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## ARTICLE II.

## THE NATURAL THEOLOGY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE.

BY REV. JOHN BASCOM, PROFESSOR IN WILLIAMS COLLEGE.

## No. III.

## VALUE AND NATURAL AGENTS.

IN proportion as order becomes complete, and the forces through which it is secured fundamental, the mass of men cease to be greatly impressed by it. There is required too much reflection and breadth of vision for its easy, instant apprehension, and thus an ingenious conjunction of very limited things close at hand more impresses them than laws undergirding the universe, and reaching, like cables of steel, back through the entire precincts of time. While the effects of God's greatest works are thus in a measure lost to the common mind, they are often in a still higher degree wasted on the scientific intellect. Principles of order, so pervasive, so permanent, so inflexible, lose their personal character, become a nature of things, and wholly separate the mind of man from God, or interpose between us and him immeasurable stretches of secondary causes, hopelessly cutting us off from his providence, and leaving us afloat on an ocean of forces, so broad as to put its nearest shore beyond our faith and hope. Secondary causes thus come to assume a form so necessary, so independent, so imperturbable, as to make an inquiry into them the sole office of thought, and their contemplation the entire range of the spiritual eye. Such a feeling of the remote, intangible, impossible character of the spiritual and the divine may consolidate itself into a system, become a dogma of the intellect, settle down around the soul like a cold and cloudy sky, cutting it off forever from the light and warmth of the Divine presence, and those reaches of infinite power in which the universe itself is held.

We need, therefore, constantly to be on our guard against

those personified abstractions which the mind is ever setting up in such words and phrases as "nature," "law," "the forces of nature," "the nature of things." These are the giants of the mist which the mythological imagination of science — in its way as superstitious as any poetic fancy that has gone before it — conjures up, and with them hides from itself the only Self-sufficient One. Men give an efficiency, eternity, and wisdom to matter which they deny to mind, to the creature, which they withhold from the Creator.

So little are we possessed of creative power, so inseparable is the association in our minds between what is, what we everywhere find, and what must be, that we overlook the wisdom of the divine plan in its supposed necessity, and come to think order indigenous because it is so pervasive and perfect. Not, therefore, till our weak wits can contrive some other possible way in which the world might be made, or its events arranged, are we willing, by the contrast of schemes, to give to God the glory of his work. In the natural world oftentimes, therefore, the perfection of the scheme and its execution dazes and blinds the eye, and we believe nothing possible but the exact thing which God has done, and conclude, with strange dullness and perversity of thought, that to such a creation there was no alternative, and hence no merit either of wisdom or of grace.

In treating of the conditions and laws of the moral world something of this impression will be lost. These might more obviously have been varied, and there is present so much manifest imperfection that thought is required even to justify to us all the ways of God. This state of things may at least induce in us a greater willingness to attribute God's work to himself, and thus prepare us to honor him in the wisdom we find in it. The judgment of God upon Adam, which is but a statement of the facts of the world, assumes the form, not of a state of things inherently necessary, but of a specific provision in reference to a special end. When, therefore, we find that out of this peculiar adjustment of things, those conditions of the moral problem expressed in the words,

“Cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground,” — there spring up laws which rule man, check him in descent, and impel him in ascent ; which hold him firmly in a state of probation, and reserve him for the moral influences that God, from time to time, employs ; which constantly accumulate powerful impulses, fresh motives, treasured in history, gathered into the organic structure of the race, consolidated in its works and acquisitions, for new stages of progress more hopeful than those which have gone before ; when in addition we find that these inferior forces and laws, working as they may, can only give the conditions of good, and not the actual good itself ; can only begin and can never complete the work, aiding without guiding it, and quickly driven from every vantage ground till fortified there by a moral force, till built and established there by the kingdom of grace, we see, at once, the disciplinary plan under which we are trained, impelled, perplexed, baffled by forces futile in themselves, waiting to work up into, and be completed by, that holier and more perfect law which Christ reveals, when, the insufficiency, vagaries, and dangers of every other method being experimentally exposed, man, in the fulness of time, is prepared for it.

To these secondary and provisional laws we now turn.

The economic interests and actions of men concern values. By an easy figure value is transferred to those things which possess it, this being in economic science the only quality we have occasion to consider in them. We thus speak of values, though value has no substantial, independent, or even permanent existence, but is a more or less transient quality of many things. Value is purchasing power, and implies, therefore, at least two things possessed by different individuals, and ready to be exchanged for each other at certain rates. The things thus waiting barter may be either services or products, present labor or the results of previous

labor and appropriation. That in the individuals which gives rise to barter, are desires and difficulty in obtaining the objects necessary for their gratification. This difficulty is due both to the nature of man and of the world in which he is placed. He extorts his bread from a soil that is cursed, and does it by the sweat of his brow. These difficulties constitute at least the enhanced, bitter, and pungent causes of labor, and the values which spring from it; and give to the traffic of the world that eager, grasping, acrimonious character which imparts to it the power of a great constitutional incentive, and enables it to awaken the indolence of men, and impose the laws of production on their actions. Without this deepening of motives, this more stringent excitation of desire, the forces impelling action would, in the state induced by sin, have been found insufficient to contend with the sluggish and wayward tendencies of man. Hence he is now compelled both to make and keep the garden.

The incentives, therefore, to create values, are strong desires inspired both by the necessities, enjoyments, and indulgences of life, and the serious obstacles to their attainment. Desire, like a flowing stream, can only accumulate its full force and make itself formidable as it meets some barrier, and is thereby deepened, broadened, set back upon itself. A right balance between these two elements, desire and difficulty, is very essential for the best development of national and individual character. The broad belts of the temperate zones, embracing most of the historical regions and races afford this. Effort is imposed and rewarded. Desire is made firm and powerful by industry; and values, great by the labor that is in them, and abundant and varied through the generosity of nature, stimulate the most intense activity. As we pass to warmer and more prolific regions, desire becomes passionate and irregular, feeling too little the presence and restraints of necessity. In the far north, on the other hand, we have great patience, but the reward is too slight to call forth or sustain enterprise.

Desire is the efficient cause of value, while difficulty of

attainment is the condition under which it must find play in order to the actual creation of value. The power lies in the water, but can only be developed as this is enclosed. Moving freely, its force remains latent; hemmed in by the stone reservoir and the iron tubing, its presence becomes sensible, and it sends up a jet whose height is proportioned to the constraint it has suffered. But as the column of water will not rise in the pipe beyond a certain point, so the desire cannot be forced to every exertion by an indefinite increase of difficulties. These may over-match it and thus deaden the feeling they were designed to call forth. We shall have the highest values in those things which elicit the most desire, and whose acquisition is attended with kindred difficulty. These two conditions of high value can only be met in a civilized community, that is, among men in whom the social, economic forces have long acted, inducing habits of thought, and phases of desire generally prevalent, and therefore proportionately strong. In savage life we shall have neither that depth of feeling, that consolidated passion, nor that patient effort which are requisite for condensed value. Not only cannot the products of fine art, but even furs, precious metals, and gems will not possess any such value for men in the forest as for the occupants of cities. Indeed, the larger and more commercial the community, the more, by crowded, intensified, and competitive life, it has developed the love of acquisition, and made the desires which feed on values strong, will certain rare products, like laces, shawls, and diamonds, bear a price that in other stages of society would be deemed fanciful and absurd. Thus in civilized nations, the people of the country criticise those of the cities, and, half in derision, half in envy, make a mock of their fineries.

In God's economy, a stronger stimulus is called for to restrain and impel masses of men — the congregated life of great marts — to act on the lower, to incite the higher, and it is furnished in this natural and necessary deepening of desire in view of multiplied elegances, and multiplied eyes whose

admiring gaze feeds the vanity of the possessor. The force becomes intense as we approach the centre of the vortex, and though the movement is more rapid, it is even more certainly than ever faithful to the orbit assigned it. In great cities where values are most fluctuating, and oftentimes seem most extravagant and factitious, they, nevertheless, obey most perfectly the natural forces at work, and rule most completely the swaying population in search of the last fiction of vanity and novelty of fashion. The madness of luxury is yet the frenzy of law.

It is these quickened, enlarged, and endlessly diversified forms which desire assumes in connection with production and commerce that supply an increasing momentum, carrying the community once started, rapidly on in the pursuit of wealth. In this stage of growth the movement is toward the perihelion, and is each moment accelerated. Tyre, once a commercial city, quickly becomes queen of the seas.

While desire is the efficient force, it is difficulty of attainment that marks the exact point at which this can find gratification, and therefore the amount of value in each case to be given. Difficulty of attainment is of two kinds. It may arise either from the labor to be undergone in securing the things sought for, or from their scarcity. The first is by far the most common occasion of value, including the necessities and most of the luxuries of life; the second chiefly governs those products sought for by cultivated taste and refined vanity. The labor to be undergone is the great obstacle to production, and the most immediate and constant measure therefore of value. At first sight this might seem to give a sufficient measure, a scale in which all the products of the market could be readily and rapidly weighed with each other; so much for so much. A little observation and reflection, however, show us that this is far from being true, and that rarely, and then by accident, are things exchanged according to the amount of labor they contain.

We cannot compare with precision, labor with labor, even of the same kinds: I give two men at work in my field or

at my forge the same price per day, and yet I am aware that the services of the one are much better worth the money than those of the other. Though time and circumstances shall weigh the men in juster scales, for the present they have an equality of advantage, and I cannot discriminate. Much more is the difficulty increased when the exertion varies in kind as well as in degree; when I compare a day's labor in one calling with the same period in another; labor of the body with labor of the mind. Here even the semblance of measurement seems lost. Comparison avails us little except between exertions of the same kind, and then only secures approximate justice.

But it may be thought that when we come to products, the amount of labor these contain is more susceptible of estimation. Yet even when comparing articles of the same kind, carpets with carpets, carriages with carriages, horses with horses, the faithfulness and skill of the work are so diverse, that the difficulty re-appears in a slightly different form. The value of no two products of any complexity can be determined with perfect precision, while the mass of estimates remain of the roughest character.

In addition to these causes which prevent comparison of labor is another quite as serious. Persons are in possession of very diverse advantages for the performance of any task. One has a natural power or an acquired skill for its perfect and easy accomplishment; another, a positive aversion and inability, making treble the amount of labor requisite for the same results. For certain forms of production, one has a favorable situation, near the sources of material, or close to the market, or with ample means of conveyance; while another is deficient in one or all of these. One is in possession of a powerful natural agent,— a fine waterfall, a fertile farm, a favorable climate,— and thus mingles with his labor the peculiar quality and efficiency of a force not his own. He evokes in his behalf not the genii of the brain, but of air, earth, and water.

This finds its most marked illustration in produce. To



the same market may be brought vegetables, grains, and grasses from the mellow interval, from the slope of the mountain — more exacting of labor, less liberal of reward — and from the barren summit, a stingy paymaster of the hard tillage bestowed on it. These products secured with such diverse amounts of toil, must bear essentially the same price; if any have the advantage it will more likely be those which have grown to full maturity and been well ripened in the valley. The rugged laborer of the hill-top will find that with a dull tool he has put to the more strength only to reach a result inferior to that of his neighbor. There is great diversity and variety of advantage given us of God, both in our own powers and the powers he places at our disposal, and this serves still further to prevent a comparison of labor, and introduces into its reward a new element not at all dependent on the intensity of exertion.

We may now have gone over to the other extreme, and come to regard difficulty of attainment as expressed by labor as no measure whatever of value. We should thus be not so near the truth as before. Each individual in estimating his own powers and opportunities, chooses that trade or calling in which his labor will, he thinks, be most productive, with the least unpleasant exertion to himself. If, therefore, the products of any one art come to demand a high price, there is an immediate and strong inducement for all in the least adapted to it to fit themselves for it. Thus by increased competition, this form of production is quickly cheapened. The equality, therefore, of products is not maintained by any estimate made in the market of the labor they respectively represent, but by the effect of the price they bear on those engaged, or about to engage, in the several kinds of employment. Any inequality between the exertion and the reward will, acting on the minds of those who are to undertake the one and enjoy the other, and who are, therefore, the only proper judges of labor, soon turn the stream of effort from pursuit to pursuit, checking it at this point and enlarging it at that, till results approximately equal and just are arrived at.

So far as there is no natural monopoly, like that of talent or of the best lands, this force left to itself, unchecked by trade laws, will nearly equalize the results of labor, and give to extra exertion and irksome toil a reward approximately correct. For the partial and fluctuating adjustment of values to the labor they respectively contain, we are to look to the commencement of the process and not to its close. Once in the market, the products are at the mercy of quite other forces. As the needle moves slowly in the region of the North Pole, rather than actually rests at it, so values, while feeling the constant effect of the labor they contain, seldom if ever actually express it. No sooner, however, do they seriously depart from this measure, than there is brought into action a strong force to restore them to it; though, like the needle deflected by the hand, they may at first pass to an opposite extreme, and at length rest at a point to the right or the left of the true one. Nevertheless, this is the most important and evenly influential of all the forces that govern values. Without it, all would be fluctuation and confusion; with it, fluctuation finds an orbit, and confusion a calculable limit.

The second form which difficulty of attainment assumes is that of scarcity. A good illustration of value as affected by this element, are ancient coins, manuscripts, curiosities, situations prized for their beauty, and, in fine arts, the works of masters. With the price which these bear, labor has very little or nothing to do. The difficulty of attainment is so great that the watermark of value is determined alone by the height to which desire can be driven. He whose desire exceeds that of any other person will, if able, purchase the curiosity, the painting, the choice locality, at a price just transcending that fixed by the desire of him who stands second in the rank of competitors. All, therefore, which serves to inflame feelings and make competition lively, will enhance the value of the product affected thereby. The emulation of an auction often secures a price which cooler judgment does not justify.

These two elements of value, desire and difficulty of attainment, are inseparably blended in prices, now the one and now the other being predominant. If the difficulty of attainment is one of labor merely, then this settles approximately the point in value at which gratification can be obtained. If, on the other hand, the difficulty of attainment is one of scarcity, desire may sweep to its full height, and fix a price at the point at which it stands at equilibrium with, or rather slightly transcends, the desires of others. To return for illustration to our figure, the water representing the desire will rise in the pipe to the first orifice, or opportunity of indulgence; or, this closed, to the second; or, all closed, to the height secured by its own pressure.

Though the number of products whose value depends chiefly on labor is much greater, and the classes to which they belong much more important than those affected chiefly by scarcity, the former are rarely sold for a price determined by labor, while the latter fluctuate constantly, and only under the demand occasioned by desire. If products were capable of immediate multiplication to meet any demand, then the labor they contained would very nearly and very generally define their value; but as considerable periods must usually intervene before the present supply of any article can be increased, while the desire for it is more or less urgent, every product is affected by the state of the market, the present relation of the supply to the demand, that is, by the scarcity-element of value. This we shall term, in contrast with the labor-element, the quantity-element, since the principle is precisely the same whether the price be affected by a quantity offered for sale greater or less than the demand.

Owing to this intervention of time between the beginning and completion of production, all values are affected by supply and demand. While a few of secondary consequence are solely determined by it, the mass of products exchange for each other under the influences of both elements, labor and quantity; the one affecting values by anticipation, the other through the present position of forces, the balance of

desires with their means of gratification. The two forces operate, as it were, at the two extremes of the process of production. At the commencement, we compare the labor to be undertaken with the values to be realized. At the conclusion of our work, and once in the inexorable market with our products, these are compared as to quantity with the desires of the purchasers, and we are compelled to accept the price finally fixed by this consideration. The anticipatory and substantial element is labor; the last and determinative one, stamping the bullion into coin, the product into price, is quantity.

Which of those two forces so acting shall have the chief influence at the actual sale will depend on the nature of the product. If this is of a permanent character, a subject of very general desire, and capable of being replaced in a brief period, the accidents of the market disappear, neither much enhancing or reducing its value. If it lacks any of these qualities, if it is liable, like fruit, to speedy decay; or, like a rare book, if it is sought eagerly by a few; or, like grain, if it cannot be replaced under several months, then the price will fluctuate violently according to the conditions of the sale, sinking to the worthlessness of a surfeit, or rising to a famine value. The quantity-element knows no law but that of appetite and passion, and when dominant, therefore, rules without mercy, pressing the price up or down as the vanities or wants of men may enable it, selling jewelry in pounds, and buying labor in pence, quenching some vagrant frenzy of the eye at a cost that would feed the hungry poor of half a city.

We may represent the action of the forces which determine the value of two products when exchanging for each other, or its price when either is exchanged for gold by a mechanical illustration. Suppose two springs of different material pulling against each other. At their point of attachment one to the other, let an index hand be placed ready to play in both directions along a scale graduated from the centre toward either end. Suppose these two springs to be very

unequally affected by a change of temperature, the one rapidly relaxed under heat like rubber, the other retaining its elasticity like steel. Let the index at a mean temperature rest at the middle or par point of the scale. From this position, under the variable and uncertain element of temperature, it would play in either direction to the left as the heat decreased, to the right as it advanced, passing over to the steel coil. The two springs tugging against each other express the forces of labor contained in the two commodities; in a mean or normal state, holding the index or price at par. The effect of temperature illustrates the action of the element of quantity, relaxing in different degrees the energies of labor which struggle to adjust the value, suffering one product to draw the price toward itself, thus passing above par, while the other correspondingly sinks below par.

Bearing in mind that value is thus wholly relative, its loss in one commodity indicating a corresponding gain in other commodities; and that the more remote, permanent element of value is that of labor, and the more immediate and fluctuating element, that of quantity, giving opportunity for the irregular play of desire, we have the facts of value sufficiently before us to see their moral relations, and the kind of government which they exercise over man.

It is in the first place plain, that it becomes the interest of every one to gratify with the products which he offers the strongest existing desire, since this will be ready to pay the largest price. Men will not thus work at cross purposes, but find their own interest in mutually and in the most discriminating manner, consulting the pleasure of others, as by this method only can they draw the index of advantage toward themselves. It is also evident that those who provide for the more permanent wants of men, best escape the fluctuations and risks of business, and find compensation for the slowness of gain in its certainty.

While, however, society thus works together harmoniously under commercial law, we mark also how far this order falls below that of love. The trader feels that he has no occasion

to inquire as to the absolute utility of that which he sells, but only as to the estimate which the buyer puts on it. If the commodity be intoxicating drink, he is only surer of larger profits, and commercial law has no adequate restraint or censure for the transaction. So too, the tradesmen, who by the ever-changing varieties of fabrics and styles, quicken the wheel of fashion into rapid revolution, play off their goods at advanced rates on the morbid vanity of their customers, making the fickleness and extravagance of others net them a neat profit. Thus while traffic seeks the immediate pleasure and repose of the parties who engage in it, it is pervaded by no moral strength, giving tone to character and force to manhood, but often quite the reverse. The more honest and heedful observance of the real wants and well-being of the purchaser which love enjoins is indeed found ultimately in highest harmony with trade; but the mere trader, as a trader, is slow to discern this, and does not feel it obligatory upon him to watch the expenditures of his neighbor, except as an aid in forming an estimate of his ability to pay for further purchases. The real concord of society is blindly approached from below, and only revealed and felt from above. Selfishness may indulge itself, and the social law is elastic and variable enough to quicken all parties thereby, and hold in reserve a rebuke for the evil-doer.

Again, this relation of values leads each to make the most of that which is peculiar to himself either in powers or circumstances. It watches over the development of the individual as carefully as over the peace of society. Competition is the great reducer of profits, — a disadvantage as to quantity one of the worst detriments that products can suffer. But in proportion as each individual gives play to his individuality, or husbands the opportunity of position or circumstance which nature may have bestowed on him, is he made most free from the severe tyranny of a market, crowded with a mob of common and indifferent things. One who has to sell his services or his products in a surfeited and closing

market, under the contemptuous phrase, "For what they'll fetch," is not in the way of wealth. Nothing is more abundant than simple, brute force; and he whose labor is chiefly of this character finds himself in competition with the lowest among men, with brutes, and even with the inanimate agents of the world. These last two classes were doubtless intended to furnish the simple, naked force of manufacture and husbandry, and he who sinks to this field of labor must accept that parsimony of provision which belongs to the mere animal. Like the horse, he must live that he may work. Let there begin to be the first efforts of separation, of individualism; let the laborer gain skill in any direction, become a gardener or horticulturist, and the price of his services rises. Let there be a further separation, as by peculiar power in the branch of mechanics he has accepted, and there is a further rise of value. Thus it becomes the immediate, urgent interest of each to excel, and that he may excel, to canvass carefully his own aptitudes and advantages. A fertile field in possession, a good trade in hand, a father's professional friends, may all take the place in part of peculiar, native talent. To keep aloof from the mob, and cultivate one's powers, becomes a cardinal consideration in enhancing values.

Thus also society by the necessity laid on each individual in securing his own gain, comes into possession of most manifold, diversified, and skilful powers. Each individual is a new organ of social life, adds to its aptitudes at a new point, and becomes a fresh avenue of strength and pleasure. A completely productive community is possessed of the most abundant resources and versatile faculties. The very impulse of gain makes the individual watch closely his own opportunities, and develop his peculiar powers, yet thereby best fits him to play a part in that organic whole of which he is but a single member. Yet now, no more than before, will these economic take the place of the moral forces. The shrewdness of the lawyer will bring its price, whether he sells justice or sustains it.

As a third result of the laws of value, we draw attention to the scope and variety of economic action, the wide range between certainty on the one side and fortuity on the other; between plodding diligence and bold, brilliant speculation. Mercantile exigencies strike from manhood now the dull red spark, and now bright flashes of light, flaming up like a conflagration, setting the sober world on its feet, running after a new meteor of success.

As a greater or less period intervenes between the commencement of the processes of production and their completion, action must be based in agriculture, and yet more in manufacture and commerce, on a future, an anticipated, condition of the market. The forces at present or prospectively at work to effect prices must be forecast, and immediate effort, both in its kind and degree, be made to conform to a demand yet future. The necessity for this anticipation of results, still remote, is very different in the several branches of production. In the larger part of them, simple industry and patience are sure of their reward, while in others a wider reach of thought, a bolder stroke of prophecy, will secure a signal reward.

It is also true that the greater risks fall almost uniformly to capital, and especially to capital in its heavier investments. Simple labor which can bear little, runs small hazards, wages returning at short intervals; while capital with greater strength enters the field of mechanical enterprise and commercial exploration, compensating the risk of heavy loss with the hope of rapid gain. While every one reaps the fruit of his wise or of his fortunate thoughts, none can escape the results of his mistakes or throw their burden on to others. The value of a commodity once in the market is not governed by the labor or the price it may have cost the unfortunate holder, but only by its immediate relations to labor and to demand. If a new invention has lessened the cost of its production, the holder must suffer its depreciated value; or if any want of skill on his part has added to its cost, he must bear the results of his error.



In the labor-element and the quantity-element, standing respectively at the extremes of the process of production, we find occasion for the introduction both of calculation and skill, and also of good fortune, chance, into the problem of wealth. Unexpected turns in events, unanticipated states of the market, are inevitable, greatly enhancing or reducing profits. Herein we have an exact counterpart of that discipline which meets us everywhere in life; events so ordered, that while industry and forethought have great and certain preponderance in the struggle for success, yet vicissitudes and fortuitous effects constantly intervene to modify the measure and form of results. A boldness, freshness, a fascination, and a breadth of discipline are thus given to life more provocative of enterprise than the perfect calculability of all results.

As the chances of commerce enter in connection with the changing conditions of the markets, there has arisen a speculative branch of trade which rests solely on purchase and sales made in anticipation of the rise and fall of products. The speculator converts exchange into a game at hazard, and bringing to it either more skill or more recklessness than belongs to others, prospers or fails with the rapidity of a gambler. This element of risk will, from time to time, in connection with an undue extension of credit, an expanded currency, or some startling discovery inflaming the fancy with the possibility of sudden wealth, so far gain the ascendancy over sober industry as to bewilder and intoxicate the public mind, and refuse arrest except by those sudden and wide-spread losses which are sure to follow. Enterprise which has not a sufficient basis of virtue in patience, industry, and honesty is certain, sooner or later, to run so largely into insecure and speculative transactions as to meet with overthrow, and be forced back to a more sober method. The sluggish are quickened, the rash are checked, and the varieties of character find each fitting incitements and restraints.

Without the balance-wheel of virtue, however, the movements of commerce, though active and disciplinary, are

violent, irregular, and unsafe, compensating partial successes with great discouragements and severe losses.

The prevalence of purely speculative purchases always indicates a feverish and excited state of production, either springing from some unsafe condition of the commercial instruments, currency and credit, or sure to induce it. The naked fact, however, of speculation — a purchase with the intent to sell in a future and better market — violates no law of trade, and when separated from all effort to influence prices, no law of morality. Indeed, a measure of such transfers tends to equalize gains by taking goods from a sluggish and introducing them again to an active market, thus stimulating the first, and quieting the second.

When speculation assumes the uncertainty and extravagance of gambling, inflaming the public mind, debauching the individual, and bringing dissatisfaction and contempt to ordinary industry, it is a fever possessing the whole economic body, to be cast off only by that thorough treatment which shall restore the health and tone of the constitution, which shall limit the facilities of purchase, deepen the sense of honesty, sober the desires, and increase the willingness to labor.

There arises here one of those striking illustrations which show the relations of commercial and religious law, and that the first, while laying the foundations of order, cannot supplant the second, but must be complemented by it. The presentation of it involves the fourth moral office of values, that in their transfer they define the limits between justice and benevolence. So far as the laws of simple traffic and commercial obligation are concerned, there can be no doubt that the trader has the right to avail himself fully of the condition of the market, provided always that its fluctuations have not arisen by design, by misrepresentation, and falsehood. The range of prices, the advantages of a sudden demand, are as much elements in the harvest of trade as the fertility of soil or favorable seasons in that of agriculture. We have no more right to complain of the one advantage

than of the other. Yet it is evident that this rule will sometimes lead to extravagant profits, and, what is of more moment, to great severity and hardship in the treatment of the poor and the unfortunate. A needle-woman may find the pittance the market price of wages allows her hardly sufficient to support life, and the bankrupt bringing the remnant of his fortunes to a forced sale, may see them unmercifully underrated, and scattered among bidders as hungry and heartless as the waves that break in pieces and devour the stranded vessel.

According to their several habits of life men feel, or fail to feel, this rigor of commercial law. The farmer, standing at the beginning of production, and estimating value chiefly by labor, will often experience some compunction at receiving an unusual price, and will not unfrequently say, you may have the grain for less, for it is all that it is worth, meaning thereby that his labor finds full compensation in the sum mentioned. The merchant, on the other hand, operating constantly in the market, where the element of labor is kept more out of sight, and the last efficient force in setting the price, and the one constantly under observation, is the demand, the quantity, readily and inevitably adopts the maxim, "A thing is worth all it will bring," and buys goods at half-price as composedly as at reasonable profits. Now while few would be disposed to call such purchases dishonest, most would nevertheless feel that there was somehow a nicer moral discrimination and more sensitiveness to the interest of others in the first than in the second transaction. Commercial law is, however, as well satisfied with the one as with the other, and has no censure to bestow on him who, with ingenuity and forethought reaps with steady and relentless sickle the gains of the market.

The laws of honest trade arise from nature, that is, from the natural circumstances and conditions under which man is placed, and define justice—the claims we have one against another—under these conditions, ordered by neither party, but common to them both, and ready to deal the same meas-

ure to one as to another, as skill or fortune shall shift the advantage. The most wretched human being has no claim, either under economic, civil, or moral law, as against the most affluent for a higher rate of wages than the market allows him. Here are the boundaries of justice, where obligation ends and benevolence begins. The market settles wages and prices; there is no other force to settle them. It is the exact office of this force to define constantly these rates of exchange. We might as well rebel against the thermometer, and say that it should range higher as long as the poor are unclothed, as to require prices to assume the work of benevolence, and bend to the necessity of the purchaser. As hard-handed a miser as ever lived can be strictly honest, bringing remorselessly down on the weak, ignorant, and degraded the last screw of extortion which the state of the market puts in his hand; and he shall still find an image for his cruelty in the biting cold of winter; an extenuation of his unscrupulous rigor in the greater forethought and providence which it begets; and a sentiment wherewith at least to disguise his action in an unqualified scorn of the whining, pusillanimous spirit of those who have not the courage and industry to face the conditions of a life under which God has placed them.

We should rest this claim of commercial justice, to buy as cheaply as an open, free market will allow, on the simple fact, it is a law of trade, a law of nature, a result inevitably developed by the forces at work, and thus ultimately a law of God, had not Ruskin recently attacked it, strangely bleeding religious and commercial obligation. Observe, then, the consequences of the claim, that products should always exchange for each other according to the labor they respectively contain. The opportunity and motive of careful adaptation in the kind of products and services offered to the wants and wishes of men would be removed, — the opportunity, since the fixedness of the price would disguise the state of the market; the motive, since the returns of labor are not made dependent exclusively on its character and

fitness. One demand more should be made to complete the false philanthropy of the first — that we should not only pay the price for the product indicated by the labor expended on it, but buy the article whether we wished it or not. Indeed, without adding this requisition, the first would mainly miscarry. If we were compelled to give more than the state of desire, that is, than the demand required for any given commodity, or to go without it, we should, in most cases, decline the purchase, thus leaving the market more than ever choked with the unsalable product. Not only would the silent, unthought-of adaptation of labor to the wishes of men, which is now secured by the fluctuation of prices, be arrested, but the vexations of scarcity and danger of famine would be left to steal upon us unawares. No increase of value would occur to check consumption and call forth supply, and not till we had struck full against the barrier of absolute want would there be any arrest of speed. The result would be, that, instead of trifling delays and partial suffering, we should experience an entire suspension of industry, or the devastation of famine and pestilence on occasions intrinsically slight. Price is the self-adjusting mechanism of society by which expenditure is adapted to the facts of production. We might as well, in the engine, close the safety-valve or detach the dampers, and then leave the machinery to itself, as to destroy the self-regulation of the market, and wait results. Let the full flow of opportunity steal unchecked over the desires, and these, burning with a steady heat, will, in times of scarcity, eat up the narrow supplies of production, and, filling all hearts with the blind cravings of appetite, like hissing steam hungering for air, blow into fragments the commercial fabric tampered with by ignorant philanthropy.

Yet everyone must feel that with this law of traffic alone human society would soon sink, under whatever forms of civilization it might abide, into a most savage and remorseless state; one of entire selfishness and heathenism, such as we find approximated, in the East, in the social life of China and Japan. Each takes to himself the opportunities which

society has given him without compunction, or endures the suffering it imposes without hope. Here, then, the religious law of love comes in to clothe this naked, hard granite with verdure, to implant in the heart of the producer and trader a new spring of action, and impart a new law of life. By as much as grace surpasses justice, love, self-love, and the generous affections, the morose passions, will this new law excel that of commerce, calling into full, diversified, grateful play, our higher sympathies and holier impulses. A crystalline force is something, but a living power is more, in building up the world. Interest lays foundations of society, but love alone can build thereon homes and temples.

In showing the government which the fact of values and their relation to each other exercise on society we have but one further point to present — the range of value, the things that fall under it, and the suggestion we meet everywhere of something higher, nobler, than commerce.

Value finds its most regular and calculable application in the field of manual industry, in the things which secure physical well-being, the necessities of life; and is most irregular and wayward in elegances and indulgences, the freaks of vanity or the extravagances of taste; while purely intellectual and moral qualities, though often enhancing the value of things and greatly adding to that of services, do not themselves come under the measurement of price, unless in these exceptional cases, abnormal to trade itself, in which slavery traffics in the souls of men.

The great department, then, of value is that of industry called forth by the curse of God on a sterile earth, everywhere interposing obstacles more or less formidable to the possession of her treasures, and occupation of her powers. Here, therefore, is universal and inevitable discipline for all men, conjointly and singly, vanquishing the difficulties before them, and with toil entering into the necessities and blessings of life. In proportion as a skilful hand and thoughtful mind are brought to this task is the reward increased. A stroke of invention casting the load of toil from the shoulders of

man and laying it on the untiring wheels of machinery, reaps an immediate reward. But as if God would have the higher work of the mind, more free and largely serviceable than that of the body, the returns of invention are liberally scattered through the community, and the fortunate inventor, in the very effort to realize his own advantage, by increased facility of production and the fall of prices, confers a greater and more permanent gain on others. The labor of the body can be coined, stroke by stroke; the drudgery of toil is laid upon us only at a price; but the mind, more spontaneous, cheerful, and beneficent in its action, is of necessity more generous, and only shares those gains which it liberally confers. Indeed, so little has nature protected the labor of the mind, that society has found its interest in devising further rewards, and by patents increasing the returns of the inventor. As this right to the products of thought is not provided for and enforced by nature, but rests exclusively on legislation, it is evident that the interests of society alone are to determine its conditions and duration, and that when sufficient returns have been realized to reward and stimulate invention, the public may then, as residuary legatee of the powers and gifts of nature, enter, without compunction, into the vast and increasing benefits of ingenuity and discovery. The utmost merit of invention and inquiry cannot forestall the gifts of nature or appropriate her powers. The discoverer is rather put at the mercy of his fellows in the division of the spoils, though he alone may have unlocked the chamber of secrets and of wealth. A Columbus cannot stand door-keeper to the continent he has opened, and often receives but too meagre a share of its gains.

In the value which attaches to luxuries it is a matter of small moment that fluctuations are extreme and prices exorbitant. Vanity is as pleased with extrinsic as intrinsic merit, and finds, therefore, as much pleasure in the rareness and cost of the article as in its excellence. As long as there are those who wish to make an exhibit of wealth in French laces, jewelry, and India shawls, it is a small matter that there

are crafty tradesmen willing to facilitate the folly by the largeness of the price. So long as vanity finds play in prices, the largest price serves the best purpose. These wandering values are the eccentricities, the meteors, of the system, which startle fools, but leave its stability unaffected. They are only portentous when they indicate to the commercial world, rushing through a whole belt of them, the wildness and delirium of speculation, the breaking up and explosion of some planet, some settled principle of order.

When we pass to the highest range of human products, we find these least subject to value. Virtue is not marketable, and truth is scarcely so. The one we can buy without money, the other we buy so cheaply that we may well buy and sell it not. The light and breath of our spiritual, like those of our physical, life are given us. The book that contains truth is made no dearer thereby; and, though incidentally we pay a nominal price for wisdom, it is for that whose intrinsic worth is above rubies. In this higher realm freedom proportionately prevails, and the doors of opportunity are not locked or unlocked with a golden key. We more and more leave behind us the hard labor and sordid estimates of the market as we enter into the wealth and freedom of the sons of God. We bear with us, indeed, the ideas and language of the lower field, but permeate them with a higher meaning. The treasures of the spiritual and heavenly world are incapable of transfer or of loss.

In these relations of value, we see the bending of motives to the sordid and selfish heart, the primal government which is introduced into a chaotic moral world, the probationary travel and discipline of the race; yet, amid all, the introduction of the elements of a better wealth, more personal to the possessor, more generous in its law of transfer, more certain in acquisition, more secure in holding, more blessed in expenditure, laid up in that kingdom of heaven which our Saviour assures us is found in the hearts of disciples.



A prominent and weighty point in natural theology has always been the adaptation of the world as a whole to man. Indeed, as this is the most comprehensive of adaptations, giving value and fitness to every other; as it consists not merely in details, but embraces the grand outstanding features of the entire plan, it is best of all fitted to impress the mind with the scope and thoroughness of God's providence, and the disciplinary and moral nature of the training to which man is subjected. That the world is given to man is as plain in fact as in revelation, is a conclusion confirmed as distinctly by the reason of man as by the word of God.

The language of the gift recognizes the result as following close upon the powers conferred. And God said: "Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat; and it was so." Indeed, the gift of government is involved in the powers of governing the world, and the power is the ratifying seal of the gift.

The world has something for man in every part of his nature. It is a book as copious and complete as the necessities of the pupil require; and there is nothing in mind which does not find a counterpart in matter, food, stimulus, and nurture in the world about us. Here man's grossest want is supplied and his most subtile thought finds reflection; here the body feeds in the whole circuit of its senses and appetites, and the soul finds facts and imagery discoursing to it of its most evanescent and intangible feelings, opening a vista through visible things to invisible not otherwise approachable. We may live as within the four walls of a house, eating and sleeping, revolving in a daily circuit of comforts, as the earth on its axis; we may live as on the eury of the universe, the mind feeding on the vast ranges of thought; or we may translate all this visible language and love of God

into the tokens of his immediate presence, and live and move and have our being in him. If the earth is surprising in its physical adaptations, it is not less so in its intellectual, nor yet less so in its spiritual. Man comes slowly to his latest conquest, lives by food long before he can live by faith — by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God; sees the wisdom of the world quicker than its love; is hemmed in and barred about by the immutability of law, before he can substitute for this figment of the brain the firm hand of God, and is made aware of the supersensible, as it ebbs like water beneath the sensible and floats it, or rises like air above it, and gives that which the soul can inhale and live.

But the adaptation to which we must now draw attention, is that of the earth to the economic and industrial wants of man. The gifts of God to production are natural agents. These are of two kinds — those which furnish material, and those which furnish power. Of the first class are lands, mines, and fisheries; fisheries, however, though of exceeding utility in themselves, are often incapable of appropriation, and, hence, value attaches to their products exclusively through the labor expended in securing them. The ocean, chafing at man's dominion, has always befriended the poor, takes to itself its sons, nourishes in them something of its own rough, wayward moods, and gives them bread. Lands and mines, on the other hand, capable of easy appropriation, have become powerful agents in the hands of individuals and nations; yet, usually, with such expenditure of labor and skill as to make them the rewards of enterprise, the premiums of industry and sagacity. In an economic point of view, among the chief adaptations of lands is found the diversity of their products. The forest growth is most varied, and through each variety subserves some fresh mechanical purpose. From rosewood, ebony, and walnut, to oak, linden, pine, and palmetto; from the richest ornament to the severest use: through all the qualities of fragrance, strength, hardness, lightness, softness, toughness, elasticity, inflexibility, durability; unchangeableness by heat, moisture, water, insects, oils, ranges the native

growth of the woods, meeting every new demand of art with a fiber that withstands the shock of mechanical force; or turns back the corrosive, penetrating tooth of fluids; or furnishes a perfect, inflexible surface for the polished instrument; or adorns our houses with a rich network of veining.

Nor is the variety of fruits, constantly increasing and capable of indefinite multiplication, less remarkable. The palm, apple, and banana, each in their several climates, furnishing the centres of cultivation, around which gather, from shrub and tree, produce of less diversified use, but constituting in its various seasons, in its larger and lesser forms, as melon, fruit, nut, or berry, a rich repast, as appetitive and inviting to every sense as can easily be conceived. The flush of the peach, the gold of the apple, cherry red, the fragrance of the plum, the luxuriance of the grape, the melting pear, the early richness of the strawberry, are witnesses near at hand of the untold wealth of fruits reserved in the various climates, soils, and undeveloped varieties of the globe. We find, also, the same completeness in garden vegetables. A changing, wholesome, and nourishing table can everywhere be spread largely from this resource. The skill of the horticulturist quickly develops so many and valuable varieties, that he is at a loss what part of his treasures to retain, and what to reject as breeding the waste of superfluity. When, however, we come to the staples of agriculture, we find a needed limitation of the prodigality of orchard and garden, less specific and more general adaptations, greater value in less bulk, and increased ease of preservation.

While each country and climate must rely chiefly on themselves for the luxuries of the table, for the transient returns of the fruit-yard, and the vegetables of the season, they may seek the produce of the fields, the staples of husbandry, in every quarter of the globe. Wheat, corn, oats, and rice, easy of transportation, with a wide range of climates and soil, constitute, and will more and more constitute, the bread of every meal in every civilized land. A loss of variety and specific adaptation thus becomes a great gain, enabling the several

quarters of the globe to feed each other, and cheaply and perfectly compensate the fluctuations of crops in different countries and seasons. The grain vessels of Egypt, the earliest instruments of commerce, will find successors to the end of time.

The adaptation of fruit to soil and climate—the more dry and durable to the colder, the more succulent and prolific to the warmer—seems so natural, so inevitable, as to lose the power of impressing us. The provision is not sufficiently mechanical, sufficiently an afterthought, to awaken attention and, to the dull mind of man, indicate a specific purpose. But the much wider range of the grains, the fewness of kinds, their durability and diversity of use, ought to impress us as by no means necessary, as giving peculiar fitness for the end they are intended to subserve.

The same is true in a yet higher degree of the products of mines. Not only are the metals, minerals, and amalgams, so numerous and possessed of such a variety of qualities, as to meet all the exigencies of the arts with a peculiar property, a reciprocal power—brass, copper, quicksilver, iron, lead, each falling into and filling its own place; but those which have the more general application, and are relatively the indispensable conditions of progress in the arts, are the most abundant and widely scattered, while those of less general utility and more peculiar office are less abundant and more local.

Nor can we fairly say that the fact establishes this, their relation to the arts; that the plentiful metals for this reason find a wide circle of uses, while the rarer product is correspondingly limited in its employment. No multiplication of gold could make it take the place of steel, or rareness of lead cause it to supply the want of platinum. We might lodge emery in every quarter of the globe in place of the many coal mines, and limit these to the few localities in which the first mineral is found, but we should not thereby change the offices of the two, nor capacitate either of them to play new parts in the arts corresponding in utility to those they now

discharge. Coal and iron and lime, the most useful of minerals, are the most widely scattered and abundant, while secondary services of great moment are adequately discharged by minerals of less frequent occurrence, and in some instances, as in the case of gold and silver and precious stones, all the better discharged, because of the rareness of the product.

It is not our purpose to dwell on these marvellous resources of the rocks, soils, waters, of the vegetable and animal life of the world; these adaptations belong to natural history. We have passed them in rapid survey as the produce of those natural agents that play so leading a part in production. They are capable of appropriation through an appropriation of the soil with which they stand connected, and furnish the entire material on which the mechanical industry of the world is employed. So far as their possession is reached without the ownership of the land, it is because that ownership is imperfect, a potential and partial rather than an actual and complete occupation. Thus wild fruits and game remain open to all as long as appropriation is incomplete, either through the extent of the territory owned, or the lax laws of custom fortifying possession. As civilization progresses, however, the bands of ownership are contracted and strengthened, till the mere crossing of land becomes a trespass.

The second class of natural agents is those that confer power. The chief of these are animals fitted for draught and carriage, wind, water-power, and steam. They are all, with the exception of wind, as used in commerce, connected with the ownership of the soil; steam slightly, water completely. Though we locate our engine where we please, it yet requires a location; and the best location often brings a high price. The availability, therefore, of this power is connected with the possession of the soil. The water privilege, on the other hand, is as strictly located, appertains as closely to the soil as the fertility of a farm. While the produce of agriculture, of mines, and quarries, give the

materials of production, the power-agents furnish the chief, and as civilization progresses will furnish almost the entire, strength for their manufacture. Indeed, civilization consists largely in shifting the laboring oar into the hands of natural agents, leaving the helm with man. Thus has it been in the department of labor whence the figure comes. The paddle was unshipped and sails spread to the winds. Men ceased to heap bank upon bank of oars, and stretched sail above sail, a mimic mountain of canvas. Later, this force, as often tedious, uncertain, or adverse, was replaced with steam, and men now hold a power which, with its dark trail in the air and white trail in the sea, bears them with alacrity and certainty to all quarters of the globe. Between the row-boat and ocean steamer lies one of those long reaches which the race has made in substituting for its own the strength of nature.

We have, then, a vast array of forces put at our disposal in connection with the soil; forces that give the material of industry, and the powers wherewith we shape it to our purpose; forces which, when owing their efficiency to our skill and industry, are yet the indispensable centres about which labor must gather. The ownership of the soil is the appropriation of its powers, is making ourselves possessors of the gratuities of nature, is the securing of an advantage which might otherwise accrue to a fellow. These gifts are unequally united to different soils and localities, and determine, by the preponderance of advantage they offer, the centres of population and emigration. Egypt became the granary of the world by the will of God, expressed in natural adaptations, rather than by the will of man. While, however, the most accessible and fertile soils and favored climates, affording the easiest hold to industry, reward man's first efforts, it cannot be doubted that later difficulties, though greater in themselves, are often relatively less, the powers to overcome them rapidly enlarging with the extension of culture. The land taken later under cultivation, though inferior in quality or oppressed with unusual obstacles to occupation, may, never-

theless, owing to improved methods of agriculture and the nearness of markets, afford a larger return of profits than soils intrinsically more favorable, and hence earlier occupied. The great discrepancies of advantage which the later stages of civilization reveal, as seen in city and village lots, in rich interval when contrasted with rugged uplands, slowly arise in connection with that expenditure of skill and industry which completely uncloses the usually frugal hand of nature, and makes the gains conferred on her favored children seem extravagant.

But, notwithstanding these two considerations equalizing the gifts of nature,—that the increase of skill may make poorer soils more valuable than she alone has made the best; that enterprise and commerce develop great values, and spread them broadly in unexpected places,—the appropriation of the soil, of the opportunities offered by its best fertility and localities, confers most important and permanent advantages on the occupants, and constitutes a monopoly of nature and pre-occupation of the world.

This being the relation of the soil, with its diversified forces, to production, it would seem that some rule resting on justice ought to regulate its possession. The earth is evidently the common capital of man, the undivided inheritance of equal heirs. A community of faculties and a similarity of position as regards the world, indicate our equality of rights, and make the productive resources of the globe the property of mankind, awaiting just, impartial division. Such a partition with proximate accuracy would seem possible, if a single generation were to enter alone upon their rights, and were disposed equitably to determine them, and to protect each other in their enjoyment. But even the partial justice capable of being reached under this arbitrary supposition would quickly disappear again. The rights of succeeding generations are not to be forestalled or cancelled by the actions of previous ones, and, therefore, at the close of some definite period, a new division and distribution would become necessary. Otherwise a portion of the race, by the improvidence

or misfortune of parents, would find themselves permanently deprived of their part of the earth, — heirs with nothing to inherit, men with no lodgement or lot in the gifts of Providence. But it is plain that a redivision in successive generations, would occasion far more injustice than it would remedy. Men do not march into the world in long, unbroken lines, once in thirty years, ready to inherit and occupy that whose occupation has been yielded, they steal in and out every moment, and require for theoretical justice, therefore, a constant recognition of rights, and a perpetual shifting of ownership. An accurate adjustment would begin at once to lose precision, and would hold the rights of many parties in abeyance for half a lifetime.

Still more, injustice would arise on the actual redivision. Labor so incorporates itself with the soil, so adds itself to it in buildings, trees, and permanent improvements, as shortly to occasion a large share of the value which attaches to natural agents. This inseparable part of the worth of land is private wealth, and can neither itself fall into the common stock for equal division, nor suffer the loss of that land on which it depends.

Some, like Herbert Spencer, seeking an actual and perfect equality of possessions in the earth, have thought that the ownership of land should rest in the state, and that it should be held in convenient lots for yearly rental to the highest bidder, the rent accruing to the community. Overlooking the complexity of this scheme, so great as to make it totally impracticable, we should find it impossible by any such method to reach the coveted good of general prosperity. The plan would result in a dismal equality of poverty, a common and complete loss of wealth. Property in constant transfer would gain none of those improvements so necessary to its development, get to itself few of those snug comforts and adornments which so largely impart value. Ownership, permanent and complete, is necessary to progress. No truth is settled by a broader and more undeniable experience. If this impossibility of constant transfer is plain in farm-lands,



where the nature and fertility of the soil constitute so large a portion of the value, how much more obvious is it in village and city lots, where the land is often but an insignificant fraction of the value. The greater part being due to the edifices built thereon.

Theoretical equality, therefore, is evidently impracticable, if all parties were disposed to seek it. So far from being contemplated in the formation of society, it is rendered forever impossible by a constitution of things incapable of modification, unpliant to the most cunning devices of equalization. The prosperity these are instituted to secure, soon evaporates under them, and division ceases with the disappearance of that which is to be divided.

A petty perfection of parts, a scrupulous tithing of mint and anise, an exact equalization of advantages, a rolling up in recipe-pellets, each for each, at such and such an hour, of the good and gifts of the world, does not enter into the plan of Providence. It is the discipline of great movements, permanent principles, and fluctuating chances that God seeks; and out of these he develops for all most goodly opportunities. The world, neither moral nor physical, rests on minutiae. Its laws sweep outside of accidents, and bring order out of this or that form of confusion. The highest and lowest, the fortunate and unfortunate, change places, and it is the slow gravitation of time that settles events. Heaven's justice is not the ounce and dram measure of a police-court, but the noble, unequal, abounding liberality of parental love. Such is it in industry and in grace.

But because absolute justice is a chimera, it does not follow that that proximate justice which is attainable, which is allowed by the interests of society, and demanded by those of the individual, should not be carefully provided for. Indeed, we herein have the true criterion of justice, that which the interests of the individual require, limited by the kindred interests of others. Justice, attainable, practical justice, lies at the point of reconciliation; as for absolute justice there is no such thing. Justice is that adjustment

and balancing of claims which respects all in the highest possible degree, and so abridges all that they are mutually consistent. Justice does not secure to the individual an equality of opportunity, but simply leaves open to him the natural avenues to good, except so far as already closed by the kindred liberty of others. A diversity of opportunities is inseparable from a diversity of powers and positions, and to strive to remedy the inequality of gifts which God working through nature has bestowed, is chimerical, is mistaking good for evil. The freest possible play of native powers, that play which is consistent with a like play in others, and with the general well-being, is all that the individual can claim. If one faculty curbs another, one right limits another, and one gain restricts another, it is the duty of wise men to choose between them. It is not possible that the individual should secure the full advantage of personal labor, and society maintain an equal division and redistribution of land, or even of its proceeds. As the first, however, is the fundamental right, the immediate and constant incentive to production, it must suffer the least possible abridgment. That ownership of property must be maintained, which is consistent with the highest development of industry, since this, and this only, is for the ultimate interest both of society and the individual.

The general good must overrule individual good, since the last is included in the first. A member cannot set up a claim as against the whole body, as that which ruins this destroys that. If a liberty of which I am in the exercise does not conflict with a kindred liberty in others, yet this joint liberty, lying in the sphere of law, conflicts with a healthy social state, common restrictions are admissible and called for, as the remedy of a public evil. Society is so far organic that it may regulate and restrict action that does not interfere with equality of rights, but does interfere with social progress. Society may do what it can do for its own good, and the justification of the measure is its wisdom. Success is a sufficient defence of many acts, a sufficient guar-

antee of their fitness. Equality of rights is but a negative guide to legislation. The highest social well-being, skilfully harmonized with individual liberty, and springing out of it, is the goal of law. A civil polity that bows instead of bends private rights, therein destroys itself; but not less does one which leaves wayward action, recklessly confronting the public good, uncurbed. The common weal must give the form, and individual liberty the substance, of national prosperity; the two inseparably organized into a perfect social constitution.

While absolute equality of ownership in natural agents is a condition impossible to industry, equally is a disregard of the rights of each individual to acquire land incompatible with prosperity. Society may easily, justly, and wisely set limits to the possessions she will suffer in this direction to fall into the hands of the individual, and by her authority maintain them. Large estates when so extended or so retained in families as to destroy the fluency of landed property, and cut off a large share of the community from the possibility of its acquisition, become an injury to society, and rob it of that free and equal development which is possible and natural to it. It may, therefore, most rightfully refuse its protection to claims which are made against its own best interests, and disallow titles which pass the limits set by the general good.

Much more may society decline to transfer an ownership prejudicial to itself from generation to generation, thus transforming transient evil into permanent mischief, and instituting a class with superior hereditary rights. Complex entail and inheritance by primogeniture — creatures of civil law, the act of society itself — none, certainly, can justify in opposition to the interests of the many. These laws needlessly and injuriously close opportunities which nature has opened for the redistribution of natural agents. The hand relaxed by death has no ownership, no power, physical or moral, and the inheritance which society steps in to establish and secure ought obviously to be that which best facilitates

the acquisition and transfer of land, at least so far as the motives to industry are quickened thereby.

Indeed, death is God's silent, constant, universal agent of distribution, breaking up the compact estate, scattering by settlement and sale landed property, and enabling a new generation, as fast as the old gives way, imperceptibly, yet certainly, to enter on its rights, with a fresh adjustment of titles, and a new balance of opportunities. All, therefore, in law which makes natural agents of easy passage from hand to hand, responsive in the market to the highest price; all that breaks down the barriers which the pride of families or greed of classes is struggling to maintain, which refuses execution to a will establishing a permanent entail, lies in the direction of liberty, and, without serious abridgment of the rights of ownership, opens them to the largest number. Indeed, these are the precise interests to be at this point balanced, the largest enjoyment of ownership with the freest participation therein by the greatest number. A rental system would well-nigh ruin the first; primogeniture and kindred laws greatly limits the second. Freedom of sale with equal division among like heirs best reconciles the two, and secures that proximate equality which is all that God seems to design, or, in the ordinances of nature, to allow.

In the actual distribution of natural agents, justice, at the outset, found little place. The question was one almost purely of force. Each took what he was able to take, and held possession by the same title of strength. As between nations might has made right, so within nations force has laid the foundations of order, the principles of law and justice slowly emerging from institutions which, in the beginning, had very partial dependence on them. Indeed, not only have the few seized the patrimony of the many, they have often reduced the weaker to slavery, and made them bondsmen on their own lands. With one stroke of tyranny they have sequestered both the owner and his possessions, subjecting each to their pleasure. But society cannot exist with general, unrestrained violence. Supreme authority

must have support, and that it may have it, must impose some restraints on itself. Between a portion of the community at least, there must of necessity, in the protection of common interests and in the pursuit of kindred ends, spring up claims to be respected and duties to be enforced by the conjoint strength. A measure of right thus finds entrance between the upper classes, and therewith arise the pregnant and inexhaustible questions of the claims of the individual, and the conditions under which he shall yield support to the authority over him. Runnymede is a germ of liberty; though the lords that are bold against their king are equally defiant against their serfs and slaves.

A discussion of the principles of order and prosperity finding entrance, even in the limited circle of leaders, cannot suffer arrest. The mechanical and mercantile classes, developing skill, wealth, power, brought into close contact with each other, and placed in circumstances favorable for combination, soon in turn institute and maintain their claims, and in free cities lay the foundations of a broader liberty. The farming class, on the other hand, though usually the most deeply wronged, are the least able to assert their rights, and to obtain that personal freedom and equitable distribution of natural agents which belong to them. Yet the interests of production, the laws of economic action, steadily press on the public consideration questions of ownership, of the inheritance of land; and, if the agriculturist is the last to feel the movement toward liberty, he at length proposes the most radical inquiries. He not only claims his own powers, but a share of the common powers of nature. Large landed property, passing from father to son in the midst of a swarming, destitute population, so propounds and presses the question of the ultimate grounds of distribution of common gifts between man and man, that it cannot remain forever unanswered. Thus, not mere liberty is demanded, but the advantages of liberty as well, — freedom to enter on the inheritance that God has granted the race.

Thus we have a striking verification of the remark, "that  
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force and right govern the world"; force till right is ready. We start with force, because the principles of right are not so in men's minds, have not been so painfully and faithfully developed by experience, so fretted into them by lash and spur, as to be an efficient power of combination, resistance, action. When force, with its evils and partial order, has educated man to the right, then it, ready to reign, establishes and is able to maintain supreme authority. In this long transition from force to right, from the unrestrained action of the one to the ballanced action of all, the laws of production play a most important part, the love and pursuit of wealth urging men to that justice which best stimulates and rewards the exertions of all. At no point can society tarry in its growth without shortly finding itself at war with economic interests, and that production will suffer permanent arrest without liberty, intelligence, opportunity, in its agents.

It is, then, in the interests of men that is found in large part the power that transfers society from the reign of force to that of right, and lays the foundation of that justice which religion completes and adorns. Generosity, the liberal giving of lords and kings, may seek to embellish tyranny; but the true play of these virtues is not found till the claims of justice are met, and there remain only those inequalities instituted by nature and not by man. Thus, in the very relation we sustain to natural agents, the productive and mechanical powers of the world, we find a school of liberty pressing home upon us, in the conflict of daily interests, the comparison and determination of our rights with those of others, as before a common Heavenly Father. No discipline is more severe, more patient, yet none more perfect than this, by which the right first reigns in the mind, and on that condition alone reigns in the world; by which a law, sternly just, is established as the precursor of a kindly intercourse; by which we are emancipated from the patriarchal tenderness of rulers to their fear and respect; from a kindness whose open hand holds the spoils of our labor to a good feeling which starts from the bounds of justice. First law, then love—Sinai, then Calvary—is everywhere the line of growth.

Agriculture, we have said, remains longest unaffected by the progress of liberty. The mechanical arts more immediately quicken ingenuity, sharpen the mind by intercourse, and make their agents more compact and formidable. The labor of the field, on the other hand, leaves the workman isolated, may be performed in a careless, clownish way, and, by its severe, rough character, confirm the boor in his ignorance and stolidity. It has always, therefore, been the last refuge of slavery, and presented it in its most revolting forms. By compensation for this disadvantage, a peculiar importance attaches to agriculture, and a peculiar law of development. The mechanical arts must ultimately rest for support on the cultivation of the earth. Hence comes their material, and hence that produce that is to feed and clothe their agents. The prosperity of agriculture, therefore, must underlie all other prosperity. There can be built no substantial edifice without this foundation. Special attention must thus, sooner or later, be turned to this branch of production, and its development be pushed as preliminary to further progress.

But the law of this growth is peculiar. Manufactures advance with easy increase. As capital enlarges in these branches of industry, profits are multiplied even more rapidly. The large operator secures a better command of machinery, of workmen, of the market; a more complete and complementary combination of processes, and division of labor in each; an increased economy of material, and a shorter period of production. The agriculturist, on the other hand, expends his labor with increasing disadvantage. He can neither indefinitely enlarge the same kind of labor on the old ground, nor carry it to new ground without loss. The centre of operations becomes more and more remote from the extremes. Labor, crops, manure have further to go. The remote field, with no advantage over the field near at hand, suffers to the full this disadvantage of position. Hence agriculture tends to break up rapidly into distinct centres, into farms of convenient size; and, if many of these are under one ownership and supervision, they soon show the want of complete and

constant direction. They are burdened with the difficulties of a lease and rental system. Thus a large capital employed in farming suffers unusual and increasing difficulties, spreading itself over lands beyond personal observation and control. A capital of half a million may, in the arts, lie within a few square rods, in agriculture it must cover almost as many square miles.

There arises from this peculiar law of growth a force which, when the interests of agriculture excite attention as pressing and supreme, goes far to correct the degradation of labor otherwise incident to it, and makes it the chosen department of independent and self-reliant men. This force acts so powerfully as to restore the balance between the cultivation of the soil and manufacture. Small capitals in competition with larger ones suffer a disadvantage in mechanical and commercial employments; in agriculture they possess an advantage. The condensed labor and personal observation they bring with them, are more sure of profits than the diffused labor and multiplication of remote agents which accompany large farming operations. No capital that can command a half acre of ground is too small for some of the most remunerative branches of culture. This tendency to restricted ownership is further aided by the nature of agriculture, demanding, as in the cultivation of trees and rearing of stock, immediate, constant, interested, intelligent observation, and rewarding it by results not otherwise to be reached. Most mechanical labor admits of definite, complete accomplishment, the products clearly indicating the kind of care and skill bestowed on them. Its tasks can be divided into days' works, of ten hours each, and suffer no loss in the intervals. The exertion it imposes is more thoroughly and immediately remunerative, securing almost at once a cash equivalent in increased products. Quite otherwise is it with agriculture. This is full of extra demands, will often not suffer a regular respite from labor, does not betray negligence by an immediate falling off in the quality of produce, but by a remote effect on quantity, imposes much exertion which is



not obviously and at once compensatory, and finds its reward, in part at least, in the love of neatness, in the luxury of order, beauty, and work well done. Hence the untiring hand and gratified eye of the master have great advantage over the labor of the hireling, to whom all exertion, aside from compensation, is irksome. The pleasure of ownership, the reward of skill, the growth of order and elegance, are so mingled with the toil for a livelihood, as to take from it its severity and servility, and make farming to the small yet skilful holder, a gratification, almost as much as a labor.

The branches, also, of cultivation which fall to the large and small capitalists respectively, favor the latter. Grain, cotton, tobacco, sugar, may be produced on a large scale, and will always be cultivated with exclusive reference to profits. The rough, uniform labor these crops require fits them for field hands, but takes from them much of the satisfaction of gratified taste, of the eye fed with natural beauty. Horticulture, on the other hand — the raising of berries, flowers, fruits, — falls readily to small owners, and the gardener is as pleased with the results as with the profits of toil. The luxury of pleasant and fruitful grounds becomes his in the very line of his business, and what to others is a coveted and costly indulgence is to him a remunerative investment. Thus does agriculture, by contrast with other occupations, invite feeble capitalists, and give comforts and luxuries of living not otherwise attainable by them.

Again, the law of progress in tillage tends to the same result. It is not possible, as we have seen, to increase the ratio of profits to labor and capital by mere exertion. This toil secures rather a lighter and lighter reward. Every true advance by which nature is made more liberal, and a larger share of the burden is shifted to her strong hand, is achieved by greater skill, a wiser method of breaking and handling the soil, a better rotation of crops, more powerful fertilizers, more perfect tools, and a laying of labor upon machinery and brute force. More wit, more wisdom, is the constant demand in the farmer. He works with agents very power-

ful, but somewhat restive and intractable. Broken and driven with a firm and judicious rein, there is no limit to their accomplishment. Managed with a stupid and passionate hand, they soon escape control, and leave the vexed and complaining workman the drudge of poor and poorly-paid toil. In no department of production are careful observation, skilful management, and extended theoretical knowledge more requisite than in agriculture. The farmer has to do with living things, with the food of plants and animals, and must know how, therefore, to meet the conditions of growth through a wide circle of life. A little skill often becomes of more worth than much labor. The grand condition of success is to understand on what terms nature will work for us, when bring into play her chemistry, loan her vital powers, and make the elements of earth and air, the winds and seasons, toil in their courses for our behoof. This peculiar and pressing demand for skill, as farming escapes its half-savage state and passes into productiveness, fits it to be the calling of thoughtful men. In the hands of such workers alone can the earth develop its full power, and become the mother and nurse of a prosperous and prolific population.

So also the introduction of machinery into agriculture tends to the subdivision of land, and increasing independence of owners. The labor thus set free must either seek employment in the trades, or by emigration, or be re-absorbed by a better division of the soil and a more thorough cultivation of it. A portion at least of those thus liberated will, in this method, return to their familiar branch of industry.

There are, then, in the progress of civilization many forces at work, apportioning the earth in small parcels to numerous holders, and making way for that faithful garden-culture which develops its full capacity. The mechanical arts cannot progress, with crowded cities and swarming villages, without giving rise to a demand for the products of the garden, the orchard, and the field, which will tend rapidly to concentrate farm-labor, and place it in the hands of many independent producers.

As in the progress of population the most available lands are first occupied, leaving those less accessible for later cultivation, it would at first seem that agriculture is forced, by the increasing demand, either to seek unoccupied continents or ascend a plain of increasing difficulties as it passes from one soil to another less eligible. Spreading over the rich interval, it is crowded up the slopes of hills, and at length reaches their barren summits. This would be in a much higher degree true than it is, did not the gains of agriculture keep pace with its obstacles. The higher price of produce is equivalent to more power, and bestows to the circumference of culture advantages which in the beginning belonged alone to its central ground. Indeed, the margin, as it passes out from the centre, is always the line of equilibrium between means, motives, and the difficulties confronting them. With a new fertilizer, and a new branch of production, as of the grape, sands previously sterile may yield an easy income. With the growth of population and consequent increased value of stock, grazing on the harder lands may give returns scarcely surpassed by the grain culture of the richest districts. Thus steady and variable forces are at work to enlarge the lines of cultivation.

But it is evident that while there may thus be an equality, or even growth of advantage in the lands last redeemed, those first cultivated, or at least those intrinsically most fertile and best located, will have a growing value and bear a heavy rental. There will thus be great concentrations of wealth in the soil, maintaining the power of the agriculturist and his balance with other classes. The stream overflowing its banks, and rising on the slopes, occasions everywhere an increased depth in its waters; thus, also, we have an enlarged volume of values as the movement of occupation advances.

The possession of natural agents therefore, becomes in the progress of the race more and more important, their distribution more perfect, and the independence and intellectual power of those who hold them more complete. The natural

law grows up into the moral law. The ownership of one's powers or personal liberty is closely connected with the ownership of natural agents or property. The principles which underlie the two are essentially the same. Both rest on an acknowledgment of the equal rights which God bestows on his common children. But as we have seen, the interests of production, the interests of the masses, require and lead to a struggle for that free, transferable possession of natural agents which enables each individual to unite his industry to the powers essential for its best success, and by competitive purchase leaves land to fall into the hands of those who most desire it, and therefore will usually most thoroughly develop its resources. Real estate thus becomes active, seeking in the market the best and most efficient holder. Men in securing the possession of the gifts of nature, as in the cultivation of their own powers, and attaining rank among their fellows, are thrown into bold, free, stringent competition, developing all their resources and imparting to the whole body of society momentum by the struggle of each for excellence and eminence.

But those institutions and laws, which, resting upon right, ultimately give full play to the faculties of every man, are not the first, but the last, achievement of civilization. Though interest demands them, it is the interests of the masses, and these can only find a safe balance among themselves, and recognition by the powerful few with the utmost difficulty. Society is in its better forms its own product, the completion and perfection of its own strength by its own growth. Anarchy is the unrestrained violence of all. The first step toward order is the successful, permanent violence of a few. The forces in conflict are not equal, and one prevails. But this force in prevailing must set itself limits. It must have supporters wherewith to watch opposers; it must employ discretion as well as strength; it must concede something that it may retain the more; it must be content to sow and protect others in sowing, that it may be with them a joint reaper. So fast as any influence becomes powerful it must

seek to ally itself therewith, or at least to conciliate the new force. Failing materially of wisdom and moderation in these respects, it opens the way for counter-violence; and a new power, binding itself with more skill and consideration to the agencies present, will advance freedom by revolution. Thus violence must at once commence the march toward right, meeting conflicting forces, balancing itself therewith, pushing its way by victory, compromise, concession, and binding itself to order by compacts of mutual interest with this and that party. The ruler is not unlike the merchant. He is exorbitant in his claims when he can be, but crowded more and more into the open market; subject to the competition of others, he is at length beaten from his vantage-ground, and parts with his commodities at their just value. Power, that it may remain power, must more and more include the interests of the masses, since its own existence, bringing to a conclusion the aimless divisions of anarchy, tends to concentrate all adverse interests into an opposition, which must be kept in a minority of strength if not of numbers. There must, therefore, be a growing harmony of voices in favor of ruling institutions and authorities, or these, outstripped by the united elements of opposition, will be compelled to give way to a power more deeply rooted in popular affection.

It is evident, that in this transition from violence to right, in a rough, general way, those will rule who are most competent. Intelligence is that form of force most efficient in securing authority. But the most intelligent leader and party will best understand their own interests and most successfully combine parties in their attainment. It is ever better to suffer the moderated rapacity of those who know their interests, than the extravagant claims of those who do not; of an intelligent minority than of an ignorant, brute majority. Those will set the wiser and more liberal limits, will ground their authority on more just concessions, and support it by a kinder policy. Not till the oppressed know their rights, and those of others as well, are they prepared

to exercise authority. Prior to such a discovery, their government is the most searching and merciless form of pillage. On a low basis of morality, one ruler is always more just and bearable than many.

In this severe school of suffering the masses are held, till, with a distinct, settled idea of rights, they present a front so firm and bold to their rulers as to demand respect, and give a guarantee of a temperate use of the power they shall win. The whole march, then, from anarchy, through violence to right, is one of discipline, and will be as rapid as the mental and moral states of the parties to it will allow. An insurrection of the masses, the result of the weakness of the dominant power, or a movement in excess of the ideas which sustain it, will throw the community back toward anarchy, as the eruption of a volcano overwhelms the growth already realized, and compels a new formation.

For this reason it is, that the safest revolutions are those of single and short steps, with no general disturbance of the elements of disorder, a single party or interest pushing its way into the circle of those whose rights are recognized; thus combining itself with accepted authority.

Tyranny becomes most hopeless, waiting the solution of force, when those subject to it are cut off by strong distinctions of race or color from the oppressors. A system of manumission, transferring the most intelligent and dangerous, from slaves to freemen, gives a vent to elements, which in African slavery, compressing all the most dull and the most daring into one rank, are sure to prepare the way for insurrection. A free movement upward and downward in society is the safety of growth. Establish barriers, at which those beneath can accumulate in angry masses, till, like a hungry flood, they are able to overleap them, and we have the conditions of wide-spread ruin. The stubbornness of the obstacle measures the force it calls forth, and blind tyranny evokes the mighty and demoniac spirits of revolution.

The line, then, of growth which pure interest prompts, which the love of ownership and property-rights stimulate, lies

parallel with that which simple right and morality require. It commences, however, far lower than moral motives reach, and, from a state of violence and plunder, lifts society upward, till a sense of duty, uniting itself with desire, fortifies the mind, plants it on principle, and prepares it for a complete and permanent victory.

Government can thus exist, and order be instituted, far down in the descent of selfishness toward rapine and lawless plunder. Even here a force catches and holds man, but can only accomplish its mission and reach its noblest results as it travels up into the region of the spiritual affections, fortifies itself there, and gives steadiness and consistency to its motives, enabling society to endure unbroken all the sudden shocks of interest, and wayward winds of popular sentiment. The roots of order hide themselves deep in the mould: they first establish themselves in the darkness, then send a single bud into the air above, and later only bring material from this nether region, that they may build it up into towering top and wide-spread branches, whose life is the light they revel in. Interest, hidden as a seed by God in the dark, cold soil of society, initiates a growth it does not understand, pushes it into higher regions, and there finds and feels a heaven-descended warmth, which henceforth seizes upon it and draws it ever up, thirsting for that which is above. God rules the heart of men by forces first, unknown, then known to it.