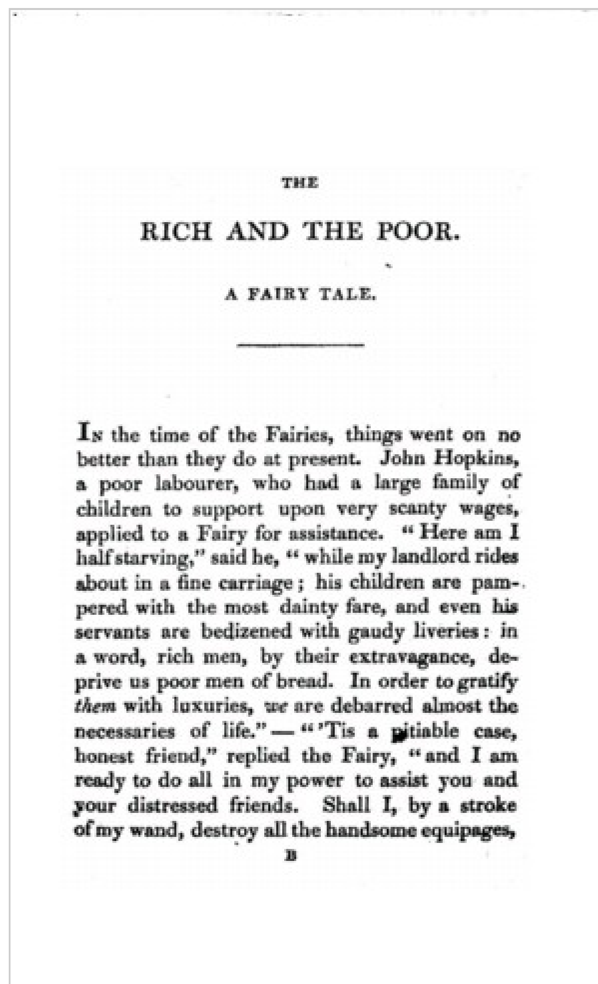
Liberty Fund, Inc. is a private, educational foundation established to encourage the study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals.

Copyright Information:

The text is in the public domain.

Fair Use Statement:

This material is put online to further the educational goals of Liberty Fund, Inc. Unless otherwise stated in the Copyright Information section above, this material may be used freely for educational and academic purposes. It may not be used in any way for profit.



THE

RICH AND THE POOR.

A FAIRY TALE.

In the time of the Fairies, things went on no better than they do at present. John Hopkins, a poor labourer, who had a large family of children to support upon very scanty wages, applied to a Fairy for assistance. "Here am I half starving," said he, "while my landlord rides about in a fine carriage; his children are pampered with the most dainty fare, and even his servants are bedizened with gaudy liveries: in a word, rich men, by their extravagance, deprive us poor men of bread. In order to gratify *them* with luxuries, *we* are debarred almost the necessaries of life."—"'Tis a pitiable case, honest friend," replied the Fairy, "and I am ready to do all in my power to assist you and your distressed friends. Shall I, by a stroke of my wand, destroy all the handsome equipages,

B

Table Of Contents

Essay 1 the Rich and the Poor. a Fairy Tale.
Essay 2 Wages; a Fairy Tale.
Essay 3 the Three Giants.
Essay 4 Population, &c. Or, the Old World.
Essay 5 Emigration; Or, a New World.
Essay 6 the Poor's Rate; Or, the Treacherous Friend.
Essay 7 Machinery; Or, Cheap Goods and Dear Goods.
Essay 8 Foreign Trade; Or, the Wedding Gown.
Essay 9 the Corn Trade; Or, the Price of Bread.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 1
THE RICH AND THE POOR.
A FAIRY TALE.

IN the time of the Fairies, things went on no better than they do at present. John Hopkins, a poor labourer, who had a large family of children to support upon very scanty wages, applied to a Fairy for assistance. "Here am I half starving," said he, "while my landlord rides about in a fine carriage; his children are pampered with the most dainty fare, and even his servants are bedizened with gaudy liveries: in a word, rich men, by their extravagance, deprive us poor men of bread. In order to gratify *them* with luxuries, *we* are debarred almost the necessaries of life."—"'Tis a pitiable case, honest friend," replied the Fairy, "and I am ready to do all in my power to assist you and your distressed friends. Shall I, by a stroke of my wand, destroy all the handsome equipages, fine clothes and dainty dishes, which offend you?"—"Since you are so very obliging," said honest John, in the joy of his heart, "it would perhaps be better to destroy all luxuries whatever: for, if you confine yourself to those you mention, the rich would soon have recourse to others; and it will scarcely cost you more than an additional stroke of your wand to do the business outright, and get rid of the evil root and branch."

No sooner said than done. The good-natured Fairy waved her all-powerful wand, and, wonderful to behold! the superb mansion of the landlord shrunk beneath its stroke, and was reduced to a humble thatched cottage. The gay colours and delicate textures of the apparel of its inhabitants faded and thickened, and were transformed into the most ordinary clothing; the green-house plants sprouted out cabbages, and the pinery produced potatoes. A similar change took place in the stables and coach-house: the elegant landau was seen varying in form, and enlarging in dimensions, till it become a waggon; while the smart gig shrunk and thickened into a plough. The manes of the horses grew coarse and shaggy, their coats lost all brilliancy and softness, and their legs became thick and clumsy: in a word, they were adapted to the new vehicles they were henceforward to draw.

Honest John was profuse in his thanks, but the Fairy stopped him short. "Return to me at the end of the week," said she; "it will be time enough for you to express your gratitude when you can judge how much reason you have to be obliged to me."

Delighted with his success, and eager to communicate the happy tidings to his wife and family, John returned home. "I shall no longer," said he to himself, "be disgusted with the contrast of the rich and the poor: what *they* lose must be our gain, and we shall see whether things will not now go on in a different manner." His wife, however, did not receive him with equal satisfaction; for, on having gone to dress herself (it being Sunday) in her best cotton gown, she beheld it changed to a homely stuff; and her China tea-pot, given her by her landlord's wife, and on which she set no small store, though the handle was broken, was converted into crockery ware!

She came with a woful countenance to communicate these sad tidings to her husband. John hemmed and hawed, and at length wisely determined to keep his own counsel, instead of boasting of being the author of the changes which had taken place. Presently his little boy came in crying. "What ails you, Tommy?" said the father, half pettishly, and somewhat suspecting that he might have caused his tears also. "Why, daddy," replied the urchin, "as I was playing at battledore with Dick, the shuttlecock flew away and was lost, and the battledores turned into two dry sticks, good for nothing but to be burnt." "Psha!" cried the father, who was beginning to doubt whether he had not done a foolish thing. In order to take time to turn over the subject in his mind, and console himself for his disappointment, he called for his pipe. The good wife ran to fetch it, when, lo and behold! the pipes were all dissolved! there was pipe-clay in plenty, but no means of smoking. Poor John could not refrain from an oath, and, in order to pacify him, his wife kindly offered him a pinch of snuff. He took the box: it felt light, and his mind misgave him as he tapped it. It was with too much cause; for, on opening it, he found it empty! At length, being alone, he gave vent to his vexation and disappointment. "I was a fool," cried he, "not to desire the Fairy to meddle with the luxuries of the rich only. God knows, we have so few, that it is very hard we should be deprived of them. I will return to her at the end of the week, and beg her to make an exception in our favour." This thought consoled for awhile; but, long before the end of the week, poor John had abundance of cause to repent of all he had done. His brother Richard, who was engaged in a silk manufactory, was, with all the other weavers, turned out of work. The silk had disappeared; the manufacturers, with ruin staring them in the face, had sent their workmen out upon the wide world. Poor John, conscience-struck, received his starving brother into his house. "You will see great changes for the better soon," said he, "and get plenty of work."—"Where and how?" cried Richard. But that was more than John would say.

Soon after, Jack, his eldest son, returned home from the coachmaker with whom he worked; all the carriages being changed into waggons, carts, and ploughs. "But why not remain with your master, and work at the carts instead of the coaches?" said his father.—"Nay, but he would not keep me, he had no work for me; he had more carts and waggons than he could dispose of for many a day: the farmers, he said, had more than they wanted, and the cartwright business was at an end, as well as coachmaking."

John sighed; indeed, he well-nigh groaned with compunction. "It is, however, fortunate for me," said he, "that I earn my livelihood as a labourer in the fields. Corn and hay, thank God! are not luxuries; and I, at least, shall not be thrown out of work."

In a few days, however, the landlord, on whose estate he worked, walked into the cottage. John did not immediately know him, so much was his appearance altered by a bob wig, a russet suit of clothes, and worsted stockings. "John," said he, "you are an honest hard-working man, and I should be sorry you should come to distress. Here are a couple of guineas, to help you on till you can find some new employment, for I have no further occasion for your services." John's countenance, which had brightened up at the sight of the gold, now fell most heavily. He half suspected that his landlord might have discovered the author of all the mischief (for such he could no longer conceal from himself that the change really was), and he muttered, that "he hoped he had not offended his honour?" "Do not *honour* me: we are all now, methinks, peasants

alike. I have the good fortune, however, to retain my land, since that is not a luxury; but the farm is so much larger than, in my present style of living, I have any occasion for, that I mean to turn the greater part of it into a sheep-walk, or let it remain uncultivated."—"Bless your honour, that would be a sad pity! such fine meadows, and such corn! But cannot you sell the produce, as before? for corn and hay are not luxuries."—"True," replied the landlord, "but I am now living on the produce of less than half my estate; and why take the trouble to cultivate more? for since there are no luxuries to purchase, I want no more money than to pay my labourers, and buy the homely clothes I and my family are now obliged to wear. Half the produce of my land will be quite sufficient for these purposes."

Poor John was now reduced to despair. The cries of distress from people thrown out of work every where assailed his ears. He knew not where to hide his shame and mortification till the eventful week had expired, when he hastened to the Fairy, threw himself on his knees, and implored her to reverse the fatal decree, and to bring back things to what they had been before. The light wand once more waved in the air, but in a direction opposite to that in which it before moved; and immediately the stately mansion rose from the lowly cottage; the heavy teams began to prance and snort, and shook their clumsy harness till they became elegant trappings: but most of all was it delightful to see the turned-off workmen running to their looms and their spindles; the young girls and old women enchanted to regain possession of their lost lace-cushions, on which they depended for a livelihood; and every thing offering a prospect of wealth and happiness, compared to the week of misery they had passed through.

John grew wise by this lesson; and, whenever any one complained of the hardness of the times, and laid it to the score of the expenses of the rich, took upon him to prove that the poor were gainers, not losers, by luxuries; and when argument failed to convince his hearers, he related his wonderful tale. One night at the public house, Bob Scarecrow, who was one of the listeners, cried out, "Ay, it is all fine talk, folks being turned out of work if there were no luxuries; but for his part, he knew it, to his cost, that he at least lost *his* livelihood because his master spent his all in luxuries. The young lord whom he served as gamekeeper set no bounds to his extravagance, until he had not a farthing left; and then his huntsmen, his hounds, his gamekeeper, and his laced livery-servants, were all sent off together! Now, I should be glad to know, honest John," added Bob, "whether *we* lost our places because there was too much luxury, or too little?" John felt that there was some truth in what Bob said; but he was unwilling to give up the point. At length a bright thought struck him, and he triumphantly exclaimed, "Too *few,* Bob! why, don't you see, that as long as your master spent his money too freely in luxuries, you kept your places, and when he was ruined and spent no more, you were turned off?"

Bob, who was a sharp fellow, saw the weakness of John's argument, and replied, "that it was neither more nor less than a quibble, fit for a pettifogging lawyer; for," said he, "suppose that every man of substance were to spend his all, and come to ruin, a pretty plight we poor folks should be in: and you can't deny, that, if the rich lived with prudence, and spent only what they could afford, they would continue to keep us in employment." John felt convinced; and he was above disowning it. "I grant you," said he, "that there may be too much luxury as well as too little, as was the case with your

young lord. But then you must allow, that if a man don't spend more than he can afford, that is, if he don't injure *himself, we* have no reason to complain of his luxuries, whatever they may be, because they give us work, and that not for a short time, after which we are turned off, as was your case, but regularly and for a continuance."

John now went home, satisfied that the expenses of the rich could not harm the poor, unless the expenses first injured the rich themselves. No bad safeguard, thought he; and as he trudged on, pondering it in his mind, he came to this conclusion:—

"Why then, after all, the rich and the poor have but one and the same interest—that is very strange! I always thought they had been as wide apart as the east is from the west! But now I am convinced that the comforts of the poor are derived from the riches of the rich."

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 2
WAGES;
A FAIRY TALE.

JOHN HOPKINS did not soon forget this lesson, though he was far from deriving all the benefit from it that he ought. He acknowledged that he had not hit upon the right remedy; but, after having long turned the subject in his mind, and talked it over with his neighbours, he came at length to this conclusion:—Let the rich have as many luxuries as they can pay for; but let them give us higher wages for our labour. It is by the sweat of our brow, and by the work of our hands, that every thing is produced. Why, the rich would not have even bread to put into their mouths, unless we ploughed the ground and sowed the seed for them; so it is but fair that we should be better paid for our services. If wages were doubled, we should be as well off again as we are now; and the rich would be but a trifle the poorer, that is all; for double wages would be nothing for a man who is rolling in wealth to pay; and yet it would be a mighty matter for us poor fellows to receive."

Chuckling over this discovery, John sets off for the abode of the Fairy, and begs her, with the stroke of her wand, to cause wages to be doubled. "Are you sure," enquired the Fairy, "that you will have no reason to repent of this request if I should grant it?"—"No, no," said John, "this time I cannot be mistaken; for I have considered the matter thoroughly." "Well, then," replied she, "we will make the trial. But it shall be for three months only. After that time we shall see whether you wish your present scheme to be continued."

As John was returning home, he could not help thinking that, this time at least, he should not meet with a discontented reception from his wife; yet, as he opened the door of his cottage, he looked rather anxiously in her face:—it beamed with joy. "Good news for you, husband!" cried she; "the bailiff has been here to pay your week's wages; and see, he has given me all this money; for he says there's a new law in the land, and every one must pay double wages!" John thanked the Fairy in his heart, for the expedition she had used in complying with his wishes. The news soon spread through the village: all received double wages; and the rejoicing was universal.

John was resolved to make a holyday; so, next market day, instead of sending his wife, he proposed to go to market himself, and to lay out his store of money in clothes for his ragged children. This was readily agreed to, provided he would take a basket of plums, and a bundle of straw-plait which one of his little girls had made, and sell them. To market he went; and what was his delight to learn that plums and straw-plait had risen considerably in price. He little dreamed that this was owing to his good offices; but, on enquiring the cause, he was told that, the condition of the labouring classes being so much bettered by their increased wages, they could afford to buy new straw bonnets; so that straw-plait was very much in demand, and would fetch a good price. "I should not give you so much for it," said the bonnet-maker, "if I was not sure that I could sell my bonnets at a higher price now there is such a demand for them."

"And why are plums risen in price?" enquired John of the fruiterer. "Because I have none left," replied he. "I had as fine a store of plums this morning as ever I had any market day; but there has been such a swarm of young brats with their halfpence to buy them, that they were all sold by nine o'clock; for, do you see, now the fathers get double wages, they have not the heart to deny their children a halfpenny to buy fruit. I began selling my plums at four a penny; but when I found they were likely to fall short, I would not let the urchins have more than three for a penny; and as for your basket, Hopkins, I mean to sell it at two a penny: so you see I can afford to give you a good price for it." John did not quite understand this; "but it shows," thought he, "that I have hit the right nail on the head at last. It seems that as much unforeseen good comes of the Fairy's wand, this time, as there came unforeseen bad luck before." And now that he had sold his plums and his plait, he determined to go to the woollen-draper's to buy cloth for his children's jackets. He looked rather blank when, on entering, he found that cloth had risen in price, and was two shillings a yard dearer than before. He expressed his surprise. "Why, there's no end to my customers this market day," said the draper. "I verily believe half the town means to have new coats, and I have not near cloth enough to furnish them all: so those that will have it must pay the price I ask, or go without." "That's not fair, to my mind," cried John: "the cloth cost you no more than it did last market day; so you can afford to sell it as cheap as you did then."—"Perhaps I could," replied the woollen-draper: but, since I can get more for it, I will. Don't you know, Hopkins, that, when corn falls short at market, the price rises? When there is more of an article to be had than is wanted, why you must sell it for what you can get, though you may chance to make a loss instead of a gain; but when there is less to be sold than is wanted, why you may sell it at an advanced price. That is my case now: many more want the cloth than I can supply; so, why should I let you have it rather than another, unless you pay me a better price? We must make hay while the sun shines."—" To be sure," said John to himself: "I sold my plums and my plait dearer than last market day, though they stood me in no more; and it's natural enough the draper should do the same. Well," said he, addressing the draper, "it's a bright sunshine, and we are all right to make the most of it; but, as my boys can wait a bit longer for their coats, I shall stop till you lay in a new stock of cloth, and then it will be cheaper."—" I won't promise you that," replied the draper. "There's no saying what will come of these double wages, it's such an out of the way thing. It looks fair enough; to be sure; but all is not gold that glitters, as you know, Hopkins."

"But when you have a fresh supply, and plenty of cloth for all the customers that may come, I see no reason why it should be dearer."

"I have not had time to turn it well in my mind; but it seems to me, that when I have sold my stock on hand, and go to the manufacturer for more, he will not let me have it on the same terms, seeing there is such a demand for cloth, and that I sell it at an advanced price. Besides," continued he, rubbing his forehead, "a thought just comes across me,—he can't afford to let me have the goods so cheap; for, since he is obliged to pay his workmen double wages, the cloth must stand him in much more; and if he can't get it back from the shopkeeper, why the factory must go to ruin. Is it not so, Hopkins?"—"It looks very like it," replied Hopkins, thoughtfully. "Well, then," continued the draper, "it's impossible for me to say whether the manufacturer will be

able to sell his cloth higher, or whether he will be ruined: all I know is, that if I must pay him a higher price for his cloth, I must get it back from my customers, or I may as well shut up shop; ay, and better too; for I should be losing instead of making money."—"Well, then," said Hopkins, "may-hap I had as well buy the cloth now, dear as it is." Having made his purchases, he found that he had scarcely money enough to pay for them. He was sadly disappointed; for he had flattered himself, that, what with the high price he had got for his plums and his plait, and what with the double wages he had received, he might contrive to eke out the money, so as to buy himself a new smock frock, of which he stood much in need; but that was now out of the question.

His wife and children impatiently waited his return. The little ones had strolled to the end of the lane, in hopes of seeing him, and soon ran home with the glad tidings that "father was in sight, with a great big bundle on his shoulders." Jenny had been promised a new thimble, and Jem a penny whistle, if any money was left after the more necessary purchases had been made. John at length arrived; and, after wiping his brows, he began by boasting of the high price he had got for the basket of plums and the bundle of plait; whereupon his wife gave him a hearty kiss, calling him "a good man as he was;" and the children crowded round his knees, and began to untie the bundle he had brought home. The contents fell far short of their expectations; and they rummaged in vain for the presents they had expected. Then followed the indispensable explanation of the rise in price of cloth as well as of other goods. "Humph!" cried the good wife, "if we must pay so much more for every thing we have to buy, I don't see how we shall be any the better for the double wages we get."—"Well, but," retorted her husband, "it's not only me, but Dick and Sally at the factory get double wages too; so there's no room to complain, wife; for, if our means run short, they would be willing and able to lend us a helping hand."

Some time after, Dick came home; but, alas! far from lending a hand, it was to tell the sad news of his being discharged from the factory. "Why, how's this, Dick?" said his father; "were not you satisfied with double wages?"—"I had little need to be so," replied he; "double wages one week, and none at all the next: I would rather by half have had the common wages, without being turned off."—" But why should you be turned off, if you did your duty?"—" Oh, for that matter, there was no fault found with me; only the master had not enough to pay us all, so he discharged half his men, and it fell to my lot to be one of the number."

"Well, but," said John, "by turning off half his men, he can get only half the work done; and then, how can he supply the shopkeepers?"—"He says the shopkeepers won't want so much goods as they did before this new law was made."

"There he's wrong," cried John, "to my certain knowledge: for it's scarce a month back that the draper told me he sold a deal more cloth than he did before the rise of wages, though the price was higher by two shillings a yard."

"That was only just a spirt at first," cried Dick. "When folks first got their double wages, they were so flush of money, they thought there would be no end to their riches; but when they came to find that so many buyers made prices rise, (and more especially when half their families were turned out of work, and they had their

children to support idle,) they saw that there was more outgoings than incomings; and that they had enough to do to provide food, without furbishing themselves out with new clothes."

Hopkins felt conscience-struck: he looked blank, and had not a word to say for himself. "No, no," continued Dick: "brisk as the cloth was at first, it's slack enough now, and prices are falling apace."

"That I know to my cost," quoth Dame Hopkins. "Why, last market day I could not sell my fruit nor Jenny's plait for much more than half you got for it, John, when wages first rose. Folks begin to find they have no such store of spare money as they thought for, to lay out in new bonnets, or to give their children to buy fruit."

The fall in price, John thought, was all in his favour; for he had more to buy than to sell. This made him pluck up courage; and he said,—"Why, Dick, we must be better for things coming round to their natural price, so as wages don't lower too; but I should have done wiser to have waited, and have bought the boys' jackets later."—"Wiser still not to have bought them at all," replied his son; "and that's what you would have done had you waited; for times will fall heavy on us now, father, so far as I can see."

"Never be disheartened, lad," cried Hopkins, giving his son an encouraging thump on the back; "you see things all askance, because of being turned off at the factory: but surely," said he, with a hesitation in his voice which he would not let out in words, "such high wages must be a good thing."—"Much good may it do those that get them," muttered Dick, sulkily. "If things don't change, the manufacturers will all be bankrupts; and then there will be work neither at fifteen shillings, nor at thirty. There's well-nigh half the machines at our factory going to wreck and ruin by standing idle; and one of the great steam-engines, that cost master a power of money, lying just like dead. But how is he to help it, while the wages eat up all his profits; ay, and more too? so, the less he works the better; for it's my belief he sells at a clear loss."

"One would think this new law was made to mock us," said the wife; "for it promises fair, and just makes fools of us for believing it."

"It's a rare lesson, however," exclaimed Hopkins, with a sigh; "for it shows that a rise of wages is full of danger and mischief."

"I don't agree with you, there, father," cried Dick: "a rise of wages, in a fair and natural way, is a very good thing. Last year, when our master had more orders than he could well get done, he raised the wages, so as to get more hands; and people came flocking in from all quarters, and quitting other employ, where they did not get so much. Then he could afford to pay us all well, because trade was brisk, and he got good profits. When wages rise because there is a greater demand for workmen, we are all the better for it, master and man too; but when they rise from a foolish and arbitrary law, it does us all harm instead of good; and it is to be hoped that those who made it will soon see the folly of it, and bring us back to the natural wages."

This observation came home to poor John, who kept his own secret, but swore in his heart that, when once out of this scrape, he would never more apply to the Fairy. A few weeks after, Sally, who worked at the silk mills, came home with the same story as her brother. "So, here we are, saddled with two more children," cried his wife; "and this comes of high wages."—"Well, at least I have got high wages to maintain 'em," replied John, who was still unwilling to confess that he had been in the wrong.

As he was speaking, the bailiff entered the door. "Good morrow to you, John," said he:—"why, methinks you do not look in such glee as you did last month, about the rise of wages."—"Nor have I cause," muttered John: "see, here are two of my grown children sent home to me, out of work. But, mayhap," added he, brightening up at the thought,—"mayhap you, Master Barnes, might get 'em some work at the farm. Though they are not used to that kind of labour, I'm sure they will turn their hand to it, and thank ye heartily for it."—"Ah, I might have given 'em work before this change," answered the bailiff; "but my master can't afford to pay 'em double wages; and the new law won't allow us to give less. To say the truth, I am now come upon a very different errand; for, d'ye see, we are trying, instead of increasing the number of our workmen, to do what we can to reduce them. My master says he has too great a respect for you, John, to turn you off: you have worked nigh a score of years for him, and have got such a large family to maintain."—"Thank his honour, kindly," said John. "I have worked for him long and hard, too, Master Barnes. I'm sure I have followed the precepts of the Bible, and earned my bread by the sweat of my brow. Thank his honour—"—"Ay, but, John," interrupted the bailiff, "you stopped my mouth with your thanks before you had heard me out. You know, however willing the squire may be, he can't coin money; so, what is he to do? Now, this is what he has thought of:—he says he will employ you three days of the week, instead of six."—"And what am I to do the other three?" asked John.—"Why, you must seek for work elsewhere."—"Seek, indeed, I may; but I shall not find," quoth John. "Why, there's Dick and Sally both turned adrift; and if they can't find work, an old man like me stands no chance."—"Well," said the bailiff, "if you sit with your hands across three days of the week, you are as well paid for the three others as you used to be for the whole week: besides, his honour is stretching a point for your sake, John; for, d'ye see, he pays you the same wages a week as before, and yet he will have only half the work done." John thought that but poor comfort, when he saw he had two children more on his hands. The bailiff took his departure; and, as he shut the door, the poor wife lifted up her hands, fetched a deep sigh, and said,—"Ah, well-a-day! how little we understand these matters: who would not have thought that, when the law obliged the rich to pay us double wages, it would have made us much richer, and made them only a trifle poorer? but now it seems it will bring us all to ruin together."

"Never fear," said John, "it is the Fairy's doing; it will be all over at the end of three months, and two of them are gone already."

So it was. At the expiration of three months the influence of the Fairy's wand ceased, wages returned to their usual rate, Dick and Sally were restored to their work at the mills and the factory, and John laboured with more good will six days of the week than he had done when he was employed only three, though at double wages.

Moreover, he had learnt how dangerous it was to meddle with things he did not understand: and he came to a firm resolution of never more applying to the Fairy; but to endeavour to get clearer ideas on such matters. This he was in some measure enabled to do through his son Dick, during the time he remained at home; for Dick, working at a factory, and living in a town, had many more opportunities of picking up knowledge than a country labourer, whose life is comparatively solitary. Factory men have so deep an interest in the rise and fall of wages, that they are in the habit of talking the matter over, till at last they get pretty good notions on the subject. They are aware that their own employment depends on the manufacturer being able to sell his goods with profit: they see, therefore, that the prosperity of the master and his workmen go hand in hand. John was surprised that Dick should turn out so knowing a lad, as he had had very little schooling. Dick observed, that working in a factory was like going to school, only that they learnt by talking instead of by reading. "Well, but I should have thought your talk would have run on merrier matters, and that you would not have worried your brains with such difficult subjects," said John.—"Men are sharp witted, father, when their interest is at stake; and if it's fit that they should learn their calling, it's just as fit that they should be able to judge whether their calling goes on well or ill, and the reason why and wherefore."

"It's not all good that's learnt by your talk in a factory, Dick. I've heard say that one bad man will corrupt a whole factory, just as one rotten apple will infect the whole heap."—"It's no such thing," replied Dick; "when men can earn their livelihood fairly and honestly, they are ready enough to go on in the straight road: it's want and wretchedness that leads them into the crooked paths, you may take my word for it."

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 3 THE THREE GIANTS.

AS Hopkins was sitting one evening at his cottage door smoking his pipe, and his children gamboling around him, an old pedlar came up, and offered his little wares for sale; their purchases were small, for small were their means; but as the poor man seemed much tired, they offered him a seat, and some refreshment.—"It is a weary length of way I am come," said the old man, "and where can I get a night's lodging?"—"I wish I had one to give you," replied Hopkins, "but we are overcrowded with the family already; however, there's a bit of an outhouse behind, where I could make you up a bed of clean straw, with a warm coverlid, if that would serve your turn?"—"Ay, and a blessing to you for it," replied the pedlar; "and if it will please these young ones, I can tell them a story in return, to wile away the evening."—Upon this all the children crowded round him, crying out, "A story! a story!"—"I hope it will be a wonderful one," said Tom, "about giants or fairies, and such like."—"Pooh, pooh, nonsense," cried Jenny; "I like a true story better by half."—"True or false," said Hopkins, "I care not, so as there be but some sense in it, that one may learn somewhat by it."—"Oh, pray," cried little Betsy, "tell us a pretty story like those in my book of fables; but none of the moral at the end, if you please, that is always so stupid."—"I fear I shall have a hard matter to satisfy you all," said the old man: "one is for the marvellous, another for truth, and another good sense, and the little one likes a fable. Well," said he, "I will do my best to suit your tastes." So, after clearing his throat, he began thus:—

"A long while ago, when the times were no better than they are now, and perhaps worse for aught I know, a poor labouring man, encumbered with a large family of young children, and finding it every day more difficult to earn wherewithal to maintain them, resolved to go and seek his fortune beyond seas. Several of his neighbours, who felt the same distress, had joined together to sell what little they had, in order to fit themselves out, and pay their passage to one of the foreign colonies, where they were told they might have farms of their own just for a mere nothing; and our goodman Jobson thought he could not do better than take his wife and family thither. So off they all set for Liverpool, where they embarked for—, I cannot recollect the name of the place; but it matters not, for the poor folks never reached it! When they had been at sea some weeks, far away from land, and nothing but wide waters all around them, there arose a great storm, which drove the ship out beyond all reckoning; and the sailors, do what they would, could never manage her; so she drifted before the wind for several days and nights, and at last struck upon a rocky shore, and was wrecked. The poor folks had much ado to save their lives; they did so, however; and were somewhat comforted when they saw that the land to which they had escaped was a pleasant, fruitful country. They found no inhabitants. So much the better, thought they: we shall have all the land to ourselves; and we may live as happily here as we could do in the colony, if we can but get our farming tools from the wreck, and a few clothes. 'And some of the pots and pans for cooking,' cried the women. 'Oh, pray remember the poor hens in the coop,' hollowed out one of the

children, as the men were trudging off to the wreck to see what they could save. They brought ashore much more than they expected; and, to make short of my story, they settled themselves pretty comfortably; and in the course of a year each of the families had a neat log-house and a little garden of vegetables: fruit they found in abundance growing wild; and, as it was a hot climate, there were grapes, and figs, and cocoanuts, and a number of fruits, the names of which they did not know. They had sown corn, and had got in a fine crop, enough for them all; but the difficulty was to turn it into flour for bread. They had no other means than by bruising it between two stones, for it could hardly be called grinding; and it took up so much time and labour, that Jobson, who had a large family to feed, found it a hard matter to make all ends meet."

"Well, but there's nothing wonderful in this story," said Tom: "I hope you will come to a ghost, or a giant, or a fairy soon."

"All in good time, my lad," replied the pedlar; "youth must have patience with old age; we cannot scamper on so fast as you do; but it's coming." Upon hearing this, the children all crowded still closer around him.—"Well, one day as Jobson was taking a stroll over the new country, and thinking how he wished his boys were big enough to assist him in his work, (for he felt well nigh worn out himself,) he came to a valley where he had never been before; a river wound through it, overshaded with trees: and it was so beautiful, that he could not find in his heart to turn back; so he went on and on, till at last he came within sight of an object that made him start back and shudder."

"Oh, here it's coming!" cried Tom, clapping his hands: "what was it? it could not be a fairy, for that would never have frightened him."

"It was as little like a fairy," said the pedlar, "as any thing well could be. It was an enormous giant, stretched at his whole length upon the ground. Jobson would have fled; but the giant's eyes were shut, so that he appeared to be asleep; and he looked so harmless and good humoured, that Jobson stood gazing on him till his fear was nearly over. He was clad in a robe of dazzling brightness where the sun shone upon it, but the greater part was shaded by the trees; and it reflected all their different colours, which made it look like a green changing silk. As Jobson stood, lost in amazement, the giant opened his eyes, and turned towards him with a good humoured smile."

"Then he was not a wicked giant?" said Betsy.

"Far from it," replied the old man. "Still, when Jobson saw that he was awake, and stretching himself as if he was going to rise, he took to his heels; but the giant remained quietly stretched on the grass, and called after him in a tone of voice so gentle, that Jobson was tempted to stop. 'Fear me not, good man, because I am strong and powerful; I am not cruel, and will do you no harm.' Jobson hesitated: but the giant looked so kind-hearted, that he felt inclined to trust to his words, and, step by step, he approached. 'Why should you fear me because of my size?' said the giant; 'you are not afraid of yonder hill, which is bigger than I am.'—'Ay, but you are alive,' replied Jobson, 'and I have read of giants being very wicked. It is true, I never saw one before. Indeed, till now, I thought they were only idle stories made to amuse children.'—'The wicked giants you have read of are so,' replied he; 'but there are real

giants in nature, who, far from being inclined to evil, are willing to do all the good to mankind that lies in their power; and I am one of these.'—'Then a deal of good you can do,' replied Jobson; 'for you must be as strong as Samson.'—He then began to cast over in his mind what good the giant might do him, seeing he was so ready; for, thought he, if he is willing to work, he can do more in a day than I can in a month; so I'll e'en make bold to ask him the question. 'Iam ready to do any work you will set me; but I must tell you, that, not having been in the habit of working in this desert island, I shall require some teaching in order to know how to set about it.'—'If that is all,' said Jobson, 'I can teach you any work you would like to do.' But a difficulty occurred to him; he concluded that the giant would require to be paid in proportion to the work he did; and he asked, with some anxiety, what wages he would expect. 'Wages!' replied the giant, smiling: 'I cannot expect any; I do not even know what wages mean.' Jobson was ready to leap for joy at the idea of getting a labourer who could do the work of a hundred men without wages; and he was hurrying away to tell his wife the good news, when the giant said, 'If you will let me carry you home, it will save you the trouble of walking, and you will be there much sooner.' Jobson rather hung back; yet not liking to show any distrust of one who was willing to do him so much good, he consented. 'You may think it strange,' said the giant; 'but as I never carried any one before, you must show me how to do it.'—'He seems rather stupid,' thought Jobson: 'however, it is well he takes so little upon himself, and is so ready to be taught.'—'Will you mount upon my back? or shall I carry you in my arms?' continued the giant. Jobson was very glad to have the option, for he had much rather mount him like a horse, than be carried in his arms like a baby. Besides, if the truth must be told, he was still rather fearful of seeing the giant stand upright, and of being folded in his arms: having, therefore, first saddled him with some planks of wood, to make a comfortable seat, and having cut himself a long pole, which might serve to hasten his pace in case of need, he desired him to take the road homewards. The giant obeyed: he neither walked nor trotted, but glided on so smoothly, that, though he went at a pretty brisk pace, Jobson felt scarcely any motion. In a short time they reached the cottage. But you may imagine the fright of Dame Jobson and all her little crew when they beheld him mounted on such an enormous animal: the children ran screaming away, as if they had seen a wild beast, and the poor woman wrung her hands in despair, and fell a-crying; then she threw herself at the feet of the giant, begging him to set her dear husband at liberty. 'He is quite free,' said the giant; 'I only brought him home to save him the fatigue of walking;—and now, good woman, if there is any thing I can do for you, you need but tell me; for I ask no better than to be busy. The dame courtesied, and trembled, and wiped her eyes, and tried to smile; but she was so astounded with wonder at the sight of this monstrous giant, and so surprised at his good-nature, that she began to doubt whether she was in her right senses. And when her husband talked to her, and told her all that had passed between them, and how much the giant had promised to do for them, she lifted up her hands and eyes, and said she would try to believe it; but she thought it was only too good to be true. In the mean while, the children, who had scampered away, when they saw their father and mother in friendly talk with the giant, ventured gently to return. 'Look at his legs,' cried little Jack; 'I am sure I could not reach round the calf.'—'If he stood upright, he might gather the cocoa nuts without climbing,' said Will. As they drew near, they crowded together, as if for defence: but when they saw the giant smile upon them, and heard their father and mother say there was nothing to fear, their terror ceased; for neither father nor mother

had ever deceived them, so they had full belief in all they said. Their fright was no sooner over, than they gave way to their curiosity. The giant was still stretched upon the grass; and in a few minutes the little ones were crawling and climbing all over his huge body, and making a playfellow of him.

"In the mean time, the father and mother were consulting together how they should manage to lodge and board the giant. 'Why, he will want a room bigger than all our house,' said the dame, 'and I'm sure no one can build it but himself: then, as for his food,' continued she, 'he will eat us out of house and home; he will devour a plantation of cabbages and a flitch of bacon at a meal.' This Jobson had never considered; and he began to doubt whether, after all, he had made so good a bargain as he had supposed. 'We had best go and speak to the giant, wife,' said he; and accordingly they went to enquire what sort of fare he would want. 'Nothing more than a draught of fresh water,' replied he.—'Well, that is very moderate, indeed,' exclaimed Jobson; 'neither spirits, nor even malt liquor!'—'Ay, but for your eating, friend,' quoth the wife, who began to tremble for her kitchen.—'I never eat,' returned the giant: 'strong as I am, I require no food, so do not disturb yourselves about that; and as for house-room or bedding, I always lie on the grass when I am not employed.' You would have thought that Jobson and his wife would have gone wild with joy, when they heard that their powerful labourer worked without board, food, or wages! 'Why, we shall no longer want for any thing,' cried they, 'provided he always keeps in this good temper, and ready to work.'—'We must not overshoot the mark,' said his wife, 'but do what we can to make things agreeable to him.' So they went and told him they should not think of asking him to do what would fatigue him, and begged he would work only just when he liked. 'That depends upon you, my good friends; I am ready to work whenever you have work to give me; as for fatigue, I do not know what it means.'—'Indeed!' exclaimed Jobson and his wife; 'more and more wonderful! So, then, you want no further rest than your night's sleep?'—'I never sleep,' replied the giant; 'and can as easily work the four and twenty hours round as I can a single minute.' Jobson was lost in astonishment, and overjoyed at his good luck. They now put their heads together to settle what work they should set the giant to do first. 'He shall begin by bruising the corn that I am so tired of working at,' cried Jobson; so he showed him how he used the stones for that purpose. But this proved mere child's play to the giant; and Jobson thought, if he could but get two large flat stones, such as were used in a mill, the giant would be able to get through much more work. But then the quarry was a long way off; and when they were cut, how could they ever be got home? 'They will be no burthen to me to carry,' said the giant; 'let us be off.' Jobson only staid to fetch his tools, which he placed in a sort of large shallow box upon the giant's shoulders. This served him also for a seat: and carrying the long staff in his hand, away they went to the quarry, where they soon cut the stones, which were placed in the box on the giant's back, and brought home. When the stones were properly arranged, the giant went to work as steadily as if he had done nothing else all his life. At nightfall the happy couple begged him to leave off and take some rest; but they could not persuade him to do so. They went to bed themselves; but not without first returning thanks to God in their prayers, for having sent them so great a blessing as a labourer who worked both day and night without wanting either food or lodging."—"And pray what was the name of this wonderful giant?" said Tom, interrupting the pedlar.

"*Aquafluentes,*" replied he.

"Oh, what a long hard name!" exclaimed little Betsy; "I never heard such a name before."—"Giants have not the same sort of names as we men have," replied the pedlar; "but I assure you it is a very significant one. However, now let me go on with my story.

"The children were awakened in the night by the noise of the giant grinding the corn; and, frightened at the unusual sound, they called to their mother, who told them what it was. And when she saw her husband quietly sleeping by her side, and thought what a world of labour he was spared, she ejaculated a blessing on their new friend before she again fell asleep. The next morning, Aquafluentes having ground all the corn, asked for more work; and whilst Jobson was thinking what he could set him to, he began to wash the house, and carried away all the dirt and filth in a trice. He then took the children down to the water side, played with them for some time, and began teaching them to swim: this delighted them beyond measure; and when they returned home to breakfast, clean and fresh, and with rosy cheeks and good appetites, they were full of the praises of their playfellow, Aquafluentes. In the mean time, Jobson had settled on a task for him: he had long wished to bring home a large tree which had been blown down in the forest, for the purpose of cutting it into planks, in order to floor his cottage, which got damp and muddy in wet weather; but it was impossible for him either to carry so heavy a burthen, or to cut it into planks. Now nothing was more easy; he slung the tree across the giant's shoulders, who brought it home without difficulty. Then Jobson showed him how to use the saw; he soon took to it; and, after some little time, proved a much more exact and regular sawyer than his master. Jobson thought he got on prodigiously with his work; yet he said to himself,—'If I could fasten eight or ten saws together, parallel to each other, with handles at each end, I am sure he would be strong enough to pull them backwards and forwards, and to cut eight or ten planks at once.' The difficulty was to obtain such a number of saws. Jobson applied to his neighbours, and agreed to provide them with a stipulated quantity of planks in return for the use of their saws. The fame of the laborious giant had spread throughout the colony, and every one was eager to furnish a saw, in order to partake of the benefit of his work. One of the men, who had been bred a carpenter, undertook to arrange the saws in a kind of framework; others dug out a large sawpit. This took some time; but when it was accomplished, and the giant fairly set to work, the whole tree was cut into neat planks in the course of a day.

"After Jobson had paid for the use of the saws, there remained planks enough not only to floor his cottage, but to make a door, a set of shelves, and a good sized table. The carpenter offered to make these things for Jobson, on condition that he would allow Aquafluentes to grind his corn. This was a bargain advantageous to both parties, and therefore soon agreed upon; and when the rest of the colony saw how comfortable and tidy Jobson's cottage was become, they set to felling trees in the forest for the same purpose. Then it was necessary to pay Jobson for Aquafluentes' labour to bring them home and saw them into planks; for it was not to be expected that Jobson should part with the services of such a workman without compensation. Each brought him what he could best spare, or what he thought Jobson most wanted. One came laden with a basket of fish, being part of a draught he had just caught; another brought half of a

young kid he had lately snared; another, some wild ducks he had shot; and so they went on, till Jobson's cottage was so well stored that it might have been taken for the larder of some great inn. One man brought Jobson a purse of money which he had saved from the wreck, and offered to pay him in cash for the use of the giant's labour. 'Why, my good fellow, what should I do with your money? it would be of no use to me here; and a guinea would not be half so valuable as these good things which your neighbours have brought me: however, as I have more food than we shall be able to consume for many a day, I will take your money for once; mayhap, some day or other, it may turn to some use.' Last of all came a poor widow, who had lost her husband since they were wrecked: she wished much for a floor of planks to keep her children dry and clean; but she had nothing to offer in exchange for the giant's labour but a basket of potatoes from her little garden. 'I shall not take your potatoes, Martha,' cried Jobson, 'so carry them back again.'—'Alas!' said the poor widow, 'I have nothing else to offer: you know how destitute I am. Jackson has kindly promised to cut me down a tree, if I can obtain the giant's services to bring it home and saw it into planks; and I dare say the carpenter would lend me a hand, some leisure day, to lay down the floor.'—'And do you think I am the only one who will not give a turn to a poor neighbour without reward?' muttered Jobson, half sulkily. 'Go your ways, my good woman; bid Jackson cut down your tree; and as soon as that is done, Aquafluentes shall take it in hand.' The poor woman thanked him with tears in her eyes; and away she trudged with her load of potatoes, which, to her, felt lighter than if she had carried back the basket empty; so pleased was she to have them to dress for her children's dinner.

"There were two men still loitering about the door of Jobson's cottage, who would gladly have got the use of the giant's services; but, having always been idle fellows, who had done no more than scrape together the bare necessaries of life, they had not a single thing to offer in return. 'If so, you had as well be gone,' said Jobson; 'the giant does not work to encourage idleness, I promise you.'—'What can we do?' replied one of them; 'if we have got nothing, we can give nothing.'—'You have, both of you, got a good pair of arms; and if you had made a right use of them, you would not have come empty handed now.'—Jobson's wife, knowing they had each of them a wife and children, could not but have a fellow feeling towards them,—'you have still got your arms,' said she; 'and if you will use them for us for a time, I'll venture to say my good man will lend you the giant's services.'—'But,' said Jobson, 'whilst we have the giant to work for us, what need have we of the help of others?'—'There is a power of things Aquafluentes cannot do, you well know, Jobson; and have not I many a time heard you say that he does his work so fast, that it's more than you can do to get it ready for him; now, why should not you, husband, take your ease a bit, and let others prepare the work for him.'—'That's true enough,' replied he; 'seeing we are so well to do in the world, there's no manner of reason why I should slave myself. But then,' added he, 'I doubt whether I can trust these idle fellows.'—'You may give an eye to them, and see that they mind what they are set about: besides,' added she, 'I sadly want a set of large baskets to keep the store of good things our neighbours bring us.' So it was agreed that the giant was to grind the corn of these two men, on condition that they should do such work in return as Jobson and his wife required. Then one of them was sent to strip off the bark from the trunk of a tree, and place it in the pit ready for the giant to

saw; whilst the other was dispatched to gather slips of willow, and make them into baskets.

"It would be endless to relate all the advantages which the colony reaped from the giant's labour; but, though the benefit was general, Jobson, being master of his services, was by far the greatest gainer by them. This led his neighbours, when they had a leisure day, to stroll about the unknown parts of the country, in hopes of meeting with some other giant, whom they might engage in their service. Many were the enquiries made of Aquafluentes, whether there were any other giants in the island. 'I have a brother,' replied he; 'but we seldom meet: I love to repose in the vallies; and he, for the most part, frequents the hills.'—'And can he do as much work as you do?'—'Yes,' replied Aquafluentes, 'when he is in the humour; but he is more variable in his temper, and now and then is over boisterous. He sometimes overcomes the natural calmness of my temper, and works me up into a rage.'

"The search of the colonists was long fruitless; at length, one day Jackson, climbing a high rock in pursuit of a wild goat, saw a magnificent figure seated upon the summit. He could scarcely distinguish the shape, for his eyes were dazzled by its brightness; but what struck him most were two enormous wings, as large as the sails of a ship, but thin and transparent as the wings of a gnat. Jackson doubted not but that this was the brother of Aquafluentes. Alarmed at the account he had heard of the uncertainty of his temper, he hesitated whether to approach: the hope of gain, however, tempted him: and as he drew nearer, he observed that he also had a smiling countenance; so, mustering up courage, he ventured to accost him, and enquire whether he was the person they had so long been in search of; and whether he would engage in his service. 'My name is Ventosus,' cried the winged giant; 'and I am ready to work for you, if you will let me have my own way. I am not of the low grovelling disposition of my brother, who plods on with the same uniform pace. I cannot help sometimes laughing at his slow motion, and I amuse myself with ruffling his placid temper, in order to make him jog on a little faster. But then I frequently lend him a helping hand when he is laden with a heavy burthen. I perch upon his bosom, and, stretching out my wings, I move with such rapidity as almost to lift him from the ground.' Jackson was astonished to hear Aquafluentes accused of sluggishness: he told Ventosus what a prodigious quantity of work he had done for the colony. 'He is a snail to me, for all that,' hollowed out Ventosus, who had sometimes a very loud voice; and, to show his rapidity, he spread his wings, and was out of sight in a moment. Jackson was sadly frightened, lest he should be gone for ever; but he soon returned, and consented to accompany Jackson home, on condition that he would settle him in an elevated spot of ground. 'My house is built on the brow of a hill,' said Jackson, 'and I shall place yours on the summit.'—'Well,' said the giant, 'if you will get me a couple of millstones, I will grind you as much corn in one hour as Aquafluentes can in two: like my brother, I work without food or wages; but then I have an independent spirit, I cannot bear confinement, I work only when I have a mind to it, and I follow no will but my own.'—'This is not such a tractable giant as Aquafluentes,' thought Jackson; 'but he is still more powerful; so I must try to manage his temper as well as I can.' His wonderful form and the lightness of his wings excited great admiration. Jackson immediately set about building a house for him on the hill, to grind corn in; and, in the mean time, Ventosus took a flight into the valley, to see his brother. He found him

carrying a heavy load of planks, which he had lately sawed, to their proprietor: they embraced each other; and Ventosus, being in a good humour, said,—'Come, brother, let me help you forward with your load; you will never get on at this lazy pace.'—'Lazy pace!' exclaimed one of the children, who was seated on the load of wood on the giant's back; 'why, there is no man who can walk half a quarter as fast.'—'True,' replied Ventosus; 'but we are not such little pigmies as you.' So he seated himself beside the child, stretched out his wings, and off they flew with a rapidity which at first terrified the boy; but when he found he was quite safe, he was delighted to sail through the air almost as quickly as a bird flies. When they arrived, and the wood had been unloaded,—'Now, brother,' said Aquafluentes, 'you may help me back again.'—'Not I,' replied Ventosus; 'I am going on, straight forward: if you choose to go along with me, well and good; if not, you may make your way home as you please.' Aquafluentes thought this very unkind, and he began to argue with his brother; but this only led to a dispute: Aquafluentes' temper at length grew ruffled; Ventosus flew into a passion; he struggled with his brother, and roared louder than any wild beast. Aquafluentes then lost all self-command, and actually foamed with rage. The poor child stood trembling with fear at a distance: he hardly knew the face of his old friend, so much was his countenance distorted by wrath; he looked as if he could almost have swallowed him up. At length Ventosus disengaged himself from his brother, and flew out of his sight; but his sighs and moans were still heard afar off. Aquafluentes also murmured loudly at the ill treatment he had received; but he composed himself by degrees; and, taking the boy on his back, slowly returned home. Jackson enquired eagerly after Ventosus; and when the child told him all that had happened, he was much alarmed for fear Ventosus should never return; and he was the more disappointed, as he had prepared every thing for him to go to work. Ventosus, however, came back in the night; and when Jackson went to set him to work in the morning, he found that nearly half the corn was already ground. This was a wonderful performance; yet, upon the whole, Ventosus did not prove of such use to the colony as his brother. He would carry with astonishing quickness; but then, he would always carry his own way; so that it was necessary to know what direction he intended to take, before you could confide any goods to his charge; and then, when you thought them sure to arrive on account of the rapidity with which they were conveyed, Ventosus would sometimes suddenly change his mind, and veer about with the fickleness of a weathercock; so that the goods, instead of reaching their place of destination, were carried to some other place, or brought back to the spot whence they set out. This inconvenience could not happen with regard to grinding corn; but one, of no less importance, often did occur. Ventosus, when not inclined to work, disappeared, and was nowhere to be found.

"The benefit derived from the labour of these two giants had so much improved the state of the colony, that, not only were the cottages well floored, and had good doors and window-shutters, but there was abundance of comfortable furniture—bedsteads, tables, chairs, chests, and cupboards, as many as could be wished; and the men and women, now that they were relieved from the most laborious work, could employ themselves in making a number of things which, before, they had not time for. It was no wonder, therefore, that the desire to discover more giants was uppermost in men's minds. In reply to their numerous enquiries, Aquafluentes one day said, with a sigh,—'I know but of one more of our species to be met with in this island, and that is

a truant son of my own. It is many years ago since he left me; and, from that day to this, I have never beheld him. His mother was of the tribe of Salamanders, and he always took to her relations more kindly than to mine; and, one sultry day, as he was basking in the sunbeams, he rose up of a sudden and disappeared from my sight.'—'Then there is little chance that any of us should find him,' cried the colonists; 'he has probably left the island.'

"Perkins, one of the most enterprising among them, was not wholly discouraged by this account: he returned alone to talk to Aquafluentes about his runaway son; and learnt that there was reason to believe he had not wholly abandoned the island, as he was known to amuse himself occasionally with bathing in a hot spring which flowed from a rock in a distant valley, where none of the inhabitants had ever been. 'The fact is,' said his father, 'he takes so much after his mother, that he cannot live but in a very high temperature. These waters are boiling hot; but this only increases his vigour.' Perkins enquired if he was a powerful workman. 'I can only speak by report,' replied the father; 'and from that I should judge that he can do more than I and Ventosus together: the difficulty, however, is to catch him and confine him, for he is just the reverse of Ventosus; he will only work when imprisoned: then, he differs from both of us by being a great feeder.'—'Oh!' exclaimed Perkins, 'if so, he loses one of his principal merits; for, if he is near the size of either of you, it will be difficult to satisfy his appetite, and it may cost me as much to procure him food, as I should gain by his labour.'—'Never fear,' returned the giant, 'the only food he takes is coals or wood, which he devours burning hot, and the more you give him the better he will work, provided, as I said before, he is imprisoned.'—'But where can we meet with a prison large enough to enclose a giant?'— 'Why, in regard to his size,' replied Aquafluentes, 'though he sometimes reaches up to the skies, he can, at others, be squeezed into a very small compass, and the smaller the space in which you confine him, the harder he will work.'—'Surely he cannot take a pleasure in being imprisoned,' said Perkins.—'Oh, no!' replied Aquafluentes; 'he works only with a view to get free; for he is as fond of his liberty as Ventosus.'—'Well,' said Perkins, 'if you will help me, perhaps we might manage to get hold of him.' Accordingly, the next morning they set out together, Perkins having purchased the services of Aquafluentes by a fine ham which he took to Jobson. As they were on their road, Perkins quietly seated on the back of the giant, he enquired of him by what means he thought they could confine his son, if they should be so fortunate as to meet with him? 'I have brought a vessel for that purpose,' said the giant, and showed him a bottle; upon which Perkins fell a laughing, and declared 'that he believed Aquafluentes was making game of him.' In a short time they arrived at the hot spring. As they drew near, they observed a great body of vapour rising from the pool.—'Look, look!' cried Aquafluentes, 'there he is.' Perkins looked with great eagerness: he saw nothing but a cloud of steam. In a few moments, however, this cloud took the form of an enormous giant, whose head reached almost to the clouds: the figure, as it continued slowly rising, became more and more indistinct, till at length it wholly disappeared.'—'There he was, indeed!' exclaimed Perkins; 'but he is gone, perhaps fled for ever!'—' No, no!' replied Aquafluentes; 'since we know the spot he haunts, we may be more fortunate another time.' Another time they came, but no giant was to be seen. 'So much the better,' said Aquafluentes; 'we must prepare to catch him when he rises;' so he drew out his bottle, which he held with the mouth downwards over the pool, and he gave the cork to

Perkins, charging him to thrust it into the bottle, as soon as he saw it filled with vapour. Perkins had much to do to refrain from laughing at the idea of squeezing a giant into a bottle; however, he was too intent on an object of such importance, to venture to give way to his mirth. In a short time the vapour began to arise; Aquafluentes held the bottle inverted over it, where it appeared thickest: it was soon filled, and well corked; but Perkins could not be persuaded that they really were in possession of the long-sought treasure. 'Well, if he is within the bottle,' said he, 'he submits to his confinement with a very good grace; he is as quiet as a lamb.'—'Never trust to that,' replied Aquafluentes, 'he is cool now; but you will see the difference by and by.' When they got home, Aquafluentes told him to place him in the chimney-corner as near the fire as possible: 'Heat is his element,' said he, 'and unless you contrive to keep him scalding hot, you will do nothing with him.' Perkins, in order to give his new host complete satisfaction, placed him in a pot of boiling water over the fire, when, to his utter consternation, the cork flew out, and he saw the figure of the giant, of a diminished size, come out of the bottle, and, increasing in dimensions as it arose, make its escape through the chimney. Perkins, quite discomforted, went to relate the disaster to Aquafluentes. 'What a trick the lad has played you!' said he; 'but we will catch him again, depend upon it.'—'What's the use of catching, if we can't keep him?' retorted Perkins. 'I advise you,' said Aquafluentes, 'to see if amongst the things saved from the wreck, there is not an iron or a copper vessel, which would be strong enough to hold him, when he is alive and active, and fit for work.' Perkins enquired throughout the colony, and at last found a man who had a brass vessel of a cylindrical form, which Perkins purchased with a pair of old shoes. 'I defy him to burst this,' cried Perkins, 'it is so thick and strong.'—'I have known him crack stouter vessels,' replied the giant, 'when he is much heated by passion;' but, on examining it, he said he thought it would serve their purpose; for he observed, that there was a small opening closed with a little door. 'He will make nothing of lifting this door,' cried he, 'when he is violent; but it is too small for him to escape by. However, it will serve him to vent his wrath, and keep him more temperate.' The next day off they posted; succeeded in enclosing Vaporoso (for that was his name), as he arose from the boiling pool; and carried him home in triumph.

"When Vaporoso was fairly captured, he was ready to come to terms with his master, and offered to do almost any sort of work he chose to set him to. 'But,' said he, 'it would be beneath my talents to grind corn or to saw planks. I can work a manufacture of cotton or woollen, or raise coals or water out of a mine.'—'As for coals,' said Perkins, 'we have such abundance of wood, that we need give ourselves no trouble to get coals; and in regard to mining of any sort, that is quite beyond our reach. But if it were possible to manufacture the cotton that grows in such plenty in this country, it would be a great blessing; for we are all short of shirts, and our women and children are half naked. So I must consult with the rest of them, and see if it would be possible to build some mills to spin the cotton and weave it.' This was so desirable a thing, that every one was ready to give his assistance to the best of his ability. The carpenter, the smith, and the wheelwright were of essential service; and, after much toil and trouble, a mill was erected. A manufacturer from Manchester would have laughed at it; but it proved a most valuable treasure to the little colony; which, by the by, continued the pedlar, I ought to have told you, had increased considerably in population, as well as in wealth."—"Wealth!" interrupted Tom: "I thought you said they made no use of

money, and did not care about it."—"True," replied the pedlar, "the wealth I speak of was the corn, and cattle, and vegetables, and furniture, and better houses, and boats with which they caught plenty of fish, and other things without number. After a few years had passed over their heads, no one would have known the colony again, so much was it increased and improved. Thanks to Aquafluentes and Ventosus, and, above all, to Vaporoso: not that the people were idle; they had enough to do to prepare work for the giants, and finish it up after they had performed their part. Thus, the men had to build houses, and to make furniture, and boats, and carts, out of the boards which Aquafluentes sawed. Then they were obliged to raise the corn for Ventosus to grind, and afterwards make it into bread."—"And the women must have had plenty of work too," said little Betsy, "after they made cotton, to sew it up into gowns and petticoats for the little girls."—"Very true, my dear," said the old man; "and the little girls helped them at this work; for there was a school set up to teach the children to sew, and to read and write; and the poor widow was the mistress of it. Then there was a church built, it was neither very large nor very handsome; but they prayed to God in it as piously and as sincerely as if it had been finer and richer; and never failed to return thanks for the wonderful assistance he had sent them."—"But pray, what did the men do for coats?" asked Tom; "for theirs must have been worn out in time, as well as the women's petticoats?"—"Oh!" said the pedlar, "when once the manufacture of cotton was found to answer, another for wool was set on foot; and after that they raised flax, and manufactured linen; and, build as many mills as they would, Vaporoso worked them all. At last they undertook to build a ship; and then the three giants began to dispute which should take charge of it.—'It cannot move without my assistance,' said Aquafluentes. 'Nay,' said Ventosus, 'you may support it, but a pretty snail's pace it will move at, unless I perch upon the deck, and stretch out my wings; and then it will fly upon the surface of the waters.'—'Ay, but it must fly the way you choose to go,' cried Vaporoso, 'whilst I can take it in any direction they choose it to go, and at a quicker rate than either of you.' Aquafluentes was obliged to give up the point; for though he could have carried a vessel as far as the mouth of a river, he had no power to walk on the sea. The other two determined to divide the charge amicably between them. When Ventosus was in a humour to conduct the vessel towards the place of its destination, he was to be captain; but if he grew refractory, the command was to be taken by Vaporoso. The colony had now an opportunity of either returning to England, or seeking the spot where it had at first been their intention to settle; but, during the course of twenty years that they had been established in this desert island, they had improved it so much, and become so attached to it, that they had not the least desire to leave it. Besides, the young people were now growing old; but those who had been born in the island, or had arrived there at a very early age, were curious to visit England, of which they had heard so much from their parents. They carried thither a cargo of goods, the produce of the island, which they thought would fetch a good price in England, and brought in return such commodities as the colony required. Thus, manufactures and commerce were established in the country, and from that time they went on in an almost uninterrupted course of prosperity. And so now, I am come to the end of my story," cried the old man, who began to be out of breath with so long a narrative. "And a very pretty story it is," cried Tom, "with giants in plenty!"—"But I should be glad to know where the sense lies?" said Hopkins; "for as it has not pleased God to give us such helps as you

describe, I see no good that can come of setting us a longing for what we can't get, and so making us discontented with what we have."

"Are you sure that you have no such helps?" said the old man, with an arch smile. "I could give you an explanation of my tale, but little Betsy would say it was the stupid moral at the end: so I think the children had better go to bed before I proceed." Betsy and little Jem, who were beginning to yawn, agreed to this; but the other children all begged leave to stay and hear the explanation.

"Well, then," cried the old man, "Nature has, in reality, given these gigantic powers to assist the labours of men." The children looked around in astonishment, as if doubting whether they should not behold one of the giants. "Tell me," continued he, addressing Hopkins, "who is it turns the mill that saws the wood yonder?"—"No one," cried Hopkins: "it is turned by a stream of water."—"And does not that stream of water work, without requiring either food, lodging, or wages?"—"That is true, indeed," replied Hopkins, scratching his head, as if to make the meaning enter into it the easier. "It is strange that never struck me before."—"Aquafluentes," continued the pedlar, "means no other than a stream of running water."—"Oh, that is the reason," cried Jenny, "that he cleaned the house, and washed the children, and taught them to swim; but I do not understand how running water can fetch and carry cargoes of wood and other things, as Aquafluentes did."—"Why, in a boat," said Tom, "no doubt: don't you remember they placed a large shallow box on his back, to hold things in: what was that but a boat?"—"Ay, true," replied Jenny; "and the long pole or staff to make the giant go on, must have been an oar."—"Well, it must be confessed," said Hopkins, "there is as much truth as fiction in your tale."

"Then Ventosus," continued the pedlar..."Oh, stop," cried Tom, interrupting him; "let me try to guess what Ventosus means." After thinking awhile, he exclaimed,—"I do think Ventosus must be the wind; because, when he quarrels with his brother, Aquafluentes, he makes the waves rage, and swell, and foam. Oh, it is certainly the wind which turns the mill to grind the corn."—"True," said Hopkins, thoughtfully; "the wind is another gigantic power in nature, for which we have never thought of being thankful. Well, my good friend," continued he, "your story has taught me that we possess blessings I little thought of; and I hope it will teach us to be grateful for them. But what is the third power, which is more able than the other two?"—"It is one you know less of,—it is steam; which, confined in the cylinder of the steam-engine, sets all our manufactures in motion. As it rises from boiling water, I have called it the son of water and of fire or heat. It is now, you know, applied to vessels at sea, acting always steadily and regularly, whilst the wind is not under our command. But, observe," said the pedlar, "though these powers do so much for men, they do not take the work out of their hands: on the contrary, when the mills or manufactures thrive, they give them more to do. It was the giant Vaporoso that introduced the cotton mills in this village, which gives so much work to all the folks in the neighbourhood; and if Ventosus did not grind the corn, depend upon it there would not be half so much raised; no, nor near so many bakers: for, when men were obliged to bruise their corn themselves, it would take up the time which they can now give to sowing and reaping it."—"Nor would there be so many floored cottages, and doors, and window shutters, and tables, and chairs," said Tom (proud to show that he had not forgotten the number

of articles mentioned in the tale), "if Aquafluentes had not been such a capital sawyer of wood."—"Well, but," said Dame Hopkins, who hitherto had made no remark, for, being busied about her domestic affairs, she had not heard above half the story, "if these giants do but make men work the more, I can't see what good they do them."—"Why, wife," answered Hopkins, "we don't want to be idle; but we want to earn a comfortable livelihood by our work; and I see now, that, if it were not for the help of these powers which nature has given us (and we must have been as blind as buzzards not to have observed them before), our cottage would have been unfloored, we should have had neither bedstead to lie on, chair to sit on, or table to eat off; and, what's worse still, a sad scarcity of bread to set on the table at meals. We have now the produce of our own work and of theirs also; and, as they do a hundred times more work than we can, why, we get a hundred times more food and clothing, and comforts of one kind or other."

"Ay," said Jenny; "where should we have got our cotton gowns and petticoats, or you your shirt, Tom, if Vaporoso had not set the cotton mills a-going?"—"Well," said Hopkins, snuffing up the air, "I smell the smell of supper. I see my good woman has been busy to some purpose."—"Ay, and it's all the work of my own hands," said she: "none of your giants have had any thing to do with it." But the pedlar, who stood up for the credit of his giants, replied,—"By your leave, mistress, I think you are mistaken. These potatoes could never have been so well boiled without the help of steam; nor would the iron, of which the pot is made, have been so easily got out of the mine, without the use of a steam-engine."—"I think that truant young giant is the greatest favourite of yours," said Hopkins, "of the three."—"Not when he was running wild about the country," replied the pedlar; "but, after he was reclaimed, and took to working, he certainly did more than the other two."—"And, mother, who ground the corn that made this bread?" cried Tom, archly. "And I doubt whether Ventosus had not some hand in bringing this sugar over the seas from foreign parts," said Hopkins. "Well, well, come in and eat," cried the good dame, a little angry that she did but half understand the meaning of the story, which seemed to be more attended to than her supper. So they all went in laughing and joking, and sat down to a comfortable meal; which, in spite of all the credit the good dame claimed for her cooking, they declared she could not have brought to table without the help of Aquafluentes, Ventosus, and Vaporoso.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 4
POPULATION, &C.
OR,
THE OLD WORLD.

"FATHER," said Tom the next morning to Hopkins, "I can't, for the life of me, make out why we are so poor in old England: for the real giants work much more for us here than they did for the folks in the desert island. What is a single water-mill, and a single wind-mill, and such a bit of a factory as they set up, compared to all those we have here? And yet they lived in plenty, whilst we are often half-starved.

Their island was but a nut-shell to ours," cried Hopkins; "and there were but a few of them in it; and so the single water-mill, and wind-mill, and bit of a factory, as you call it, did all the work they wanted; whilst here, we are too many by half for all the mills and factories in the kingdom."

"Well, then we have nothing to do but to build more; there's no want of hands with us."

"Ay, but you must have wherewithal to pay the builders; and money runs short among so many."

"It can't run shorter than it did in the island," replied Tom; "for they had but one purseful that I heard of, and that they made no use of. So why cannot you build without money here, as well as they did there? you need only feed the workmen instead of paying them wages."—"That's all one," said Hopkins; "feed and clothe the workmen, or pay them wages, comes to the same thing: and if food and clothing run short, the factory cannot be built, nor worked if it were built. The fault lies in there being more people here than there is food to maintain, clothes to cover, or houses to lodge them. There's your mother there has had sixteen children; and God knows we have never had wherewithal to bring up half that number. But you are too young for these matters, Tom, so be off to your work, and don't stand idling here."

When Tom was gone, his mother said,—"Ay, its very hard that I, who have brought sixteen children into the world, and worked, as one may say, day and night, should not be able to give them clothes to their backs, nor a hearty meal of wholesome food; no, nor a bit of learning to lift them on in the world. You know what a hard matter we have had to place out Dick and Nance; and now that I am looking out for Jenny, there is nothing to be had. I sent her after Farmer Wilkin's place, but there were no less than six girls about it already; so they underbid each other, and one of them got it, who offered to go for nothing more than her board and a pair of shoes a year."

"That is because there are more girls than places for them," said John.

"Well, and what is to be done with them at home is more than I can tell! Why, there is Jenny gets such an appetite now-a-day, there is no satisfying her. She would be willing enough to earn the bread she eats, if she knew but how; but they won't take her in at the mills, and there is no want of hands at the factory."—"That is because there are more hands to work than work to be done," replied her husband.—"Don't be telling me of your 'cause this, and 'cause t'other," cried the impatient wife; "but tell me, what is much more to the purpose, how am I to get bread to put into my children's mouths?" But John said, with a sigh, that was more than he could tell.

"But I suppose you can tell the cause?" retorted his discontented wife.—"Yes, that is easy enough," replied John; "there are more mouths to be fed than there is bread to feed them."—"Well, and where is the remedy?"—"That is a harder matter, wife. Now we have the children, we must make the best of it we can, and divide what we have among them; but if you had not had such a swarm of brats, we should all have fared better. Look at neighbour Fairburn's; why, they never want for any thing!"—"Ay, that is true enough," replied his wife; "there was his Sukey at church last Sunday in as neat a cotton gown as I would wish to set eyes on: and, God forgive me! I could not but cast a look of envy on it, when I compared it with our own poor girls' patched rags. Well, I remember the time, when Patty there was but a little one, she had as good a gown to her back as Sukey Fairburn; but times are sadly changed now!"—"As for that matter, dame," cried John, "cotton gowns are a great deal cheaper now than they were then; but you have had thirteen children since Patty; so it is no wonder you can't give them a new gown so often, even though you may buy the cotton at half price. When we had only three children, why, it was natural we should do as well as Fairburn does with his three, for both he and I get the same wages; but when you come to divide among three, or among sixteen, there is a wide difference."—"Nay, but you know, John, we never had sixteen alive at once, nor near," cried the wife,—"That is true," said he; "but so many dying, is but a proof we had more than we could rear. If you and I had not married till the time of life Fairburn and his wife did, we should not have been troubled with such a monstrous family." The good dame, who could not bear any reflection being cast on the number of her children, and yet was at a loss for an argument in its favour, said coaxingly to her husband—"Well, but, John, you know the proverb says, 'The more the merrier.'"—"Ay, but you forget what follows, wife,—'The fewer the better cheer.'"

John then went on to show that if the labourers took care to have small families, they would gain another and a still greater advantage; not only would they have fewer children to clothe and feed, and therefore their money would go farther, but also their wages would necessarily be higher. The rich, instead of having too many workmen, would have too few. His wife thought that this would not mend matters, for that the fewer the labourers, the more work would each have to do. But John replied very properly, "Nay, nay, we are not slaves, and cannot be forced to work more than we are willing. Now," continued he, "if we were fewer in number, the rich would be looking out for workmen, instead of workmen looking out for employers, as is the case now. And if there was a want of hands instead of a want of work, those who wanted work to be done would be ready enough to pay higher wages. We might say to our employers, 'If you do not choose to give us a better price for our labour, we will go elsewhere to others who will.' But if any of us were to say that now, when there are

so many all wanting employment, we should starve in idleness, for others would consent to work at the low prices which we had refused."

"I can't think the rich would ever allow us to fix our own price," said the wife; "for they are wiser by far than we are, and they are mighty clever at having things their own way. They would get a law made to forbid the raising of wages mayhap! It is true, as you say, they can't oblige us to work, but they may oblige us by law to take low wages if we do work, and you know well enough we cannot live without it."—"There's no doubt of that," replied John; "and it reminds me, that when I went to pay the last quarter's schooling, I found the master musing over an old book, and he bade me stop to hear what it said; for that it was a curious thing, and concerned the labouring people; and moreover that it was true. Well, as far as I can recollect, he read that once upon a time there was a mortal disease fell upon the people of England, called the plague, and that as many as half of them died of it."—"Poor creatures!" exclaimed the wife, in a tone of compassion, "how shocking!" Then, after a little thought, she added, "Labourers must have been scarce enough then, God knows!"—"Well," continued John, "the book went on to say, that those who survived took advantage of their numbers being reduced, to ask higher wages."—"Ay, but there is one thing I can't understand," said the wife; "why should there be a call for more labourers? for if there were fewer poor folks to labour, there were fewer rich folks to labour for; for the plague is no respecter of persons, and falls on the rich as well as the poor, as we read in the Bible it did in the time of Pharaoh."—"Sure enough," replied John; "but then the rich can pay for doctor's stuff, and all manner of things to help them through it; so more of them are likely to recover than of the poor, who are pent up in their small cottages, and have no money to pay nurses or doctors. However, there is no doubt but that many of the rich died too. But look ye, wife, when they go down to the grave, their riches are not buried with them; no, no, that remains above ground, and goes to their friends and relations; so you see the plague did not take the money, and there was not less of that in the land, though there were fewer people. Now mind ye, wife, it is wealth that sets the people to work. So if half the rich folk had died, others would have come in for their wealth; and these, becoming so much richer than they were before, would have wanted more people to work for them."

"They might *want* and welcome," said the wife; "but how could they get them if they were dead?"—"And it is just because they *cannot* get those who died, that those they *can* get (I mean those who survived) are sure to get higher wages; for, as I said before, when labourers are scarce, the rich are ready enough to pay them high wages. But the book went on to say, that when the King who reigned in those times heard that his subjects would not work without higher wages, he fell into a rage, and made a law such as you were thinking of, wife, to forbid, under severe pains and penalties, that the poor should take higher wages than they had before the plague."—"Why, then, I think he was no better than a tyrant, to hinder the poor from getting what they fairly could: he must have been quite another sort of man from our good King William."—"That he was," said John; "but it would not do; and after a hard struggle, the King was obliged to give in, and the people got the wages they asked."

"Well, but I do not know how it is," said his wife, after a pause, "my mind sadly misgives me about high wages ever since the Fairy's wand brought on such a train of

ill luck, that we so little looked for."—"That was because the high wages then was not the natural rate of wages, as one might say. The Fairy forced wages up, and had no better success than the King's law to force wages down; but you see, wife, that the nature of things is stronger than Kings' laws or Fairies' wands; and that when the number of labourers was so much lessened by the plague, it was quite natural that the wages should be high, and so they were, without any ill luck coming of it."

"Well, for my part, I can't see the difference," said the good dame. "Why should not the manufacturers send away half their workmen when wages rise after the plague, just as they did when the Fairy's wand did the business."

"Mercy on me," cried John, "how thick-headed you are, wife! Don't you see that half of them are sent away already by the plague into their coffins? so, instead of discharging any more, they must pay high wages if they wish to keep those that remain; for when labourers are scarce, and there is a great demand for them, they won't work without good pay."

"Then," said his wife, returning to her favourite subject, "when the labouring people were so well off, they might marry young, for they could afford to provide for a large family if they chanced to have one." John readily agreed to this, observing, at the same time, "that people must take care, however, not to overshoot the mark; for that if they increased and multiplied so much, that in the end the market were again overstocked with labourers, wages would naturally lower again, and then the poor would be in no better plight than they were before the plague. And that is the plight we are in now," continued John. "But God forbid that a plague should ever come to thin our ranks!"—"Heaven preserve us from it!" cried his wife; "for though those that outlive it may fare the better, who knows, John, that you and I should escape with our lives; and I'll promise you," added she, with a look of affright, "it would snatch away some of the children that are still left to us."

"Ay, I trust the plague will never return; but we may learn a lesson from that which is past, though it be so many years back. For we may be sure that if we have but small, or at least moderate sized families, in the course of a few years it will bring about the same good to the working people."

"To be sure," said his wife, "if there had been only one or two girls after Farmer Wilkin's place, Jenny would have stood a much better chance of getting it, and perhaps have had two or three guineas wages; for if girls were scarce, they would not be so simple as to be satisfied with their board and a pair of shoes."

"Well, dame, the country is like our family, there are too many of them for every one to get a livelihood."—"God help the country!" cried the wife; "it is more than we can do to help ourselves."—"Why, what is a country made up of, but of families like ours?" said John.—"And if every family had taken care of themselves, there would have been no distress in the country. When God has given us hands to labour with, and heads with common sense to teach us what we ought to do, we have no reason to complain, and it is our own fault if we do not guard against poverty by prudence and saving. We ought not to have married so young, and then we should not have been

troubled with so large a family. But what is done can't be undone, only it should serve as a warning against another time."

"We are little likely to marry again, either of us," said his wife; "and if we did, sure enough it would not be over young."

"I was not thinking of you and me, wife, but of the young ones. There is our boy, George, who is but two and twenty, hankering after Betsy Bloomfield, and she is but nineteen. Now, George has not a farthing more than the labour of his hands to support her and the dozen of children they are likely to have at those years. I say, I will not hear of it. George must work hard, and lay up something before he marries the girl. And let her go to service, and get something to lay by too; and then, when they have a little money in hand, and a few more years over their heads, they may come together without harm."

"Mercy on us! what will they say to that? it will be a hard thing upon them, John."

"But it would be harder still upon their children, if we let them marry so young. They would be half starved, and rickety, and breed all sorts of distempers, and so they would die off, and be an affliction instead of blessing to their parents."

"Ah!" said the good woman, heaving a sigh, "like our poor babes." Then, after a pause of painful remembrance, she added,—"But one of them, you know, John, was carried off by the measles, and that is not bred by lack of good food, but comes of the will of God."

"Yes," returned John; "but if it had not been a poor weakly thing, it might have got through the measles as well as the rest of them. Why, to be sure, none of them died of starvation; but who knows but that they might all have lived, had they been reared in plenty?"

"Alack!" said the poor woman, drawing the back of her hand across her eyes; "it was not so much their deaths I minded, for I knew they would want for nothing in a better world; but it was their puling and crying when they were alive, as if they had not a moment's peace, poor babes! They were a sore trouble to me; and the more I loved them, the harder it was to bear. One while," continued the poor woman, "we lost our children by the small-pox; and when the cow-pox was found out, I thought they would be safe; but they went off the same, one by one sickness, another by another; so I can't but think, husband, that it is the will of God that poor babes should drop off, as the blossom drops from the trees; for it never all comes to fruit."

"It is the will of God," answered John, "that children should die if their parents do not provide for them so that they may live. And when there is no small-pox, why, the sickly ones are carried off by the measles or hooping-cough; nay, even a cold will do the work; for die some of them *must,* when there is not food to rear them all."

"Nay, John, I can't bear to hear you talk after that fashion. It seems for all the world as if you thought their dying a good riddance."

"No; but I think it a sin and a shame to bring children into the world just to suffer, and send them out of it. First a cradle, and then a coffin; and little else between than fretting. But, at least, let us have no grandchildren born to die off in that way: we must live and learn, or we shall live to little purpose. So get Betsy Bloomfield a service as soon as you can."

"Well," said Dame Hopkins, after a little thought, "there is the Squire's lady was here last week, in want of a girl for her nursery. I begged hard for our Jenny; it would have been the making of her; but it was lost labour, for the lady would have it she was too young. She cast an eye upon Patty, there," added she, in a half whisper; "but I told the lady she had other thoughts in her head. Now this place would just suit Betsy, who is a nice tidy body, and has reared up her brothers and sisters, and is fit for a nursery."

John turned towards his daughter Patty, who was sitting by the casement window, sewing. When she saw that her father observed her, a blush came over her face; for she could not conceal the tears that were trickling down her cheeks. "Hey-day, what is to do, now?" cried he; "have you and Tom Barton had a lovers' quarrel? Never fear, girl, you will soon make it up again."—"Oh no," cried Patty, "he never gives me so much as a cross word; but I have heard all you have been saying, and I am no older, you know, than Betsy; nay, even younger by three months; so I suppose," added she, sobbing, "I must give up the wedding, and think of going out to service as well as Betsy."

"Hey, never take on so, child," cried the father; "that is quite another thing: Barton is able to support you; ay, and as many brats as you may chance to have. He has neither kith nor kin; and his father has left him the shop, and all the stock in trade, and a good lot of money beside; so there is no harm can come of your marrying him. Quite the reverse, you see, deary, for you are a burthen upon us, who have so many of your brothers and sisters to maintain." Patty cast up her tearful eyes, which seemed to complain that she should be thought a burthen. The mother, who understood her looks, said, "Your father does not mean that we shall be glad to be rid of you, Patty: nay, nay, child; but we shall be glad to see you happy, and to have your share of the meals to give to your brothers and sisters."

Patty brightened up at these words; but a cloud again passed over her brow as she thought of poor Betsy.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 5
EMIGRATION;
OR,
A NEW WORLD.

HOPKINS'S wife, as we have seen, loved her children tenderly; and, hard as it was to maintain them, she could not bring her mind to regret that she had so large a family; for there was not one of them she would have liked to part with. "Dick and Nancy," thought she, "earn their own livelihood, so they are none too many for us; and I had trouble enough to let them go so far away. Then Patty is soon to be married, and it will be hard to part with her even to a good husband, fond as the girl is of him; and well she may, for one may go far and near and not meet with the like. Jenny and Tom, to be sure, are growing so fast, they are enough to eat us out of house and home; but then it does one good to see them so hearty; and they will be the better able to work, when they can get any thing to do. Betsy eats but little, as yet, and is so healthy that she gives one no trouble. Then, as to my poor little darling Jemmy, he is but an ailing child, I must own; but I love him the better for all the care he gives me; and many a heartach have I had for fear I should not rear him." So the good woman went on, numbering up the qualities which endeared her children to her. At length, addressing herself to her husband, she said, with a sigh,—"What a pity 'tis, John, that the world is not a little wider, that there might be room, and work, and food for us all."

"As for that matter," cried Hopkins, "the world is big enough, in all conscience; it's only Old England that's a bit of the smallest for the lots of people it has to hold. Why, there are some countries, as they tell me, that want workmen. America, they say, is too large by half for the folks that live in it; and ship loads of people go over there, because there's a scarcity of hands, and wages run high. They go such lengths as to say, that the more children you have there, the better you are off. They are no burthen there; for, as soon as ever they can do any sort of work, they are sure to get it, and a good pennyworth by it. I've heard, that a widow woman, with a large family, is counted a prize there, and will get a second husband as soon as ever she chooses."—"Then they may marry young in those parts?" said his wife. —"No doubt; the sooner the better," replied Hopkins: "they tell me the country swarms with children, all living in plenty."—"That's a fine thing," said the dame; "but yet it would be hard to leave one's own country, where one has been bred and born; it is like leaving father and mother. Besides, husband," added she, after a thoughtful pause, "if such numbers of poor go over to America, it will soon be stock full; and then they will be in no better plight there than they are here."—"Bless you," cried John, "it is not so easy to fill America with people. I've heard a deal about it from the mate of the ship at Liverpool, which takes them over the sea; he calls it *emigration.*"

"Emigration!" repeated the wife; "why, one would think they were sent across the seas for some crime, it sounds so like transportation."

"What matters the sound," cried John, "when it's quite another thing?"

"Well, but do, John, tell me all about it," said she, coaxingly, to her husband.

"Why, what can you understand of these matters?" replied he. But he was a kind-hearted husband, and let his wife have her way when she was not unreasonable; so he told her "that America was so large, that the mate said it would take a thousand years, and more, to fill it with people, like Old England. There is so much land there, that it may be had for asking; and those who engage to cultivate it may get as many acres as they choose. And most of those who go over, the mate says, won't stay in the towns and work for the high wages they could get there, but take their goods and chattels, and go up the country, and settle in a farm of their own."

"A farm of their own!" exclaimed the wife, "lack o'day; if our landlord would but give us one poor acre by our cottage, how happy we should be!"

John began to fear his wife might take a fancy to go over to America, so he added,—"It's not all so smooth and easy as you may think, wife. First there's such tossing to and fro on the salt seas, and they are all sick to death before they get there. And when they are landed, and go up the country and choose their ground, there are no farm houses, no barns, no ricks, no live stock; no, not even fields ready for them, meadow or arable, nothing but woods without end."—"And are there no wild beasts in those woods?" asked the good woman, timidly.—"Why, not many of them, I believe," replied Hopkins; "but plenty of snakes and reptiles, and such like. Well, the first thing they have to do is to cut down the trees, and clear them away, before they can sow their seed; and then they are obliged to build themselves log-houses to live in, and make a shift for furniture. Then they must carry their tools with them to work with, and some few pots and kettles, for you find none of those things in the woods. So, you see, there's a deal to be done before you can settle comfortably."—"I wonder," said his wife, "that when poor men are turned off at the factory, and can't find work, and those, too, who can no longer get a livelihood by the hand loom, do not pack up their all and go over to America."

"How should they?" cried Hopkins: "they have not wherewithal to pay their passage. The captain won't take them over for nothing, and feed them while aboard the ship. And it's well for them that he won't, for America would not suit such people as these. Set a weaver to cut down a tree! why he knows no more about it than a child, and he would be a week at it. Then he would never get a log-house over his head before the winter set in, and starved him outright. They who have been used to the closeness of the factory by day, and to sleep four or five in a room by night, why they would perish in the wild woods, with no one near them for miles around."—"Well, but," said she, "there must be firing in plenty to keep them warm: no one to forbid their picking up the dry sticks, nor pulling down a branch when they wanted it."—"Sure enough, they will not want fuel," replied he; "it's easy enough to boil the pot, but not so sure of having something to put into it. Now your country folks, that have been used to out-door work, get through hardships much better than the factory men, who have been mewed up all their days like chickens in a coop. Why, the first time they slept out in those woods they would be sure to get the ague; and then who is to work for them? No such plenty of hands there. No, it is only fit for folks who are used to hard out-of-doors labour; and it won't do for them either, unless they have some little property to

set them agoing; for, besides taking so many things with them, they must have a supply of food till they can get their crops in, or they would run some chance of being starved. That has happened to more than one who has gone without forethought. They say a whole colony has sometimes been cut off by famine and sickness, before they could get in their first harvest."—"Why, I can't well make out what you mean, husband; first you are after saying America's such a fine place that it almost made my mouth water; and then you talk of so many hardships and difficulties, that I would not venture there for the world."—"Why there's both good and bad in it," replied Hopkins: "a hard working man, with no ailments about him, and able to pay his passage, or get it paid for him, and with money enough to buy the tools he wants, may find it answer; ay, and become a wealthy farmer after some years, and bring up his family in peace and plenty: but he will always meet with difficulties at first, such as would knock up your indoor men in no time."

"But then you say that in towns wages are high, and the men from the factory might get employment there."

"Ay, a good handy carpenter, or wheel-wright, they tell me, can earn as much as a dollar a day, and that's more than four shillings."

"Mercy o' me!" exclaimed the wife, "what a sum!"

"But," added he, "these fellows from the factory, or the hand loom, who have done nothing else all their lives, would be mighty awkward at any other work."

"They might work in the factories in America, as there is such want of hands: their pay at the factories must be worth having."

"They have scarcely any factories in America," replied Hopkins, "being all so busy in tilling the ground."

"Then what do they do for clothes?" quoth she.

"Oh, they mostly come from England. For, look ye, they have such loads of corn that they would not know what to do with it, if they did not send it over here, where, God knows, we are short enough of it: so then they get, in return, our Manchester cotton, and Leeds cloth, and Birmingham hardware, and whatever else they may want. Corn is their money, as one may say, for it pays for every thing."

"It must be a rare place for poachers," observed the dame; "for I suppose there's plenty of game in those great woods, and corn to fatten them, and no one to hinder them killing as many as they can catch."

"It is no use killing more than you can eat, for there is no one to sell it to. But it is a good thing to know how to handle a gun; for you may knock down the birds in no time, and so keep the pot a boiling; and, indeed, that is what a man must mainly depend upon till his crops come in."

"Then there must be some wild fruits," said the dame; "and, mayhap, they might pick a salad of one sort or other to eat with the birds."

"Ay, but they will be better off when they get a bit of garden about their log-house, and a plot of potatoes and cabbages of their own."

"There is too much danger one way or other," said his wife; "better stay at home."

"If you can earn a living at home," said Hopkins; "if not, in my mind, it's better to seek your fortune abroad, than to be half starved, or go to the parish."

"But then they should not go like ninnies, not knowing what to provide or what to expect; and it is easy enough to know, by asking those that do."—"They say that sometimes the government, or the parish, will lend a helping hand, and pay their passage, or supply them with the needful, to prevent their becoming a burthen upon the parish."

"They owe them no great thanks for that, if it is just to get rid of them."

"Nay, but it is their own wish, wife, else they would not go; and if they go prudently provided for, that is to say, able to do for themselves till they can get in their crops, when once that is done, they will get on swimmingly."—"And why should we not do so in England?" said his wife.—"For the best of all reasons," replied he; "because the land in England is all cultivated already."—"Nay, how can you say that, husband, when you know there's Broom Heath, not half a mile off, that is all a barren waste?"—"And why is it so? but because it is not worth the cultivating."—"It is true," said his wife, "the soil may not be so good as the field you were ploughing the other day, that gives such heavy crops. But if it was well ploughed and sown, surely it would yield something? And any thing is better than nothing, you know, John; if it was but even enough to make a score of loaves, why there would be a score more than there was before."—"Ay, but when the soil is so bad, the ploughing, and dunging, and seed corn, and reaping, would cost more than the corn would sell for at market; and who will be such a fool as to raise corn which costs him more than it will fetch at market? Undertake a concern that brings in a loss instead of a gain? not I, faith. Why, if they gave me the land free of cost, as they do in America, I would not say thank you for it."

"Well, but you know it sometimes answers to take in commons, John," said she; "there's Ashdown Common, that was parcelled out among the parish."

"Ay, that's a better soil: it grew grass, and the parish fed their cattle and sheep on it before it was parcelled out. So their crops are not all clear gain, for they have lost the pasture, now that it is turned into arable land."— "Yes," replied his wife, "I have heard neighbour Partridge say, she has often sorrowed for the loss of the milk her little ones got when her dappled cow fed on the common; yet, upon the whole, she owned they were better off now. 'My husband,' said she, 'makes more by his five acres now, than he could get by the cow formerly; and though I am sorry poor Biddy is

gone, the money she sold for bought us a bit of good dung for the land; which was so poor, that the seed put into it would have been as good as lost without it.'"

"There is farmer Stubbs," said Hopkins, "who had a good big slice of the common (for he bought up the shares of some of the poor parishioners, who had not the means to cultivate it). Well, he says as how he was obliged to lay so much dung on it, that he had not enough for his own farm; and he thinks he has lost as much by injuring the crops of his old land, as he has gained by that of the new. For it is but a poor crop after all. Then to think of the labour it cost him; why, there were more men at work on that bit of ground than there was to raise twice the quantity of corn on the old land; and it is small encouragement to have to work harder and get less. However, he expects it will do better next year, and pay him in time. And look ye, wife, I don't pretend for to say, that it will not answer to turn up any common or waste."—"No, that you can't," returned she; "for you know that when we got leave to take in that bit of a bank by the road-side into our garden, what a pretty crop of potatoes it gave us."

"That it did; but you may remember, dame, how you complained of the cabbages that same season. And why did they fail? Just because they were stinted of manure; for I was obliged to lay some of it on the new land, before I planted my potatoes. So you see, after all, it was robbing Peter to pay Paul, as the saying is. However, the bit of ground is not bad, and it will answer in the end. But, as I said before, you must not reckon all you get from new land as clear gain, on account of the outlay."—"And what do they do to manure the land in America?" said the wife: "it must want it sadly, never having had a morsel laid on since it was created."

"If there has been no manure laid on, there have been no crops taken out of it," said Hopkins; "and so the soil has never had any work to wear it out."

"No more has a common, when it is first ploughed up," quoth she.

"That's true enough; but then think, what are the commons and heaths of Old England? They are just nothing but the poorest land that is neglected, after all the better soils are taken into cultivation. Now see the difference in America. It's a large country, with very little of it cultivated:—the land lies before you, and you have only to pick and choose; if one spot don't please you, why, another will. Besides, the land, so far from being poor, the mate swears, is as fine a soil as you could wish to see; and instead of wanting manure, when first it's turned up, it will yield crops for many years without having any thing at all put upon it."

"That seems very strange to us here," cried the dame.—" And well it may, because all the good land was turned up, and cultivated ages ago: it is natural enough to choose the best first, and then when all the best is cultivated, why, you must take up with the second best; and after that, with land of the third quality, and so on, worse and worse, till you come to the poorest land of all; and that is all we have left now," quoth he, "that is not cultivated. So, if you turn up that, you must needs humour it and give it a bit of good stuff, and make much of it, if you expect it to pay you. But those woods in America, that have grown time out of mind, since the beginning of the world for ought we know—" "Nay," interrupted his wife, "it can but have been but since Noah's

time, for those woods must have been all destroyed by the flood."—"Well, well," retorted he, impatiently; "they have had time enough in all conscience to grow since the flood—but you have put it out of my head what the ship's mate told me." Then, after recollecting himself, he went on. "These same trees, d'ye see, shed their leaves every year, and there they lie on the ground, for there is no one to meddle with them. So when the rain comes they are well soaked, and they become manure as it were, and help to nourish the soil; and when once the labour of felling the timber and clearing it away is over, the ground wants nothing more than scratching over with a light plough to be ready for sowing, and it brings forth crops unheard of!"

"And how comes it," said the wife, "that America, seeing it is such a large place, and such a fine soil, has so much fewer people to live in it than England?"

"Because," said Hopkins, "it is so far away, that it was not found out or known that there was such a country in former times. The mate says, that in those days no ship ventured to sail out so far on an unknown sea: they were not so handy at their rigging as they are now; nor the ships either so well built or so well managed; and as for a steam-boat, why, they never so much as heard of such a thing, because they were not invented as yet."—"They must have been but dolts in those times," cried his wife. "And how came they to find out America, after all?"

"Why, once upon a time, a matter of three hundred years back, the mate says there was one Christopher Columbus, who was a fine, brave fellow, and had set his heart upon doing what no one had ever done before. So he got a ship and sailed on fearless in those unknown seas, till he reached land, and that land was America."

"How pleased he must have been when he first saw it!" cried dame Hopkins; "and well he deserved to be pleased, for being so bold; for there is no saying what might have befallen him, or whether he would ever have found his way home, if he had not met with land."—"So the sailors thought," replied Hopkins; "for they were all in such a taking, for fear they should sail on for ever without coming to land, that at last they mutinied, and had well nigh thrown him overboard. Then he begged hard for three days more, and promised, that if at the end of that time they should not see land, he would give all up, and sail homewards. Well, what should turn out, but on the third day, just as they were going about, the sailor at the top of the mast cried out, 'Land!' and sure enough it was land, for they sailed on a little longer, and then came to America. There is a whole book written about it, and it tells all that happened to them afterwards. They say it is as amusing a book as one could wish to read."—"Well," said the dame, "this same Christopher Columbus, with his hard name, was a fine daring fellow, and Old England has reason to be proud of him."—"Why, good wife," returned John, hesitating whether to confess the mortifying truth or not, "Christopher Columbus was not an Englishman, as you might have guessed by his name."—"Not an Englishman!" exclaimed she, lifting up her hands in astonishment; "who would ever have thought that a foreigner would dare to go where an English sailor had not ventured?"—"I should not credit it," said Hopkins, "if I had not heard it from the ship's mate at Liver-pool, but I'll warrant he is not mistaken, for he seems to know every thing, especially about those parts. However, we must remember, wife, that we are all God's creatures alike, English or foreigner, Protestant or Papist, Jew or Gentile;

as you may call to mind in the parable of the good Samaritan, which Patty read to us last Sunday; he was but a foreigner to the Jews, and yet he was worth more than any of them."

"And are there any other countries besides America, where poor folks can earn their bread easier than they can here?" asked Dame Hopkins.

"Yes; brother Bob tells me there are several, and one above all the rest which he sailed to in one of his voyages; he declares it a very Paradise for fine weather, beautiful prospects, and abundance of all things—fish, flesh, and fowl, besides fruit and garden-stuff. But then there's one thing that would never please you, wife."

"And why not, pray, if it's such a pleasant place?"—"Why, because they send convicts there," replied her husband. "However, that don't so much matter, every thing else being so agreeable. Indeed, Bob says people are but too happy when they can hire some of the convicts to work for them, hands being so scarce."—"Mercy on me!" exclaimed the wife, "I should always be fancying they were going to murder me!"—" Women will have foolish fancies," replied he; "but you would soon be used to them. Then there's no danger; for those that are unruly are made to work in chains, with an overseer to watch them. But many a poor lad has been transported, that poverty has brought to crime; and when he has worked out his freedom, there's no reason why he should not turn out as good as his betters who never were transported. Several have been known to thrive and prosper in that country, and bring up their children as Christians should do."

"And pray, what is the name of that country?" enquired the wife.

"It is called Van Dieman's Land, after one Van Dieman who discovered it; and it lies in the same part of the world as Botany Bay."

"Ay, one may guess that by the convicts being sent there; but that is at the end of the world, as one may say. Dick White once got a letter from his brother there, and he said it was well nigh a year coming."—"Yes, it's a sad long way off," said Hopkins; "and that makes it the more difficult to get there. All the world would be going to such a pretty place, if the expense of the long passage on board of ship was not so heavy."

"Well, for my part," returned his wife, "I don't like long voyages, because of the sea sickness; and I don't like convicts, because of their wickedness: so if it was the very Paradise that Adam and Eve lived in, I would none on't; for I'm sure the Devil would be behind the bush, in the shape of a serpent, or a convict, or some such creature."

This set her husband laughing. "So you are after cutting your jokes, are you?" cried he. "Well, it is not much more that women know about such matters, and it's my belief that I have only just been losing my time, in telling you all about it." So he took up his hat and walked off; while his wife, who liked to have the last word, called after him—"A Paradise full of convicts, forsooth! Why, it's more like a prison by half."

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 6
THE POOR'S RATE;
OR,
THE TREACHEROUS FRIEND.

"GOOD morrow to you, Dame Hopkins," said Farmer Stubbs, as he entered her cottage; "how fares it with you and your family?"

"Pretty well in health, thank you, sir," said she, wiping a chair with the corner of her apron for him to sit down; "but, with such a family as ours, it's a hard matter to make all ends meet; and, indeed, we never could do it without the help of the parish. John is only just gone down to get the weekly allowance."

"Indeed! I thought Hopkins held himself above receiving relief from the parish."

"And so he did, till the children were well nigh starved. Ah, I shall never forget it. It's just two years come Michaelmas, we had five of them ill of the measles at once; and there were but four got through it," added she, a tear starting from her eye.—"And, as soon as the fever was off, though the poor things were so weak they could scarce crawl about, they had such craving appetites, and a morsel of food did them so much good, that when I had not enough to satisfy their hunger, I told John I could bear it no longer; 'So bring down your proud spirit,' said I, 'and go and claim your dues. We have as much right to the parish money as others; ay, and a better right than many of our neighbours, who make no scruple about it. It is better to come to the parish than to come to be beggars; and I would rather ask alms than see my children starve.' Then John said, 'I had thought to have gone through the world without demeaning myself by asking aught of the parish;' and I do think that a tear came into his eye; but I did not dare notice it. So he took his hat, and trudged off with a heavy heart; and, to this very day, he never goes with a light one; but," added she, with a sigh, "use blunts the edge of things we can't help."

"True enough, you can't help it now," returned the farmer; "but, if your husband had been a prudent man, and had belonged to the benefit club, he might have got relief when his children were sick, without going to the parish."

"Ay, but that weekly sixpence, to be paid down every Saturday, when, God knows, we have a sixpence too little when the day comes round, rather than one to spare for the club.[1] Sixpence seems a mighty small matter to you, Master Stubbs; but, to come every week, it's a heavy call upon a man with so large a family as ours."

"He should not have had such a large family, Dame, if he could not provide for them in sickness and in health; for he knows that sickness and trouble is the lot of man in this world."

"We have good reason to know it," retorted Dame Hopkins, who was nettled at the farmer's rebuke; "for we have had our full share. And, as for the number of our children, we know pretty well, by experience, the hardships *that* brings on us, too: and has not John been breaking off the match between George and Betsy Bloomfield on purpose?"

"A very prudent step," replied the cautious farmer; "but here he comes.—Well, John, how much have you got from the overseers?"

"Not more than I had need of," answered John, sulkily, as if he thought that that was no business of Farmer Stubbs.—"Why, I want to know how much of it comes out of my pocket, man."

"And if some of it does," retorted John, "I owe you no thanks; for it is not I that take it from you, but the law of the land."

"Ay, but if you, and such as you, did not come to want, the law of the land would not meddle with my money."

"You are well to do in the world, and can afford to pay the poor's rate: and let me tell you, that if you have little pleasure in paying it, why we have not much in receiving it. It is dealt out in such a niggardly grudging manner, and with such a surly tone, that one would think the overseers were giving you their own."

"Why, for that matter, they pay pretty heavily towards it; so they have some cause to be discontented."

"Well, it is hard," said John, "to grudge us the only law that is made to favour the poor, when there are so many to favour the rich."

"Why, by your own account, John, it is not a good law; for you allow that it is both paid and received with an ill-will."

"Yes; but it gets us bread, which we can't do without, either with a good will or a bad one," said Dame Hopkins; "and I don't take it over kind of you, Master Stubbs, to be grumbling at my good man about the parish money, when I have just been telling you how he hated to go for it."

"Why, look ye, John," said the farmer; "it is natural enough that I and the overseers, and the rest of us that pay the poor's rate, should grumble at it. You say I am well to do in the world; and it is true I have a little property; but I have a large family as well as you."

"Ay, but they live in clover," cried John.

"Why, I wish to do the best I can by my children, as we all do, and to turn my means to the best account. Well, here are these twenty acres of common I have been turning up: I could have brought them to good account, if I could have bought as much manure and have paid as many hands as the land required to bring it into good order.

But while I am reckoning up my means, and turning in my head how I can manage it, in comes the collector for the poor's rate, five shillings in the pound! and when I complain, he tells me that, besides the large families, there are I don't know how many able-bodied single men, who can get no work, and must be maintained by the parish. Then, indeed, I fell in a passion, and said, 'You are going to maintain them in idleness with the very money which I should have paid for their labour, if they had come to work for me.'—'Oh, they will be ready enough to work for you.'—'Well,' replied I, 'then leave me the money to pay for them;' but he answered, 'You know well enough that I must collect the rate that has been assessed; make what agreement you will afterwards.'—'I can make none,' replied I; 'when you take away my money, you take away my means.' Now, if this happened to me only, you might say that I argued for my own interest; but it happens to every one who pays the poor's rate throughout the kingdom; and that not once and away, but every year, regularly, more or less."

"Well, but you don't reckon fairly," said John, "if you say that the rate you pay is all sheer loss; for, depend on it, if the overseers did not pay a part of the maintenance of children, farmers would be obliged to give higher wages, else the families would be starved to death; and then I should be glad to know how you would get your work done?"

"I would willingly pay higher wages, and employ more hands, too, could I once be rid of this poor's rate; for then I should get the value of my money in labour; whilst now I get nothing in return, and it goes to support a set of vagabonds who can't get work. And I will tell you why;—because they won't seek it, and because their labour is not worth having: and so these lazy fellows are employed idling their time away over some parish labour; and taking away the money that would have employed an honest hard-working man, and have enabled him to have maintained his family without going upon the parish."

"Get me paid wages enough to maintain my family, and I promise you the overseers shall not see my face again."

"But you have such a swarm of children, John; now I pay a man the value of the work he does for me, without minding the number of his children: for that is his business, not mine."

"Then the poor's rate must make up what's wanting," cried Dame Hopkins; "for mothers won't let their own flesh and blood starve: and, if they can't maintain them by their labour, why, they would beg, borrow, or steal, sooner than come to that. And as for the poor's rate, Master Stubbs, there can be no harm in taking what the law gives you."

"I tell you it is a bad law: bad for the rich, because it hinders them from employing the poor (at least so far as the rate goes); bad for the poor, because it encourages them to increase and multiply, till they come to rags and starvation. Let me ask you, Hopkins,—when you married, had not you an eye to the parish relief, in case you should come to distress?"

"Mayhap I might: and sure, a prudent man ought to look forward to the changes and chances that may happen in life; for then he is the better able to provide for them when they do come."

"Better provide against their coming at all," replied Stubbs; "but you counted not on your own efforts, but on the parish for helping you in distress."

"And could I do better, when the law makes such a provision for those that come to poverty, and can't help themselves out of it?"

"They would not have got into it if the law did not make such a provision for them. You yourself own you would not have married so early, had you not reckoned on the parish. Others would not either: families would have been smaller; labourers would have been fewer; they would more easily have got employment; ay, and have been better paid too."

"Why, that is just all I have been telling my wife; but I never thought the poor's rate had any thing to do with it. I am sure our distress all comes from having too many children; not from the poor's rate, which helps to maintain them."

"But what is it encourages large families?" cried Stubbs: "why, the poor's rate."—"What is it lowers wages?" retorted John: "why, the poor's rate; you can't deny that."

"No, I don't; but I tell you again it's the poor's rate that brings them to the brink of starvation; for, is it not large families, low wages, and want of work, that does it? Ay, and it is not receiving it only that does the damage; for, paying it, many a time, brings those to poverty who would else have been able to keep their heads above water."

"That's true enough of one I saw this morning at the vestry," said John; "and a hard matter I had to see her; for she wrapped herself up in her cloak, and pulled her bonnet over her face: but my heart misgave me,—it was the widow Dixon; and so I turned short upon her; and, when she saw me right before her, the blood came up into her face, which is, you know, as white as a sheet, and has been so ever since she lost poor Dixon, except round her eyes. And when I asked her how she came to be so reduced (thinking her husband had left her pretty well off), she said, 'No, Master Hopkins; he did all he could not to bring me down to a lower station while he lived; but his means were but small, and the profits of our little shop did but just serve to maintain us. We should have laid by a trifle every year, if it had not been for the poor's rate; but that eat up all our savings. However, I ought not to complain of it now, since it brings me relief; but it is hard to have shame and sorrow come upon me at once:' and the tears ran down her cheeks. I told her there was no shame in taking her own again. She, who had paid it so long, had more right to it than any of us. She said, 'God's will be done!' but she looked as though sorrow and shame would break her heart. It was sad to see her."

"And why should you needs be thrusting yourself upon her," cried his wife, "when you saw she had no mind to be noticed? You should just have let her have her way, poor woman, since you could not give her any help."

"Ay, but it lightens the load upon the heart when any one gives you a good word and a kind look, as much as to say, 'You should not have come to this pass if I could have helped you;' for the widow Dixon thinks more of the disgrace than of the want of bread, or she would not have been so shamefaced."

"Well, if the poor's rate goes on increasing and increasing, as it has done of late years, it is what we shall all come to at last," said the farmer; "and then who is to pay it?"

"Nay, it will never come to that pass, Master Stubbs."

"Mayhap not; but the time may come when the collector will not be able to raise the rate that is assessed: and that time is well nigh come in some parts of the country, as I can tell you, John, of my own knowledge; for, bad as the poor's rate is here, there are some places in which it is still worse; that is some comfort."

"Much good may it do you, Farmer Stubbs; but, to my mind, it is a poor comfort that comes from the distress of one's neighbour."

"As for that," returned Stubbs, "there is not much neighbourhood in the matter; for I am talking of the counties in the south of England, and that is some hundred miles off."

"Ay," but what does the Scripture teach us, Master Stubbs?" said Dame Hopkins; "to love our neighbour as ourselves; and that neighbour, the parson tells us, does not mean the next door neighbour only, no, nor the next market town, but every body and every where. So we ought not to get comfort from our neighbour's trouble any more than from our own."

"Well, but how is the poor's rate managed in the south?" said John.

"Why, I will tell you," replied Stubbs, "if your dame has ended her sermon. The men are paid according to the number of their children, not according to the value of their work."

"Well, but, asking your pardon, Master Stubbs, you said a bit ago, that farmers care much more for the goodness of the workman than for the number of his children; and that they will employ an able-bodied, hard-working man, without asking whether he be married or single."

"To be sure they will; but let me go on with my story. Well, as I was saying, this regulation began in Berkshire. The magistrates declared that it was very unfair that the single and the married should get the same wages; and as they could not oblige the farmers to give the one more than the other, they agreed to make up the difference from the poor's rate. So they made a table of the rate of wages; saying so much would maintain a single man, and then they doubled it for a married man with one or two

children; then it went on so much more for five, and so much for seven children. Then, again, the wages were to depend on the price of bread also."

"Well, one must say that was very thoughtful of the magistrates," exclaimed the good wife, "and very humane too; I did not think they cared so much about the poor as to portion out his lot to each so fairly and honestly."

"Stop a bit, till you have heard the end of it, Dame; and then, if you give them credit for good will, you won't for clear-sightedness. I heard all about it from an uncle of mine, who is a landholder in those parts, and he says the poor's rate is intolerable to those that have to pay it; and as to those it maintains, they are worse off there than in any other part of the country."

"But how is that, when there is such a provision for them?"

"Why, when the regulation was first made, it did well enough, for a while. But no sooner did the young lads find that a married man got double wages, and more, too, if he had several children, than their heads were all agog after getting wives; for you know it is natural enough they should fancy the girls, when they get the money to boot. My uncle says, that he remembers the time when a decent young man never thought of a wife till he had put by forty or fifty pounds; and some, much more: but now, instead of working hard to save up the money, and so getting habits of industry before they marry, they take a wife in order to get the money without working for it, and so begin life with habits of indolence. Why, the magistrates might just as well have gone about driving the young couples into church, as you would sheep into a fold. Well, the next year the children swarm, increased rates must be raised; and so it goes on year after year, till the young ones grow up fit for work. But there is no work for such numbers; and they come more and more upon the parish, till at last the parish is forced to give in, and can't keep to its agreement, for no rate will satisfy so many mouths. So then the youngsters fall to grumbling, and after that to poaching and pilfering; for when a man cannot get a livelihood honestly by his labour, he is little like to resist a temptation that falls in his way to get it otherwise, especially when he has been bred up to indolence: then come prisons, and trials, and transportations, and sometimes the gallows; and though it is no more than their deserts, they won't put up with it; and so, at last, they come to rioting, and sending threatening letters, and burning of farms, and all that sort of thing, as you know they did last autumn."

"God forgive them, poor souls!" ejaculated the good wife, "seeing it is no fault of theirs, but of their parents, who brought them into the world before there was room for them."

"Yes, but they should know how to behave themselves when they are in it," replied Stubbs.

"Where is the use of being industrious and hard-working," cried John, "when you get nothing by it? We don't work for the pleasure of the thing, Master Stubbs, as you well know, but for the gain it brings us; and if the parish will maintain them without it, they won't wear themselves out for nothing. And then as for laying by forty or fifty

pounds, as you said they did formerly, why, it would be impossible with these regulations, even if they had no mind to marry; for, while wages are so low to a single man, he can make no savings."

"When wages were alike to all," said Stubbs, "the single man had to spare, and could lay by, though the married one was straitened."

"And do you call that fair and honest," said the dame, "to straiten the man with a family, in order to give the single man more than he can spend?"

"I believe it is wise and prudent, wife," said Hopkins: "for, instead of driving the lads into wedlock, it would make them keep out of it; at least, till they had got somewhat to maintain a wife and family."

"True enough," said Stubbs; "so you see that this humane regulation of the magistrates encourages idleness just as much as it encourages early marriages, and a superabundance of children."

"But the worst of all," said the wife, "is, that it teaches them to be idle, discontented, and riotous, and madly to burn the very ricks of corn that might have made them bread."

"Yes, my uncle said, that the labourers now-a-days were quite different from what they used to be. Their characters quite changed within his memory; not but there maybe some among them right-minded still, but, take the general run, they are a bad set. There was one of them so impudent as to say to his employer,—'If you don't give me better wages, I will marry to-morrow, and then you must maintain me at double cost.' For the fellow was sharp enough to know, that, though the magistrates paid the difference, it came out of the farmer's pocket in the shape of poor's rate."

"But when the parish maintains them, the parish ought to make them work," said John.

"So they do, as far as they can: they send them round to the farmers in gangs, and when the farmer can find them work, they pay the wages to the parish, who let them come off cheap, as they help to maintain these paupers."

"The more fools they!" cried John; "for the farmer will turn off his labourers at regular wages to employ these cheaper hands, and then these others will come upon the parish too."

"And cruel it is," said the wife, "upon those that are turned out of their natural work by these gangs, and so forced to go upon the parish themselves."

"However," continued Stubbs, "the farmers find they make no great savings by employing these gangs of roundsmen, as they call them, for they don't do half the work of a common day labourer."

"Why should they?" cried John—"do little, do much, they get no reward but their maintenance; just like an ox, or a horse, that won't work without the whip."

"Or like the negro slaves in the West Indies," said Stubbs, "who want the whip, too, to stir their indolence."

"What a sin and a shame," cried the dame, "to use men like negro slaves and brute beasts!"

"Why, it all comes of your fair, honest, and humane regulations made by the magistrates," cried the farmer, laughing at her.

"It is no laughing matter, methinks, Master Stubbs: you may be in the right, and I in the wrong; and if I am, why I am free to confess it. But I can't but think that, in all this talk, you have had more an eye to your own interest, than to the good of others."

"And if my interest, and the good of others, go along together cheek by jowl, where is the harm of thinking of one's own interest? Let us each take care of number one, say I."

"No objections to that," said the dame, "if you don't forget number two when your interests don't jog on together."

"Well, I maintain that it would be for the good of one and all to put down these poor's rates. Did you ever hear what a sum they amount to?—Why, above six millions."

"Gracious me!" cried the wife, "what a power of money that must be!"

"Well, and all this to be employed in doing more harm than good,—for I don't pretend to say that it does no good. No; when the large families are there, and distress and poverty keep close at their heels, then the poor's rate lends a helping hand, it is true. But it is a treacherous friend, that pretends to do a mighty deal of good by giving you a mouthful, after it has taken away a whole meal. You don't think of the lost meal, because you never saw it, and don't understand it. But just think a bit: if this enormous sum of money, instead of being paid in poor's rate, was employed in setting people to work; why, the poor would earn the same money by labour that they get now as paupers, and the hard-working and industrious would come in for the best share, which now falls to the lot of idle vagabonds."

"There is some sense in all that, no doubt," said John; "but still, though we should get the money another way, there would not be enough for all, any more than there is now."

"I don't know that," replied Farmer Stubbs, "for the poor's rate is the root of the evil; and if you cut down the tree, root and branch, there is no saying how much good may come of it. Poor folks would not marry so early in life, and have such swarms of children; in the course of time labourers would become scarce, and they would get higher wages; and so, after a while, all would be set to rights."

"If there never had been any poor's rate, perhaps it would have been better; but now that we have the large families, and the low wages, and the want of work, we can't do without it."

"The more is the harm of having brought the poor to such a condition," said Stubbs; "but it might be done by degrees."

"I don't see how, except by starving half our children; and I shan't agree to that, I promise you."

"Mercy on me!" interposed the wife, raising up her hands, "how can you talk after that manner, husband? And how can you put such thoughts into his head, Master Stubbs?"

"No, no, I am not so hard-hearted as that comes to," said Stubbs: "but suppose a law was made that no child born after three or four years from this time should be entitled to parish relief, why, that would give time for people to think of the consequences; large families would thus be discouraged; and when those who receive relief from the parish died off in the course of nature, why, the poor's rate would die of a natural death too; for if there was none to want it, it would not be raised; so the landholders would get their own again, the labourers higher wages and plenty of work, and the world would jog on merrily."

"Ay, but do what you will, Master Stubbs, a poor man is always falling in with bad luck: first there is sickness; then there are accidents."

"Here and there a case," said Stubbs; "but that is not an every-day evil: besides, when a man gets good wages, he may put aside a penny against the unlucky day, and lock it up safe in the club-box, that he may not be tempted in a merry freak to spend it at the alehouse; or, what is better still, he may put it in the savings' bank, where it is safe and sure, and gives you interest into the bargain. Besides, you know, John, that in case of accident there is no want of hospitals, where there are as skilful doctors, and as handy nurses, as the rich have themselves. And then the great folks are, many of them, very good to the poor in case of need, and would do still more for them when they knew they had not the parish to go to for help."

"Well, it is a hard matter to understand the right and the wrong of these things," said John; "and if we did not feel them any more than we can understand them, why, I should not trouble my head about them. But a hungry stomach is apt to make one discontented, and turn it in one's mind how things might be changed for the better. They are bad enough now, God knows! so I am one that would not object to make trial of some change, if it were done fairly and softly."

"Well, I hope we shall live to see it," said the farmer, taking up his hat; "and so a good day to you, John; and to you, too, dame, if you bear me no ill will."

Dame Hopkins contented herself with dropping him a slight curtsy as he went out; and no sooner was he gone, than she exclaimed, "Have a care, John, how you lend an ear to that man, though he is one of your betters; for it is as clear as broad day that he thinks of nothing but his own good."

"Ay, one may see that with half an eye," said John; "but for all that, he has his wits about him, and knows more than I do of these matters; and I can't but think that what he said was very near the truth."

"True or false," cried the dame, "I can't abide to hear him talk in so hard-hearted a manner."

"Ay, but the matter is much more to the point than the manner; and I do agree with him, that, if we understood it rightly, the interest of the rich and poor might go hand in hand, like a loving man and wife, who, though they may fall out now and then, jog on together till death parts them."

"Ah, John! if the husband were rich, and the wife poor, they would not long go on lovingly together."

"Well, you won't believe me, because you don't understand it; but come, now, Tom shall read you a fable, and an apt one it is,—it shows how the rich stand in need of the poor, as much as the poor in need of the rich; and if so, their interests must lie the same way."

Then he called Tom to bring his book, and bade him read the Fable of the Belly and the Members.

Tom, who had been some time monitor at the Village School, began in an audible voice, and we shall leave them to their lecture.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 7 MACHINERY; OR, CHEAP GOODS AND DEAR GOODS.

JACKSON, a poor weaver, had all his life supported himself by working at the hand-loom. At length, finding that he could no longer gain a livelihood in this manner, he made up his mind to go to America. Before setting off, however, he went round the village to take leave of his friends; and when he came to the cottage of Hopkins, who was standing at his door, he was thus accosted by him:—

"So then, neighbour Jackson, you are off for America, are you? Well, good luck go with you! I have heard it's a rare place for wages; but it's a strange land, and there's no telling the changes and chances that may happen before you get well settled there."

"Happen what may," replied Jackson, "I have no choice but to go there or to the parish; and it shall not be said of me that, able to work, and without encumbrances, I became a burden to my country. I've staid here year after year, struggling and striving to get a livelihood in my old calling, but all to no purpose: since the invention of the power-loom, it's all over with us at the hand-loom. We work both harder and later to endeavour to make all ends meet, but there's no standing against these new machines; they do the work of a dozen of us. Ay," continued he, with a sigh, "machinery will be the ruin of us all one day or other. They are for ever finding out something that will do the work cheaper than we can; and unless we could work without wages, like their machines, that have neither hungry stomachs to feed nor helpless children to rear, we have no chance for it. Why, I remember the time when I made no less than twenty shillings a week by my hand-loom; but now, that the power-loom does as much work for the value of three or four shillings, they will give me no more, without considering how much more labour it costs me."

It's natural enough," replied Hopkins, "that the masters will get their work done at the cheapest rate; in the way of business, men look to their interest, and nothing else."

This was poor consolation to Jackson; and it pleased him little better, when Hopkins advised him to turn his hand to some other work: for he had stuck so closely to the hand-loom all his life, that he thought there was no other possible means of gaining his livelihood.—"Well, perhaps," said Hopkins, "you had rather try your luck in another country; and having neither wife nor children, you may be right to risk the venture."

"Though I have neither wife nor child," replied Jackson, "I have no wish to leave my own country and my kinsfolk; but when you have been used to one sort of work all the days of your life, it's no such easy matter to turn your hand to another. And, besides, if you did so," added he, "no sooner is a man again settled in an honest way of earning his bread, than there is some other new machine or invention that does the

work cheaper, and so he is again turned adrift. It's my turn now, neighbour Hopkins, but it will be yours by and by: for, it's my belief, they will never stop finding out new helps till they come to tilling the ground with machines, as well as using them in factories."

"Why, for that matter," cried Hopkins, "they do so already, sure enough; for the plough is a machine, to all intents and purposes."

"Ay," retorted Jackson, "they say that once upon a time it was all spade husbandry. What numbers of men must have been employed in digging the cornfields! There could have been no lack of work then."—"No, but a sad lack of corn," replied Hopkins; "work as hard as they would, they could never produce half so much as the plough. Now, the people can get no more corn than there is to be had; you will grant me that?"

"There's no denying it; for it's as clear as two and two make four."

"Ay, and what's more," continued Hopkins, "the poor won't get all there is to be had; for the rich will have the largest share; which is natural enough, they having the most money to pay for what they want. Now, corn raised by the spade would be very scarce; and what is very scarce is very dear, as we all know: so we poor folk should scarcely get bread enough to keep life and soul together. Besides," added Hopkins (when he found that Jackson had not a word to answer), "if you are so averse to machines, a spade is a machine as well as a plough; so, if you are for doing away with machines, one and all, you must destroy the spade as well as the plough, and fall to scratching up the ground with your hands, like very savages. A famous improvement that would be, indeed! and I should like to know how much corn we should raise after that fashion?"

"Nay," replied Jackson, "now you are running into extremes; there's a wide difference between scratching up the earth with hands, and doing nothing at all with them. I don't say that all machines that help us on with our work are bad. A hand-loom is good enough, it has gained me a livelihood many a year; but the power-loom is the very devil."

"Suppose that, in after-times," said Hopkins; "a machine should be invented that would cut out the power-loom, just as the power-loom has cut out the hand-loom; would not the weavers at the power-loom call their own a good machine, and the new invention the very devil?"

Jackson could make no reply: but he knew that the argument afforded him no relief, so he returned to the old point, and said,—"But I don't allow that the spade is a machine; it is but a simple tool at best."—Well," replied Hopkins, "in my mind a machine, a tool, an implement, or an instrument, is all one. Besides, what matters the name? I call machinery, whatever helps us to make things easier or better than we could do with our naked hands; whether it be a spade or a pickaxe, a hammer or a chisel, or the great steam engine that sets all the cotton-winders' machines a-going."

"Well, but granting the spade to be a machine," replied Jackson, "it's one that does us no harm. It can't turn us out of work, for there must be a man to every spade; just as there is a man to every hand-loom. And those are the only right sort of machines, I maintain," said he, raising his voice, and laying a stronger emphasis on his words as he felt himself stronger in his argument: "they help you on, and never turn you off. Whilst the machines, that do the work of twenty men, and require only one to manage it, throw nineteen out of work; that's clear. No, a spade and a hand-loom for my money; with a man tacked to each of them." Having finished his phrase, he stood looking with an air of triumph at Hopkins, whom he thought he had now fairly mastered.

"Why," said Hopkins, casting a look at him somewhat between a smile and a sneer, "that's just the reason they are not used. For, look ye, if every spade must have his man, every man must have his wages; so that it would cost the farmer a mint of money to raise corn by the spade."

"What care I for the farmer?" cried Jackson, vexed to be again crossed, when he thought he had made out his point. "It is better to care for the poor who eat the bread, than for the rich who grow it."

"Ay, but what costs dear to grow, cannot be sold cheap, and that's what the poor look to. Unless, indeed," continued Hopkins, laughing, "men can gain a livelihood by driving a losing trade."

"I'm no such fool as to think that a farmer will sell his corn for less than it cost him to raise," said Jackson; "he ought to get a fair and reasonable profit too."

"Well, then," said Hopkins, "a plough, with a team of oxen, or of horses, and a couple of men, will do the work of fifty spades; and the corn, being raised so much the cheaper, will be sold the cheaper. The poor will be able to pay the price of it, and will be better supplied with it."

"Yet it is well known," said Jackson, "that the spade breaks up the ground better than the plough; else, why is it used in gardens?"

"I don't deny that the spade is the best instrument of the two," replied Hopkins; "but for all that it would not raise so much corn as the plough; because farmers could not afford to employ spades enough, and the poor could not afford to pay the price of corn raised by spade husbandry. Take my word for it, that it is because the plough digs up our fields, the drill sows our corn, the thrashing machine beats it, and the wind or water-mill grinds it; that bread does not cost one half of what it would, were these cheap means of producing and preparing it unknown. And should more new contrivances be made to till the land easier, and make bread cheaper, why, so much the better, say I."

Jackson, finding that he was not a match for Hopkins, had no other resource than to stick obstinately to his old argument, "that if all work was done by machines, those who had no means of living but by their labour must starve."

"We are apt to say," replied Hopkins, "that we live by our labour; but that's only a way of speaking; for labour would rather be the death of us than make us live, if it was not for the wages it brought us."

"Well, methinks it is you, Hopkins, who are speaking after an odd fashion; we are none of us such fools as not to know that labour, on the long run, wears us out, and that when we say we live by our labour, we mean by the wages we earn by it. Nay, indeed, if you are so particular, we do not live by wages either, for we can neither eat nor drink, nor wear the wages we get. They are of no use to us till we spend them; so that we live on what our wages will buy."—"Ay, you are in the right road now," cried Hopkins. "And the cheaper things are the more we can buy with our wages; eb, Jackson?"

"Sure enough," returned the latter.

Well, then," continued Hopkins, "which is the way to have things cheap and plenty? Is it by making them by the hands of man, or with such helps as mills and steam engines, which receive no wages, but are set a going by a puff of wind or a bubble of steam, or a stream of cold water, good creatures, that do the work of hundreds of men, and all free cost; and yet, instead of being thankful, you fall abusing them."

Jackson, who had felt his losses too bitterly to be easily satisfied, replied—"I grant you they work cheaper, and mayhap better than we do; but I say it again, what's that to us who are turned adrift by them? If we have no work we have no wages, and then we have no means of getting at the goods, be they cheap or dear."

"There's no factory that can go alone," replied Hopkins: "there are always men and women, ay, and children too, wanted to manage the machinery.—Now, answer me this one question. Do you think that as machines improve, and new ones are invented, there are more or fewer people employed in factories than before?"—"Fewer, no doubt," said Jackson, "by just the number thrown out of work by the new or improved machinery."

"So it is, if you look no further than your nose," answered Hopkins. "You never think of the increase of work at the factories in consequence of the new machinery; and of the number of people in the end employed in them. I have heard old Master Spires, who has had no less than fifty years' experience in the manufacturing line say, that when first spinning-mills were set up, numbers of hand spinners could no longer get their bread, the mills doing the work so much cheaper than the spinning-wheel. So there was great alarm among the people, and rioting to such a pitch, that several of the mills were destroyed; but at last the mills were built up again, and the rioters put down."—"Ay," interrupted Jackson, "that's the way of the world, the rich are the strongest and always gain their point in the end."

"Well, but let us see what that end is," cried Hopkins. "Old Spires told me, that no more than ten years after the setting up of the spinning mills, the trade increased so much, in consequence of the goods being cheaper, that the number of people employed, both as spinners or weavers, was no less than forty times as many as when

the spinning was done by hand. So, you see, that if the folks were thrown out of work one while, they had ample amends afterwards."

"Ay, but they might have been all starved before the ten years were out."

"Why, look ye, Jackson; the mills did not employ forty times as many all on a sudden, as it were, at the end of ten years. No, it increased by degrees. When the mills were first set up they began on a small scale. Let us say, that they turned half of the hand spinners out of work. At the end of a twelvemonth the trade, perhaps, had increased so much, that all those who had forsaken their wheels might find work at the mills, if they chose it. The next year the mills would perhaps employ double the number, and so go on regularly increasing, till at the end of ten years they set to work forty times as many as gained their livelihood by spinning before the mills were set up.

"Master Spires told me another story, about an old crone, who was somewhat of your way of thinking, Jackson.—'She was sitting at her wheel,' said he, 'in the chimney-corner, and grumbling at me who was concerned in the factory, because she could not get half so much by her spinning as she did formerly. Just then the bell at the mills rung, and the people were let out from work. Soon after, in came two men, three women, and four or five children, who were all grandchildren, or great-grandchildren of the old woman.—"And what do these get by their work?" said Spires; "twenty times as much as you ever made by your wheel, I'll warrant?" But she would not listen to reason, and fell abusing the factory, insisting that the old times were the best. I asked her how much she gave for a cotton gown in those good old times.' "Why, I never had one to my back," replied she. "Cotton gowns were only made for our betters in those days; for they cost a power of money far beyond our reach."—"Well," said Spires; "look at your grandchildren, the lads have cotton shirts, and the lasses neat cotton gowns; and I'll be bound to say, they do not cost them more than five shillings each; whilst I know that in the days of your youth they cost a guinea, or more. And why are they so much cheaper now? Because the cotton is spun and woven at the factory."—"Umph!" cried she, drawing herself up; "they might have worn stuff gowns, as their betters did before them."—"Ay, but," said one of the lads, "we could not wear stuff shirts, grandam."—"And as for stuff gowns," said a smart looking girl, turning up her nose with a look of contempt; "they are not half so nice and so clean as cotton ones, for summer at least."—"Besides," said Spires, "stuffs are made in a factory as well as cottons." The old woman still stood out for the good old times, so Spires thought he would take her upon another tack, and asked her what she paid for stockings in the days of her youth? "Nothing at all," answered she; "for I was fain to go barefooted: stockings were too dear, and we never found the want of them."—"Then, why not do without them now, and spend the money in something you *do* want? But, methinks, you would be loth to part with that pair of worsted stockings that keeps your feet so warm and comfortable; and your grandchildren would not be willing to part with theirs either, for the comfort or the look of it."—"There's no need we should," cried the old crone; "they are cheap enough now for us to afford to wear them."—"And why?" replied Spires; "because they were woven in a loom, and made with half the labour that was bestowed on them, when they were knitted."—"Lookye, goody, added he; "not only is this large family of yours supplied with food and clothing by machinery, but some of them may owe their

very lives to it; for they might have died from want, had there been no factory here."—"For that matter," cried the dame; "it pleased the Lord to take more than half my children; for I had twelve born alive, and I reared only four."—"That was in the good old times," said Spires, smiling archly. "But tell me, have you lost half your grandchildren?"—"No," replied she; "their mothers had better luck. I have had sixteen grandchildren born, and only six died."—"No luck in the case," replied Spires; "only the children were better provided for, and it is the will of God, that children should die, when their parents either do not or cannot provide for them. So, it's my belief, that these likely lads and buxom lasses not only owe their cotton shirts and gowns to the factory, but one half of them their lives to it also.'"—"And he was right," continued Hopkins; "there's no reckoning up the good that comes of machinery one way or other. We manufacture goods not only for ourselves, but for almost every other country, as I've heard say, and why? Because we can make goods cheaper, and all on account of the superiority of our machinery. I tell you there's no country has so many factories as Old England; and there's none employ so many hands. How, then, can machinery prevent labour? on the contrary, it increases it, and affords a maintenance to thousands." Hopkins now stopped, fairly out of breath, and left time for Jackson to observe, that other countries had factories as well as England. "They have," replied Hopkins; "they are always after copying our machinery; but John Bull is a shrewd fellow, and contrives to keep a-head of them all. He has a quick insight and a ready hand, and is for ever inventing something new to improve his machinery, and get the work done better or cheaper than his neighbours, so as to be able to undersell them."

Jackson could answer nothing but a repetition of his old complaint; he declared, that the new inventions made the fortunes of the master manufacturers, but starved the labourers.

The patience of Hopkins was well nigh exhausted, at having this argument again brought forward, when he thought he had completely refuted it; but he was so desirous to bring round Jackson to his way of thinking, that he determined to make another trial.—"Yours is a hard case, Jackson, I allow," said he; "and it is that which blinds you to the truth; but there cannot be many cases like yours; else, how could the country become more and more populous every year? and that no one can deny. Why, if machinery drove people away to foreign lands, or starved them at home, there would be a decrease instead of an increase of people, would there not?"

"As for that matter," replied Jackson, "the population depends on the numbers that are born; and I think, for my part, that the poorer folks are, the more children they have."

"Remember what Master Spires said to the old crone, Jackson; though many be born, few can be reared, unless there be food for the stomach, and clothes to the back. So, if there are more children reared now than there were formerly, you must admit that their parents are better off. Now, it is not so much because more are born, but because fewer die, that the country increases in population.

"Fewer die!" repeated Jackson, laughing; "why, you know as well as I, that they are all sure to die one day or other."

"Ay! but it makes a rare difference, whether that day comes soon or late, eh, Jackson? I tell you, people's lives last out longer than they used to do years ago. More children grow up to man's estate—grown-up men are more healthy, and the old have fewer infirmities, and are not so soon cut off. Fifty years back, one man in forty died every year; now only one in fifty-eight dies; that makes eighteen years difference; and you and I shall not be sorry to have a fair chance of living eighteen years longer than our forefathers? Nay, if you go back to the good old times, some hundred years ago, there were two died then for one that dies now. And why? Because we are better fed, better clothed, better nursed when young, and better doctored when sick. Now, all this bettering comes from things being made cheaper, and sold cheaper through the help of machines; so, instead of grumbling at them, you should thank God for having given men the power of inventing contrivances to shorten and cheapen labour; and the sense to find out, that wind, and water, and steam will work without tiring, both by night and by day; and, what's more, without pay." "Ay, I wish you had heard the story an old pedlar told us one day; he said, that wind,' and water, and steam worked like giants, and without requiring either food or clothing, or lodging, or wages."

"And for what purpose?" interrupted Jackson, who was only waiting for an opportunity to thrust in his old argument, "just to turn us poor folk out of work!"—"No such thing!" retorted Hopkins, impatiently; "for the purpose of making the good things of this world cheap and plenty; so that the poor may be able to get at them as well as the rich."—"Talk till doomsday," replied Jackson, "you will never persuade me, that when the master manufacturer hits upon some new devise to improve his machinery, it's with an eye to the good of any but himself."

"Mayhaps not," replied Hopkins; "but the fact is, that they can't do good to themselves without doing good to others also. I tell you, it's in the nature of things; for," added he, devoutly raising his eyes, "there is One above who looks to the good of the poor as well as of the rich; and if he puts it into the head of manufacturers how to shorten labour and to cheapen goods, he does it for our advantage as well as theirs. Yes," added he, with a pious emphasis, "God Almighty, who made 'the sun to shine upon the just and the unjust,' is good to all; and he created wind, and water, and steam, to work for the benefit of all, the poor as well as the rich."

"Well, if it had pleased God," exclaimed Jackson, "to have given us food and clothing ready to our hand, as he has given us water to drink and air to breathe, without stir or trouble, we should have wanted neither work nor wages. The world would have gone on famously then," added he, chuckling at his bright idea. Hopkins was not sorry to hear something new. There was some ingenuity in Jackson's observation; and, though Hopkins thought it could not be true, he knew not what objection to raise against it. He had recourse (as he commonly had in such a dilemma,) to scratching his head; and if the action did not call forth new ideas, it at least gave him time to reflect on what he should say. "So one would think," at length replied he; "but you may be sure God knows best what is good for us: and, since it has not been his pleasure to give us food and clothing gratis, as it were, you may be certain that it would not have been for our good. Why and wherefore is more than I can tell: perhaps," added he, with more alacrity, a bright thought having crossed his mind,—"perhaps, because it would have made us all idle: and I am apt to think that would have led us to frequenting the public

house. If beer and spirits had been as plenty as water, what drunkards we should have all been! and then the broils that would have followed! No, Jackson, it is better as it is: idleness is the parent of vice, you know."

"Why, now you are not consistent," quoth Jackson: "if it is good for man to labour, why get machines to do the work instead of us?"

"Not for the sake of being idle," replied Hopkins; "but because the less labour we bestow on one thing, the more we shall have to give to another; and the less labour things cost, the cheaper we shall buy them. Now, it is quite as important for us to have things cheap as to have plenty of work; for the wages of one week will buy as much of cheap goods as the wages of two weeks will of dear ones. And I have told you, over and over again, (but I cannot hammer it into your head,) that the way to make things cheap is to produce them by machinery. When wind, and water, and fire and steam do the work, the goods are sold so reasonably, that almost every one can afford to buy. You well know there's a much greater demand for cheap than for dear goods; and, in order to satisfy so great a demand, more and more must be made, and more hands taken in at the factory; till, in the end, many more come to be employed to manage the machinery than there was before to do the work without it. And, when increase of employment goes along with cheapness of production, you have every thing you can wish;—more commodities, more work, and more comfort and enjoyment within your reach."

"And, pray, where did you pick up all this learning?" enquired Jackson. "It's surely never out of your own head."—"No, for a truth," replied Hopkins; "my head has, however, been given to these matters for a long time past; and I never missed gathering what I could from those who knew more than myself. I have learnt a good deal from talking with my landlord, who has a great knack at these things, and he gave me a little book, called 'The Working Man's Companion;' but, small as it is, there's a world of knowledge in it. "I found it rather hard at first; but he helped me on with it by an explanation now and then; and it's there I learnt all the good that comes of machinery, and the folly and wickedness of opposing it."

"Well, I should like to see the book," said Jackson.—"Here it is," returned Hopkins, producing the volume on the results of machinery. "Come, I will read you a bit," continued he, turning over the leaves till he came to a place which he thought suited his purpose. "Here," said he, "they are talking of a poor ignorant people called the New Zealanders, who had no machinery whatever; scarcely so much as a tool to work with.

"Page 31. 'The chief distinction between man in a rude, and man in a civilised state of society is, that the one wastes his force, whether natural or acquired; the other economises, that is, saves it. The man in a rude state has very rude instruments; he, therefore, wastes his force: the man in a civilised state has very perfect ones; he, therefore, economises it.... One of the chiefs of the people of New Zealand, who, from their intercourse with Englishmen, had learnt the value of tools, told Mr. Marsden, a missionary, that his wooden spades were all broken, and he had not an axe to make any more:—his canoes were all broken, and he had not a nail or a gimlet to mend

them with:—his potatoe grounds were uncultivated, and he had not a hoe to break them up with:—and that, for want of cultivation, he and his people would have nothing to eat. This shows you the state of the people without tools.......

"'The New Zealanders live exactly on the opposite side of our globe; and, therefore, very seldom come near us; but, when they do come, they are acute enough to perceive the advantages which machinery has conferred upon us: and the great distance, in point of comfort, between their state and ours, principally for the reason that they have no machinery, while we have a great deal. One of these poor men burst into tears when he saw a rope-walk, because he perceived the immense superiority which the process of spinning ropes gave us over his countrymen. Another of these people, and he was a shrewd and intelligent man, carried back to his country a small hand-mill for grinding corn, which he prized as the greatest of all earthly possessions.'

"Now," continued Hopkins, laying down his book, "you must know that Old England and New Zealand are much of a size; and, while we have twenty-six millions of people, New Zealand has only ten thousand; that is, two thousand six hundred men in England to one in New Zealand. And, moreover, one of us working people in England is better off by far than the chiefs of New Zealand;—better fed, better clothed, and more comforts in every respect: and that because they have not yet found out how to make wind, and water, and fire, and steam work for them; and so they remain poor, half starved, half naked savages, living in huts, such as you would scarcely put a pig in.

"And, do you know, Jackson, that, if you read the history of England, you will see that, once upon a time, (it's ages ago; before any factories were set up,) England was no better off than New Zealand; so you see what we have gained by our machinery."

Jackson still looked discontented; and Hopkins confessed that his was a hard case, a very hard case; "But you cannot," added he, "say that the power-loom does an injury to the people at large. If the weaving is cheaper done by it, the goods are cheaper sold; and all those who buy are gainers by it; you and I as well as others. You are always harping after the loss you make as a weaver, and never think of the benefit you receive as a consumer."

"Much good will the cheap weaving do me here," cried Jackson, "when I am far away."

"I don't know for that," replied Hopkins; "go where you will, the English manufactures will follow you; especially in America; and there you would not be sorry to get them as low as you could."

"All I know," grumbled Jackson, "is, that the power-loom has been the ruin of me here."

"But when we talk of the good of the people and the good of the country," said Hopkins, emphatically, "we must remember that there are others in the country besides yourself and your fellow weavers at the hand-loom. You are the only

sufferers, whilst the whole of the population are gainers. Now, I ask you, would it be fair to set aside the power-loom merely to benefit these few, to the loss of millions of men? It would be injuring ten thousand, at least, for the good of one. Then, let me tell you, if you had not stuck so obstinately to your hand-loom, though losing ground by it every year, you might have turned your hand to something else, as many others have done. I have been told there are no less than twenty thousand journeymen silk weavers who were turned adrift, and are now working at the cotton factory at Manchester. One must take courage, man, and go along with the stream; for we cannot stop it, do what we will. Many have tried hard at it by rioting and violence; but what was the end of it? The rioters were always put down, sooner or later: some were hanged, others transported, and the improvements in machinery went on all the same."

"They had their revenge, however, on the masters of the factories," said Jackson; "for many a steam-engine and a factory has been destroyed in such riots."

"And where's the good of that?" cried Hopkins: "why, it is burning your own house to set your neighbour's stables on fire! for, when the factory is destroyed, the workmen are all turned adrift; and what are they to do? no one will employ them; so, for one master ruined, there are perhaps five hundred of his men in the same predicament. Then take the people at large: the goods the factory made would become more scarce and dearer than before; and they would suffer from this till the factory was rebuilt and placed again upon the old footing. So, after quarrelling, and fighting, and being punished, (some by the law, others by their own folly,) you just return to the point from whence you set out. Can there be greater madness, than, when you want to live cheap, to destroy the very means of making things so? Why, it is much of a piece with burning the stacks of corn to make bread cheaper. No, believe me, if you could show a machine to be an evil, you only increase the evil by attempting to destroy it. Master manufacturers will make their goods at the cheapest rate: do what you will, you can't prevent it; and I say, thank God for it: for the cheaper they make, the cheaper they sell; and we are all benefited by that. But, since you choose to seek your fortune elsewhere, why, I wish you success with all my heart; a prosperous voyage, and good luck at the end of it."

Upon this he shook Jackson cordially by the hand, and they took leave of each other; Hopkins fancying that his arguments had produced a great effect; but Jackson was too much blinded by his prejudices, and the losses he had sustained, for his mind to be open to conviction; and, as he went away, he mumbled to himself,—"Ay, it's fine talking; but where's the good of all these helps, when they do not help me to a single meal?"

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 8
FOREIGN TRADE;
OR,
THE WEDDING GOWN.

ONE evening, when John returned from his work, he found his daughter Patty showing off a new silk gown to her mother. It was a present which her lover had just given her, for the approaching wedding day. Patty's eyes, which had seldom beheld any thing so beautiful, shone with delight, as her mother admired it; and her father gave her a hearty kiss, and said she would be as smart a bride as had ever been married in the village. "Ay, and it is a French silk, too, mother," exclaimed Patty.—"Why, as for that," replied her mother, "I don't see the more merit in its being French; and I did not think, Patty, you were such a silly girl as to have all that nonsense in your head. No, indeed, it is bad enough for the great lady-folks to make such a fuss about French finery, so that they can't wear a bit of honest English riband. I don't like your gown a bit the better for being French. No; and I should have thought that your husband, that is to be, might have given you an English silk instead."

Patty was not pleased that her mother should find any fault with her new present, and her future husband; so she said, she thought there was no harm in the gown being French, if Barton could afford to give it to her; "and for my own wedding too," added she, with a blush.—"It is not that he can't afford it, child; but don't you see the shame of an Englishman going to buy French silks, while his own countrymen are working so hard for their bread at the manufactories at home? Why, they can get nobody to buy their English goods now, and the poor workmen will soon have to go to the parish or starve; and all because the fine ladies must be for ever sending over to foreign parts for their lace and silks, and all that."

Poor Patty was sadly put out: but her mother did not perceive it; and she went on abusing the gown, which she had admired so much until she had learned that it was French. "No, no," continued she, "I shall be ashamed if my girl is not married in an English gown, and tell Barton so," she added, pushing aside the smart present.

Patty tried to put in a word, but in vain. "Why, there is our girl Nancy, who works for a riband weaver at Nottingham, your father wrote to ask whether she could get in one of her youngest sisters; but she sent back word that trade was very slack, and that they were more likely to turn off hands than to take any more in: that while so many ribands came from France one could expect no better; and that it was well if we did not see her home again for want of work. It is a crying sin," added the dame, indignantly; "and I should be glad to know whether my Nancy can't make as good a riband as any of the French girls? I'm sure the one she sent me was as pretty as any one need wish to look on." John readily agreed that the English could make these things just as well at home, as others could in foreign countries. "Nay, and even if we did not," said the wife, "I think the great people ought to give a turn to their own country folks, and encourage home manufactures, instead of having all their finery

made by foreign hands, and sent to them from foreign parts. Why, I have heard Lady Charlotte's maid, up at the castle, say, there's no end to the loads of silks, and laces, and ribands, and flowers, her Lady-ship gets from beyond seas; and, instead of being ashamed of it, she is proud to wear them, and to show them off to her acquaintances."

Now Tom, who was a good sharp lad, and given to be waggish, said,—"I wish that the French mounseers, instead of sending so much frippery for the rich, would send some good bread and cheese for us poor folks."—"And so they would, if you would pay for it," replied his father; "for they are not such fools as to send us their goods for nothing."—"Well, but how are the goods paid for?" asked Tom; "for uncle Bob, who has been over the sea to foreign lands, tells me, that when he goes to an alehouse in those outlandish parts, and has to pay for a draught of beer, they won't take our English money?" Uncle Bob, although he had not yet joined in the talk, had been in the room all the while; for he had come up from Liverpool on purpose to be present at Patty's wedding. He now pulled off his spectacles, and laying down the newspaper, which he had been quietly reading in a corner, said,—"That is true, but you should not say an alehouse, Tom, for there is little enough of ale or beer to be had there: they give you nothing but wine at their public houses. And, sure enough, they would take neither pence nor shillings, nor pounds either (if I had had them). The French will be paid in their own money, which they call sols and francs; and the Spaniards will have their own dollars."—"And how do you manage to pay for what you buy there?" asked John.—"Why, I get my English money changed into the money of the country where I happen to be. That is easy enough for the little I want; but it would never do to pay for all the goods that come over here from foreign parts."

This puzzled John not a little, when suddenly a wiser thought than usual came across him:—"If they won't take the money," said he, "perhaps they will take the money's worth, and that is all one."—"What do you mean by the money's worth, father?"—"Why, something that's worth as much as the money. They will take goods, for instance, instead of money. Ay, for now I remember, when I went over to Leeds to see your brother that works in the cloth factory, there was such a power of broad cloth piled up, of all sorts and fashions; there were some with mighty fine patterns; and I thought them rather queer for us Englishmen to wear; but Dick said that all those pieces were for foreign parts; and that if they did not please the fancy of foreigners, who liked showy patterns, they would not take our goods. 'You may guess,' added Dick, 'by the piles you see of them yonder, how much they like these.' And he told me they had orders for many more, so that they should be wanting more hands; and that if I sent one of the boys next spring, he thought they could find work for him. Now, don't you see, Tom, this is the way we pay for French goods. We pay them in kind, as it were; goods for goods; and the goods being worth as much as the money we should have paid for them, it is all one, as if we had paid in money."—"Why, it is much like my changing my top again Harry Fair-burn's marbles," said Tom. "And do they send us as much goods as we send them?"

"Why, as for that," replied his father, scratching his head, while he was thinking of an answer, "as broadcloth is much more bulky than laces or silks, we must send over larger cargoes than we receive in return. But, mind you, not more costly. No, no, we

are sharper than that comes to. We should never be such fools as to send to foreigners what was worth more than they sent us. We give money's worth for money's worth."

"Then, if they work for us as much as we work for them," said Tom, "methinks it's tit for tat; and there is no one turned out of work, neither here nor there."

"Why, have not you just heard that your sister Nancy is like to be turned off at Nottingham, because they will wear so many French ribands?"

"Ay, but," said Tom archly, who could not help thinking of his own prospect, "but have not you said that I am likely to be taken in at Leeds, because foreigners wear our English cloths. So you see, father, it is as broad as it is long."

The father was puzzled, and he could think of nothing to reply to Tom, who had certainly the best of the argument. While he remained half grumbling at being set down by so young a lad, uncle Bob exclaimed, "The boy is right enough. Where is the sense of crying down French silks? why, it is just crying down our own broad cloth."—Patty's face brightened up, and she thought that Barton was right after all, and that she should wear her gay gown at the wedding. Uncle Bob continued,—"If we won't wear any more foreign merchandise, why foreigners won't wear any more of ours; for we shan't send ours over for nothing, that is quite certain."—"So much the better," muttered John, "let us each wear our own manufactures."

"Better for Nancy, but worse for Dick and Tom too," cried uncle Bob; "for, if there are no French silks and ribands to pay for, there will be no cloth made to pay them with, for look ye, cloth is the money we pay with. I say, and I'll maintain it too, that every piece of silk, and not silk only, but lace, or cambric, or wine, or what not, that comes from France, or Spain, or Germany, or even from as far off as the Indies, East or West (for Bob was fond of talking of the many countries he had seen); I say, every piece of foreign goods that comes over to England employs just as many of our workmen as if they made it themselves. What care our workmen whether they are making ribands and silks for their own countryfolk, or broad cloth for foreigners? What they want is to be employed, and that is all.—Why it is as clear as broad day; though it never struck me before, till the lad hit on it."

John was not much pleased to find his brother take part with Tom; however, he could not but think they seemed to be in the right, and that foreign trade did neither good nor harm. But they had not got at the whole truth yet, as the second part of the story will show.

SECOND PART.

JOHN had pondered all these things a good deal in his mind, at a loss what to think or what to believe, when one day his landlord looked in upon him to talk over farming matters. Before the squire went away, John took courage to ask him about what was uppermost in his mind, and said,—"May I be so bold as to ask your honour a question?" The landlord nodded good naturedly. "Why, then, my brother Bob and my son Tom, but a bit of a chap as he is, have been arguing with me that we neither gain

nor lose by trading with foreign parts, and wearing foreign manufactures." Then observing the landlord smile, "you may think, perhaps," added he, twirling his hat in his hands, "that I ought to be minding my own concerns, and not troubling my head about what is above my capacity."

"I am very far from thinking," said the landlord, "that it is not your business to reflect and consider what is or what is not good for your country. It is not only the right but the duty of every free-born Englishman to do so to the best of his abilities. This, thank God, is not a land in which we are afraid of the people learning to distinguish between right and wrong, even in matters which concern the welfare of the country."

John was pleased: he held up his head and seemed to think all the better of himself for being counted among those who had a right to think about the welfare of the country. "I am sure," thought he, "if I had informed myself to the best of my ability before I went to the fairy, I should never have been such a fool as to have made her turn every thing upside down, as I did twice running." Then, addressing the landlord, he said,—" Indeed, your honour's right; for, in my mind, there is more mischief done for want of knowing better than there is from sheer wickedness."

"I am quite of your opinion," replied the landlord; "but, as for Bob and young Tom, there, I think they are somewhat mistaken in supposing that the country neither loses nor gains by foreign trade."

"Ay, I told you so," said John, exultingly, addressing himself to his brother and the boy.

"Then I hope your honour will set us right," replied Bob.—"Why," said the landlord, "I maintain that, when two countries trade freely with each other, they are both gainers."—"Hear what his honour says now," cried Bob: "no loss on either side, but both gainers:—all prizes, and no blanks!"

"This requires some explanation," said the landlord, "which I will try to give you. Foreigners send over to us such goods as they can make or produce cheaper and better than we can; therefore, when we buy those goods, we get them cheaper or better than we could have made them ourselves."

"There's no denying that," cried Bob, "for if they were not either cheaper or better than we can make, we should not buy them." Tom chuckled in a corner, though he did not dare open his lips.

"Now, for instance," continued the landlord, observing the piece of silk for Patty's wedding-gown, which was laid upon the table; "they have the art of making silks cheaper in France than we have in England. You may buy a silk in France for the value of two shillings a yard, which would cost you three in England. Well, then, every yard of French silk sold in England (supposing there were no duty) would be a shilling saved to those who buy it."

"And a shilling saved is a shilling gained," said Bob. "Then, she who buys a French instead of an English silk gown (supposing it took ten yards) would have ten shillings left in her pocket, would she not?"

"Certainly; and so, if many French gowns were bought, there would be many a ten shillings saved. This money," continued the land-lord, "might be laid by till wanted; or it might be spent immediately, in cotton gowns, perhaps, for the children, or shoes and stockings, or pots and pans; in short, whatever article may chance to be wanted; but, whatever it be, it will have employed people to produce it; and there is so much the more work for the labouring classes. While, on the other hand, if an English silk gown had been bought, the ten shillings saved would have been spent, and nothing more could have been purchased."—"Then it is very clear," said Bob, "that, if people wear the dear English silk gowns instead of the cheaper French ones, there is less work for our work people."

"You are quite right," answered the landlord; "and it is just the same with every other article that is purchased from abroad as it is with silk. So long as we get goods cheaper we make a saving, and that saving sets more hands to work."

"Ay," said John, "that's all very well for us; but your honour told us that the French were gainers by the trade as well as ourselves: now, it seems to me, that what we gain must be their loss."

"Why so?" cried the landlord. "Take an example or two:—We have more iron in the bowels of the earth, here, than they have in France; we are therefore more used to work it, and do it better than they do. Then we know how to construct steam-engines better; so that the. French can purchase wrought iron and steam-engines cheaper and better of us than they can make them at home. If, then, we send them iron and steam engines in exchange for their silks, they are gainers as well as we."

"But I thought," said John, "that we sent the French people broad cloths in exchange for their silk and laces."

"No; the broad cloths, I believe," said the landlord, "are exported to Spain, Portugal, and other countries. But the name of the country is of no consequence, any more than the name of the goods exchanged; the principle is the same. Buy the goods wherever they are to be had cheapest and best."

"To be sure," cried Dame Hopkins; "that is just what we do ourselves, husband: often is the time that I trudge over to the market town to buy things a trifle cheaper than I can get them in the village."—"Yes, and when you get there," cried Bob, "you go to the best shop, without caring whether its master be friend or foe."

"But," said John, "we don't go over to France to choose the goods as we do at market. It is they send them over to us; and they may chance to send us such goods as we can make as well and as cheap at home: in a word, goods that we don't want from them."

"I can assure you," replied the landlord, "that merchants often do go to foreign countries for the very purpose of choosing such goods as will be most wanted in

England. And when they don't go, they write, which answers much the same purpose."—"But how can they tell what is wanted?" cried Bob; "for, one wants one thing, another wants another; but, to say what most people want, must be a hard matter to make out."—"Far from it," said the landlord; "there is as sure a means of knowing it as if the different sorts of goods had each a voice, and one cried out, 'I am the most wanted;' another, 'I am next;' and another, 'I not at all.'"

This made them all stare; and they listened with great attention to learn what this voice could be.—"It is neither more nor less than the *price* of the goods," said the landlord. "The more goods are wanted the better price they will fetch; so it is the price which I call their voice; and, moreover, a voice that always speaks the truth."—This set them all laughing. "Now," continued the landlord, as soon as they had had their laugh out, "we cannot expect that the French or any other foreigners should send over such goods as we want, just for the pleasure of obliging us: their view is to make money."—"As every dealer's is and ought to be," interrupted Bob, "when it is done above board; that is, fairly and honestly; so we need bear them no grudge for that."

"Very true," continued the landlord; "they seek their own interest, not ours; and send over the goods that will fetch the best price, because those will give them the greatest profit."

"If they don't seek our interest, they find it nevertheless," said Bob; "for the goods which will fetch the best price, are just those which we most want. So, what suits them to sell, suits us to buy: well, to be sure, that is cleverly contrived."

"No wonder that it is clever," replied the landlord; "for it is in the nature of things; which means that it is so ordained by the Author of Nature, an all-wise and beneficent Providence.

"Well, you see, my good friends," continued the landlord, "that foreign trade—that is, trading with foreign countries—is advantageous to every country engaged in it; for, what is true of one, is true of all: and when we buy a piece of foreign goods, be it what it may, or come from whence it will, we encourage the British manufacture thereby, just as much as if we bought the piece of goods at Leeds or Manchester."

"Ay, and a little more, too," cried Bob, "according to your honour's reckoning; for you have forgot to take into the account the money saved by buying the cheaper goods, which saving is laid out in something else, and so sets more hands to work."

"That is true," cried the landlord; "I was falling into your argument, my honest tar, that there was neither loss nor gain in foreign trade; but I am glad to find you steer so clear of error that you can become my pilot. We are agreed then, that there is gain on both sides; and I hope, John, that you begin to think so too."

"Why," said John, "to be sure your honour must know best; and, if all you say be true, (as no doubt it is,) why I can't but say it must be so."

"Well," continued the landlord, "but there is another advantage in foreign trade, which I have not yet mentioned. There are some things, such as good wine, that it would be

impossible for us to make, because our climate is not hot enough to cultivate vineyards; so, if we did not get it from other countries, we should be obliged to go without."

"Oh! for the matter of that," cried John, "foreign wines will never come within our reach: we poor folk should not be the better for them, even if they paid no duty at all."

"But you are sometimes the better for foreign spirits, John, I take it," said the landlord.

"And sometimes the worse, too," said his wife. "However, I have no right to complain; for that is only once in a way."

"Well, to say nothing of the wine and the spirits," continued the landlord, addressing himself to the wife, "you, good dame, would not have a spoonful of sugar to sweeten your tea, without foreign trade. Nor could you give me a pinch of snuff," added he, holding out his hand to John, who first tapped his box and then opening it, respectfully offered it to his landlord.—"And as for the English silks," said Bob, "why we should have had none to dispute about without foreign trade; for, though we can spin and weave silk, we can't breed silk-worms in our climate."—"Nor could you smoke your pipe," said the landlord; "for tobacco is not raised in England any more than silk."—"But I have heard some talk," said John, "of passing a law to let them grow tobacco in Ireland."

"If the law of the land should allow them, I doubt whether the law of nature would," replied the landlord; "for the warm climate of Virginia, in America, whence it comes, is much more favourable to its growth; and, if they attempt to raise it in Ireland, I doubt but that it will cost them dearer, and not be so good."—"Why, then," said John, "it would be wiser to make a law to prevent instead of to allow them to grow it."

"The best way would be to pass no law, either for or against," replied the landlord. "Let men have their own way, and plant and sow, buy and sell, just where and how they like; they will soon find out what will answer best. If they can raise tobacco in Ireland as cheap and as good as in America, they will do it; and if they cannot, they will let it alone."

"Ay," cried Bob, "a man has a sharper look out for his own interest than any one else can have for him."

"So you see, my friends," continued the landlord, "foreign trade has two advantages; for it not only procures things better and cheaper, but things which our climate renders it impossible for us to produce at home; such as wine, sugar, tobacco, plums, currants, rice, spices, cotton, silks, and other things without number."

"Oh, then," cried the good woman, "I could not even treat my children with a plum pudding at Christmas without foreign trade; for there's no making it without plums and spices."

Patty smiled, and cast a look upon her wedding gown, which her mother observing, said,—"Well, child, take it up and make it up. I should be loth to say or think ill of it, after all the squire has told us."

THIRD PART.

"Well, after all," said John, "it's lucky for us they won't take our English money for their goods in foreign countries; for, if we sent them money instead of goods, it might be quite another story."—"And why not send them money?" enquired the landlord. "Why, your honour's joking, now," said John, with a smile and a shrug: "you know it would not encourage our manufactures; for we do not manufacture money: we get it from South America, as I have heard."—"And have you heard," asked the landlord, "how we pay for it?"—"Why no, I can't say I have," said John, ruminating. "Pay for money! why it's like giving them the money back again; it can't be so: and yet it must be paid somehow."—"It's sure enough," cried Bob, "the Americans will not send it us for nothing: they would no more do that than the French would send us their silks for nothing: and yet, how to pay for money I can't well guess. We cannot give gold for gold; that would be like sending coals to Newcastle."

"If we paid for the money in cash," said John, "it would be just sending them back what they had sent us. And there would be all the expense of sending it across the ocean and back again, just for nothing at all."

"Besides, I doubt their taking it back," said Bob; "for they want any thing there rather than money."—"True," said the landlord; "they are all so busy digging for gold and silver there, that they have no time to manufacture goods; so it is manufactured goods which they want."

"Then we pay for money with manufactured goods," said John: "that seems very odd to us, who are so used to do just the contrary, and pay for goods with money."—" And what do the Americans do?" said the landlord.—"They give us the money in return for our goods," replied John.

"Why, father," cried Tom, "methinks that's no more nor less than buying our goods."

"Sure enough," cried Bob, "they buy our goods with gold, and we buy their gold with goods."

"Now," said the landlord, "supposing that you sent money to France to pay for their silks and laces, you would want more gold from America, and you must manufacture more goods to pay for that gold."

"Ah, so it is," cried John, as the truth suddenly came across his mind; "and it's all one whether we send the goods to America to pay for the gold, or to France to pay for the silks."

"In both cases," continued the landlord, "the labouring manufacturer will have employment. Thus, you see, my friends, work in one country is sure to produce work

in another country, provided a free trade—that is, liberty to exchange goods—be allowed. But, though this advantage will be general, I do not mean to say that it will be without exception: some manufactures may occasionally suffer. If we import French silks and French china, we shall make less silk and less china at home; but then, other manufactures will flourish in proportion as these fail; so that, if workmen are turned off in the one, they may find employment in the other."

"Ay, but," observed John, "it's no such easy matter to turn one's hand from one sort of work to another."

"That's very true," replied the landlord; "and many are the poor who suffer from being obliged to make such a change. This world is not perfect, as we all well know; but it is improving; and a free foreign trade would do much towards increasing the industry, wealth, and comforts of the poor; for, I trust you are now satisfied, that the country which deals with foreign nations will employ considerably more labourers than those which produce and manufacture only for themselves."

The landlord now took his leave; and John confessed that he had explained it all so clearly, that he had been quite brought over to his way of thinking. Patty had understood so far as related to her wedding gown, which she now took up, and skipped away in great glee to have it made up.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Essay 9
THE CORN TRADE;
OR,
THE PRICE OF BREAD.

JOHN HOPKINS was walking with farmer Stubbs over his farm one day, examining the crops. They passed through a field of wheat in which the scarlet poppies were nearly as plentiful as the ears of corn. "Methinks, Master Stubbs," said John, "this field will scarcely pay you the labour it has cost you; you will get but a poor pennyworth out of it; and I'll venture to say, you must have put a good pennyworth into it, to make it yield even the little it does, seeing it's such a bad soil."

"I'm not such a fool as that comes to, neither," returned the farmer. "Though I may not have served my time at book-keeping, I know how to reckon up of the goings out and the comings in; ay, and to give a shrewd guess what they are like to be before I sow my crop; and if I did not see a fair chance of the field paying its expenses, ay, and a profit to boot, why, I should not have sown it. It is true, corn does not fetch so good a price as it once did, but it is good enough yet to make even this pitiful bit of soil give me a profit."

"Ah! but," says John; "you have some beautiful corn fields on the sunny side of the hill, with the stream at the bottom. That's a fine soil and a fine aspect, and those are crops it does one's heart good to look at, and will pay you well, and make up for the poverty of this here field, and so one with another you make a fair profit; but if you were to sow this field alone, I question whether you would get any thing by it."

"There you are mistaken," replied Stubbs; "for if I did not make any thing by it in corn, I should lay it down in grass; or if it was not good enough for that, I should plant it."

"But how can you tell," said Hopkins, "whether you make any thing by this very field or not? for you send your corn to market in the lump, without reckoning which field it comes from."

"It's a farmer's business," replied Stubbs, "if he means to thrive in the world, to find out what answers, and what don't. I know how many bushel of corn this same field gives me, and how much I sell it for: then, on the other side, I reckon the labour, and the manure, and the seed corn, in a word, all that the crop costs me; and if I did not find that I got a profit—mind ye, I do not mean such a profit as the crops t'other side of the hill give me, but a decent profit—for such a soil, this field would be a corn field no more."

"Well," said John, with a sigh, "it's hard that we poor folk are forced to pay so much for our bread, that you farmers may make a profit on such a miserable bit of soil as this."

"Why, it's not I that fix the market price," retorted Stubbs. "I must sell my corn for what it will fetch, cheap or dear, or I should not be able to carry on the outgoings of the farm; for I've no store of money on hand as our landlord has, who may keep his crops back when the price is low, until the market rises. Then I should be glad to know, how you would be the better for this field not being sown? for supposing this field, and all other fields in the country that had no better soil, were laid down in grass, why there would be much less corn in the markets (for there's a good number of such fields in the land, I can tell you); and you know well enough what follows a scarcity of corn at market, Hopkins?"

"Why, a rise of price," answered Hopkins.

"So, then, you see, man, you are all in the wrong," exclaimed Stubbs, exultingly, "to think that my raising corn on poor land does you any harm. Why, it's all for your good, John; for you see that if I and others did not do so, corn would rise, and bread would be dearer."

"Not quite so sure of that, neither, Master Stubbs," replied John, demurely. "You may think it bold in me, who am but a poor man, and no farmer, to venture to argue with you, who know so much about it. But, you must know that I have had a deal of talk of late with the squire, (who is your landlord as well as mine,) about foreign trade; and, if I could but tell you all he said, Master Stubbs, you would be quite in a wonderment to hear the good foreign trade does the country. And brother Bob, who has been so much in foreign parts, was all of one mind with his honour. Nay, it was so clear, that even my boy Tom understood it: and, though I tried all I could to argue against them, they brought me round at last."

"Clear as it may be, I think it has turned your head, Hopkins," replied Stubbs. "I should be glad to know what foreign trade can have to do with my raising corn on poor land."—"Why, don't you see," replied John, "if we could get our corn from foreign parts, where it is cheaper than it is here, we should be better off?"

"Oh, that's what you are after," cried Stubbs, with a shrug: "and so you would ruin the farmers of your own country, would you, to make the fortunes of your outlandish French jackanapes. Well, I thought better of you than that comes to."—"Don't you fly off in such a huff, Master Stubbs," said John. "God knows, I have no wish to ruin you or any other farmer; nor was I for caring about making the fortune of foreigners: what I was thinking of, was, how to get bread cheapest for my own children; and every poor man has a right to think about that: and, what's more, it is his duty, too."—"Well; but you will not persuade me that the squire told you that it was good for the country to get corn from foreign parts, unless it be in times of scarcity, when the price is very high; and then, you know, the law allows it; for it don't hurt the farmer. But, as for making a free corn trade at all times, as some fools talk of, why, our landlord knows his interest too well to dream of such a thing."

"And why should not the poor look to their own interest as well as the rich?" said Hopkins; "and if corn coming from foreign parts would make bread cheaper, why should they not say that the law of the land ought to allow it, and have an eye to their

good as well as that of the landholder?"—"You may think and you may say what you please," cried Stubbs; "but let me tell you, that as long as the landholders make the laws, they will not be such fools as to make a law to undo themselves. Ask a man to cut his own throat? why it's sheer nonsense."—"Well, I've a better opinion of the landholders than you," replied Hopkins. "Take our landlord, for example. It's true, he did not say any thing about corn."—"No, I was sure enough of that," interrupted Stubbs.—"But he told us," continued John, "that whenever we could get any thing from abroad cheaper than we could make it at home, it was for the good of the country that we should get it from abroad. I can't go over all his arguments, but they were as clear as broad day."—"It may be so, for aught I know," said Stubbs, "with manufactured goods, their French silks and frippery, that's made with hands; but we don't make corn, we grow it."—"Well, but though the squire did not just speak of corn, he made no difference between things that are grown and things that are made; for he talked of tobacco, and currants, and raisins, and loads of other things, the growth of the soil: and I am sure he would have said as much of corn, if it had but come into my head to have asked him."—"Nay, nay," retorted Stubbs, shaking his head with an incredulous look, "he has too good a head for that."—"I know he has a good head," replied Hopkins; "for he not only understands these matters himself, but he knows how to make us poor unlettered folks understand them too. But then, Master Stubbs, I'll warrant his heart is as sound as his head: and if he thought it was for the welfare of the country that the corn trade should be free, and that we poor folks would fare better for it, why he would give it up manfully; and never mind it's hurting himself a bit."

"He's free to do as he likes," said Stubbs; "but let me tell him, he must not expect me to pay him such a rent as I do now, if every foreign vessel that chose to bring their trash of corn into our ports were free of our markets. No, no, as soon as my lease was out (and that's next Michaelmas come two years), I should say, 'You may take the farm upon your own hands, or let it me at a lower rent, for I have been losing instead of gaining a livelihood ever since the corn trade has been free.'"—"Well, then you need not be in such a taking, Master Stubbs; for, let the worst come to the worst, you can but be a loser for a couple of years. No farmer could be a loser beyond the term of his lease; for then he would strike a new bargain. Besides, I am given to think, that, if the trade were free, there would be such an outcry among the farmers, that the landlords would make them some amends even during the run of the lease."—"No, no, they will not be over ready to come down before they must," cried Stubbs. "They would know their loss would be for ever and aye; for they would never get such rents for their farms again—no, never; at least, as long as the trade was free."—"And if once it was," cried John, "it's my mind, it would be for ever and aye: for, when the poor know what it is to have bread cheap and plenty, they won't put up with dearness and scarcity."—"And pray at what price do you think you would have corn, if the trade were free?" cried Stubbs; "for half what you pay now, perhaps; but you're quite mistaken. Corn costs land and labour, whereever it be grown; and I should be glad to know where there's farmers who understand the raising it better than we do here: for I've always heard there's no farming to be compared to that of old England."—"That may be true," replied John, "but yet I've always heard that foreign corn was cheaper than that we grow at home."—"Then," said Stubbs, "it must be worse than ours, for the best farmers ought to raise the best crops; you can't deny that?"—"Why it may,

and it may not be," cried John, thoughtfully. "If foreigners should have a better soil, or greater plenty of land, so that their rent don't run so high, or a finer climate, they may be able to grow corn as good as ours, and yet cheaper, though they do not understand farming so well as we do."—"Well, but granting that in some parts corn may be a trifle cheaper than in England, you forget that there's the freight to pay; and the further it comes from, the more that costs. Then there's sea risks; the ship may be wrecked, and the cargo lost; and even when it arrives in port, oftentimes the sea water gets in and it rots; and though it may not be good enough to bring to market, it must be paid for in the main; for, d' ye see, they won't bring over corn for nothing, and what they lose in one cargo must be made up in the price of another: so, one way or another, I'll venture to say, the trade being open would scarcely make any difference in the price."—"Well, all I can say," replied Hopkins, "is, that if it makes but little difference to me who buy corn, it will make but little difference to you who sell it; so you need not set up such an outcry against it. But I will tell you honestly, that in my mind it would make a great difference; for I know that in America corn is very cheap, and for this plain reason. America is a very large place, with but few people in it: so they have as much land as they choose, and they sow corn on the choice soils. Indeed, they say the soil is so good, that it is well nigh all choice; and wants no manure, and only just scratching over with the plough. So they may well afford to sell their corn cheap, when it costs them so little to grow it; besides, they are ready enough to sell it, being so few to eat it at home."

"Now, that's what comes of talking of what you don't understand," exclaimed Stubbs:—"few people in America, say you? why, I have been told there's ten times as many there as there is in Old England; and you know there's no lack of folks here." John was at first puzzled at this assertion; but, after scratching his head and turning the matter in his mind, he said,—"Mayhap, Master Stubbs, America may be a hundred times bigger than England; and then, you know, it would be much thinner of people, though they were ten times our number. I know you have got a book of maps; so let us give a look into it when we come to the house." They did so, and were both astonished to find that America was not only one hundred, but many hundred, times larger than England. "But, look ye, what a way off it is," cried Stubbs; "and what a heavy charge there must be to bring corn from such a distance."—"It's all across sea," said Hopkins, pointing to the Atlantic Ocean; "and freight aboard ship costs but little. Then, when it gets to England, you see, it comes up one of these great rivers, to London, or to Bristol, or to Liverpool. Besides," continued John, "without going so far as America, I've heard say, that there's many countries nearer at hand, where corn is much more plentiful, and cheaper, than with us. In Poland, where the poor folks have been fighting so hard lately, they have abundance of corn, and are ready to send it over to us whenever the law allows it."

"Ay, provided we pay them a good price for it," cried Stubbs.

"But, what's a good price to them, who grow it cheap, is a low price to us, who grow it dear," replied Hopkins. "Think how it would do one's heart good to get corn as low as forty shillings a quarter, and the quartern loaf at five-pence? Why, it would be a great saving to you, Master Stubbs, with your large family, who eat as much as ever they like."—"Save a penny, and lose a pound," replied Stubbs, sulkily.—"Well, but

when you get a new lease," said John, "you will save the penny without losing the pound."

"That's true enough," replied Stubbs, brightening up. "But still," added he, after a little thought, "look ye, Hopkins,—if bread was so cheap, it would never pay me to raise corn on poor soils, as I do now."

"To be sure," answered Hopkins, "the field we passed through must be laid down in grass; but you would get a fair profit, still, on your corn fields by the river-side."

"Fine talking, indeed," cried Stubbs, angrily: "as if it was a mere nothing to lay down land in grass, when you have been laying loads of dung on it for years past, and lime and what not, to better the soil, and make it produce corn! All that's to be wasted, is it? Why, you never dream the money that is gone that way!"

"There's no help for that," replied Hopkins: "if the trade be made free, that money is clear gone away for ever: and, if you went on raising corn on poor soils, to sell at a loss, I don't see how that would mend the matter."—"That's why I don't want the trade to be thrown open," cried Stubbs.

"But I am talking of what would happen if the trade be thrown open, whether you will or no," said Hopkins.

"Well," said Stubbs; "but though the landlords would be obliged to lower their rents, I doubt much whether they would bring them down so low as to clear us farmers of any loss by the trade being thrown open."—"Why, you are always at liberty not to take the farm," said John.—"Ay; but one would rather make a sacrifice than part with house and home that one has been used to; nor can you part with it without a great loss: besides, how is one to get another farm on better terms, if the landlords agree to hold out against the farmers?"—"Why, then the farmers must hold out against the landlords: and what are they to do, if they cannot let their farms? If they won't allow farmers a fair profit, why, they will look about them for some better means of getting a livelihood."—"Ay, but," replied the farmer, "it's no easy matter to turn your hand to any thing, especially at my time of life; so I must put up with what I can get, rather than seek to change my condition."—"Well, but farmers, if they cannot change, they would at least bring up their children to some other calling; and when the landlords found they had a hard matter to let their farms, they would be obliged to come round at last."

"But," said Stubbs, "suppose you were to get all the corn from those cheap countries you talk of, and there breaks out a war, why, they would send us no more; and we should be in a pretty pickle then."

"If we went to war with one country, we should get the corn from another," said John: "we should hardly fall out with all the corn countries at once."

"I can't answer for that," replied Stubbs, "as the fashion is in these revolutionary times."—"I don't know what you mean by the fashion of the times, Master Stubbs: here's well nigh twenty good years we have had peace in Old England," said John:

"and I have heard say, no one can recollect so long a peace before. There has been fighting abroad, and plenty, it is true; but then, it has not been, as they tell me, so much one nation coming to blows with another, as it has been the people rising up against their rulers when they ruled them with an iron rod; then they wrested it out of their hands, and knocked them down with it. But, take my word for it, war or no war, those who have got corn to sell, will contrive to get it over to a good market. Besides, Master Stubbs, I was never for having all our corn from abroad: grow as much as you will here, on good land; for then it will cost you little to raise; and you can afford to sell it as cheap as we can get it from abroad."—"Ay; but you are forgetting the high rent that's paid for good soil, which makes the corn stand you in as much as that grown on a bad soil."

"Nay," replied John; "it is you who are forgetting that, next Michaelmas two years, your rent will be lowered if the trade be thrown open; so that you may get your profit and we may eat our bread cheap; and all the loss will fall on the landlords, who are best able to bear it. Besides, the poor soils will not lie fallow, though you do not sow them with corn: they will be turned to grass, and feed cattle, which you may make a pretty penny by: and so, meat, and milk, and butter, and cheese, would be more plentiful and cheaper, as well as bread; and our little ones would stand some chance of getting a mess of milk and bread for their breakfasts, and we might more often get a bit of meat in our pot for dinner. Oh, those would be brave times, Stubbs, for us poor folk!"

"Well, you may say what you will," cried Stubbs; "but I can't but have a fellow feeling for the landlords, and would rather by half give them a good turn than your foreign corn-dealers."—"Give a good turn to the poor of your own country, Master Stubbs; it's they want it most; and if, by so doing, we chance to serve our neighbours, why, so much the better, though they are but foreigners. If they have more corn than they want, is not it better that we should have it, than that it should be wasted?"—"Oh, as for that matter," cried Stubbs, "they will take care not to grow more corn than they have a market for. If they have no sale for it abroad, they will raise no more than they want at home. They would not be such fools as to grow corn to have it lie on their hands and rot. Corn is not grown without expense, and a heavy one, too, on the best of soils; so no man in his senses would grow more than he has a fair chance of selling, and with a fair profit besides. No, no, John: wait till home crops fail, and then you may get foreign corn, and welcome."

"But," said John, archly, "have not you just been saying, that, in the corn countries, they will not grow more than they want at home, if they have no regular sale for it abroad; so, if we wait till there comes a scarcity with us, they will not have any to part with."—"Oh, leave them alone for that," cried Stubbs; "when the price rises high, they would sooner take it out of their own mouths than miss the making so good a bargain."—"But, think ye what a price must be paid to tempt them to half starve themselves, in order to let us have the corn. Whilst, if we got some from them regularly every year, why, they would grow it regularly for our market, and we should have no extra price to pay. Then, if there came a scarcity, being such good customers, they would let us have a larger supply than usual, without raising the price out of all reason."—"Well, but they might have a scarcity as well as us," replied Stubbs; "and

then what's to be done? Our corn fields, that have been laid down in grass, cannot be ploughed up in a hurry."—"Nor would there be any need of it," answered Hopkins; "for, if the trade were thrown open, we should not deal with one corn country only, but with a dozen, mayhap; and it's hard if their crops all fail the same year. If the season is bad in this part of the world, there's a good chance of its being fair in America, which lies quite another way. Look, what a deal of land there is here," cried Hopkins, pointing to the map of the world: "why, England is but a nutshell to it all: and why must you be for having all the corn we eat grown in this little spot?"

"Well, it don't sound well of you, to say any thing to the disparagement of Old England," cried Stubbs. "If it is but small, it's a tight little island, and able to withstand many a greater country when put to it. And why should we not be able to grow corn for the people that live in it, as well as other countries do?"—"Why just because we are a great people, living in a little country; there's more of us than the land can feed."—"But the more people there is, the more hands there is to work, and so the more corn they can grow," said Stubbs.—"Ay," replied Hopkins, "but the country grows no bigger for being more thickly peopled; and it's land we want to raise corn upon."—"Nay, nay," cried Stubbs, "you cannot say there's any want of land, when so much lies waste in commons and such like."—"But it's want of good land that I complain of; such soils as you may grow corn on cheap, as they do in corn countries. If there was but half the number of people to feed, perhaps corn enough might be grown in the country to feed them: but the English people are a great nation, as great as any in all this map, I'll be bold to say. Where is there such a trading country as we are? and why? because we have so many manufactures: but then we must have people to work at the manufactures, besides those that work in the fields; and both must be fed. Why, for her size, England has perhaps twice as many people as most other countries; and yet you won't let us have more bread than we can grow at home? I tell you it is half starving us: first, because there's not enough; and next, because you grow the corn on bad soils, and must sell it dear to make it answer."

"Why, Hopkins," replied the farmer, "you are now boasting of the great population of this little island, and forgetting that it was but the other day you were complaining of it; and saying, that the misery of the poor came from there being too many people."—"And so I do still," cried John, "so long as you will not let us have bread to eat, cheap and plenty; that is, as cheap as we might get it if the corn trade were free. If there's too many people, it's not for want of room to live in, and stir about as much as they will; but there's too many people, because there's not food enough for all. Let us be free to have corn from all parts as cheap as it is to be had, and then, mayhap, there may be enough for all. There never can be too many people when there's wherewithal to maintain them; there cannot be too many happy people: but when they are pinched for food, and suffer in body and mind, they can do no good to themselves or to others either, and the country would be all the better without them."

THE END

[1.]Many of the benefits of Friendly Societies may be insured at a smaller rate of payment than sixpence a week.