PAPERS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

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NOTICE.

The following Papers have nearly all appeared in print—of some, however, the printed copies have been lost, and the original Drafts have therefore been used for the present publication.

The changes introduced consist mainly of a few verbal corrections intended to render the sense more clear.

In some cases editorial remarks have been reprinted, with a view to the elucidation of succeeding papers.

The Reader will observe that the same subject has been treated of in Papers written at different times and under different circumstances. Hence have sometimes arisen a repetition of arguments and expressions, and perhaps a certain diversity of view.

These remarks are of course inapplicable when one Paper is avowedly a continuation of its predecessor.

The Writer is not now prepared to defend all the opinions expressed in the present publication—still less all the arguments by which these opinions are supported. All he need say upon this point is, that when he wrote, he did so honestly, and with an earnest desire to assert and to maintain what appeared to him to be the truth.

INSERTED IN THE TRAVELLER NEWSPAPER.—NOW PRINTED FROM THE DRAFT. DATE 1821 OR 1822.

The following Squib was intended to collect into a small compass the fallacious opinions and arguments often adduced in favour of Protection, at the time it was written, by speakers and writers, beginning in the scale of rank with Cabinet Ministers.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED, this Petition of the Market Gardeners residing in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis most humbly sheweth—

That your Petitioners have remarked with the utmost alarm, the increasing respect which is shewn by your Honourable House to the wild speculation of certain visionary men, calling themselves Political Economists, being firmly convinced, that the fanciful doctrines of these persons, however convincing or incontrovertible they may appear in theory, will prove utterly false and nugatory in practice.

That the principle of protecting British industry from foreign competition, and of rendering ourselves independent of other countries, has been acted upon by our most enlightened Statesmen for many ages, and has given rise to a system of policy, which has commanded the respect and imitation of the world, and which, under Providence, has been the means of ele-

vating this empire to its present state of glory, wealth and happiness.

That in the existing state of the world, the prospect of any changes in the grand features of our policy however specious they may at first sight appear, fills them with the deepest alarm, as nobody can venture to say how far these changes may be carried, or when the mania of alteration may stop.

That your Petitioners while thus highly applauding a system erected by the wisdom, and cemented by the blood of our ancestors, cannot help complaining of the grievances to which they are particularly exposed, and for the continuance of which in the present enlightened age, they are utterly unable to account. While all other classes of British Traders are fully encouraged by bounties on the produce of their industry, or by prohibitions against the importation of whatever might compete with it, no such advantages have ever been held out to your Petitioners; but on the contrary, foreign fruit of all descriptions have been allowed to be brought into this country and sold without limitation to the serious injury of your Petitioners and the community at large; and as it would seem, merely for the benefit of a few Commission merchants, barrow women, and Jew boys.

That the value of the fruit so imported annually cannot be computed at less than £500,000—which large sum is of course paid in gold and silver, to the vast diminution of the national wealth, and the consequent enrichment of rival and hostile nations.

That your Petitioners would wish to call the attention of your Honourable House to the highly pernicious

practice which has lately arisen, of persons settled in the East and West Indies sending large presents of pickled and preserved fruits to their friends in this country; thus preventing the consumption of a very large quantity of Girkins, Walnuts, Raspberries, and other articles, the produce of home industry. While deprecating this practice, and earnestly imploring your Honourable House to prevent its continuance, by the imposition of heavy penalties, your Petitioners would not be understood to make any personal reflection on the individuals of whose conduct they complain, and whom they conceive to err more from ignorance than ill-intention.

That your Petitioners have not the least doubt that only a very trifling inconvenience to the consumer will at first arise, from the proposed prohibition of foreign fruits, and that within a short period, they shall be enabled to supply the market, with a sufficient quantity of oranges, grapes, figs, raisins, etc., for which purpose they have already vested a very large capital in the erection of extensive conservatories and forcing-houses, not doubting but that their patriotic endeavours for the benefit of the public will be duly encouraged by the wisdom of Parliament.

That as to any objection that may be raised to the plan now proposed, arising from the increased price which the above commodities will probably bear after its adoption, your Petitioners cannot persuade themselves that any ill effects will flow from that circumstance, as no money will go out of the country; as a heavy and constant drain on its specie will be prevented, and the increased price will be wholly

distributed among many most important and deserving classes of the community, who are now frequently compelled to beg in the streets, or have recourse to parish relief, such as scavengers, nightmen, carters, bargemen, etc.

That if, however, any inconvenience should be found to arise from the supposed high price of British fruit contrary to the opinion of your Petitioners, such inconvenience might be easily obviated by the grant of a small bounty, say 5*d.* on every lemon, citron and orange, the produce of the United Kingdom, and a corresponding one per lb. weight on other fruit, a measure which at the same time would produce the happy effect of quickening the circulation of money, and thus invigorating every branch of home industry.

That the above recommendation would be also found highly useful in the present distressed state of the revenue from the great increase in the consumption of bricks, tiles, glass, and other exciseable articles which it would infallibly engender, and that as your Petitioners would be able to maintain a much larger number of horses than they can under present circumstances, the agricultural interest would be equally benefitted by the increased demand for hay and corn.

That were not your Petitioners afraid of occupying too much of the time of your Honourable House, they could easily shew upon the foregoing principles—which with gratitude they mention, have never ceased to actuate your conduct—the great benefits which would arise from due encouragement being given to the manufacture of British wines, by which measure, an immense

sum would be saved, which is now paid to foreigners, and a demand created for the produce of your Petitioner's gardens, greatly to the benefit of your said Petitioners, and to that of the community at large.

Your Petitioners having thus most respectfully stated to your Honourable House the injustice under which they labour, rely with the utmost confidence on the wisdom of Parliament, for their speedy and complete removal, and as in duty bound will ever pray, &c., &c.

Respecting the Laws of Partnership.

[Communication from Geo. Warde Norman, in answer to Questions relating to the Laws of Partnership proposed by J. Bellenden Ker, Esq.]

In the following paper the answers were drawn up under the supposition that Partnerships, *en commandite*, might become popular in England. For some reason, which the writer is unable to explain, this has not proved to be the case.

1. I think Partners should be allowed to sue each other, without necessarily putting an end to the partnership, and that the Courts should enforce an agreement in the Partnership deed for referring disputes to arbitration; that they will not now do so, appears to me one of the flagrant instances afforded by our legislation of a preference to the interest of the profession over that of the public.

2. I am also of opinion that an easy mode should exist for a Joint Stock Company to obtain the permission of nominating a person to sue and be sued; in fact, I go farther; I think that for the sake of the

public, no Joint Stock Company ought to exist without some such regularly responsible officer. The registration of deeds of partnerships would also be very useful, and should extend to all associations, which, from the number of the partners or any other distinctive marks that might be selected, could be excluded from strictly private partnerships. This regulation exists, I believe, already in most countries. I have no apprehension that the measure in question could produce an improper spirit of speculation; if from the misdirection of public opinion or ignorance such an effect should occur to a certain extent in the first instance, it would be speedily checked, for the result would be to afford security against imprudence and fraud, and not to promote them.

I believe there is a deficiency in the existing laws to which you have not alluded, viz., the difficulty in the way of a retiring partner or a dissolving house which may be desirous of paying debts and getting rid of liabilities. I am told that, in the case of a banking-house, which has received deposits, and in consequence of deaths, change of residence, &c., is ignorant of the domicile of its creditors or their representatives, this is now almost impossible. Why, after a notice in the *Gazette*, and a proper interval of time, should not the sums unclaimed be paid over to some public board, which should hold the money for those entitled to it? This board, to be called the Board of Commerce, or Tribunal of Commerce, might be made useful in many ways beyond the sphere of your enquiry, such as settling questions of mercantile law and usage, now so pitiably mangled by the Courts; and might supervise

the deeds of settlement of Joint Stock Companies, and disallow them under certain specified circumstances, while its fiat should carry the permission of sueing and being sued, and sanction the collective designations. Of course it would not be called upon to pronounce as to their probable chance of profit, but simply as to their having conformed to the law, and not being fraudulent.

I now proceed to make a few observations on the advisability of allowing partnerships "*en commandite.*" Upon this point I am disposed to take the affirmative side. Indeed, I should do so without hesitation, was I not aware of the danger in such cases of relying on a train of *à priori* reasoning, wherein the action of disturbing causes may escape observation.

The ordinary and strongest objections to Partnerships with limited responsibility are:—

1. That they would give rise to fraud.
2. That they would lead to overtrading.
3. That they are not at any rate required in this country, where capital is readily found for every profitable undertaking, and credit for all who deserve it.

1. With respect to the first, with publicity of the deed of partnership, non-interference on the part of the "*commanditaire*" in the management of the business, and other regulations, the apprehension that great frauds would be practised is, I think, groundless.

Why is it to be assumed that the public, after a little practice, would not be able to form a proper estimate of the degree of confidence that the firm, A. and Co., ought to receive from the known fact that B. had embarked £10,000 in the house. Surely the influence of this latter fact could at any rate be better

appreciated than the degree of credit properly belonging to A. and Co. alone, supposing the original firm to consist of an ordinary partnership, the amount of whose capital it would be impossible for the public to ascertain, except from the ordinary empirical signs which we know to be so frequently fallacious. But it will be said that B. will only pretend to advance the £10,000, or that having advanced it he will withdraw it. Any danger of this kind might, I think, be obviated to a considerable degree by throwing upon him the burthen of proving that the stipulations of the registered deed had been strictly fulfilled by him in this respect: he might of course be allowed to diminish his interest in the concern, but only upon condition that the alteration was made public and a sufficient time allowed for old engagements to run off.

As things now are, the exact capital of a house can never be known; even a probable estimate of its amount can rarely be made, while the public would be enabled to ascertain, with at least tolerable accuracy (allowing something for fraud), a portion of that possessed by a house which included a "*commanditaire*." The greatest risk of deception would occur when B., supposed to be rich, but not being really so, pretended to advance £10,000, but really advanced £5,000 or nothing; legal punishments would of course be provided for such an offence, but I do not think the danger of it greater than that which now exists in all cases, without any liability to punishment on parties who perhaps tacitly profess to be richer than they are.

2. It is difficult to estimate the force of the second objection; my own opinion is, that the evil arising from

the impulse given to overtrading would not be great. Of this point, we have, in England, no experience to guide us, and at the best can only form a probable guess. Much might be learnt in France; and I should be rather surprised if there, *ceteris paribus*, *Societés "en commandite"* were found habitually more disposed to stretch their capitals and engage in hazardous speculations than *"Societés en nom collectif."* On the whole, I have great confidence in the good sense of the great bulk of mankind, and believe that they will not voluntarily pursue a ruinous system of trade. There is much overtrading and excitement now: there would be much with the proposed change, but I do not believe that it would be materially augmented.

3. Under the third head, I think the objections assume what they cannot possibly prove, and what I believe to be unfounded in fact. It is true, that in London and other of our large and wealthy cities, there is little appearance of want of means among those deserving credit or of capital for any useful undertaking; still I apprehend, that even in them, capital is not distributed and employed so beneficially as it would be if partnerships with limited responsibility were authorized by law, and in smaller places I am perfectly sure this state of things exists; in my immediate neighbourhood, I could point out many tradesmen, honest, respectable men, with good connections, who suffer greatly from want of capital, which they would probably obtain under an altered system; and further from the metropolis the evil must be much greater. It must be remarked, that instances in which poor men of talent and character obtain pecuniary assistance from the

wealthy, naturally excite attention, while instances in which they fail to obtain it are more easily overlooked.

Looking at the matter in a general point of view, I am persuaded that the mischief alluded to above must exist. For any commercial enterprise, two distinct capitals must be employed to insure the greatest chance of success, a material capital and an immaterial capital, the latter consisting of knowledge, experience, frugality, etc. etc. Now these will be more generally found separated than united. The possessor of the former, from that very circumstance (unless perhaps he has acquired it himself), is less likely than a poorer man would be to possess the latter. He may indeed lend his money to the man endowed with the larger immaterial capital, but with the usury laws staring him in the face he would often be prevented from doing so, because he cannot obtain a rate of interest equivalent to the risk.

An abolition of the usury laws would go far to replace to us the advantages of partnerships *en commandite*, still I do not think that the adoption of the former measure would render the latter inexpedient. Without it I think the national capital will never on the whole, both material and immaterial, be so usefully and beneficially distributed and employed as with it.

In conclusion I must observe, that had I to legislate on this subject, I should look narrowly to the experience of foreign countries, France, Italy, Germany, and America; and if I found that experience favourable I should not hesitate to act in conformity

with it; notwithstanding any supposed difference in our situation which might appear to render it inapplicable here, unless the want of parallelism could be clearly and distinctly shown. The reasons that induce me to think that limited partnerships would be useful in this country, appear to me to apply more strongly to the colonies.

1836.

WEST KENT CHAIRMEN'S PETITION.*

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Boards of Guardians belonging to the Western Division of the County of Kent, most humbly sheweth:—

That your Petitioners being aware that great efforts have been made to mislead the public mind and your Honourable House, respecting the effects produced by the New Poor Law Bill, and that statements and opinions having this tendency, have often proceeded from persons manifestly unfitted by a want of practical knowledge to form a trustworthy judgment on the subject; conceive that it is in some degree incumbent upon them to lay before you the results to which their

* This petition was likewise sent for presentation to the Lords. It was agreed to at a meeting held at Maidstone.

own experience, now extended over a period of from one to three years, and aided, as to many of them, by a previous acquaintance with the administration of the old law, has led them.

They have no hesitation in declaring it to be their full conviction that the existing Poor Law possesses great advantages over the former system, with respect to the chief objects at which, as they presume, this branch of legislation ought to aim, viz., the certain relief of destitution with the least injury to the moral and physical welfare of the persons relieved, or of the working classes in general. These objects it endeavours to attain, by placing in the hands of those who are called on to administer the laws, a far more perfect and complete machinery than before existed, and the means of applying a self-acting test which at once detects imposition, removes the pressure of want, and does not place the person relieved in a better condition, either in his own opinion, or that of others, than that of the independent labourer.

That cases of distress or hardship may have arisen from the recent change, your Petitioners are not prepared to deny, though few or none have occurred to their own observation. If some such, fairly attributable to the new system, should come to the knowledge of your Honourable House, they respectfully request you to recollect that no human legislation can be perfect, that every great good is almost necessarily accompanied with a certain amount of evil, and that it is the part of a wise lawgiver to compare general results with general results, and not to abandon a plan because liable to some objections, if, on the whole, it

should appear preferable to that which it is calculated to replace.

That your Petitioners beg leave to call the attention of your Honourable House to the great advantages which have flowed from the employment of paid and responsible officers, from the improvements in the education of pauper children, and in the important branch of spiritual assistance generally, from the divisions into unions instead of that into parishes, from the superior intelligence and impartiality of Boards of Guardians as compared with the old Overseers and Vestries, and from the superintendence and control exercised by the Assistant Commissioners and the Central Board,—all tending to render the relief afforded, certain and adequate to its object, and generally to correct abuse, either on the side of deficiency or excess.

That your Petitioners rejoice in the enquiry now in progress before a committee of your Honourable House, which they are full assured will tend generally to confirm the views they have now ventured to lay down. That should any improvements during the course of the investigation appear practicable, they are persuaded your wisdom will not fail to adopt them; but at the same tlme they earnestly entreat that you will not be induced by the clamour of persons interested in the continuance or renewal of abuses, or insufficiently informed on the subject, to interfere with the essentials of the new system, in which they conceive that the virtue and happiness of a large portion of the community are so deeply involved.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

1840.

Condition of England.

Some recent Publications of Colonel Torrens, which appeared to be in direct opposition to the doctrine of Free Trade, had greatly excited the writer's attention. He studied them, and thought that he had discovered a fallacy in them which went very far to explain away the conclusions to which their author had arrived.

In order to arrive at, and more clearly to confirm his convictions on this important subject, he printed, but never published, mainly from dread of a controversy, a short pamphlet, in which the Letters on the Budget, so far as they bear upon Free Trade, are fully examined.

The succeeding Papers relate to the same subject.

To the Editor of the Spectator.

8th February, 1843.

Sir,—Among living writers on subjects connected with political economy, there is hardly one whose talents entitle him to more attention than Colonel Torrens. The mistakes and errors of such a man are pernicious in proportion to the weight of his authority. Impressed with these considerations, I venture to send you a few observations on his late publication, which do not aim at completeness, but which may at any rate serve to excite the attention of persons more competent than myself to form a judgment on matters of overwhelming importance as respects the public good.

The circumstance that you have already devoted an editorial article to the doctrines propounded in "A Letter to Sir Robert Peel," does not arrest my pen, because, agreeing as I do with much of your criticism, I do not think that you have exhausted the subject.

Colonel Torrens' work seems to me essentially to involve the following sequence of assumption and inference.

First, That this country is in a declining state; indeed, that it has reached the point where wages and profits are at a minimum, owing to the accumulation and competition of capital and labour, and the effects of hostile tariffs, narrowing the field of employment, etc. Secondly, that errors in legislation, especially, and indeed almost wholly, those committed by the late Whig Government, have mainly given rise to this unhappy position of affairs, but at any rate, that our ruinous condition is necessarily dependent upon the circumstances in which we have been placed; in other words, that the policy of our rulers, aided a little by natural causes, has led to a state of things which, unless counteracted by some extraordinary measures, will render a minimum of profits and wages our habitual state.

Thirdly, That the only remedy for our overwhelming evils is systematic colonization.

Now, in all this, I think that, mingled with somewhat of correct principle, there is a vast deal of pernicious exaggeration. It will be seen that Colonel Torrens, in asserting, first, that we are in a state of ruin, consequent upon the causes which he enumerates, must imply that, according to his views, these causes, in their actually existing extent, are adequate to produce it. If then, it can be shown that our actual condition is far less deplorable than he imagines—that our malady, instead of being chronic, is in its nature acute, but carrying with it the seeds of recovery—his arguments are at once overthrown, so far at least as they are based on the example he has adduced. Upon this point, then, I proceed to assert an opinion totally different from that of Colonel Torrens. I can see nothing in our actual

condition differing in kind from what I have repeatedly observed in a pretty long career. It seems to me, that we are at the lowest point of the ordinary mercantile cycle, so well described by Mr. S. J. Loyd; that the general distress is not even so severe as it has been on some past occasions—in 1826, for instance; and that we may anticipate, with almost unhesitating confidence, that, without any extraordinary legislative measures, a state of things resembling their normal condition during the last twenty years will recur within a period more or less remote. It would occupy too much space were I to enlarge upon the facts which led me to this conclusion; but I may appeal to most acute observers for an opinion whether or no an extravagant course of over-banking and overtrading, aided by bad harvests and the condition of America, are not quite sufficient to account for all we see. A speedy improvement cannot perhaps be expected after so long a period of active excitement. In morals and economies, as well as in physics, there is a close relation between action and reaction.

I am quite aware that on this point my views are based in some degree on an assumption; but at any rate they are supported by past experience; while those of Colonel Torrens, equally founded on assumption, are directly opposed to past experience. A few words now upon systematic colonization. No man can feel more strongly than I do the advantages of founding upon a well-arranged plan, in various parts of the world, new communities of producers and consumers, bound to us by the ties of a common origin, language, laws, and, for a time, of a common government. But I think that Colonel Torrens overlooks an immense mass of difficulties in the practical application

of his views; that their realization is as difficult a problem as could well engage the energies of a statesman; that we should proceed upon them slowly, and as it were tentatively; and that any administration which should as a remedy for existing distress, at once proceed to raise a loan of twenty millions on the security of land sales, and employ it in making surveys and transporting labourers, would act unwisely and obtain no corresponding good result. I could bring many important arguments to bear upon this point, but will now content myself with calling to your attention the undoubted facts—that Canada is of difficult access, and has a bad climate; that Australia and the Cape of Good Hope have a soil and climate on the whole little suitable to agriculture; that Van Diemen's land is of very small extent; that New Zealand is mostly covered with a dense vegetation, requiring an immense outlay to clear it; and that, finally, most of these colonies are on the other side of the world.

My advice to the Government would then be, "colonize as fast as you can;" but I should add, "in doing so, proceed with the greatest care and deliberation—do not raise hopes only to frustrate them;" and the result, I fear, would be a rate of progress which would impose a severe trial on the patience of Colonel Torrens.

In conclusion, I will remark that the effect produced upon the public mind by Colonel Torrens' recent publication seems calculated to give, and indeed has given, new force to the almost exploded absurdities of the old mercantile school. In fact, there is little practical difference between its doctrines, and his, as

respects legislative measures applicable to external commerce. The chief variation between them appears to be, that the Colonel would admit the importation of corn and other raw produce on low terms; but doubt is even thrown on this point by the apparent preference accorded in the "Letters on the Budget" to the Tory sliding-scale over the Whig fixed duty.

I will only add, further, that Colonel Torrens is now the favourite authority among all classes of monopolists, and is cited as the opponent of the Economists and Free-traders.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
Z.

Editorial Comment.

[Whatever Colonel Torrens may have done in his other publications, we cannot recollect that his letter to Sir Robert Peel on the condition of England, affords any grounds for accusing him of attributing the evils of our social state to Whig legislation, and still less for believing that he has furnished arguments to the Monopolists against the Economists and Free-traders. The pamphlet in question appeared to us unexceptionable on the score both of party-spirit and of free-trade doctrine; and it was of this work only that we expressed the favourable opinion which Z. calls in question.

Confining ourselves, now as before, to the letter to Sir Robert Peel, it may be admitted that Colonel Torrens, in expounding his peculiar views of the condition of England, has in some places given way to some degree of exaggeration. We are all apt to do so,

more especially in controversy. But, allowing that one or two pictures of the operation of certain causes are somewhat over-coloured, it is not to be questioned that Colonel Torrens presents us with new and very interesting views of the causes and character of the national distress. Our correspondent's objections to those views are merely stated—they are only naked statements of opinion, without the support of evidence or reasoning.

Supposing, however, that Colonel Torrens is wrong in considering our present extreme difficulties as a chronic disease, and that Z.'s opinion as to its being an acute one is correct; still, the "state of things resembling their normal condition during the last twenty years," to which he hopes that we shall soon return, is surely not a state of economical health. During the whole of that term, not excepting the most prosperous years, the competition of capital with capital, and of labour with labour, in a limited field of employment for both, whilst both were continually increasing, has been productive of much suffering for every class, by turns, whose means of subsistence consisted of profits and wages. Suppose us restored to the "normal state of the last twenty years," and then add the six hostile foreign tariffs which have been adopted since the present administration came into power: would that be a healthy condition of things, permitting us to repose in security, instead of making every effort to enlarge the field of employment for our overgrowing amount of capital and labour?

The hostile tariffs are beyond our reach. It seems to have been adopted as a deliberate policy by the more advanced nations, that each should possess

within its own bounds the means of supplying its own wants. Very well, then, says Colonel Torrens, England extends to all parts of the world; the many and diversified countries within the bounds of England admit of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce without assignable limit; let us answer the hostile tariffs by colonizing.

While Z. "feels strongly the advantages of founding upon a well-arranged plan, in various parts of the world, new communities of producers and consumers, bound to us by the ties of a common origin, language, laws, and for a time of a common government," he yet objects to the scheme of Colonel Torrens as being on too large a scale. And here we are inclined to agree with him. Twenty millions would be too large a colonization-fund for the first year, or perhaps for the first half-dozen years. One million might suffice to begin with. But it is idle to talk of any sum in particular. There is a rule, by observing which, the emigration could not be overdone; let the demand for labour in each existing colony, and for any new colonies which capitalists, being sure of a supply of labour, would be tempted to found, be continually supplied, and no more. This would prevent excess at any time; and as each supply of labour to a colony would soon create a demand for more, the safe amount of emigration would ere long be very great. Z. does not question that, according to the plan which Colonel Torrens advocates, the whole fund for emigration would be got from the colonies.

His remarks about the agricultural capabilities of Canada, Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, Van Diemen's Land, and New Zealand, appear to us to be

founded on erroneous information; but we have not space to mention any facts leading to a different conclusion, except that Canada, with its "bad climate," produces wheat in great abundance in proportion to labour, and of the finest quality. The distance of the other colonies is, doubtless an unfavourable circumstance as respects a direct trade in flour between them and England; but if they were enriched by being plentifully supplied with labour, they would pay for our manufactures with something that would enable us to pay for European wheat with hard money, or with something else that European nations would be glad to take though they should refuse our manufactures.

Z. and Colonel Torrens have equally overlooked this last very important consideration.—ED.]

THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND QUESTION.

To the Editor of the Spectator.

2nd March, 1843.

SIR,—I feel greatly obliged by the insertion of my last letter, and flattered by the attention which you and Colonel Torrens have thought fit to pay to it.

In writing it I had no intention of entering upon a controversy, which, if carried out to any good purpose, would demand far more space than your pages could afford. I will, however, venture to offer a few words of remark and explanation, and then make my bow.

In my observations on the Letter to Sir Robert Peel, I certainly kept in view the doctrines expounded in the Letters on the Budget, which are supposed,

justly or not, to represent exactly Colonel Torrens' opinions. There, our difficulties are more than once declared to arise from the erroneous legislation of the Whigs; and I certainly imagined that this erroneous legislation consisted mainly, according to the writer of the Letters, in their having adopted, however incompletely, the principles of Free-trade, and not encountered hostile tariffs by a tariff sufficiently retaliatory.

But it seems from Colonel Torrens' letter to you, that the abstinence from legislation on the currency was a fault which falls to the charge of the late Government, and has had much to do with our present sufferings. Nobody laments more than myself the errors in our system of paper issues; but I do not blame the Whigs for not doing what I feel confident that they had not the power to do; and I am grateful to them for their partial enforcement of publicity, and for those searching examinations before Committees of the House of Commons, which have so much contributed to the enlightenment of the public as to the character of our circulation. The present Government, with an overwhelming majority at its command, may take advantage of the mistakes and unpopularity of the Joint Stock Banks, and the inability and possibly the unwillingness of the Bank of England to offer any resistance to a beneficial change, in order to introduce a searching reform into our currency.

We shall see if the Peel Cabinet will undertake a task in which it possesses so much advantage over its predecessor. It has been announced that the circulation question will not be stirred during this session.

I will now add a few words, in order to show that

Colonel Torrens advocates a fiscal system, as respects international trade, almost identical with that of the old mercantile school. It is true that the mercantile school proposed to legislate with a view to retain the largest possible quantities of the precious metals, because it was considered by them that gold and silver alone constitute wealth; and that Colonel Torrens proposes to legislate with a view to retain large quantities of the precious metals, in order to maintain a range of high money-prices. The ultimate object the two parties seek, and the reasons by which they are guided, are in some respects different; but the means by which they propose to accomplish their objects is with both parties the same—viz., a legislative interference with trading operations, for the purpose of affecting the distribution of the precious metals.

I do not, indeed, recollect, on the part of Colonel Torrens, any advocacy of the propriety of introducing a protective system as respects internal productions, excepting as a means of counteracting hostile tariffs. He does not propose to commence hostilities, but only to give blow for blow: but whoever will look at the England and Cuba case, in the second letter on the Budget, will, I think, perceive, that if the view which it exhibits be calculated to guide practically the measures of the legislature, it would lead him in every instance to discourage the importation of foreign goods, excepting, perhaps, certain articles of raw produce, whenever either by force or diplomatic subtlety, he could escape from the danger of retaliation.

If this be to advocate free trade, I have indeed laboured under a great mistake; having always imagined its practical rule, saving a few exceptions to be,

"Take care of the buyers, and leave the sellers to take care of themselves." This is the avowed doctrine of the Anti-Corn-Law League. It is directly opposed to that of Colonel Torrens; and although I may not approve of all the acts and language of that noisy and active association, yet on this point I consider them right.

In short, I think that the England and Cuba case affords a very imperfect exhibition of the truth. That it neglects many causes affecting the distribution of the precious metals, which are almost beyond the sphere of legislation—such as the operations of the smuggler, the shifting of capital, the expenditure of travellers, the purchase and sale of public securities, and the reciprocal action of the currencies of numerous co-existent countries, some of which produce the precious metals, and some do not, on each other. Thus, that practically speaking, it is impossible by any course of legislation to pen up in a given country an unnaturally large quantity of gold and silver, with a view to keep up high money prices. Finally, that the attempt to effect this object is fraught with many evils, among which may be enumerated the excitement of hostility on the part of foreigners, and hot-house manufactures at home, like those of France, unfortified by the healthy breeze of external competition.

My opinion, that the condition of England is by no means that of wide spread ruin to the industrious classes, hopeless, indeed, excepting it be relieved through the medium of systematic colonization—is founded, among others, on the following facts and considerations. First, for many years previously to 1837 or 1838, the working-classes generally were earning wages which gave them a command of neces-

saries and conveniences in greater amount than at any previous period. On this head, and generally as to a gradual improvement in their condition, the original Report of the Poor Law Commissioners may be consulted. Secondly, during the above period, the rate of profit was notoriously sufficient to remunerate the capitalists. Thirdly, the enormous accumulation of wealth in the hands of individuals cannot be accounted for by considering it as representing merely the savings of mortgages, annuitants, land and house owners: great part must be derived from the economies of the industrious classes. Fourthly, the existing distress can be easily explained by referring it to temporary causes, without at all regarding it as a proof of national decay.

While I say this, however, I beg it to be understood that in my view the condition of the masses can never be too good; and that the greatest sagacity and purest benevolence can never be better employed than in endeavouring to improve the intellectual, moral, and physical state of the millions.

There are many points in reference especially to Colonel Torrens' letter to which I should wish to advert, but I have already occupied too much space; and in conclusion, I will only reiterate the declaration of my profound respect for the learning, the acuteness, and the power of exposition which so highly distinguish Colonel Torrens. There is probably no man alive who could so well serve the cause of Systematic Colonization as himself, if putting aside all extraneous discussions, all party feeling, and a tendency to exaggerate his views, which sometimes deter the reader from the ready admission or adoption of a principle in

itself useful and true, he would inform us how the Wakefieldian system can best be carried into effect. The Whigs first called that system into actual operation in the management of our Colonies: the Tories are disposed to adhere to it; but in its application there are still disputed points, and practical difficulties. If Colonel Torrens would lend his powerful aid in elucidating and removing these, he would, indeed, confer an enduring benefit on his country.

I now take my leave of him and you; and have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant.

Z.

Internal Defence of England.

To the Editor of the Spectator.

Sir,—I have read with much pleasure the article on "National Defence" in your publication of the 15th inst. It relates to a subject which has often occupied my thoughts, and which, as it appears to me, merits the attention of every reflecting man.

Protection is, perhaps, the first duty which Government owes to its subjects—the first advantage which the members of a society, organized in the shape of a nation, have a right to expect as a repayment for the sacrifices they are compelled to make for the common good. Without protection of person and property against external aggression or internal riot, most social blessings must be destroyed, or become precarious.

Thus far we should probably agree; and I am fully of your opinion in thinking, that in consequence of the introduction of steam, "the Channel has become merely a great river, and that we can no longer rest for defence

on a moveable force passing up and down: its bank must be fortified."

But you seem to think that to fortify our coasts is not enough—that we require men to occupy the fortifications, and moreover a force sufficient to defeat an enemy should he succeed in penetrating through them. Here, too, I agree with you. But at this point commences a divergence in our views; and I will proceed to point out in what the divergence consists; and having done so, will state succinctly, so as not to occupy an unreasonable portion of your pages, my own opinion on the question between us.

You appear to think that our danger would be removed, or at least most materially mitigated, were our whole population practised in athletic sports and the use of arms. I do not deny that some advantage would arise in case of war from a state of things analogous to that which existed, when among the City apprentices, the peasants, and yeomen, a large proportion was to be found equally skilled in the use of the national weapon with those who conquered at Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. Other advantages would arise if the present age could borrow from the past somewhat of its independent and outdoor character; upon which I forbear to enlarge, as being beside my present object. At any rate, I think that, under actual circumstances, little could be gained with a view to defence against foreign aggression, or internal revolt, from any change in the habits of our population.

My opinion upon the matter in dispute shortly stated is as follows—

That regular troops, under ordinary circumstances,

can be successfully opposed only by regular troops possessing something like an equality in number.

All recent history, and ancient history too, well understood, supports the above maxim. It would be tedious to multiply instances in proof of it. It may suffice to point out the example which France exhibited in 1792, 1793, 1794, 1814, and 1815. The French are the most *military* people in Europe. From the breaking out of the Revolutionary war, they possessed an immense National Guard, as well organized as such a force can be: yet, during this long course of hostilities no instance can be found in which the National Guards defeated a hostile army, or defended a town, or opposed an efficient resistance to an invading enemy. Yet this enemy was, generally speaking, ill commanded, feeble, and unenergetic in his enterprises.

But even supposing that, under favourable circumstances, a levy *en masse* or National Guard may form an efficient instrument of national defence, I am prepared to maintain, that, in the whole of Europe, no country can be pointed out where a popular resistance would be less efficacious than in the case of England.

England labours under several special disadvantages with respect to the object in view. I will only enumerate a few—

First, The small extent of her territory.

Second, The want of forests, mountains, or large rivers.

Third, The absence of walled towns.

Fourth, The extreme productiveness of the territory; which would thus furnish to an enemy the means of support, and to the inhabitants a motive for submission.

Fifth, The excellence of the roads and other means of communication.

From what precedes you will readily perceive, that in my views the chief danger to England, so far as respects the national defence, arises from the trifling amount of the regular army. This army, in the three kingdoms, including the marines, does not exceed fifty thousand men, and is not supported by any reserve excepting a few pensioners; the militia being merely a name.

Supposing an outbreak in Ireland—an event highly probable, sooner or later, indeed certain—the twenty thousand men stationed on the other side of St. George's Channel could do little more than furnish garrisons for a few of the great towns, so as to obviate fears for the effect of a rising of the Catholic populace.

Supposing such an outbreak, supported by ten thousand French troops, embarked at Brest or St. Malo, and landed in 24 hours from a dozen steamboats.

Suppose, again, two or three expeditions of a similar amount thrown simultaneously or successively on different points of the English coast: how or where could they be resisted, with the existing force of our army? They would doubtless be overpowered at last; but what would be the alarm, the loss of property, the interruption to all peaceful occupation, which this nation would be previously called upon to undergo!

But I must hasten to a conclusion, being prepared to explain and enforce what has preceded hereafter, should it appear necessary so to do.

Taking all things into account, it seems to me that the amount of the regular army stationed within the

British Islands ought not, with any regard to the national safety, to fall short of one hundred thousand men; and this force should be supported by a *trained* reserve equally numerous, and so organized that a few days might range it in battle array against an invading foe.

The increase of the regular army should consist mainly in infantry and artillery; with a view to the superior utility of both in an enclosed country, and for purposes of defence; and also because an artillery soldier requires a proportionably longer period of training before he becomes efficient.

While England, of all the countries of Europe, is perhaps the least fitted for a popular resistance, it possesses peculiar advantages in the maintenance of a regular army, from its vast financial resources, and from the warlike character of its inhabitants who, when properly disciplined, never yet met a foe who could stand before them.

Perhaps some of your readers may consider me over-confident when I say that I should be satisfied with one hundred thousand men in time of peace, considering that France has three hundred and fifty thousand, besides an immense reserve. In fixing this amount, I have reference to the *Channel ditch*, to our invincible marine, and to the diversion of force in Algiers, and perhaps in Morocco and Madagascar.

The only argument which I can anticipate as likely to be brought against me, is the greatly increased taxation which my proposal would necessitate. That this is an objection I allow—that it is a valid one I respectfully deny: England is not so poor, in purse

or spirit, that an additional expenditure of (say) three millions per annum could not be readily afforded, when the national honour—perhaps, indeed, the security of all we hold dear as men and citizens—demands the sacrifice.

If you should honour me by giving place in your columns to this communication, I may venture to trouble you again on the same important subject.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

Z.

November 22nd, 1845.

Poor Laws.

To the Editor of the Spectator.

Jan. 27, 1847.

Sir,—In the whole province of legislation, there is no department which exercises a more important influence on the well-being both physical and moral of the labouring classes, than that which is occupied by the Poor-laws; and there is no object of legislation which in this country has more occupied the minds of reflecting men, than the endeavour to discover in what way the greatest good and the least evil could be attained as to those matters with which the Poor-laws are concerned.

But the interest excited by Poor-laws is not confined to England. They exist under one form or another in every Protestant country of Europe; in all, their importance is appreciated; in all, they have excited the earnest attention of the Legislature.

The existing Poor-law of England was enacted after the most rigid and searching inquiry which ever preceded the direct action of a legislative body, and no one measure, perhaps, ever united in its favour the suffrages of a larger portion of the well-informed public.

Under these circumstances, one might hope that at any rate little difference of opinion could exist among sensible men as to the objects of a Poor-law—as to its main features—in short as to everything excepting its minor details. Yet, Mr. Editor, even a man like yourself, who usually casts so piercing a gaze on all political subjects, and are so little likely to be led away by the transient humbug of the day, confess yourself to be at sea as respects this all-important matter; while it is perfectly clear that your correspondent, "A Guardian," however amiable and intelligent he may be, is not merely at sea, but is being driven about among shoals and quicksands without either chart or compass.

Both you and he dream occasionally of making a Poor-law the refuge for deserving but unfortunate virtue, which has been buffeted by the gales of misfortune. Depend upon it, that we lay a sufficient burden upon it when we direct it to its legitimate objects—viz:

First, the relief of destitution from whatever cause arising;

Second, the removal of any pretext for vagrancy;

Third, the attainment of these ends without serious injury to the social virtues, such as industry, economy, filial and parental affection, on which the welfare of the community so largely depends.

In affecting these purposes with that completeness which the humanity of our generation requires, we shall encounter difficulties of an appalling kind: let us not add to these difficulties by mixing them up with others, which I firmly believe to be almost invincible.

I have often been tempted to break a lance with your well-intentioned correspondent, (for well-intentioned I believe him to be), but have refrained from a fear that I might claim a larger space than your crowded columns would afford me.

In passing I will just allude to a passage which you cull from a pamphlet by the Rev. T. O'Malley. In this the author suggests, that the paupers should be collected in industrial establishments, and employed according to their age, sex, etc. in raising their food, making their clothes, etc. Now the value of this proposal has often been tested, in this and other countries, with one uniform result—thorough and complete failure, so far as respects any saving of expense. It is indeed absolutely requisite that employment should be found for the inmates of a workhouse; but if we except a little garden-stuff, or other objects of trifling importance, the dearest goods bought of a regular dealer are invariably cheaper in an old country, than the products of pauper labour.

However, I must now direct your attention to the point which formed my chief inducement for taking pen in hand to-day,—the suggestion cited by "A Guardian," as emanating from Col. Wood, for making the support of paupers a general, instead of a total burden, to be defrayed from the national exchequer, in place of being assessed on parishes or unions as at

present; the administration being left mainly as now in the hands of local authorities.

Of all the crude notions at present afloat in the public mind on the subject of Poor-laws, this of making the support of the destitute a charge on the general revenue seems to me most unwise. The plan might, indeed, be tried, but could not be persisted in for three years without producing the most appalling consequences.

A board of guardians, as at present constituted, has many temptations to be extravagant in point of expenditure. Its members may gratify their kindly feelings, and obtain a reputation for liberality at the expense mainly of others. They well know that they may be over prodigal with their neighbours' money in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred, and by so doing obtain credit for generosity; but that if, in the hundredth instance, they exhibit even an appearance of harshness, they will be held up to public scorn in half the newspapers of the Empire. However, they are not without some counteracting motives, tending to produce an economical employment of the funds entrusted to their charge; for first these funds are partly drawn from their own pockets; secondly, they are an elected body, and would excite the discontent of their constituents by raising the rates above a certain point.

But suppose a board of guardians, most of them employers of labour, many of them owners of cottages, to have the power of drawing on the public exchequer. Every motive to economy would be lost; payment of rent and wages out of a fund apparently inexhaustible would everywhere be the order of the day. The worst

evils of the old poor-law would not be local but universal; the expense of relieving pauperism would be soon doubled or trebled, and in a short period the law would be repealed or a social convulsion ensue.

But I may be told that the Government, which furnished the means of relief, might also administer those means, through the hands of local agents appointed by itself. To this I reply, waiving many other objections to the plan, that these local agents could never resist the pressure from without—that they would be hurried into extravagance, in spite of their own efforts and the injunctions of their superiors. Their lives would hardly be safe if they did their duty. Conceive a Government superintendent of relief exposed to the heavy broadsides of the *Times* and Mr. Wakley.

But to throw the support of pauperism on the national exchequer would be hardly less unjust than it would be inexpedient. Property has been bought and bequeathed subject to this charge: a charge which is not more burdensome on the whole now than it was a century ago: a charge which, compared with the probable value of the property which is to support it, need not be heavier fifty years hence than it is at present. Why make an enormous present to owners of real estates, at the expense of the rest of the community, especially as this class has so much in its power as respects the increase or decrease of pauperism?

If, indeed, we were now about to enact a Poor-law for the first time, as is the case in Ireland, we might well consider whether or no it might not be just and expedient to throw a part of the burden on the owners of personal property.

I will now say a few words upon two points, which at this moment create much interest among persons conversant with Poor-law affairs, and then take my leave of you.

First, then, as to the law of last session respecting the non-removal of paupers who may have resided in a given parish for more than five years. Attempts are made to throw dust in the eyes of the public by complaining of this as a harsh enactment, which produces inconvenience to persons applying for relief. Nothing can be more untrue than such a representation. This measure is one of kindness and of mercy; and the complaints emanate from places whose expenses are increased by the claims of non-settled paupers; such increase being nearly balanced by the diminution of expense in those parishes to which the paupers belong. Depend upon it, the Non-removal Act is benevolent and just. There exist doubts as to its interpretation, which should be settled authoritatively; and a question of expediency, as to whether the relief given under it should be charged on the parish or the union, which is very important, and where much is to be said on both sides.

Now, as to the proposed reconstruction of the Poor-law Board—

That the Commissioners have not been guiltless of error and mistake I freely allow. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that few individuals could have been selected who would have acted better under circumstances of unexampled difficulty; and that no public functionaries could be found more cruelly and unjustly treated.

The Poor-law Commissioners were appointed for

the purpose of protecting the interests of the public, and especially of the working classes, against the influence of prejudice and self-seeking. From the very commencement of their career, they were exposed to attacks, in many of which truth, reason, and decency were alike set at nought. Neither the community at large nor even the Government gave them a fair support; opponents were fierce and noisy; supporters cowardly and silent. The result is that they have fallen, and the central control must be placed in new hands.

I am unable to suggest a better scheme as circumstances exist, than that proposed by the ministry. But while I say this, I am not blind to the waste of time, and other inconveniences which will arise, especially in the House of Commons, from endless petitions and discussions as to minute points of Poor-law management, which never can be satisfactorily treated in a popular assembly. If Parliament strenuously set its face against abuses of this kind, the scheme may answer, but judging the future by the past, I am inclined to anticipate failure.

Begging your pardon for having intruded on you so long, I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. W. N.

The preceding letter elicited an editorial comment which is here omitted, partly on account of its length, and partly because the arguments employed may be sufficiently inferred from the following reply, which does not, however, appear to have been printed.

To the Editor of the Spectator.

Sir,—Some months ago you were kind enough to admit into the columns of the *Spectator*, a letter of mine on the subject of Poor-laws, and to honour it with a commentary.

You did not on all points agree with my opinions, but I had not time, nor you probably room for a controversy. I did not therefore make any rejoinder to your remarks, and now only advert to them, for the purpose of informing both yourself and your readers, that I am not a mere political economist, who looks at the Poor-laws in a point of view purely abstract and scientific, but that I have been an active and attentive administrator of both the old and new during many years, and that my opinions, if erroneous, err in opposition not only to general principles, but to most extensive experience. These, be it remarked, I have almost always found to coincide in their results.

My object in now addressing you is to call your attention to two clauses inserted last week into the Poor-law, one after a division, in which the Government were defeated, the other without opposition or comment.

The first clause enacts simply that married persons above the age of 60 shall not be separated in the workhouse. The last that Ratepayers shall be admitted to the meetings of Boards of Guardians.

Now there are few if any workhouses which at present possess the means of accommodating married couples. They could not be admitted without complete derangement of the existing state of things. In other words they could not be admitted at all until new

buildings shall have been erected. This clause then removes the only available test of destitution from the class of married persons above the age of 60. For there are no means, excepting in rare cases, of applying to them the only other test of destitution, viz., the offer of labour.

Now let us see how this clause may act in numerous instances, and in every Union in the kingdom.

A strong and healthy married man above 60 prefers idleness to work. He therefore either gives up his employment, or as a safer plan does his work so badly that he is discharged. He is now of course destitute, and applies to the Board of Guardians for relief. The Guardians cannot take him into the house from want of room, nor can they refuse relief altogether. They must therefore give him out-door relief to such an amount as will afford the complete means of support. The amount of this relief cannot be less than one-third more than the cost of the maintenance of a man and woman in the house. In my district, where wages are high, I hardly think less than 10*s.* per week would obviate the danger of a charge of grinding the faces of the poor, starving them, &c.

You are probably aware that Guardians rarely refuse relief altogether, when applied for generally and on the plea of destitution,—however ill-founded they might consider the claim for relief, they would be afraid to do so. If in doubt they almost invariably offer the house, which of course the applicant accepts, if his tale be true, and refuses if it be false.

But to return to my story. One application such as I have described, having been so successful and the

prospect of comfortable support without labour being brought before the eyes of a whole class, applications would become numerous until most married couples above 60 in agricultural districts became pensioners on the public, living in idleness.

But I may be told that it is not to persons such as I describe that the law is meant to apply, but to the honest, industrious, infirm couple who are now torn from each other's arms, and ruthlessly imprisoned for life in the Chadwick Bastiles.

I reply that such persons almost invariably receive out-door relief at present in every Union in the kingdom. The Legislature is about to create an enormous practical evil, in order to remove a purely imaginative one.

There are very few old couples in workhouses anywhere, and after long intercourse with paupers, I can affirm that I never heard a single complaint from them of the regulation which prescribes the separation of the sexes.

I could say much more as to the effect of the clause in the Poor-law Bill now animadverted on, but I must not claim too large a space in the *Spectator*, and will therefore pass on to that which gives a right of admission to Boards of Guardians on the part of ratepayers.

As things now are, the Ratepayers possess easy means of knowing all that is done by their representatives at the Union workhouse.

A minutely detailed abstract of accounts may be seen by anybody who likes to examine it. The names of paupers relieved, and the amount of relief given is exhibited on the church doors; and at the close of each

financial year a condensed statement of the receipts and disbursements of the Union is usually printed and distributed.

Should the Ratepayers be dissatisfied at the proceedings of the Guardians, they have a perfect remedy in their hands. They can displace the existing Guardians and elect others. What more can be desired, in the way of accountability and power of control?

Our institutions present nothing so democratic as the condition of the elected members of a Board of Guardians—annual election, a most extended suffrage, and a mode of voting approaching the Ballot.

Now what good can possibly arise from admitting Ratepayers to meetings of the Board? I can see none, but I can see much evil.

A Board Meeting is a purely administrative proceeding. It requires much confidence between the members—much freedom of remark, and its utility would be seriously impaired by attempts at display, claptrap oratory, and the other concomitants of a popular assembly. Persons forming no essential part of it would be as much out of place, as at the Board of Directors of a Public Company.

Let us now see how this clause would act. It may be assumed that on an average, a Union possesses at least 1000 ratepayers, and there can be little doubt that any half dozen crotchety or ill-conditioned persons among them, by attending at the Board, might seriously impede business.

In rural Unions even the half-dozen ratepayers might not often be found, and in that case the evil would be rather *in posse* than *in esse*, but in towns, it

would often be intolerable, and would end in driving from the Boards the Guardians most fitted from knowledge, temper, and experience, to discharge their duties properly.

Now a few words, not upon the general objects of the clauses, but upon the form under which they have been introduced into the Bill. This is so vague and general, that it must give rise to endless difficulties, disputes, and litigation.

Here follow a few of the many questions, to decide which, the authority of the Courts may be required.

Must both man and wife exceed 60 years of age, in order to become objects of the law, or only one of them, and if only one will either suffice?

Is separation meant to be forbidden during the whole 24 hours, or only at night? If at night what constitutes the portion of time so called?

There being 1000 ratepayers in a given Union, and place in the Board Room for only 40, how are these 40 to be selected?

A legal right of admission being given, it may be assumed that the law supposes the creation of adequate means for the exercise of the right. Are there buildings to be erected capable of containing all the ratepayers, or how many?

Are the Ratepayers present at a Board authorized to ask questions, make speeches, or to express audibly approbation or disapprobation?

If not, who is to prevent them from so doing and how? By committal to prison? By forcible ejectment from the room? Or by the threat of an indictment for misdemeanor?

These questions might of course be multiplied *ad infinitum.* You will perhaps think that common sense answers might be given to most of them, but as you will allow that common sense and legal right often take different sides, you will perhaps agree with me, in a feeling of astonishment that one branch of the Legislature, should have expressed its will, in so crude and unintelligible a form.

The truth is that if the objects of these clauses are to form a part of the law, they would each require the most deliberate consideration, and a number of distinct rules and regulations, in order to make them at all applicable. As they now stand they are not merely pernicious but unintelligible.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.,

1847. G. W. N.

Letter to the South Eastern Gazette on the New Reform Bill.

Sir,—I am an old Reformer, have been for many years a subscriber to the *Maidstone Gazette,* and have usually coincided in the judgment formed by you upon important political questions.

I cannot, however, agree with you in the ardent support you afford to the new Reform movement, and I will venture to tell you why.

In the first place, I am of opinion that the present is a most inopportune time for agitating the nation by an attempt to procure changes in our institutions of a most extensive and important kind.

Such an attempt is inconsistent with the maintenance

of that internal tranquillity, which at the present moment is the real interest of every class in the British Islands, but, most of all of the operative class. The troubled condition of other countries; the distress and ruin which has befallen so large a portion of their inhabitants, has interfered with our commerce, by impoverishing our customers. Everybody connected with foreign trade is suffering, and political agitation, without which, organic change on an extensive scale cannot be hoped for, would shake confidence and injure the home markets, when tranquillity is most wanted.

Our neighbours on the other side of the water, have chosen to set fire to their houses, in the hope of being able to provide themselves with more commodious habitations, and at present have not a roof over their heads.

Mr. Hume seems to think that because French and Germans have had their great conflagration, we ought to have our little bonfire. Surely it would be wiser when sparks and flakes of fire are flying about in all directions, to content ourselves with preserving unscathed our venerable mansion, which although somewhat uncouth and wanting in artistical symmetry, answers its purpose better than any dwelling which has hitherto existed in an old country.

When the French and Germans are better lodged than ourselves, it will be easy to imitate them. At present the object of their ardent but ineffectual aspirations is to be able to imitate us.

I could enlarge upon this part of my subject, and show upon other grounds the extreme unfitness of the present time for an agitation directed to the attainment

of organic reform, but with a view to brevity will pass on to another point of view, in which it may be regarded.

I fully allow that abuses in our legislation might exist, so gross, so irremediable, excepting through the means of organic changes, that any inconvenience connected with the agitation necessary to obtain this object, should be cheerfully undergone. Such has been the case in some other countries; but I deny the existence of evils, of the kind supposed, in this.

The fact is that the Reform Bill, with all its acknowledged anomalies and faults, rendered the middle class in this country omnipotent. What is called public opinion, is mainly the exponent of the wishes of this class, which through its representatives in the Commons governs the empire. I do not believe that, for the general good, power could be placed in better hands.

Numerous improvements are required in our laws—I will name only one, which seems to me of overwhelming importance, especially as respects Ireland, viz., the laws which regulate the title to, and the transfer of real property; but these improvements might be as readily obtained from the present legislation, as from a House of Commons chosen under the proposed scheme of Reform.

The immediate practical good which seems to be expected by the followers of Mr. Hume from the success of their endeavours, is a large diminution in our expenditure and taxation. I confess that I have no notion of the possibility of any immediate reduction of expenditure, to an extent which a private person would feel, consistently with the maintenance of public

faith, and the support of such an armed force, as the safety of the state requires.

Mr. Cobden early in the session urged a large reduction in the army and navy on the assumption, that Free Trade was on the point of being universally established, and that by its influence nations would be knit together in brotherhood, and all chance of foreign war would be extinguished. This prophecy, to say the least, was illtimed.

I almost doubt if the four, or even the six, points in the Charter would lead to more economy than may be expected from the Committee of the House of Commons now sitting. The pressure from without is as often calculated to increase as to diminish expenditure. Political changes often cost money, and when they become revolutions, are the most costly of all national undertakings, with the possible exception of war.

Nobody is more ready than I am to acknowledge the democratic tendencies of our age. These tendencies I believe to be irresistible, and in spite of the examples of repudiation and the Mexican war in America, of communism in France, and of socialism in England, I hope, and believe too, that under the influence of general education, political power may be gradually confided to the whole people without overthrowing the great landmarks on which the peace and welfare of society depends.

In conclusion I will make a few remarks which I recommend to the attention of your readers, they are a sort of corollary from what has preceded:—

1. I am of opinion that the four points of Mr. Hume approach too nearly to a revolution, and that

even if obtained, their practical results would disappoint their promoters, and further that little would be by their adoption, gained in the way of conciliation, as the Chartists would be left nearly as much dissatisfied as at present.

2. The constituency might be greatly augmented under the existing law, if all persons possessing legal claims to the franchise would register, and persons possessing monied property would purchase freeholds.

3. Organic changes should be made step by step, and not by irregular jumps. Perhaps the first and most important step would be the adoption of the ballot.

4. That is the best government, whatever be its form, which leads to the best attainable results, as respects the public happiness. The same precise form of government will hardly suit any two countries in the same age, or the same country in different ages.

5. One word to the middle class and I have done. The bourgeoise of Paris wanted to act a spirited part, to get rid of Guizot, and perhaps to lower the suffrage a little. They have got a so-called republic, in which few dare to speak their minds, which has largely increased expenditure and taxation, ruined the exchequer, and threatens to waste all private fortunes.

Are we not to profit by this great example?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Y. Z.

About 1849.

The Defences of the Country.

For many years previously, and about this time, Mr. Cobden and others were in the habit of declaiming on the enormity of our armaments and on the vast expense they entailed, simply as they alleged to forward the views of the Aristocracy, who, it was further said, had been the fomenters of all former wars. The middle and working classes were declared, on the other hand, to be uniformly the friends of peace.

At any rate these opinions produced great effect. The Government strove to adopt them, and the result was that, at length, we had neither army nor fleet, worthy of the name.

At length the public awakened a little from its fool's paradise—Rifle Clubs, &c. &c., were planned. Hence this and the following letter:—

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

Sir,—I am glad to perceive that the Editor of the leading Liberal journal in the South Eastern Counties is at length sensible of the defenceless state of the country.

I am of opinion, however, that your proposed remedy for the evil, the establishment of "Rifle Clubs," would be worse than useless, if it led to a sense of fancied security, and a neglect of more efficient measures.

The members of such clubs, not being formed into military bodies and trained as soldiers, would be inferior even to a national guard; and experience has shown that a national guard is all but useless when opposed to regular armies.

The national guard of France, notwithstanding the warlike character of the nation, never produced, so far as I can recollect, the slightest effect on military

operations, during the whole course of the revolutionary war.

The truth is, that regular armies can only be beaten by disciplined soldiers, and if we wish that England should be placed in a condition to resist a foreign attack, we must consent to augment our fleet and army, notwithstanding the bugbear of economy, which has been the misleading topic of a section of the nation, in default of a better, during the last few years.

The object should be to take measures which would enable us to resist a first attack, and render it certain that 10,000 or 20,000 men, if thrown on any part of our coast, would be driven into the sea, or taken prisoners, within twenty-four hours. An invasion with 150,000 men would take long to organize, and thus give us time for preparation.

Now with this object, and also to enable us speedily to augment our defensive means to the point which would be required, were the war to continue, I submit the following as the least expensive scheme suitable to the purpose, and as one well harmonizing with the constitution:—

1. The number of seamen and marines to be so far augmented as to enable us to maintain a sufficient home squadron, and especially to man the guard ships.

2. The regular army to be increased by 20,000 men.

3. The militia to be called out and trained for a month in the year; a depôt company, or some other nucleus of each regiment, being kept in constant pay.

4. A fortified depôt for the army to be formed in the

centre of England, beyond the risk of a *coup de main*. To this the great establishments from Woolwich should be removed, leaving at Woolwich only the stores requisite for foreign service. The naval arsenals, Dover, etc., to be better fortified.

Should the militia service be deemed too onerous for the population, the regular army should be still further augmented, and a trained reserve be provided in some other way.

I need hardly say that the arms of the troops should be the best and most efficient hitherto invented, and that every new improvement in them should be at once adopted. It must be recollected that of all European countries, England is one of those the least adapted for defence by its untrained population. This fact is the result of its small extent, its admirable roads, and the means of subsistence which a hostile army would everywhere find.

I calculate that the defensive measures suggested would cost from two to three millions per annum, and would about absorb our surplus revenue for two or three years to come.

At the end of three years it is probable that the revenue would have so far increased, that the ordinary reduction of taxation might be resumed.

Such an amount of preparation would afford the best guarantee of peace, by convincing foreign powers that we were in a condition to resist attack. This might make to us all the difference between peace and war.

It remains to be seen if the English people are so blindly selfish, so deaf to the calls of honour and patriotism, as to risk the loss of their independence and

freedom, in order to avoid, out of their enormous wealth, the paltry pecuniary sacrifice which I have suggested.

In looking at the question of peace and war, it should be recollected that we have not a friend in the world. All nations envy our wealth and power, and would like to see us pulled down; while we are equally obnoxious to absolutists and republicans, as affording an example hostile to the exclusive theories of both.

Your most obedient servant,

AN OLD REFORMER AND YOUR CONSTANT READER.

Bromley, Saturday, June 24, 1852.

OUR NATIONAL DEFENCES.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

SIR,—I feel greatly honoured by the insertion of my last letter in your paper, and by the criticism which you have bestowed upon it, and venture to trespass on your pages with a few lines more.

My main difference with you is, as to the utility of Rifle Clubs, with a view to our defence against a foreign foe, and in substitution for an organized force; and with all respect for your judgment, I cannot think that you have proved much in their favour. [We have never advocated Rifle Clubs as a substitute for an organized force, but as a valuable auxiliary to it.—ED. S. E. G.]

New Orleans was defended partly by regular troops,

partly by militia and volunteers who had, generally speaking, been embodied for a considerable period; and these troops were most ably commanded.

The irregular portion of the American force probably resembled, in point of training, what our militia would be after a year or two with the annual month's exercise, and after having been called for some time into active service.

At any rate, it bore no more resemblance to the members of Rifle Clubs than that a portion of it was armed with the rifle, and aimed well.

Germany is full of Rifle Clubs, and I never heard of their utility against foreign attack or domestic tyranny.

The resistance of the Caffres, and that of the Tyrolese against the French and Bavarians in 1809, the latter perhaps being the strongest case in your favour, is to be ascribed to the natural strength of their respective countries.

The ruin of the Cabul army arose from the glaring mistakes of its leaders and the climate. Without them the efforts of the Affghans would have gone for little, as was shown by the subsequent success of Sir R. Sale and Sir G. Pollock.

War carried on in this country by the desultory efforts of the population firing on the enemy from woods and hedge-rows would inflict incalculable misery and ruin on the inhabitants, with but little damage to the foe. If an ill-trained militia would be ineffective against regular troops, the members of Rifle Clubs, without training, would surely be still more impotent.

What we require is such a regular force as would at once annihilate any small number of invaders who, by the help of steam, might be landed on our shores, at the commencement of hostilities, and ready means of augmenting our armies to a considerable extent with organized soldiers, and within a short time, and that without incurring any enormous expense, and I must say that the militia trained a month in each year, and called out permanently at the commencement of a war, still seems to me the best and cheapest means at our disposition.

Great misapprehension appears to prevail as to the armament of our troops. I believe our ordinary infantry musket to be a better weapon than that used in most foreign armies. The Minié and needle guns may probably be employed with advantage to some extent, and doubtless will be so employed by us if further experiments prove their utility. When people talk of a firelock which carries straight 1000 yards, they forget the difficulty of aiming straight at an object so distant.

In conclusion, I must say that I am unable to participate in your gratitude to "the peace and economy party." Even our present armaments, imperfect as they are, have been denounced as extravagant and excessive, by these gentlemen, and have been maintained against their most strenuous efforts. Had Mr. Cobden's proposal to reduce the estimates by ten millions been carried, we should now be almost without fleet or army, and really invite attack.

In short, Mr. Editor, economy is a great thing, but peace and security are far better. England is well

able to pay the expense required to render successful invasion all but impossible, and it seems to me most unwise and unpatriotic on the part of the nation to refuse the pecuniary sacrifice necessary for this purpose.

We spend thirty millions per annum on tobacco and spirits, etc., and throw away as much more on abortive speculations, and are we to grudge two to three millions for the protection of our freedom and of our dearest interests?

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

AN OLD REFORMER AND YOUR CONSTANT READER.

MILITARY PATRONAGE.

With reference to the following papers, it may be remarked that the writer never felt much enthusiasm as respected the Russian war.

He thought at the time, and still thinks, that its legitimate objects might have been attained either without a war, or with hostilities carried on in a field of action which would not have included the Crimea. He was, moreover, deeply disgusted with the reflection, that so much British blood should have been shed in an attempt to bolster up the barbarous, effete, and unimprovable despotism of Turkey, which has turned into deserts some of the fairest portions of the globe.

He thought too, that able and honest servants of the State, who did their best with insufficient means, were harshly treated by public opinion.

He is quite willing, however, to allow, that the Russian war produced a certain amount of good. It, at any rate, somewhat

opened our eyes to the insufficiency of our armaments, and dispelled the dream of universal peace, which had been so indefatigably inculcated by a section of our leading politicians.

He must add that, on reperusing these papers, after an interval of many years, he is quite willing to allow that the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette says much that is good, and says that well.

To the Editor of the Southern Eastern Gazette.

SIR,—Having been one of your oldest subscribers, and in general a firm adherent of the political principles advocated in your pages, I venture to solicit the insertion of the following lines, which relate to a subject of great importance, upon which, in my humble opinion, both you and the public at large are greatly in error. I allude to the disasters which have befallen our army in the East. These you, and the public with you, attribute chiefly, if not exclusively, to the ignorance and imbecility of ministers and generals, the neglect of new and able men, and the spirit of favouritism and aristocratic preference, which you allege to pervade all our service.

We hear a great deal of youthful Hannibals in our Indian army, and of hidden Oxenstierns in our middle class in Europe, who have been deliberately neglected by our Government in favour of the noodles of the aristocracy, but as nobody has been able to point out the names and whereabouts of these extraordinary phenomena, I must still believe that our rulers followed the principles both of interest and duty, by making the best selection of instruments from the materials at their disposition. That they have always been fortunate in their appointments I am far from asserting; as respects the army, however, it must be recollected that the long

peace which had so restricted the number of officers whose qualities had been tested by actual service, increased the difficulties of a proper choice.

Many mistakes, and those of a grave character, have doubtless been made in the Crimean expedition, but it has always seemed to me that the certainty of mistakes and errors of all kinds was one of the many objections to that most extravagant enterprize. We tried to effect the impossible, we acted in defiance of the principles of the art of war, principles deduced from the most extensive experience, and have failed; ought this to excite our indignation?

I call the expedition a failure, and should call it so even if Sebastopol were captured to-morrow, for it will have cost in blood and treasure many times its worth. Who ever heard of sending an army to winter 3000 miles off, on a barren mountain ridge, with a stormy sea behind it, in front of a fortress, not invested, and having on its flank a hostile army, the foe being at least as numerous as the allies, well commanded, furnished with an enormous materiel, and with troops of an excellent quality. A simple statement of the case is sufficient to condemn the authors of the Crimean expedition.

In defiance, as I believe, of an overwhelming amount of military opinion, the allies embarked in an enterprise where success was highly improbable, and in which failure would be most disastrous; but although I, and the small minority who think like me, may be of opinion that the Aberdeen Government, in this instance, are deserving of the severest censure; yet, neither the public press, nor the people of England, can justly

pass this sentence upon it. In truth, I fear that the source of its error is to be found in its weakly yielding to external pressure. A poor excuse for statesmen I readily admit.

But it is said, that while our army has been almost destroyed, our gallant allies the French have suffered comparatively little, and that from this fact a direct proof may be brought of the imbecility of our civil and military administration. The truth is, we know little or nothing of the French army. The Gallic cock is not a bird which dirties its own nest. No "Special correspondents" are allowed within the sphere of General Canrobert's command; all, in short, we know is, that the sickness and mortality in the French army has been most severe, although probably less so, in proportion to its numbers, than ours. Granting this, however, we have no right to infer a general superiority in the French arrangements. The more natural explanation of the fact would be, that the French troops have been far less hardly worked than ours, and that they have had three harbours within from two to four miles from their camp, while we have had but one harbour at more than double that distance. Had the French and English completely exchanged position and number, I see no reason to believe that the former would have suffered less than the latter have suffered, or the latter more than the former.

The French have had a large army employed in carrying on war in Algeria for 25 years. This must have given both officers and men much practical experience, of which English troops have been deprived; and I doubt not but that some of their arrangements

are superior to ours. It must not, however, be imagined that this superiority is general, or that they have nothing to borrow from us.

I must now conclude, apologizing for having taken up so much of your valuable space. The opinions maintained in this letter are those of a minority, perhaps of a small minority, but depend upon it they will rapidly spread, under the influence of free discussion, and that they will finally obtain the verdict of posterity.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SENEX.

March 10th, 1855.

MANAGEMENT OF THE WAR.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

SIR,—I cannot but feel deeply obliged by the insertion in your paper of my letter of the 10th ult. It seems to me that your readiness to give currency to opinions which, however well-founded I may think them, are at present very unpopular, and strongly opposed to your own, does honour to the Manager of the leading Liberal journal in the South Eastern Counties.

Having explained in my last, the main fault, according to my view, in our past management of the war, I now address you for the purpose of showing how it ought, in my opinion, to have been carried on.

I must first explain that I consider the object of the present war to be, the protection of Turkey against the aggression of the Czar, and the placing her under the safety of the common law of Europe. You sometimes hint that we ought to reconstitute Poland, and establish the independence of Hungary; an attempt to do this would involve us in immediate hostilities with Austria and Prussia, in addition to Russia, and our final success, if we succeeded at all (a matter more than doubtful) would leave the Rhenish provinces of Germany, and perhaps Belgium and Savoy, in the hands of France, and thus defeat a main object of English policy, during the larger portion of two centuries.

The ill-treatment which Hungary and Poland have received from their oppressors is, doubtless, a great crime, but it is not our business to redress all political grievances; and I am perfectly sure that the English people, when the subject is properly explained to them, would, by an enormous majority, reject the Quixotic scheme now animadverted upon. We have quite enough on our hands already.

But I must now explain what I believe would have been the best scheme for the management of the war, a scheme to which we may still recur when the expedition to the Crimea has been terminated either by success or failure; a point still unfortunately in doubt.

I think that our active operations should have been confined to the placing Russia under a general pressure; all the ports in the White and Black Seas, and the Baltic, should have been blocked up and menaced, and we should have been prepared to strike a blow when-

ever we could have done so with a moral certainty of success. We see that the English people will not bear reverses.

A force of from 40,000 to 50,000 English and French troops, in healthy cantonments behind the Balkan, would have been required, so as to render successful operations by the Russians on the Danube impossible; a portion of these, or an additional force, might have been necessary to check the progress of the Muscovite arms in Asia. The result of this would have been that Russia would have been obliged to exert herself on every point of her frontiers, without a chance of gaining any advantage, while we were making no corresponding sacrifice, and that, in all human probability, within a longer or a shorter period, she must have abandoned so losing a game, and consented to a reasonable peace. We should have opposed, as fencers say, our "fort" to her "faible," not as at present, our "faible" to her "fort."

Her determination would have been hastened by the full weight of Austrian influence; the expense of an armed observation, continued for a long time, would have furnished an irresistible motive to the Cabinet of Vienna, and we might have depended upon its sincerity. It is obvious that the interests of Austria are far more involved in opposing the extension of Russian domination in the south than those of the Western Powers. It is the more important to urge the views thus explained, because the same popular pressure to which the attack on Sebastopol must be ascribed is now at work to enforce an attack on Cronstadt or Helsingfors, and may lead to the loss or serious

damage of our fleet, and possibly to an attack on the eastern coast of England. Notwithstanding what the *Times* says, we have as yet no proof that wood, even cased in iron, is as strong as stone.

I have the honour to remain,
Your obedient servant,
SENEX.

April 14th, 1855.

MANAGEMENT OF THE WAR.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

SIR,—I address you to-day for the purpose of calling your especial attention to one peculiar fact in the position of the United Kingdom, considered as a belligerent Power.

The peculiarity to which I desire now to advert arises from the publicity which exists in England respecting all public affairs, and which almost deprives us of one most essential advantage in the management of warlike operations.

The greatest Ministers and Generals of all ages and nations have considered it a matter of the utmost importance in war to conceal their own designs, while they have striven to acquire the most intimate knowledge as to the plans, forces, etc., of their antagonists.

Thus, in 1800, Napoleon was enabled to assemble the Army of Reserve at Dijon, and to conduct it over the Great St. Bernard, whence it burst like an avalanche upon Italy, before the Austrians were aware of their impending danger. Milan was seized in their

rear; their communication with Germany was interrupted; they were compelled to fight at a disadvantage, and the battle of Marengo deprived them of the fruit of many victories, and placed all Lombardy in the power of France.

History abounds with examples of a similar character; but our annals for the present cannot be expected to add to their number, excepting when they relate to our own failures and shortcomings.

During the present war our newspapers have furnished from day to day exact details as to our plans for carrying on hostilities, exact lists of the ships and regiments employed or to be employed—even returns of the actual force of each corps, present, sick, and fit for service—the number of guns in position—the state of the approaches, even the locality of mines; and this intelligence, procured by persons residing at the seat of war, and possessed of remarkable energy and talent, when published in London, has been doubtless at once telegraphed to St. Petersburg.

In other words, intelligence of the utmost value to Russia, which, in former wars, could only have been obtained imperfectly and irregularly, through the agency of spies, and at a vast expense, has been furnished by ourselves, free from all trouble and charge, and of the most perfect authenticity. It would have been something to put into the scale against this vast evil, if our newspapers had been equally successful in procuring for us reliable information respecting the foe; but here, alas! they have been altogether unsuccessful. On the contrary, they have on this point been deceived themselves, and have unwittingly deceived the public.

By magnifying wretched skirmishes on the Danube or in Circassia into great victories, they persuaded us, in spite of the just renown obtained by the Russian troops in innumerable battles extending over 150 years, that the Russian armies were composed of feeble soldiers, half starved and badly commanded; in short, that they were hardly able to meet the bands of Schamyl or of Omer Pasha on equal terms; that a large portion of them, being composed of Poles and Finlanders, were ready to desert, and that it would be an easy matter to excite revolts in important provinces of the Russian empire; that the Turks, on the other hand, were good troops, and able to resist their enemies without our help.

I need hardly remark to you how miserably the hopes excited by such representations have been falsified, and how much of the disappointment and regret now felt by the whole English people has arisen from the expectations thus excited.

It would be a curious question how many thousand lives and how many millions of money would have been saved to us if there had been such a thing in existence as a Russian *Times*. Perhaps some would add, if besides, there had been no such thing as an English *Times* during the last twelve months.

Napoleon acknowledged his obligations to the English newspapers for information during the last war. What would he say to them now? The truth is, that we are in the condition of a man, either blind or with imperfect eyes, engaged in a mortal conflict against an antagonist possessed of the most acute power of vision.

I have thus pointed out a great and undeniable evil —an evil the existence of which makes me doubt if we are now in a condition to carry on successfully a great and difficult war. You will doubtless expect me to suggest a remedy. I have none to offer unless it be by an appeal to the patriotism and intelligence of the Correspondents and Editors of the newspapers, urging them to withhold intelligence which may be useful to the foe. The public might afford aid by discouraging those who offend most flagrantly in this way.

To impose any legal restrictions on the Press could hardly be thought of. The liberty of the Press, although sometimes abused, as in this instance, is too great a blessing to be tampered with. Of this nobody is more convinced than,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

SENEX.

May 11th, 1855.

(EDITORIAL COMMENTS.)

["Senex," in the above letter, has assumed several fallacies for facts. In the first place, it is the fault of the Ministry themselves, and not of the newspapers, if their "designs" obtain publicity prematurely. With regard to the "means of executing great designs," other parts of Europe enjoy no greater advantages of secrecy than ourselves; for the concentration and movement of troops, when once commenced, cannot be concealed from neighbouring nations unless all intercourse be suspended.

It is wholly a mistake to suppose that Napoleon's army of reserve was assembled at Dijon in 1800 without the knowledge of Austria and of the whole of

Europe. That reserve was a mere feint, and was constantly spoken of in the *Moniteur;* reviewed, paraded, and lauded in Paris, and laughed at in London, Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg as tatterdemallion forlorn hope of the French Republic; for it consisted mainly of invalids—the lame, the halt, and the incapable. The real army intended for the invasion of Italy, by the passage of the Alps, was not collected till the moment the ascent was to commence.

They were quietly marching from every department, by different roads, emerging at the foot of the mountains, where all arrived at a given time, so that the daring operation was executed with a celerity worthy of the genius which prompted it. The "army of Dijon" remained behind, and was regarded as a storehouse of diplomatic and ministerial jokes in England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, till the news of the battle of Marengo fell upon Europe like a thunderbolt, and turned the previous hilarity of the imbeciles into despair. When the British Cabinet shall conceive a similar enterprize, and execute it with a tithe of the skill displayed by Napoleon in this masterly exploit, there need be no apprehension that it will be marred by the garrulity of the Press.

"Senex" complains that the English journals have furnished "details as to our plans, the state of the approaches to our lines, and the locality of the mines." Now we have read the daily papers with considerable attention and interest, but do not remember to have met with a single instance of such information having been furnished till after the period when it could be of the smallest service to the Russians; and even

assuming that such indiscretion had been exercised with regard to the English force, it certainly has not been the case with regard to the French, whose "failures, shortcomings," and resultless encounters have been as disastrous as our own.

With regard to the Turkish operations in the Principalities, whether "wretched skirmishes" or not, they were of sufficient importance to drive the Russian army, headed by Prince Gortshacoff, across the Danube and out of Moldavia and Wallachia; the bulk of those Russian troops being the same who have held Sebastopol and the surrounding district against the combined forces of England and France. If the newspapers are accountable for the failures in the Crimea, they must needs be entitled to credit for the success obtained on the Danube.

Had a Russian *Times* been in existence *all* the lives and money sacrificed in this war would undoubtedly have been saved; for Russian public opinion would have curbed the ambition of the Czar, and prevented hostilities. Had there been no English *Times*, the miseries sustained by our troops would have been infinitely greater than they have had to endure; for they would have been without hospital nurses, without the Crimean fund, without huts, and extra warm clothing, and they would have had little hope of remedy, for their grievances would never have been publicly known. The war itself would, in all probability, have been still more languid than it has been, but for the stimulus imparted to sluggish Ministers and Commanders by the Press.—Ed. S. E. G.]

Civil Service Reform.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

Sir,—I feel highly honoured by the insertion in your pages of my last letter, dated May 11th, and still more by the comments you were kind enough to bestow upon it. After paying the most candid attention to your arguments, I remain convinced that the publicity given by our newspapers to everything connected with our warlike enterprizes has been of the most essential advantage to the foe, and that as respects Russia, we are somewhat in the condition of a pugilist of immense muscular power, but either blind, or with imperfect vision, who should engage against an antagonist in full employment of his visual faculties.

My object, however, is not controversy, but the assertion of opinions, which, however unpopular they may now be, I fully believe to be true; and, further, that they will generally be recognised as true, when the passions and prejudices of the day have passed away.

I now wish to call your attention to another subject, which at present excites much attention, but upon which as it seems to me, the views of newspapers and the public are eminently vague and unsatisfactory—I mean the improvement of the Civil Service.

Among civilised nations two opposite systems are employed in the selection and advancement of civil officers.

I will first allude to that of America. In the United States, place is considered the spoil of the vanquished. Nobody is ever appointed to office who does not belong

to the dominant faction. To appoint a person of the opposite faction would be regarded as a species of treason.

As victory in party conflicts passes from one side to the other, that is to say, according to recent experience, every four years, a complete sweep is made in the public offices.

The conquered are ejected to make way for the conquerors. This change of officials extends even to postmasters in small towns. In the bureaucratic states of the Continent, France and Prussia, for instance, the civil officers are carefully educated for their employment. They enter them after an examination, subsequently, I believe, renewed.

Competition is largely used. Promotion takes place by seniority as a general rule, but is deviated from in the case of great merit. No doubt, favour and jobbery are also to be met with.

Our system differs from both those above described. The civil place-holder here is not specially educated, owes his first appointment to his party connexions, but once in office is not liable to be ejected because his political friends have been defeated on the hustings. This remark of course does not apply to ministers, and other very high place-holders.

We all know that these are changed with every change of ministry.

They have rarely been brought up in the lower grades of office, but are mainly selected for their Parliamentary influence and ability.

In comparing these three systems the English appears to work the best. Our place-holders having

more experience, must become more competent than the American, and have ever shewn more energy, activity, and, may I venture to say it, a loftier probity than their brethren on the Continent.

They blend, too, more easily into the other classes of society. They are the servants of the State, not its masters. Again, each civil officer in England represents from five to ten civil officers in France or Prussia, and although things here are less systematically arranged, yet on the whole our internal Government is far better than theirs. I must confess that I dislike a bureaucracy, and consider it one of the many blessings possessed by England, that we are free from such a pest, with its endless multiplication of places, its spirit of caste—its interference with the free agency of the people—its general unpopularity, and its helplessness in troubled times.

But although our administrative functionaries are far better than it is now the fashion to call them, cannot we improve them?

I think so. First by promoting more by merit, less by seniority, than at present, recollecting, however, that a system nominally based on the first principle is very likely to lead to jobbing and favouritism; next, by imposing a sufficient test of qualification, the result of an examination before the admission to office. This might be repeated at intervals. Some would only admit to office after a competitive examination. I should have no objection to see this tried. The Government salaries, however, are, on the whole low, and not very attractive for men of first-rate ability, and there are many posts, where an honest plodding man, even if

somewhat dull, would do better than a senior wrangler. To form different classes of officers rising one above another in the scale of rank and emolument, would facilitate the use of a variety of tests suitable to each class, or should it be preferred, of competitive examination.

I say nothing of the loss of patronage to the Government, being quite persuaded that a ministry would be stronger and altogether better off, if Patronage in the vulgar sense were abolished or reduced to a minimum. A great deal has already been done in the arrangement of departments, and more probably remains to be done in that direction.

Want of space prevents me from saying anything upon the choice of ministers and heads of departments. This is a point upon which I will trouble you hereafter.

I must, however, add a word upon the Administrative Reform Association, and am bound in all candour to say, that its operations hitherto have appeared to me thoroughly unsatisfactory.

Some of its dicta, I humbly submit, are more than doubtful; for instance, that which declares that private persons manage their affairs so much better than the Government. This, so far as my experience goes, is the reverse of truth. Look at the Railroads, Bankruptcies, etc. etc.

Then we are told that we ought to have "proper men in proper places." This strikes me as being a most ordinary and useless truism. What we want to know is, how or where to find and secure the proper men. I have already alluded to tests and examina-

tions, and promotion by merit, all of which had been recommended by official persons before the Administrative Reform Association was established.

The unsparing abuse of all public measures, and all official men, if carried to its furthest points can only lead to anarchy.

I ought, perhaps, to add that I am not very learned in the proceedings of this body, so that some of their schemes may have escaped my observation. I must also add that I have a very high personal respect for many of its members.

After what has preceded, you will not, I hope, be surprised, when I proclaim myself a zealous Administrative Reformer. Indeed, what sane and honest man can be otherwise?

I beg leave to apologize for occupying so much space in your pages, and remain, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SENEX.

August, 1855.

OUR MILITARY ORGANIZATION.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

SIR,—I am now about to address to you a few lines upon the condition of England, considered as a belligerent power.

Her offensive and defensive means are enormous. Her wealth is such, that she could furnish a war expenditure equal to that which is now going on, for the next ten years, from income alone, and without any fear of intruding on her capital.

Her fleet is quite sufficient to contend against the

fleets of all the other maritime powers in the world united, or might be rendered so.

Her army, although being composed wholly of volunteers, it can hardly be as numerous as the armies of those States who have recourse habitually to a conscription; and although at the commencement of every war it suffers from a want of experience in its officers and men, and from a defective organization, is still of excellent quality.

In truth, one might predict with some confidence, that a given number of English troops would defeat an equal number of the troops of any other nation; supposing an equality of position, etc. etc.

Yet there are circumstances which place England in a condition of inferiority to most foreign States, when engaged in war, the most important of which I will endeavour to point out.

To clear the way I may remark that the English people can never be plunged into war without the consent of their representatives in the House of Commons, who are tremblingly alive to the influence of public opinion. This is quite as it should be. We who, in the event of hostilities are to pay for them with our money and our dearest blood, have the fairest claim to a vote on a declaration of war through the refusal of means to carry it on.

The question of war or peace is an issue simple in its nature, on which a free people, enjoying the blessing of a representative Government, have a right to return a verdict of Yes or No.

We have also the right through a branch of the legislature of our own appointment to select a Cabinet to carry on hostilities.

Unfortunately, as I think, we do not limit our interference to this point. We claim to administer details as well as to rule in the last resort. We undertake the control of the war, both in its civil and military branches, the conclusion and terms of alliances, the selection and removal of commanders, and the guidance of military operations.

We cannot of course do this directly, but we act through the organs of public opinion, who are at the same time our advisers and our agents.

I may name among them independent Members of Parliament, speaking in their places; attendants at public meetings; but, above all, the Fourth Estate—the writers and correspondents of the newspapers.

Among the persons last alluded to are many gentlemen of unblemished honour, and first rate ability, who, moreover, in literary merit are men surpassed by no living writers. Unfortunately these persons do not possess all those qualities which are especially required in order to direct war successfully.

I will enumerate some of the most important of these qualities.

1. Statesmanship and a knowledge of military affairs, derived from education and practice.

2. Acquaintance with the subject-matter to which these acquirements are to be applied, such as the secret schemes of foreign or allied cabinets, the strength of the foe, etc. etc.

3. Responsibility. In these respects a Ministry, and the military chiefs appointed by it, must possess an immense superiority over the public at large, or its chosen advisers—the same superiority which a lawyer

possesses over his client in the management of a suit, or a physician over his patient in the treatment of a disease.

Our wise course in my view would be, that we should place great confidence in the Ministry after we had once chosen them, leaving in their hands the uncontrolled management of warlike operations, the choice of generals, etc. If we did not like them we should choose another Cabinet, and trust that until convinced by experience of its incapacity.

If we are determined to trust no Ministry, then let the House of Commons select an executive committee, either from its body or even from the public press; but at any rate let it place confidence in the managers of the war, whoever they may be. These at any rate must not be numerous.

A democracy may carry on war successfully, but it can never carry on war democratically with success. The management of a war should be concentrated in a few hands.

The Romans, the greatest of conquerors, had much of democracy in their constitution, but their wars were directed by the Senate and Consuls. In times of difficulty they even appointed a Dictator, who was supreme both in the city and the field. They were punished by the dreadful defeats of Thrasymenus and of Cannæ for having on these two occasions listened to demagogues and not to soldiers and statesmen. The ruin of Athens in the Peloponnesian war is mainly attributable to a similar error.

I fear that England, unless she alters her present plan, must also expect great reverses, or success purchased at an unnecessary cost.

In conclusion, I will point out a few evils which arise from the perfect publicity which forms a necessary part of our scheme of action, and of our habit of administering as well as ruling, in warlike affairs.

In a previous letter I have alluded to the information given to the enemy. Upon that matter I will not therefore enlarge, though most important to my purpose.

The levying a foreign legion was greatly interfered with by a party debate in the House of Commons, aided by ill judged articles in the newspapers.

The alliance with France was jeopardized by the Roebuck Committee, and by the debate on the Turkish Loan, and was only preserved by the very incomplete manner in which the inquiry intrusted to the former was carried out, and by the abrupt termination of discussion on the latter.

Then think of the treatment our Generals have received.

They are denounced as incompetent and even cowardly by well known persons in their own camp, and charged with all sorts of offences, without having it in their power to utter a word in explanation or reply.

I am only surprised that officers can be found to submit to treatment so unfair and degrading, and can hardly enough admire the spirit of discipline and obedience in our soldiers, who still implicitly obey leaders, whom they are daily told are unworthy to command them.

The fault-finding is universal, and had the Duke of Wellington been in the Crimea, he would, I doubt not, have been pronounced by our correspondents to be backward and incapable.

In one respect it must be allowed that our public writers have evinced great discretion. They have passed over almost unnoticed the errors and deficiencies of our gallant allies, while they have blazoned forth their merits and achievements, placing the latter in strong contrast with the assumed shortcomings of our army.

This is doubtless politic, but involves the grossest injustice to the ministers, generals, officers and soldiers of England.

I have merely alluded to matters which for their full development would require a volume, and in pity to your readers must now conclude.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

SENEX.

February 9th, 1856.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS.

NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS, AND CONTEMPORARY OPINIONS.

Our Military Organization.

In another column we have inserted a letter from an able correspondent, who uses the signature "Senex," not because we agree with the opinions he has advanced, but because we hold with John Milton that "opinion in good men, is wisdom in the making," and that, in order to arrive at a correct judgment, all sides of a subject should be deliberately examined. We cannot help thinking, however, that "Senex" has

not very calmly or impartially reviewed the state of the facts on which he starts. He assumes, for instance, that the English, besides having a veto upon the question of war or no war—for, of course, it is not inferred that they can at any time prevent the conclusion of a peace, however unpopular—have also "to select the Cabinet." A little reflection would have entirely dissipated this notion. The House of Commons may declare the general policy which an administration shall or shall not pursue; but there is no instance where the selection of particular persons for the Government has been dictated to the Sovereign, by any but those small cliques of hereditary courtiers, who have for the last century and a half arrogated to themselves the posts of leading statesmen. Had Parliament been consulted on the subject, the Derby-Disraeli government would never have existed; nor would that of Lord Aberdeen have been entrusted with the fatal power of indecision—of alternate timidity and menace; procrastination and haste—which more than anything else led to the war with Russia.

Neither have the representatives of the people interfered with the detailed management of the war. They have confided to the Government all the treasure and resources—all the men and materials—that have been at any time asked for, with the most ungrudging liberality; and if they have occasionally complained, when affairs were grossly mismanaged, and when the incapacity of our commanders was exciting the scorn and ridicule of Europe from end to end, they, in that, acted but as critical spectators of the great drama that was being played under their eyes; and gave vent to their

exclamations in order to promote the final success of the piece, and because none were more deeply interested than they in a satisfactory *denouément*. When they have blamed commanders, it was *after* authentic reports of the most fatal blunders had been received; and where they have looked suspiciously on diplomatic proceedings, it has turned out, in every instance, that abundant grounds have existed for their want of confidence: need we instance the Aberdeen correspondence with Sir Hamilton Seymour, with respect to the proposal of Czar Nicholas to "burke" the "sick man" and divide his inheritance, which was kept a profound secret till revealed in the *Times*; the shuffling of Austria and Prussia with regard to their alliance with England and France; the insidious and sinister character of the "Vienna notes;" or the last year's Vienna conferences, in which Lord John Russell allowed himself to be hoodwinked till he fell helpless into the toils of the Austro-Russians.

Had our diplomacy been as open and above board as that of the United States of America, and had Parliament more frequently interfered, and more peremptorily, there is every probability that our disasters would have been smaller than those we have had to lament; the effective service rendered by our army and navy would have been greater; and our expenditure both of life and money would have been less: for individuals would have had less hope of being able to elude a fair share of personal responsibility for their acts, whether of commission or omission. "Senex" will of course, remember the "remarkable fact," often alluded to during the last long war, that all the naval enterprises

of the British were conducted to a successful issue after the shooting of an Admiral of the fleet on a charge of cowardice:—not that any one would desire the revival of similar incentives to courage; but that the recall of rash, sluggish, and incapable men, without honours and rewards, would be far more likely to conduce to energy, prudence, and painstaking in their successors, than the system which prevails at present.

With regard to the qualifications of Members of Parliament, and of the Editors and special correspondents of the English newspapers, it may be safely said that their daily studies, experience, and intelligence, fit them to criticise warlike operations and political combinations, as accurately as the habits and associations of ministers fit them to direct the business of the State. What more could the Duke of Newcastle, or Mr. Frederic Peel, Sir James Graham, or Lord Panmure, know of the operations of an army in the field, or of a fleet in the Baltic or the Black Sea, than the Editor of the *Times*, or Mr. W. H. Russell? And with respect to the relative correctness of the information which each was receiving, by every Post, from the scene of action, the reports of the Sebastopol Committee of Enquiry, and of the Government Commissioners, Sir J. M'Neill and Colonel Tulloch, have set all questions on that head at rest for ever. It is, indeed, extremely rare that any intelligence worth obtaining, whether it relates to the schemes of foreign or allied governments, or to the proceedings of our own officials abroad and at home, reaches Downing-street, or at least attracts such attention as to form a basis for action, until it has been made public in the Journals,

and elicited inquiry from all quarters. On many occasions, Ministers have been constrained to admit that the first intimation they received of occurrences of the greatest importance was through the columns of the newspapers; and this notwithstanding our costly diplomatic establishments; the position held by our Statesmen; "the acquirements and knowledge they derive from education and practice, and their acquaintance with the subject matter to which their skill is to be applied."

Of the actual, practical responsibility of military and naval chiefs and ministers, we confess that we would willingly see a little more—that we should be glad to find it somewhat more equitably proportioned to the pay, pensions, honours, and privileges which rank and office confer. Herein, we conceive, lies the whole gist of the argument. We want a responsibility adapted to the manners and modes of thought of the age. The days of impeachment, of the block, of trials and executions for cowardice and incapacity have gone by; but, having adopted nothing in their stead, we ignore the offences, and smooth down the plumage of those whom we are afraid to trust, with sinecure places and decorations.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

SIR,—My last letter dated August 1855 was on the subject of our administrative agents generally. I am now about to trouble you with a few lines on the selection of ministers and other superior officers of the State.

Suppose at any moment a Ministry has been ejected from power through a vote of the House of Commons, which really governs England, it is probable that the choice of the Opposition Leader in filling up his administration with due regard to party claims and public opinion will be restricted to about twenty or thirty persons. The defeated party we will assume to be furnished with an equal number of tried men and aspirants to office, and then come those who do not attach themselves to either of the leading parties in the State; by the way, an increasing section.

On the whole, under our existing system, we can hardly reckon upon more than fifty to sixty persons as furnishing candidates for seats in the Cabinet or other offices, which change holders with every change of Ministry.

There can be no doubt that this is a great evil.

In the first place there is less chance of finding men of superior capability among fifty men than among a larger number.

Again; this state of things furnishes food for much ill-founded cavil, and depopularizes our whole system of government to a far greater extent than it ought. It may be true that our rulers are too exclusive in their selection of instruments, but it must not be forgotten that their choice is necessarily much circumscribed even supposing them to be actuated by a sincere desire of obtaining the best men.

The truth of this remark is confirmed by the undeniable fact that, although loud complaints have been made against Lord Palmerston, for instance, because members of his administration are chiefly taken from

one class, yet I have never heard any man of mark mentioned whom he might have employed and has not.

The truth is that the materials for an English administration are not to be picked up at the corners of every street, and that its members must be possessed of rare and uncommon qualifications.

Let us reflect upon the condition of an English Minister. His post is most honourable, being in the last resort dependent upon the choice of the representatives of the first people upon earth; but it is so anxious and laborious as probably to undermine his health, while the salary is only just sufficient to defray his current expenditure, leaving no room for saving. He must therefore be possessed of some fortune of his own to keep him, when out of office. He ought also by his character and oratorical powers to be able to command the attention of the House, and if a Commoner the confidence of a constituency also. Further, before he become Minister, he ought to have some experience of public business in an inferior office. Lastly, his moral character, generally speaking, must not be open to reproach, while, as respects the State, his pecuniary honesty must be beyond suspicion.

A ministerial office is almost inconsistent with the active exercise of a profession. Hardly any leading merchant or shopkeeper could or would accept a post yielding probably an income inferior to his actual receipts, and not worth a year's purchase. The same remark applies to a practising lawyer, excepting with respect to legal offices, such as the Attorney Generalship. In short besides other objections, from their

general want of experience—of influence in Parliament, &c.— mercantile and professional men cannot afford to be Ministers.

Thus we see that at different times Mr. Baring, Mr. Laing, and doubtless many others have positively declined office, while Mr. Lindsay tells us that he could not take office.

The members of the Administrative Body who have originally entered the service as clerks, cannot be looked to in general as candidates for high office, because they have no opportunity of becoming Members of Parliament, no leisure, and usually little income excepting their salary.

But the existing evil as to the restricted sphere of choice for the high officers of state being allowed, can no remedy be found for it? Some would say, double the salaries, so that a poor man might economize out of them, and still keep up the accustomed expenditure. Others would perhaps leave the salary as it is, and recommend that the Minister should only spend £500 or £1000 a year, and save the remainder to keep him when out of office.

To these proposals, I should object as increasing the unpopularity of Ministers already unfairly great, and as creating a class of needy adventurers to whom office would be all in all, and who would be even more unscrupulous in their effort to obtain it, than is the case with politicians at present.

Are we then to sit still, allow a blot on our institutions to exist and not attempt a remedy?

The most likely palliation that I can imagine is that the Constituencies should more frequently select

as their Representatives, young men of some fortune, of leisure, and studious habits who may shew a disposition to dedicate themselves to public life.

Such persons would thus have an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of public business in Parliament, and of exhibiting those qualities, which might in after life enable them worthily to fill the higher offices of the State. Of course in this as in all similar cases, many blanks to one prize must be expected.

I cannot conclude without congratulating the Borough of Maidstone in possessing in Mr. Mildmay a candidate who exactly answers to the conditions I have here ventured to pourtray. Indeed his qualifications are greater than I have described. His acceptance of an inferior office productive neither of fame nor money, evinces his love of business, and his desire to acquire a knowledge and experience of a kind which may hereafter render him fit to serve the state in higher employments.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SENEX.

October 17th, 1855.

CAPABILITIES OF BRITISH SOLDIERS.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

SIR,—I feel greatly obliged by the insertion in your columns of my letter, dated 9th February, and equally flattered by the comments you have been pleased to bestow upon it.

I have already said that controversy lies out of my sphere. I cast my opinions upon the waters, to sink or swim according to their merits, without in general attempting to defend them against opponents. Still, I will so far deviate from my custom, as to make one or two remarks on what has fallen from you in reply to my last.

You think the success of the Parliamentarians against Charles I., of the United States against England in the war of Independence, and of France against the Allies in the Revolutionary struggle, a confutation of my opinion that war can hardly be carried on with success democratically.

Upon this, I beg leave to observe that neither the United States, nor the Long Parliament, carried on war democratically. In these cases the conduct of affairs, both in the Cabinet and in the field, fell into the hands of the ablest men who could be found, and who were allowed free scope, without popular interference. The French Republic was only a Democracy in name. In reality, it was the most ruthless despotism that the world has seen in civilized times, in which resistless power was concentrated in few and skilful hands.

You express great respect for the views of Mr. Russell, the correspondent of the *Times*, and I so far agree with you as to consider him a gentleman of honourable feelings, of considerable mental power, and a first rate literary artist. But, in the affairs of war and statesmanship, I must regard both him and other gentlemen of his class as authorities ranking far below persons who have made such subjects their peculiar study. I do not apprehend that knowledge of any kind is to be obtained intuitively.

I will now, however, request your attention to another subject, which just now possesses extraordinary interest; I mean the English army, and the best means of improving it, and of rendering it a thoroughly effective instrument for the national defence.

The first step in the enquiry will be to point out the character of our troops as they now exist—their excellencies and defects. A review of proposed improvements must be reserved for a future communication.

The most important business of an army is to fight; and so far probably ours is the first in the world. A given number of English soldiers, *ceteres paribus*, would beat an equal number of the soldiers of any other European state. They owe this superiority to their physical power, to the courage belonging to their race—to their superior armament—and to their admirable discipline. Some of these advantages are connected with the fact that they are all volunteers, while continental armies as a rule, are formed of conscripts.

In speaking of the superiority of English troops in the day of battle, it is proper to award the palm of merit to the three arms in different degrees. Thus our infantry is decidedly without an equal. The artillery at any rate unsurpassed, while our cavalry, brave and admirably mounted, has still many more defects.

The general superiority of our soldiers is more apparent when regiment is matched with regiment, than when the comparison is extended to more numerous bodies of men.

Now, then, for our defects. Our officers are less highly educated than those of some continental armies. There is a deficiency among them of persons, posses-

sing first-rate accomplishments for employments on the staff.

The privates are helpless. They work badly, are unskilful with the spade, the bill and the scythe, and are without that ready ingenuity, and spirit of resource which lightens the deficiencies of French soldiers, and enables them to make the best of untoward circumstances.

Then our establishments at the beginning of a war are always imperfect. We have no regular Land Transport Corps. The medical arrangements and Commissariat have to be created anew. Neither officers or men have usually had an opportunity of acting together in large bodies, and thus have a great deal more than is necessary of the business of actual war to learn. I say more than is necessary, for with the best appliances there must be an enormous difference between peace and war. Even an army as carefully trained and provided as those of France or Prussia, would have much to learn in the face of an enemy after a long peace.

One or two campaigns cure or greatly mitigate most of our short-comings. At the present moment our army in the Crimea is far better equipped and provided, more healthy, and altogether more fit for immediate action, than those of our gallant allies.

However, whatever may be the quality of our troops, the nation has a fair right to demand that they shall be rendered as efficient as possible; that no curable defects shall be left unremedied; and that neither ignorance, jobbery, a spirit of routine, or of false economy, shall be allowed to stand in the way of improvement.

With your permission, I will hereafter review some of the popular schemes of amelioration and add some suggestions of my own.

Some will say how, Mr. Senex, do you dare to play the critic, when you place so little reliance on popular and unprofessional judgment? The remark would be a fair one. What I say must be taken for what it is worth. At any rate I rely, not upon the rumours of the hour or my own fancies, but upon the opinion of great masters of the art like Wellington, Napier, Foy, etc., and upon the undeniable testimony of 100 combats.

I will conclude by pointing out one admirable quality of our army—I mean its perfect loyalty, its spirit of attachment to law and order. Freedom has nothing to fear from it, while the peaceable and industrious classes may thoroughly rely upon it in aid of the constable, should hereafter the internal tranquillity of the country be menaced by a socialistic outbreak.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

SENEX.

April 1856.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

SIR,—Since I last addressed you, Peace, before highly probable, has become a fact. It does not, however, follow, that the army may henceforth be abandoned, as a costly, and useless toy—on the contrary,

if we are wise, we shall strive to maintain it during the period of tranquillity which awaits us, however long that may be, in a state of as great efficiency, as the want of that experience which war alone can give, will admit of. We shall thus take the best means in our possession of diminishing the chances of war by shewing to Foreign States that we are prepared for it.

It is with this feeling that I resume the subject with which my last letter concluded, viz. Suggestions for improving the British Army, and an examination of the popular schemes having this object.

The first question to be solved, will be as to the amount of the Army to be retained. Upon this I will not enter further than to say, that I think it never ought to be reduced so low, as it was in the period before the Russian War—and that the framework of the Militia should be kept up—the several Regiments being maintained to their full numbers, and called out for training during a month in each year.

But whatever may be the number of our troops, at any rate they should form a complete army—not merely a set of insulated Regiments, however admirable in courage and discipline such regiments might be.

I observe that a plan is now on foot for distributing them in Brigades and Divisions, as is done on the Continent. This plan should be adopted if approved by competent professional authority. But even if this be not done, Camps of Exercise should be formed every year for the instruction of both officers and men. A larger proportion of Artillery should be maintained than has been customary, because that arm is less easily recruited than the Cavalry and Infantry. The

nucleus of a Land Transport Corps should also be kept up. In short, nothing should be wanting which skill can suggest or money buy to enable the British army to take the field at the earliest moment equipped and prepared for any service.

It is possible that the country, listening to demagogues in search of political capital, might refuse to submit to an amount of expenditure necessary to maintain an army of a fitting strength. It has often indeed been said that such a case will occur. I believe the notion to be a libel on the British people, and if past appearances have occasionally led to the inference that we were too ready to look upon the army as an useless burden, I attribute this fact mainly to the cowardice of successive ministries, anxious for popularity, and afraid boldly to utter and steadfastly to adhere to the maxims of wisdom and prudence.

The amount of the army being fixed as low as the real interests of the country will allow, and its instruction secured as far as may be by Camps of Exercise, the fitting education for officers should be placed on a better footing than now.

In time of peace Commissions, as is I believe the case in America, should only be given to pupils of the military schools, unless in the case of sergeants who may be worthy of promotion. In time of war the great and sudden demands for officers would render it necessary to relax this rule.

Special attention should be paid to the training of officers destined to fill high staff appointments, and the influence of emulation should be brought into play in their case.

Some would say, let all commissions be given after a competitive examination. I reserve my judgment upon that matter, only remarking that the pay of officers in the British service is comparatively so low as to narrow very materially the field of competition.

A great advantage to the army would arise from attracting as officers into its ranks more of the sons of the great industrial class, beginning with the great merchant and banker, and ending with the farmer and tradesman and shopkeeper. It would thus become popularized.

At present the officers comprehend a few of the high aristocracy, but the great bulk belong to the families of that portion of the middle class which consists of country gentlemen, clergymen, lawyers, physicians, and particularly of the sons of old officers. Certainly better materials for officers than the above cannot be imagined. The world can furnish nothing superior, but the industrial class—the class which now mainly governs England—would furnish a material equally good.

Hereafter I may trouble you with some observations upon the formation of our army, which I think defective, in not containing a sample as it were of every section in the community.

In writing to you last I omitted to mention one very advantageous peculiarity of the English army—I mean the antiquity of its regiments, some of which date from the Commonwealth.

Each regiment has its separate history and its archives, and there are corps which fought at Blenheim and Ramillies, at Salamanca and Waterloo, and lastly, in the Crimea.

Great emulation both in officers and men arises from the antient exploits of their regiment.

Many would rather die than disgrace their time-honoured colours. Only some few regiments in the Spanish, Austrian, and Russian services can boast of great antiquity.

The present French army is of recent date.

My next will be dedicated to a review of the popular themes for improving our military arrangements, and I will conclude with remarking that the full influence of public opinion, and if necessary the control of Parliament, should be exerted to prevent anything like jobbery on the part of the Horse Guards or War Office, so that the best men be really selected and placed in the posts best suited for them.

To the Editor of the South Eastern Gazette.

Sir,—I now resume my remarks upon the English army, and propose in this letter to examine a few of the schemes which have been suggested for its improvement.

First, the proposal to make advancement to depend on all occasions not upon seniority but upon merit.

Of course nobody can doubt that soldiers should be promoted as a reward for distinguished service, or that the best men should be selected for the command of Divisions and Brigades, or generally for Staff appointments.

To me it appears that to ignore the claims of seniority beyond the exceptional cases above referred to,

would be to establish a general system of jobbing and favouritism, to which any injustice connected with the system of purchase, upon which I shall say a few words hereafter, would be a joke. Take the ordinary peace or the ordinary war duties of a regiment, and who shall say that Ensign A. with two years service is more worthy of a lieutenancy than ensign B. with five years service.

It seems to me that the oldest soldier, *ceteris paribus be it remarked*, is most worthy of advancement, and that seniority, apart from every eminent service, should be the basis of promotion.

A contrary rule may be tolerated in Naples, but would I am sure never suit England.

Frequent promotions from the ranks is a panacea with some persons, and is doubtless frequent in France, but apart from the exceptional cases, of which there have been I believe more than 200 since the beginning of the Russian war, I conceive that it is only suitable to an army raised by conscription.

When any man may be forced to become a Soldier, and a substitute costs £150., persons of good education are often obliged to serve as Privates, but in England it is a well-grounded complaint, that even already our officers are ill-educated. What would be their condition, if men who had served in the ranks formed any large portion of them?

If it be said, that men of superior acquirements would enter as Privates upon the chance of becoming Officers; I deny this assumption, unless the pay of all ranks is largely increased. It is almost impossible that an officer can live upon his pay, until he gets his

company, and most sensible Sergeants decline on this ground, and also on account of their age, the boon of a Commission when offered them.

But then it may be said, raise the pay of all ranks below a Captain. I reply that I do not believe the improvement in the Army would be at all commensurate with its greatly increased expense.

Many of Cromwell's officers served in the ranks, but then his troopers received what was equal to 10*s* a day at present, taking into account the prices of commodities, and the relative scale of income and expenditure in all classes.

The American Army more resembles our own than that of any countries, being all formed of Volunteers. In the United States, I am told that promotion from the ranks is almost unknown. The pay of both officers and men is, however, higher than here.

I now come to the question of purchase. That this is a practice, scandalous, in appearance—often highly unjust, and which it would be in many respects most desirable to abolish, few can doubt, yet I think, that there are circumstances connected with purchase which would render its abolition a matter of regret, unless other great and important changes were introduced contemporaneously.

I do not mention as a valid reason for retaining purchase, that to get rid of it would involve an expenditure of five or six millions in the repayment of officers, who had invested their money on the faith of existing regulations.

Should the removal of a great evil call for such a sacrifice, the nation is bound to make it—but there is an obstacle behind of much more importance.

It is owing to purchase that at the commencement of a war, the regimental officers of the British Army are younger men than those of any other army in Europe. In the Austrian, Prussian, and French Regiments, one sees pursy Captains and Lieutenants of 30 to 40 and even older, who are useless in a campaign, while in ours such men have sold out.

Among the Generals and Colonels of the Swedish Army, (which in most other respects is formed of admirable troops) some months ago, the youngest General, setting aside Princes of the Blood, had reached the age of 52.

But we need not go so far from home to see the effect produced by the absence of purchase, or any other scheme, which involves a retirement from the service of effète officers. We may see it in our own Artillery, and in the East India Company's service. In the former it takes nearly fifty years to become a General. In the latter but very few Generals are in the possession of health and strength, suitable for active employment; even the Colonels are far too old.

It is fair to assume, that those who purchase are in other military requirements, at least the equals of those who sell, while they are usually younger.

The officer without fortune who cannot purchase, and who depends for promotion on death vacancies, distinguished service, etc. obtains his steps as rapidly, as the average of his comrades in those branches of our military Establishments, where purchase does not prevail, while, on his retirement, he can usually obtain a sum of money, which places him in comparative comfort, and which does not weigh upon the Exchequer.

I do not think that the soldier of fortune would derive any advantage from the abolition of purchase, unless both pay and half-pay were largely raised.

Another advantage connected with purchase arises from its tendency to spread through society, a number of persons, who have served in the army, and who can be made conveniently useful in the event of war.

The remarkable efficiency of our militia recently has depended, in a great degree, upon the existence of this class of men, which I should like to see increased rather than diminished. They form a most useful pendent to privates enlisted for short periods under recent regulations.

It would thus seem that however ugly in appearance purchase may be, and few can dislike it more than myself, or would more rejoice at seeing it abolished, yet that, setting aside the question of expense, it could not be dispensed with advantageously, unless the abolition were accompanied by other important changes, especially such as would enable us to get rid in time of the elderly officers.

I could say much more on this subject, but cannot venture to intrude at greater length on your columns at present.

I am, etc.

July, 1856.

Editorial comment.

["Senex," again, need not seek far to find that democracies have carried on war with perfect success long since the times of Greek and Roman greatness. Cromwell had not become Dictator when he routed the last

remnant of the Stuart forces. The Generals of the French Republic had utterly prostrated the power of Austria, Prussia, Naples, and, indeed, the whole continent of Europe before Bonaparte had attained the office of First Consul; the United States defeated all the powers that England could send against them during their war of Independence, and more recently over-ran the subjugated Mexico in the course of a few months, without either a dictator or a conscription. But then, the military systems of the British Commonwealth, the French Republic, and the Americans, did not comprise the pernicious favouritism of the Horse Guards or the Admiralty, or the unjust system of promotion by seniority and purchase which prevails among us.

If there have been any evils attending the publicity amid which the present, or recent, war has been carried on—and we are not prepared to admit that the shadow of an evil has been proved—the public are able to judge for themselves whether the benefits accruing from the exertions of the "Fourth Estate" have not infinitely more than compensated for the disadvantages. The assertion that information has thus been supplied to the enemy, while it could serve any useful purpose, needs support by the citation of at least one single instance; and as to the few cases of officers who have been denounced—not for cowardice, but for hopeless blundering and professional inefficiency—the first of sound military critics has almost universally confirmed the judgment of those who, as impartial and independent eye-witnesses, have reported what they saw.

As, then, we must of necessity maintain an effective army and navy, whether this war cease or otherwise, let us be careful to arrive at as correct conclusions as possible how their organization can be best improved. It is not by forgetting or glossing over what has been amiss in the past that we are likely to discover the right course for the future; but by probing our sore places, acknowledging our errors, and determining, without fear or favour, to do justice to the nation, which, notwithstanding that so many of its great sacrifices have been abused, has still confidently trusted its rulers with all the powers and resources they have asked for, either to prosecute a just war or to conclude an honourable peace.]

A communication (to the *Times*) intended to point out an important circumstance in the Specie relations between Europe and India.

London, Nov. 20th, 1862.

Sir,—I beg leave to call your attention to a circumstance which influences the export of silver to India of a far more constant and enduring kind than either the purchase of cotton, or the extra price obtained for cotton, when consigned from Bombay to England.

I allude to the large production of gold, and the consequent depreciation in the value of precious metals.

The *modus operandi* is as follows:—

The enlarged quantity of gold makes its appearance first in the markets of Europe and America, and there lowers the exchangeable value not merely of the gold but of the silver, which, in the shape of money, circulates along with it.

The fall in the value of the precious metals in the West involves, or rather in other words, means a rise in the price of all other commodities.

Now, a rise in the price of commodities, other than gold and silver, in Europe and America, discourages exportation from them, while on the other hand, it produces an increased importation of merchandise from the East. Hence a debt is incurred, which, in the long run, can only be discharged by gold or silver; and, as the orientals will only take gold in limited quantities, silver furnishes the chief means of balancing the account.

If the above view of the case be correct we must anticipate, so long as the increased production of gold shall continue, as the general course of things, and without reference to merely temporary agencies, a continual export of silver to the East.

It is fortunate for us that India and China are of such vast extent, and otherwise so constituted as to enable them to absorb enormous amounts of the precious metals which are thus in some sort lost to the circulation of the world.

The debasement of the standard of value in the West is thus, at any rate, retarded.

The time will probably come when the precious metals will have fallen in the East to the same extent as in the West. When this shall happen, the phenomenon now adverted to will cease to exist.

What precedes is, of course, only a sketch, which might be largely developed.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant, N.

A Communication (supposed to the *Times*) on the Transmission of Silver to the East.

March 4th, 1864.

SIR,—Some time ago you did me the honour of inserting in your City article a few lines, in which I endeavoured to show that, putting aside all ordinary influences, either commercial or financial, the vast increase in the quantity and consequent depreciation in the value of the precious metals would necessarily occasion a large export of silver to the East.

I further pointed out that this exportation of silver would go on so long as the diggings continued productive.

It is my present object to arrive at an approximation—in all probability not far from the truth—as to the amount of silver which must annually flow to the East in obedience to that law of equilibrium which governs the distribution of the precious metals through the various countries of the world.

You will recollect that, previously to the discovery of gold in California, a large increase had taken place in the produce of the Siberian mines—perhaps the oldest in the world now worked, as having been known, if I mistake not, in the time of Herodotus.

About the year 1840 the annual produce of these mines reached four millions, and there can be little doubt that this amount, added to the various smaller sources of supply, amply sufficed to make up for all loss and waste, and thus to keep up, if not to increase,

the stock of gold then existing in the shape of coin, bullion, plate, and ornament.

At any rate, there was no appearance then that gold was rising in value compared with commodities. But we have at present a further supply from Australia and North America, which may be estimated at twenty millions annually. None of this goes direct to the East, although some silver, its equivalent doubtless, finds its way across the Pacific.

But now let us estimate the amount of silver which must be sent from Europe and America to the East in order that those vast countries may receive their due proportion of the increased quantity of the precious metals.

The countries in question are China, India, and the ultra-Gangetic States which separate them—the last named countries, however, counting for little. They must contain altogether a population of 500,000,000, or nearly half the human race. They are, on the whole, eminently fertile and productive, furnishing many commodities which other countries eagerly purchase. They are thus the seat of an immense internal as well as external trade, which must employ a vast mass of coin and bullion—in overwhelming proportion silver—in circulating commodities, and so much the more because the economy of money by means of banking expedients is little practised among their populations.

Added to all this, from time immemorial the people of these vast countries have been in the habit of burying treasure, and also of using an immense

quantity of gold and silver, especially the latter, in objects of adornment.

On the whole, we cannot be far wrong in assuming that of the annual addition made to the stock of the precious metals in the world, one half, or say ten millions, almost wholly silver, must find its way sooner or later to the East.

Of this sum a certain amount may cross the Pacific to China, a little passes through Russia and Persia, the remainder goes from Europe and the United States, chiefly from the former, which receives it *in transitu*. This remainder I estimate at seven or eight millions.

I have thus, to the best of my power, solved the problem which I proposed to myself; you and your readers must decide with what success.

I have not alluded to the present rate of production in silver, which is supposed to be also on the increase, having no reliable information as respects it.

In truth, my great object has been to show that the gold discoveries alone, and their effect, first on the value of that metal, secondly on that of silver, which circulates along with it, imply necessarily a large exportation of silver to the East, where the former metal is comparatively little used.

The amount of silver sent to the East in any one year may be modified by disturbing causes of various kinds, but, looking to a series of years, it will infallibly continue while the diggings and quartz crushing remain productive.

I can hardly be wrong in thinking that the principles and facts thus brought to your notice are well

worth attention on the part of the commercial public, as being calculated to throw light on questions of great practical importance.

I remain, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

N.

Supposed to have been addressed to the *Times*.

Sir,—The extreme sensitiveness of the money market of London, as measured by the frequent variations in the rate of interest, has often excited remark, but has not, so far as I know, been adequately explained.

I will venture to occupy a little of your space with a short statement of my views upon this subject, which certainly presents some anomalous phenomena.

There can be no doubt but that the accumulation of capital in England is rapid and enormous, and, as it would appear at first sight, capable at once of bearing any demand that may be made upon it. Yet, in spite of this fact, we often observe that a call for gold, or any other sudden abstraction of capital to the extent of a couple of millions, or even less, will at once, and seriously, raise the rate of interest.

Perhaps only just previously money may have seemed a drug, seeking customers without finding them, and loanable at almost a nominal rate of interest.

How can this be? How can it happen that while so vast an accumulation is taking place, while we are told that a glut exists in Lombard Street, a compara-

tively small demand, if unusual or unexpected, can produce so great a result?

The object of this letter is an attempt to answer this question, and here follows my solution of the difficulty.

The truth, then, is that the really unemployed portion of the national capital at any one moment is never large.

The savings of the nation, when not at once invested by their owners, are deposited with bankers all over the country, and after the tills of these dealers in money have been supplied, make their appearance in the market of the metropolis. There, until permanently invested, they are mainly employed in loans and discounts by bankers and discount houses. It is only a very small surplus which ever remains unfruitful. The money dealers who hold money will lend it, on good security, at a very low rate, rather than let it lie idle. After all, should there remain a balance, they hardly increase the amount in their private tills, but pay over the excess to their accounts in the Bank of England.

I apprehend, then, that if at any time we could know the difference in amount between the sums deposited with the Bank and the balances which the Joint Stock and Private Banks consider necessary for the ordinary purposes of their business, and add to these what the Bank could well spare from its reserve, independent of the extra deposits of bankers, we should know, roughly indeed, the sum which represents that portion of national capital really unemployed at any time in the London market.

I should not estimate the excess under the first

head at more than two millions. That under the second head, less easily ascertainable, may reach as much more.

It must be recollected that the bankers' reserves appear in that of the Bank of England.

If my views be correct, it will readily be seen why an export of treasure to the East, or a forced operation in London on the part of the Bank of France, should produce temporarily an important effect on the rate of interest in our market.

The same line of argument which shows that a small demand for capital under certain circumstances, will considerably elevate the rate of interest, leads also to the inference that a small excess of capital seeking employment will occasionally depress it to an extent apparently far beyond what at first sight would appear probable.

I have now attempted to answer the question which I proposed to myself—you will judge with what success.

I will conclude with the remark that what is called a large amount of unemployed capital really means much money employed at a low rate of interest for short periods, for which the lenders desire a higher remuneration, and that the savings of the country, enormous as they are, and reaching, perhaps, 100 millions per annum, find almost immediate employment at home or abroad.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

N.

Malt Tax.

From the Economist.

1. It is a general law in economical science, that a tax on any commodity, unmonopolized, falls on the consumer.

2. This I believe to be the case with the malt tax; and if so, it follows that after an adjustment, which could only occupy a short time, had been effected, the farmers would gain nothing by a repeal of the tax, unless in the capacity of consumers. Even if barley partook of the character of a monopolized commodity this would be true, because the increased quantity of barley demanded after the fall of price, consequent on the repeal of the tax, could not be produced at the previous cost. As soon as an adjustment was complete, farmers would gain little or nothing by the change.

3. The only difference between this and the case previously adverted to, which is probably what would occur in practice, would be, that in the first case the consumers would gain the whole amount of the tax, while in the latter, they would divide the gain with the landowner.

4. The inexorable law of competition must lead to this result in both cases, neither farmers nor any other class of capitalists can in the long run obtain a higher rate of profit than that assigned to them by the struggle of the market.

5. But to descend from the general laws of science, let us look at the facts which would guide the process of adjustment after the abolition of the tax. We will assume:—

A. That the tax produces six millions per annum.

B. That the quantity of malt annually produced and consumed in England alone is about 40 millions of bushels.

C. That the tax, according to the best authorities, increases the price of beer about 12 per cent., or from a $\frac{1}{2}d$ to $\frac{3}{4}d$ a pot—the beer costing, say $4\frac{1}{2}d$ a pot.

D. That a full allowance for the costs of collection and the inconvenience of interference with industry, etc. connected with the imposition of the tax, could hardly add more than a million to the national sacrifice imposed by the tax,—and that consequently a repeal of the tax would leave seven millions in the pockets of the public which are now abstracted from them.

6. It is here assumed, in order to simplify matters that the Exchequer could spare the six millions without the necessity of imposing other taxes. This, however, could not actually happen.

7. It is fair to suppose the quantity of beer consumed would increase in something like the same rate as the fall in price, viz. 12 per cent. and that instead of using 40 we should use 45 million bushels of malt.

8. The classes who could gain during the process of adjustments by the abolition of the tax are—consumers, landowners, farmers, malsters, brewers, and publicans, in England, and abroad, the growers and exporters of barley.

9. Consumers would doubtless gain something. More barley would be malted, more beer brewed, more barley, malt and hops imported from abroad. Should the increase of beer amount to the quantity producible from two and a half millions of bushels of malt, the share of consumers in the first year would probably be

equal to three and a half millions of money, or half the whole gain.

9*a*. That of landlords would be small. They could not at once increase existing rents, but when farms were to be re-let somewhat higher rents would be offered for them, especially if suitable for barley growing.

10. Of the three and a half millions left to be divided between producers and distributors, a certain sum would fall to the foreigner for the increased quantity or increased price of barley imported after the removal of the tax. How much this would be can only be guessed at. We may safely assume, however, that it would not be less than a third of the three and a half millions, or say £1,200,000; this would leave about two and a half millions for England.

11. It is impossible to assign to farmers, malsters, and publicans their several portions of the gain arising from the inequality between the price of beer and the cost of production, but we may fairly divide it by assigning one-half, say £1,250,000 to farmers, the remaining £1,250,000 to be divided between brewers and publicans. In both cases it would be necessary to deduct from this gain the taxes if any paid by these classes to replace the loss to the revenue.

12. It need hardly be pointed out that to impose or remove taxes with a special view to the benefit of particular persons or classes is in a high degree unjust and inexpedient.

13. The state of things in the second year of the adjustment would be so far altered that more barley would be malted, more beer brewed, that the price

would again fall, the gain to consumers increase, and that of landlords, farmers, brewers, malsters, and publicans diminish.

14. It may fairly be assumed that in the third year a normal state of things would have been attained; that is to say, that, under the law of competition, the share of the former tax previously falling to producers and distributors would have vanished, and that the whole gain would belong to consumers, and show itself in an equivalent reduction in the price of beer.

15. It has been shown above that the increased demand for barley, consequent upon a total abolition of the malt tax, would probably amount to about five millions of bushels, an equivalent to six or seven hundred thousand quarters of barley. It is idle to suppose that such a demand could so press upon the quantity of barley land as to increase sensibly the costs of production, especially as both barley and malt could be imported from any part of the world free from duty. This would probably be true if the additional quantity of barley required were to be seven millions instead of 700,000 quarters.

16. From what precedes, it may be considered as quite certain, that in all reasoning upon the malt tax, malt should be reckoned among the commodities unmonopolised, because producible in almost any quantity without any sensible increase of price.

17. In order to simplify matters, it has hitherto been assumed that the whole tax is to be abolished. The reasoning will of course be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the case of a reduction in the amount of the tax.

In that case, however, the fall in the price of beer

would be so small as to be almost inappreciable to the consumer; nevertheless, it would be such, under the effect of competition between producers and distributors, as to leave to the latter no more than the ordinary rate of profit.

18. A series of careful experiments have shown, as was to be expected, that barley is a superior feeding article to malt, but were it otherwise, the loss arising from the tax would not fall on the farmers, but on meat eaters.

19. Some of the arguments of County Members are of such a character as to make it superfluous to attempt their confutation. As, for instance, that there is some vast advantage in home brewing, especially among labourers. It is difficult to perceive why, if it would answer to them to brew in their cottages after the abolition of the tax, it would not answer now. The truth is, it would not answer in either case. The public brewer has such an advantage in capital, machinery, and knowledge, that even when his profit has been added to the cost of materials, beer can be sold by him at a price, and of a quality which must make it on the whole much cheaper than the beer of the private brewer.

20. It is almost as irrational to suppose that private brewing can hereafter exist to any marked extent, as to imagine that the spinning and weaving of wool or cotton should become an object of domestic industry.

21. As no rational person can suppose that the Exchequer can bear a loss of six millions, without the imposition of fresh taxes, which must be of a general nature, falling upon farmers as well as others, and as it has been proved that the gain to farmers from the

abolition of the malt tax would be insignificant even in the first year, and would speedily vanish—it follows that if their petitions against the malt tax were to meet with complete success, the only gain to them would consist in a very slight fall in the price of beer, purchased by the imposition of some other tax, which, under the circumstances, could hardly be other than an augmented Property Tax.

The object of the writer in what precedes has been to exhibit an exact picture of the action of those general principles of political economy, which would be called into play were the malt tax either abolished or diminished. The estimates of gain to each class being in their nature hypothetical, can only be considered as approximating to the truth.

April 22nd, 1865.

On House Accommodation for Labourers.

From the Economist.

A great deal of public attention has been directed for some time to the insufficient habitations of a large portion of the British people. Too much, indeed, can hardly be said in reprobation of this crying evil. It may be pronounced, without fear of exaggeration, that a majority of our population is lodged in a manner injurious to health, decency, and morality. But although a great deal has been said and written upon this most important subject, the discussions relating to it have been usually of a very superficial character,

and the remedies either adopted or proposed are little calculated either to remove or even to mitigate the mischief. It is intended in the following paper to subject this important matter to a somewhat close examination, and to point out how, and how only, the mighty evil can be cured. But first a few words upon the only practical measure supposed to bear upon the lodging question, which is likely to receive the sanction of the Legislature. I allude to the Union Chargeability Bill. We are told that in what are called close parishes, meaning thereby parishes with a single owner, or with a few owners who combine, cottages have been pulled down to avoid the payment of poor rates, and that when the burden of rates is thrown upon a wider area, upon the Union instead of the Parish, the motive for the demolition of existing cottages will be removed, and that new cottages will be built. That in some instances cottages in close parishes have been pulled down and the erection of new cottages prevented, in order to diminish the burden of rates, must be allowed, and also that the new law will remove this motive for so doing. It seems equally certain, without discussing its merits in other respects, that the practical effect of the Union Chargeability Bill in this way will be in a national point of view almost insignificant.

1. Because the close parishes form but a small portion of the whole country, while their population forms a still smaller proportion of the entire population.

2. Because in a great number of close parishes the labourers are exceptionally well lodged. This is peculiarly the case on the estates of the great landowners, but it is also common on less extensive properties.

The worst housed being those who are tenants of small capitalists and speculators.

3. Because the temptation to pull down cottages, or to repair insufficiently those that still exist, arises less from a desire to keep down rates, than from another cause which lies at the root of the whole matter, and which we will now proceed to consider.

This cause is the undeniable fact that cottage building does not pay. Houses intended for labourers, if solidly built, or of the requisite dimensions, cannot be let at rents which will yield a suitable return for the outlay. This can easily be shown: a pair of twin cottages each with five rooms, and less than five will not properly accommodate a married couple with children, cannot in most districts be built at a less expense, including the value of the land, than £250. Indeed, generally speaking, this calculation is much too low.

Now, 5 per cent. on £125 is £6. 5*s* per annum for one cottage; to this must be added rates, taxes, and repairs, and we arrive at as much as £7. 10*s*, an amount which in the rural districts few labourers can or will pay. The large class of artisans and workers in manufactories earning with the help of their families, from £1. to £5. per week, can well afford to pay a remunerative rent for house accommodation, but such people ordinarily prefer to spend their incomes on meat, drink, and clothing, caring comparatively little how they are lodged. In short, the root of the evil under discussion may be summed up in the following propositions: —

1. That the construction of suitable dwellings for labourers does not answer in a pecuniary point of view.

2. That it does not answer because one large section of the labouring class has not the means of paying adequate rents, and another large section is unwilling so to do.

Having thus pointed out the root of the hideous evil, we see around us, in the small, crowded, filthy habitations of a majority of our fellow countrymen, the next thing to be done is to point out a remedy. This can clearly only be found in a change of opinion among labourers. They must learn the necessity of providing themselves with comfortable homes if they wish to live comfortably and to bring up healthy children in the paths of decency and morality. A large section of them have it in their power to attain the end in view at once, or within a short time. The remainder can only do so by degrees. But when a comfortable cottage is considered by every father of a family a sort of necessary of life, the natural rate of wages will rise, and the object in view will thus be attained. It can be attained, so far as I can see, in no other way.

With regard to the indifference so widely diffused among the working class on the question under discussion, the general habit of taking a lodger at 1*s* or 1*s* 6*d* per week may be referred to. In portions of the South of Scotland, known to the writer, employment is ample, and wages high, but the cottages are miserable, often containing only two rooms, seldom more than three. Many people appear to suppose that suitable dwellings for the working class could be provided under the influence of feelings of benevolence on the part of the wealthier classes. That of landowners alone has been hitherto appealed to, but one

does not see why manufacturers and indeed all employers of labour might not be required to provide dwellings for their workmen, upon grounds but little different in kind and in cogency. This view of the subject followed out to its legitimate consequences abandons the competitive system which now governs society, and would lead to a modified communism. All honour, however, at any rate is due to those persons in all conditions who have provided house accommodation for the workmen in any way dependent upon them. It is difficult to discover a more noble and useful employment of wealth and position.

But let us calmly calculate the sum which would be required to do what is necessary in this respect for the whole population, and we shall see at once that eleemosynary efforts can go but a little way towards it.

It is certain that more than half the entire population is badly lodged. Let us take the half at 15,000,000, say two and a half millions of families, and that £50. would be necessary to supply the wants of each family, and we have to furnish the outlay of £125,000,000. sterling. This calculation is far under the truth. The statement requires no comment.

The reader will perceive that what precedes might readily be expanded into the dimensions of a pamphlet. In some portions, as in that which refers to the natural price of labour, he will perhaps think that explanation is really required. It appears, however, to the writer, that he has trespassed as far as he can venture to do on the columns of a newspaper. The general conclusion to which he has arrived is that when the working classes are able and willing to pay

adequate rents, they will obtain sufficient house accommodation, but not till then.

June 24th, 1865.

The Delicacy of the Capital Market.

The "Economist" has frequently contained remarks calculated to show the great advantage derived from deposit banking, in encouraging individuals to save, and in storing up and utilising their savings.

There is another effect of deposit banking and money dealing carried to the extent now existing in this country, which has excited little attention, but which nevertheless is very important.

The matter thus alluded to is the greater and more rapid changes in the rate of interest which we now see when compared with what occurred in former times.

The reason is plain: there are no longer any hoards, any accumulations of unemployed money which, lying ordinarily dormant, can be drawn forth when the rate of interest rises beyond a certain point, and thus prevent its rising still higher. At present, everybody deposits whatever he can spare with a banker, most probably at interest, and the banker naturally lends all the money in his hands which he can prudently part with, retaining the smallest reserve in cash which he deems sufficient to meet the casual demands of his customers. This being the case, it follows that at all times nearly the whole capital of the country is en-

gaged, sometimes at a high, sometimes at a low rate of interest. There is rarely, if ever, a surplus really seeking occupation.

A writer in the "Times" some time ago, gave reason to imagine that the loose cash floating in the London money market at any given time hardly exceeds four millions. It is plain that, with so trifling a reserve, a very small, sudden, and extra demand may produce a most powerful effect upon the rate of interest. We have seen a striking example of this truth in the last few weeks. A sudden rise in the price of cotton has, according to the opinion expressed in the "Economist," caused a rise in the rate of interest, as indicated by the Bank rate of discount, of from 4 to 7 per cent., with reasonable chance of a still higher elevation.

It may be further remarked that the system so fully developed in England, has made much progress on the Continent. The hoards which in former times existed in the till of every great merchant or banker in France, Holland, Germany, &c., have disappeared. The capital of these countries is more fully employed than formerly, and we no longer receive from abroad those ample supplies of capital which used to flow into England whenever the London exchanges were favourable and the rate of interest in England high.

Foreigners have followed our example and employ their capital far more closely than formerly.

It must not, however, be imagined because at any given time, the national capital is fully employed, that we are therefore unable to furnish means for any new enterprise, such as loans to our own or other Govern-

ments, the construction of houses, factories, ships, railroads at home and abroad, &c.

The annual augmentation of wealth in England is enormous. According to the calculations of Mr. Newmarch, our savings are not less than 130 millions per annum. Up to that amount then, we are prepared during each year, without withdrawing capital from existing undertakings, to take up new enterprises, among which our capitalists naturally select the most promising.

Should our Government then want to raise a loan of 50 millions, and offer such terms as capitalists would deem more attractive than the enterprises into which they would otherwise enter, such a sum could readily be furnished, and that without any great disturbance of the money market, provided the instalments were spread over a reasonably long period.

October 21st, 1865.

Deer *versus* Sheep.

Some time ago the Sutherland clearances evoked much public attention. The late distinguished writer, Sismondi, took an active part in the discussions which ensued, and maintained that the land over which the Duke of Sutherland as Laird had exercised an absolute right of property, did not, according to the rules of public law and justice, belong wholly to him, but that the Clan had certain tribal claims on this land, to set aside which involved gross oppression.

The object of the Duke of Sutherland was to introduce sheep farming on a large scale, and the result

has, no doubt, produced a considerable addition to the national wealth. I will not, however, enter upon the question, whether in putting an end to the crofter holdings, and removing a large portion of the population, he acted in his good right, or was guilty of illegality or cruelty.

My object in addressing you is to controvert an opinion more than once expressed in your pages, that the Highland Laird, who, in order to secure a higher rent, lets his estate to a tenant who ejects sheep and preserves deer, and the purchaser or renter of an estate so acting is guilty of a moral crime, and injures society at large.

The evil of course consists in there being fewer sheep kept than would be kept if there were no deer. I cannot, however, think that the public suffers more from this circumstance than from most other unproductive expenditure of equal value and amount.

Take the case of two Lancashire manufacturers, each of whom has realized a fortune producing, say £10,000. per annum—we will call them Mr. A. and Mr. B.—and suppose that the former is fond of field sports, while the latter prefers to maintain a large establishment, comprising a fine house, many carriages and servants—that Mr. A. expends in rent or the interest of the purchase-money of a Highland estate, consisting mainly of deer forests, £2000. per annum, while his ordinary expenditure falls short of that of Mr. B. by a similar sum.

In this case, it seems to me that the national wealth is equally affected in both cases.

The country would be so much richer if both A. and

B. accumulated their surplus income instead of expending it.

It will of course be said that the crime of A. consists in his preventing the maintenance of a certain number of sheep. I can see no more harm in not keeping a certain number of sheep than in not producing a certain quantity of cotton twist, or in not using water-power up to its fullest extent, or in wasting coal by not consuming smoke.

Indeed, if sheep are especially wanted, the cotton twist may, and indeed will be exported; and probably pay for as many foreign sheep as might be kept of native sheep in the deer forest.

I need hardly add, that I see no objection to unproductive expenditure not carried to excess. It is that which ought to, and indeed must exist in the case of a wealthy and civilized community, when compared with one poor and rude in manners and habits. In truth, the best result of augmented wealth and civilization is to increase the desire for expenditure not strictly productive, and also to increase the means of bearing it.

Of course there is a difference in the moral effects of different sorts of unproductive expenditure. Some may be laudable, some innocent, some foolish, some vicious, and in themselves injurious to the common weal. I should class the keeping a deer forest in the innocent department, and maintain that the injury done by it is simply the loss of a certain number of sheep, and might be measured in money by the rent of the land, if divided into sheep farms. To stock such farms capital would be required, which capital is now employed at the average rate of profit, so that nothing need be

said as to any loss being connected with its not being employed in sheep-farming.

I would wish to say something as to the opinions expressed by Mr. John Stuart Mill and Mr. Leone Levi upon the deer question, but think that I ought not to take up more of your valuable space on the present occasion. With your kind permission, some remarks upon them may appear hereafter.

I will conclude by asking a question. Has not one institution, the London Chatham and Dover Railway —which I mention not hostilely or invidiously, but simply as a specimen—wasted more of the national wealth in a few years than could be wasted by all the deer forests in Scotland during many generations? I should measure the loss connected with this railroad to the difference between the cost and the real value of the undertaking.

June 30th, 1866.

Deer *versus* Sheep.

In an article which appeared in your columns a short time ago, the writer ventured to express an opinion that the maintenance of a deer forest was a form of unproductive expenditure, no more culpable or injurious than most other objects of unproductive expenditure.

It seldom happens that, where people spend money upon things, the only result of which is health or pleasure, we are able to show with any approach to exactness, the cost of their amusements.

This, however, I think may be done with respect to

deer forests, and proceed to show what appears to me the maximum of national cost which they involve.

I need hardly point out, that this cost, in other words, the loss to the community, may be measured by the annual rent which the land would produce, if used for sheep farming, reckoning only what would be paid as rent for the land in its natural condition.

It has been stated in your pages, that the deer forests of Scotland occupy two millions of acres. I assume this to be correct, although I believe the extent to be overstated.

I allow nothing for the deer, or other animals of chase, which may be killed, although of course they must be of some value.

I also suppose that not a cow, bullock, or sheep, is kept upon any portion of the land.

Now, then, what is a fair rent for the land unimproved and in its natural condition? It is mostly bog, mountain, and rocks, the soil of the poorest quality, and the climate ungenial and rude.

Do I not value liberally in putting the rent of this wild land in its natural state at one shilling an acre? If I am right, the rent of all the deer forests in Scotland would be £100,000. per annum, and that sum is all that is lost to the State, if indeed a simple item of unproductive expenditure can be said to involve a loss to the State, in consequence upon their maintenance.

I need hardly mention to the readers of the "Economist," that the profits arising from sheep feeding instead of deer preserving, would be the result of a large outlay of fixed capital, in building houses, and making roads, yards, &c., and of circulating capital, in buying

sheep, paying shepherds, &c., that the returns yielded by this capital would not exceed the ordinary rate of profit, or that the necessary capital could only be obtained by its abstraction from other employments equally profitable.

Of course the owners or occupiers of deer forests spend a good deal of money besides the rent, in paying game-keepers and gillies and feeding dogs, as well as for their own living, but it can hardly be pretended that if all deer forests were put an end to, such people would be obliged or induced to spend their incomes productively.

As some indication of the proportion borne by the expenditure on deer forests when compared with other forms of unproductive expenditure, it may be mentioned, that many years ago the disbursements of the English subjects, travelling or residing on the Continent, which must be considered almost wholly unproductive, was valued at twelve millions per annum. It is probably far greater now.

It may not be improper to state that the writer of what precedes never saw a Scotch deer forest in his life.

Now a few words on the opinions held by Mr. John Stuart Mill and Mr. Leone Levi as to the rights and obligations of the owners of land.

I agree with them that the Legislature is fully justified in dealing with landed, as with all other property, in the way which it may deem most conducive to the public good, saving of course to the owners either the rights which they have bought or inherited under existing Laws, or full compensation for any they may be called upon to abandon.

I will add, however, that in a country like England, where land has for many centuries been bought and inherited, with an absolute right to use, or misuse it, at discretion, any interference with this right, without ample compensation, would be an act of gross injustice.

July 28th, 1866.

Communication to the Economist on the Monetary Crisis of 1866.

The events which we have lately witnessed in England are of so remarkable and interesting a character as to invite the most careful scrutiny, and the writer is the more tempted to endeavour to throw light upon them because, as it seems to him, they have generally received, both in conversation and the public press, a very unsatisfactory and imperfect investigation alike as to their nature, causes, and remedies.

The phenomena to be explained are—the long duration of a high rate of interest and a low state of credit, attended by a very alarming amount of insolvency in certain departments of enterprise, chiefly monetary.

The first thing to be done is to lay down the general principles which must guide us through the vast mass of confused facts and discordant opinions, if we can hope to arrive at clear and sufficient results.

The principles agreed on by most, if not all economists, and which we ought constantly to bear in mind, but which are usually ignored, or neglected, are mainly two.

1. Interest is paid not for the use of money, but for

the loan of capital, for the temporary use of the commodities and services used in production. Interest might exist if there was no such thing as money in the world.

2. Money, the sign and standard and measure of value and instrument of exchange, regulates the price of commodities. Other things being equal, prices will be high or low in proportion, as the quantity of money is great or small.

It is quite true that for short periods, and under certain circumstances, interest may be regulated by the demand and supply of Bank notes, or of gold in Lombard Street, or in the Stock Exchange; and it is difficult to decide with certainty as to how long such an exceptional state of things may last, but at any rate it must be transient.

We have now witnessed what would formerly have been called a high rate of interest, with slight intermission, for many years, and an excessive rate of interest for several months, and we may assert with absolute confidence that this has arisen from the relation between the quantity of disposable capital and the demand for it, and that money has little or nothing to do with the phenomenon.

The truth is that vast as are the savings of English people—not less certainly than two, perhaps three, millions a week—these enormous additions to the national capital have been absorbed as soon as they were created. We have been planning and building houses, ships, and factories, making railroads at home and abroad, lending to foreign states and potentates, in excess of our means. It has been said, I presume with truth, that the Bills

sanctioned by Parliament during the two last sessions alone, require an expenditure of 175 millions, and that the capital of new companies, if called up, would absorb 300 millions. But we have not only spent our savings as fast as they have been made, but we have anticipated future savings. Our prospective engagements have outrun the power of meeting them. We have used up all our own capital and have borrowed that of other nations, which we have recently been called upon to repay, when its repayment was very inconvenient.

This is the naked and simple truth. The best, indeed the only remedy for the inconvenience we suffer, is to restrain our speculative tendencies, to enter into few fresh engagements, to husband our resources in order to discharge the obligations which we have already incurred. In fact to act as a community in the same way as a prudent individual would act, supposing, to use a common expression, he had accidentally outrun the constable.

It is a simple delusion to suppose that a reduction of the rate of discount at the Bank, or any other empirical remedy, would really avail to remove or even to mitigate the evils we endure. Indeed, if the rate of discount were to be reduced too soon, or too much, these evils would be prolonged and intensified.

The demand for accommodation at the given rate is the only test of its sufficiency, and when the natural rate falls the Directors of the Bank will be ready enough to conform to it. The real danger is that they will reduce too soon and too much.

Some people seem to think that a restoration of credit is alone wanting to restore our prosperity, but

credit cannot replace capital. It can merely accelerate the movement of existing capital, and facilitate its transfer from the lender to the borrower. The great evil at present is the want of capital.

Mr. Watkin appears to imagine that by some artificial manipulation of the currency, a power of borrowing at no higher rate than 5 per cent. might be assured for thoroughly good securities.

The supposition is unfounded. The rate of interest is as much beyond the reach of direct legislation as the price of corn or of iron. Any attempt to interfere with it on the part of the State could only produce mischief.

In what precedes the writer has of course been compelled to regard brevity as a matter of necessity. The reader will have much to supply in order to make the argument complete. In a future article it is purposed to point out certain special circumstances in the financial condition of England, which have tended to create and foster the existing evils, and which, unless altered, are likely to produce a revival and repetition of the suffering we now endure.

August 18th, 1866.

A communication to the *Economist* on the Monetary Crisis of 1866.

In a previous article the writer endeavoured to describe the nature of the monetary crisis of 1866, and to point out its peculiar characteristics.

These characteristics appear to have been a com-

plete exhaustion of the national capital in enterprises of all kinds at home and abroad, and the vast amount of engagements to furnish more capital, which weighed on the community when no disposable capital existed.

Previous crises have been marked by a heavy amount of pressure on particular branches of industry and enterprise, and a large but partial amount of insolvency. But in all these cases, as soon as the crash arrived, confidence and capital reappeared. It was shown that the overtrading had been only partial, and that the community possessed means of carrying on without difficulty all legitimate objects of industry.

It is not so in 1866. We are paralyzed by want of capital. Many enterprises even of a sound character are at a stand. The rate of interest continues high, and although the storm has ceased to rage, yet the waves are still surging, the horizon continues cloudy, and a considerable time may yet elapse before we reach smooth water. Now, to what special circumstances are we to attribute the remarkable difference as pointed out above between the crisis of 1866 and other financial disturbances? What are the special causes which have made that of 1866 what we see it to be?

It is here to be remarked that the insolvency has been by no means widely spread. The mercantile and manufacturing classes have stood their ground well. The failures have mainly been found among the collectors and distributors of capital, and among those who depend habitually for carrying on their business upon borrowed money, such as contractors.

Now the chief collectors and distributors of capital in England are the deposit banks, who allow interest, and

discount and financial companies, to whom may be added many of the innumerable other companies formed under the Limited Liability Acts. It is to the vast extension of deposit banking, and to the absorption of capital by new companies, that our present difficulties are to be attributed.

By deposit, as opposed to ordinary banking, is here meant that form of banking in which the depositor receives interest on the sum placed or left in the banker's hands, either when the deposit is some specific sum to be held either at call or for a fixed period, or when interest is allowed or charged upon the balance of an account current. The former system, that of the deposit of a fixed sum, is probably the most usual, and by far the more important in its character and effects.

Deposit banking thus described had been long known in Scotland and the provinces, but was only introduced into London about 30 years ago. Since that time, it has been gradually growing in importance, and now threatens to swallow up the system of ordinary banking, as still carried on by private firms. The effects of deposit banking must necessarily be enormous, when it is considered that the sum thus held in London probably amounts to 150 millions, and in the British Islands must exceed 300, and perhaps 400 millions.

The advantages of deposit banking are great. Through its means an infinity of small sums, some of which probably would never exist, and others would be wasted, without this ready means of employing them, are collected and utilised. Important objects of industry are fed with capital, and the general progress of the country is no doubt greatly promoted.

On the other hand, the system of deposit banking, as now carried on, especially in London, the great centre of all monetary transactions, involves a most formidable risk.

It is impossible to regard without alarm the possibility of a fearful catastrophe, when one contemplates the gigantic sum held practically at call in London, and the insignificant amount of reserve provided to meet it. How short an access of discredit would prostrate the edifice, whose superstructure is so vast, while the foundations are so feeble.

The sources of mischief in deposit banking will usually commence in easy times, when it is difficult to find employment for money, and when competing banks, in order to protect their business from the seductions of ambitious and unscrupulous neighbours, are tempted to offer higher terms to their customers than thoroughly sound and legitimate business can afford.

The way in which the leading joint stock banks of London have gone through the late severe ordeal, and have thus evinced the sound judgment and integrity of their directors and managers, cannot be too much admired. This fact, however, by no means proves that their system of business is perfect, or that it would not admit of many and great improvements. What these improvements should be, will be pointed out in a future communication.

What precedes will apply to finance and discount companies, as well as to banks usually so called. The former resemble the latter in what is essential to our purpose, although their mode of operation is somewhat different.

Now, a few words as to the other class of the collectors and distributors of capital, alluded to at the beginning of this article. They are the limited liability companies, other than banks, discount, and finance companies. The limited liability companies are all collectors, some of them also distributors of capital; the object of the latter class being to make loans either to individuals or other bodies, while the former employ their money in mercantile or industrial occupations of their own.

A portion of them, such as those which took up the business of houses previously existing, like that of Morrison & Co., did not necessitate any creation of fresh capital, but merely a replacement of capital previously existing. The sellers received the purchase money and had it to employ. Very many, however, perhaps the majority of these companies, contemplated the carrying on of new business either at home or abroad, and the entire sum which they purposed to invest was gigantic. The mode in which it was proposed to raise the capital for all these companies, both banking and miscellaneous, was by instalments, and this fact had a material influence on the march of events, and largely contributed to the exhaustion of the money market.

The shareholders paid their deposit and the first call with little regard to the necessity of meeting subsequent calls or to their means of doing so. In truth they too often ignored altogether the chances of success in the essential business of the undertaking in which they engaged, and only looked to the hope of selling their shares at a premium in the Stock Exchange.

The special circumstances, then, which led to that utter exhaustion of the national capital, which has marked the financial crisis of 1866, were:—1. The great extension of deposit banking in all its forms, especially in London; 2. The creation of numberless companies on the limited liability principle.

In conclusion, we may consider the mode in which the capital collected from individuals, and placed in the hands of companies, was employed. It did not so much go to maintain certain exaggerated forms of enterprise, as to aliment business in every shape. Almost every branch of commerce was supported and assumed larger dimensions than previously, but with a few exceptions, such as that of cotton, which was influenced by special causes, a certain amount of harmony and symmetry was preserved in the various departments of commerce. They all advanced with rapid steps, but marched in an unbroken line.

Sept. 1, 1866.

On the Monetary Crisis of 1866.

From the Economist.

We have seen in two preceding articles, if the views of the writer be correct:—

1. That the peculiar characteristic of the monetary crisis of this year has been the almost utter exhaustion of the national capital in which it culminated, when a vast amount of engagements were still unfulfilled.

2. That this state of things is mainly attributable to the great extension of deposit banking, meaning by

this, the action of banks and finance and discount companies, who receive and allow interest on deposits, and to the crowd of other new companies who absorbed a vast amount of capital at their original establishment, while they held over the power of making subsequently heavy calls on their shareholders.

Before proceeding, however, it is well to remark that, although bankers, using the term generically, may be regarded as the chief collectors and distributors of capital, yet that they thus act through the medium of money, the sign, standard, and measure of value. The commodity with which they originally, and we may say exclusively deal, is money, or its substitutes, the auxiliary currency about which so much has been said and written.

It would take us too far were we on this occasion to investigate the relations of money to capital, or the extent to which the former may be regarded as forming a portion of the latter.

The special object of the present article will be to point out a few alterations in the mechanism of business as carried on by the deposit banks, who manage and transact finally so large a proportion of the monetary affairs of England, which are calculated to improve our system for collecting and distributing capital, although they cannot be expected to remove all existing evils.

We have already done full justice to the integrity and ability with which the majority of the joint stock banks have been recently administered under very difficult circumstances. It does not, however, follow that their affairs are managed in all respects on a sound system.

In looking at their published accounts, one cannot but be struck with the large amount of their liabilities when compared with their capitals and reserves. Sails numerous, and of vast dimensions, are exposed to the wind, while the ballast is unreasonably light. In short, to use naval terms, the vessel is too crank and steers badly.

Now, here it is necessary to point out the difference between the capital and reserve of banks.

The capital is the sum which belongs to the proprietors, either as originally subscribed or subsequently accumulated, in order to afford security to the depositors in the event of any defalcation among the debtors of the bank, or any loss on the realization of the securities which have been purchased out of the deposits.

The reserve is the amount of money kept unemployed in order to meet the claims of the depositors, and of this the capital may be usually considered as forming a part. In some cases, however, it is, we believe, the custom to invest the capital separately. At any rate, the objects to be obtained by the capital and the reserve are different, and they ought not to be confounded in our reasoning.

It may be here remarked that in talking of the capital of a bank, we are guilty of a misnomer. The word capital denotes the mass of commodities and services which are or may be employed in production. The bank employs no capital in production. Its business is to deal with the money of other people. What is called its capital is in reality a guarantee fund.

The object of the capital and reserve of a bank is

not simply to guard against ultimate insolvency, and to give a reasonable assurance that the claims of depositors may be met at all times with punctuality, but also to guard against the risk of discredit, an enormous evil, second only in extent to absolute insolvency. The public, often ill informed and mistrustful, require patent and undeniable indications that a great bank is in a sound and healthy state.

Let us now proceed to point out some of the most obvious improvements required in the mechanism of Joint Stock Banks. The first change required is a very large increase of capital or guarantee fund. Were the leading institutions of this kind in London to triple their capital, supposing them to retain the existing amount of their deposits, they would not be chargeable with the fault of excessive caution.

It is true that having large nominal capitals they can always present an ample security to their creditors, the rather because most of them are founded on the system of unlimited liability on the part of the shareholders. But then the making calls in case of necessity involves, as we have lately seen, much cruel suffering. A very large number of shareholders in making their investments hardly contemplate the possibility of such an event. Indeed, many of them are poor people, who have not the means of paying calls, and who bought or accepted their shares in the hope of augmenting slender incomes. The best mode of increasing the guarantee fund is to carry to it a certain amount of the profits from year to year, until a satisfactory limit has been attained.

The shareholders in companies of all kinds are guilty

of great imprudence in urging their directors to divide profits to the last shilling. Sometimes indeed they go further, and compel divisions beyond the profits that are fairly earned. The disposition of directors is to go to the very verge of prudence and propriety in the per centage of dividends which they recommend. Their tendency is to pay too much rather than too little.

Now, then, for the amount of reserve required by a well managed bank; and here it is impossible to fix upon any exact proportion to liabilities. It is sometimes said the reserve should present the ratio of one-third to the depositors. This may be thought by some to be too high a proportion; at any rate it should not be allowed to fall below the ratio of one-fourth. There is much to be said for the opinion of those who maintain that the banks should keep a large amount of money, notes, and gold in their own coffers, in addition to their balances with the Bank of England, whose reserve now mainly represents that of all sister institutions as well as its own.

Now for a few hints as to the improvements which might be introduced in the mode of conducting the active business of the deposit banks.

These institutions usually allow interest at the rate of 1 per cent below the Bank rate. This is decidedly too high, and leads to an undue pressure on the reserve with a view to increase of profit. The Bank rate must in general be the maximum rate which the condition of the money market will allow. It may be doubted if a deposit bank should ever allow interest for money held at call; at any rate such a transaction should be exceptional, and requires to be justified by special circum-

stances. It may be said that the balances of private accounts with private bankers are all held at call, and that this circumstance is not found to produce practical inconvenience. But, then, the private banker knows the habits of his customers, and can reckon with sufficient certainty upon the maintenance of a sort of fixed minimum on the balance of each account.

The payment of interest on deposits at call might be undertaken by discount companies under proper regulations.

As a general rule deposits for fixed periods should never be paid until their regular echeance has arrived. A depositor desirous of receiving his money beforehand, as an exceptional transaction, might be charged a very high rate of interest, say 2 per cent. above the current rate.

This regulation would greatly check a practice plainly inconsistent with all sound banking principles —that of treating all deposits of whatever kind as if held at call, a practice understood to be extensively acted upon by both Banks and Depositors.

It is doubtful whether it can ever be a safe arrangement for a bank carrying on an extensive business in England to establish branches in distant countries, say in India or China, as by so doing it places its credit and even its existence in the hands of managers, over whose proceedings it is impossible to maintain an adequate control.

It is probable that the adoption of these suggestions would materially diminish the deposits and Dividends of banks, but they would still leave an ample margin of profit, and would place their business upon a sound

and firm basis, which is far from being the case at present.

Some people are fond of pointing out the enormous percentage paid as dividend by the leading Joint Stock Banks as a criterion of good management. They have, doubtless, been very successful, but the criterion applied is treacherous. The percentage paid in a bank in dividends may be regarded as being in a direct proportion to its income, and in an inverse proportion to its capital or guarantee fund. Thus the divisable percentage of profits increases, if the capital is small. In other words, the leading fault in its constitution—a fault which at any rate affects injuriously its credit and stability—may give it apparently the fictitious advantage of extraordinary prosperity and success.

The Bank of England pays but a moderate rate of profit in comparison with some of its compeers, not because its profits are really small, but because its capital is so large, and it is the large capital, added to a prudent system of management, which has made its credit proverbial, and enabled it to ride with safety through so many storms. Little can be said upon the second class of the collectors and distributors of capital, the discount and finance companies, for want of space, and exact knowledge on the part of the writer as to the mode in which their business is managed. At any rate, it may be safely affirmed that they have much to learn before they can administer their affairs with thorough advantage either to the public at large or to the proprietors.

Bill brokers should be simple go-betweens, introducing borrowers to lenders, and *vice versâ*. They

should never pledge their own credit for the bills that may pass through their hands, and their profits should be confined to a simple commission.

It would occupy too large a space in your pages to attempt to expatiate on the proceedings of the miscellaneous companies, who have doubtless had much to do with the monetary crisis of 1866.

It may, however, be remarked that many of their objects were absurd and ridiculous in themselves, and could never have led to a successful result under any circumstances, and that the objects of some, although reasonable in themselves, were far better suited to individuals than to associated enterprises.

In truth, experience will probably show it to be only in exceptional cases that a company can successfully compete with the practical knowledge, the spirit of economy, and the concentrated interest of individuals or private partnerships.

October 13th, 1866.

On the Doctrine of Nationalities.

From the Economist.

Ages before the time when *hostis* meant enemy as well as stranger, the hatred which a savage tribe bore to its next neighbour was, no doubt, increased in intensity when their languages or dialects were different. The inability to communicate, unless by signs, made each regard the other as formed almost of a different race of animals, and any feeling akin to kindness and

benevolence which might exist between the members of a given tribe was rarely or ever entertained towards the members of an alien tribe or race. The power of communicating by language has been naturally felt in all ages to be a bond of union, and we observe in the very dawn of history, and at the first establishment of anything like a regular government, that mankind was formed into groups who could understand each other's speech.

But difference of language, or of race, was from the first, as it has ever since been, only one among many causes which have induced mankind to shed each other's blood.

Man is a pugnacious animal, and a variety of pretences have existed from the earliest period of his appearance on earth for which he has ever been ready to kill or to be killed. In all ages, he has been eager to fight for food, or plunder, or land, or religion, for natural boundaries, and for freedom on the one side, or for empire on the other. Even mere points of etiquette have been held to justify a resort to arms. It has usually, however, happened that a combination of causes have existed to give a pretext for war, to sharpen its intensity, and to prolong its duration. Among them all, few have been more powerful than a difference of race and language between the combatants. Up to recent times, however, monarchs and republics conquered, and kept what they could, without troubling themselves as to what might be the tongue spoken by their new subjects. Upon this point, now so interesting to the world, their consciences were seared, and even bystanders to the strife regarded it with indifference. It was only

about 1848 that what is called the doctrine of nationalities was first enunciated in its simple form, and it struck the public mind, as a truth so natural and incontrovertible, that at the present time it is brought forward as alone almost sufficient to decide a very large proportion of international disputes in which a question of territory or supremacy is involved.

The doctrine may be clearly laid down in the following propositions:—

"1. Each nation or race has an indefeasible right to govern itself."

"2. When a nation has been separated by the course of events, its divided portions have an irresistible claim in point of moral justice to unite together, and any State or Government who opposes their efforts to do so, is guilty of tyranny and oppression."

On this point there does not seem to be any limitation by prescription. The great authorities in this branch of political science have not settled, so far as the writer knows, whether a difference in dialect ought to be regarded as a difference of language, although many interesting problems might arise under this view of the question as between Portuguese and Spaniards, Poles and Ruthenians, High and Low Germans, Scotch and English, or Lombards and Sicilians. We may here, however, remark that nations, like individuals in this matter, are very apt to see the mote in their brother's eye before they discover the beam in their own. Thus the English, on the whole most strenuous supporters of the doctrine in question abstractedly, are the most barefaced contraveners of it in practice. They hold in subjection 120 millions of Hindoos, and four

millions of Celtic Irish, nearly all of whom are anxious to throw off the yoke; not to mention Welsh, negroes, etc. And they are ready to repress vigorously and without compunction any effort at what they call rebellion in these subject races. The French again, who sympathise so deeply with the wrongs of the Poles, have not the remotest idea of restoring self-government to the Berbers and Arabs of Algeria, or to the Basques, Celts, Germans, Flemings, or Italians, who form so considerable a portion of the inhabitants of their country. Moreover they are quite prepared, at the first convenient opportunity, by force of arms, to conquer and annex Belgium and Rhenish Germany, although a vast majority in these countries are Germans and Flemings.

Then the Poles themselves, the object of so much well deserved sympathy, are by no means disposed to do as they would be done by. In number about six or eight millions, they lay claim to territories containing on the whole three times that number. These territories are inhabited by Ruthenians, Lithuanians, Germans, etc., of whom the last named are chiefly recent emigrants, while the Ruthenians, having been conquered by the Poles in former ages and reduced to the most cruel servitude, are by no means disposed to return under the yoke of their old masters. The case of the Hungarians closely resembles that of the Poles. They, too, form a minority in the wide dominions which they lay claim to rule over, and are regarded with unfavourable eye by the Slavonic races, which form about half the population of the countries considered as owing allegiance to the crown of St. Stephen, or by the Wallachs, or as they are now called

the Roumanians, and Germans who make up the remainder. Even the Italians are not free from blame in this respect. They claim for themselves Istria and Dalmatia because their language is spoken in the towns of those countries, although the inhabitants are generally Slavons, and speak, as I believe, among themselves Slavonic dialects.

It is not a little remarkable that, as respects the Sultan of Constantinople, in relation to his Christian subjects, where it would seem that the doctrine of nationalities is applicable in the highest degree, where, too, it is aggravated by the difference of religion between Turks and Rayas, and where the Government is a barbarous and effete despotism, utterly unimprovable, and ready to tumble to pieces from its inherent rottenness, public opinion in England rather takes part with the oppressor against the oppressed.

Only a few years ago we shed some of our best blood in defence of the Sultan, quarrelling in his cause with a power which had been and might again be our best ally. We have guaranteed a portion of his debts, lent him large sums of money, besides having employed diplomatists to puff his financial condition; and after having attempted in the first instance to frown down the Greek insurrection, succeeded in curtailing the Hellenic monarchy of its fair proportions, and thus reducing it to insignificance. Such are the inconsistencies of nations and of the statesmen who represent them.

It is true that we gave up the Ionian Islands to Greece, and thus made in appearance at least some sacrifice to the doctrine of nationalities. But the com-

plaints of the Ionians annoyed us, and we had no interest in retaining them. Then the expense of retention, say £300,000. per annum, was too heavy a burden for England, which has been labouring for some years under a cold fit of economy.

Perhaps the most fortunate instance of the doctrine of nationalities is to be found in the recent attainment of a United Italy. Here we have a large and well defined territory, a nation numerous and speaking the same language although with strong dialectic differences, a common religion, and the recollection of two ages of glory. Every friend of humanity must ardently hope that the new state of things may be in all respects successful.

The division of Switzerland between France, Germany, and Italy, which has been suggested as falling within the question under discussion, would hardly obtain general acquiescence. At any rate, then, it must be allowed that there are some exceptions to the popular view.

But we now arrive at the all-important question—Is or is not the doctrine of nationalities fit to be inscribed in the code of political morality as a maxim worthy of general obedience? We can hardly hesitate to answer this question by a decided negative. If carried out fairly and consistently it could not fail to tear almost every country to pieces, and to fill the world with bloodshed and confusion. Each separate race would take advantage of it when favourable to its interests or aspirations, and would as certainly reject the doctrine when likely to operate to its real or apparent detriment.

Who can imagine that England would voluntarily relinquish Connaught and Munster; the possessors of Poland their several shares in the spoil; or France, Alsace, Flanders, or even Algeria? Would it not be a wiser plan to inculcate upon small races, whom the course of events have annexed to more powerful governments, a tranquil submission to their destiny than to feed them with false hopes, and to urge them to fruitless efforts at resistance, of which the only effects can be to excite mutual hatreds, and to make the yoke more galling. It need hardly be added, that a conquering race which maltreats a vanquished people deserves the malediction of public opinion throughout the civilized world.

But to conclude, what are the practical inferences upon the subject in hand, to which reason and humanity would lead us?

There is manifestly a great convenience in the facts that governors and governed should speak the same language, and that their opinions and feelings should be in unison; but in the case of small and divided races, such a state of things is all but unattainable.

The real object of government is to protect persons and property to the fullest extent, and at the smallest possible cost, and while doing this, to allow individuals the fullest opportunities of self-development in all directions; and these objects being attained, it is the duty and interest of the subject to submit quietly to the established order of things, and not to sacrifice the reality in pursuit of a mere phantom, in many cases the offspring of fancy and of prejudice.

November 17th, 1866.

On the Ownership and Movement of Landed Property in England.

No. 1. *Economist.*

In the following paper the words "movement of landed property" are used to express the change of possession through the means of inheritance or purchase and sale. The word "ownership" of course speaks for itself.

The number of landowners in England, looking to the extent of territory and amount of population, is doubtless very small when compared with the number of landowners in most continental countries, especially those in which there exists a large class of what are called peasant proprietors, persons supporting their families by the cultivation of small quantities of land owned by themselves. Upon this matter there can be no doubt, nor in the opinion that peasant proprietors are in general a highly respectable class,—industrious, frugal, and as honest, at least, as other people. They are in general of course staunch defenders of the rights of property, and thus afford a powerful barrier against the socialistic doctrines, which in some European countries have threatened so much danger to internal peace and orderly government. Peasant proprietors, however, whatever may be their merits, do not exist in England, nor have they ever existed among us to any considerable extent in former times. The small copyholders and the cottier tenants who sprung up after the destruction of villenage bore little or no resemblance to them.

But now comes an important question, upon which it is the main object of this paper to throw a little light. Is the distribution of landed property in England,

chiefly among but a few proprietors, the result of the law? Or does it arise wholly or in part from natural circumstances? Many persons say to the law chiefly, others to the law wholly, while some affirm that the very object of our law is to concentrate the land in as few hands as possible, to promote the formation of large estates, and to extinguish small properties; and that if the law was altered, in what they consider a reasonable sense, the land might become minutely divided in England as it is in France or Switzerland, a result which they think desirable. It would, indeed, seem that there is a sect among us who consider an existing landowner as carrying a wolf's head, and who regard him with the same feelings as one of our greatest orators is said to look at a Lord or a Bishop.

Let us now consider a little, what has been the distribution of our land in past times compared with the present, and we shall thus be better able to judge of the tendency of things as they exist. Here statistics fail us. The want of a registry, and the absence of any heavy tax falling upon land like the "Impôt Foncier," leaves us to arrive at a conclusion in this matter, which however certain, on the whole, does not pretend to anything like accuracy in point of detail.

It is clear that since the extinction of the great Norman feudatories, the Warrens, Veres, Bigods, Mowbrays, etc. etc., gigantic estates have become fewer and smaller with each succeeding century. Those that remain, vast as some territorial incomes may be, are far less extensive than the possessions of great nobles in former ages. The largest incomes derived from such property at present existing, contain a considerable

proportion of city or mining rental, from which the return is mainly derived. A few, and but few, very large estates have been formed by persons who have made fortunes by trade, the law, etc., in the last two centuries, but a far greater number have been divided and dissipated during the same period.

On the other hand, it is equally certain that the number of small properties cultivated by the owners, like the yeomen of Kent, or the statesmen of Westmoreland, has greatly diminished. These have been sold and absorbed for the most part into neighbouring and larger estates. It must not, however, be imagined that the total number of owners of real property has become less. The probability, indeed, is that it has increased. There are fewer persons who own and occupy small quantities of land, but incomparably more who live in their own houses, or who own house property, and subsist upon their rents. The influence of land companies is very much felt in this way. In short, one class of small proprietors has much diminished, while another has largely increased.

Another fact bearing upon the movement and distribution of land is visible in almost every county in England. What are called the county families gradually disappear, and their estates, with hardly an exception, pass into the hands of new men who have made fortunes in trade or manufactures, or in connection with mining or railroad adventures. Such persons are frequently great improvers of the estates which they purchase.

Supposing that what precedes is a tolerably fair picture of the present condition of England as respects the ownership of land, to what are we to

attribute this state of things? Is it to the law wholly, or are we to seek for causes of a wider and deeper influence?

Of course, it cannot be disputed that were the freedom of bequest curtailed, and the land divided equally among the children at the death of the father; or if, as has been suggested, a sort of sumptuary law applicable to land were enacted and could be enforced, the number of landowners would speedily increase. But such laws would be so directly opposed to the habits and feelings of the English people, that one can hardly suppose that they are seriously entertained by anybody. Those who lament the existing distribution of real property, and lay the blame of it on the law, mainly point to entails, settlements and primogeniture, as the source of the evil, and imagine that if these ceased to be legal, what is in their eyes an evil, would disappear.

Now, without entering upon the question of whether entails and settlements should be allowed, it may be pointed out, that an English entail does not last, on an average, more than about thirty years, that once in a generation the entail is usually cut off, and the estates resettled, and that most deeds of entail contain powers to grant long leases, to sell for special purposes, and to exchange; and, finally, that by far the greater part of the land in England, including some of the largest estates, is not entailed. It may be further remarked that estates are constantly sold in England, and entire, although, if a strong desire existed to obtain small portions of them for cultivation, and a higher price could thus be realised for them, they would infallibly be divided as we see to happen when a demand exists

for land for building or accommodation purposes, owing to some peculiarities of situation. On the whole then it appears certain that, although the effect of entail in preventing the division of estates is doubtless considerable, yet it is much less than is commonly supposed, and will not account for the phenomena before us.

It is said by some persons that it is the uncertainty of titles, and the expense of conveyances which renders land so little marketable, and slackens its movement, and this may be so to a certain extent, but to a much less extent than is often alleged. There is no serious difficulty at present in dividing land for building purposes into the most minute portions, and we see that in France a notable portion of the soil is sold every year, although the expense of conveyance, owing to the existence of a heavy tax on transfers, is three or four times as great as in England.

The scheme, which we owe to Lord Westbury, has as yet made little progress. We may hope that it will gain in popularity, or be reinforced by a still better measure. Should such be the case the movement of land would doubtless be greatly accelerated. There would be a great deal of jobbing in land. Men would buy simply with the intention of selling again. The number of landowners would increase, but it is highly improbable that the division would extend very far—at any rate, that it would bring our country in this respect into a state at all resembling some continental countries.

It may here be remarked that the number of small farmers occupying the land of others for agricultural purposes has diminished as much and as rapidly as

that of small freeholders, unless in a few districts where market gardening and fruit growing prevail. There a class of tenants holding small portions of land is rapidly increasing.

It would appear, as a general inference and summary from what precedes, that there is little in the existing laws which can prevent an intending buyer of land from obtaining even the smallest portion, provided only that the terms demanded suit him. He need not be at all alarmed, either by the insecurity of title—a thing much talked about, but presenting little difficulty in practice—or by the expense of conveyance, which is comparatively trifling.

There may, indeed, be land which he would desire to buy, and which the owner might be willing to sell, and is unable to convey readily owing to its being entailed, or in settlement, but even these are usually obstacles, which, although presenting some difficulties, are not invincible, provided the terms offered are sufficiently tempting. Looking at this matter in another point of view—from that of the seller instead of the buyer, it seldom happens that means may not be found to meet any demand for lease or purchase which holds out sufficient pecuniary inducement to overcome a certain amount of trouble and expense.

If it were found that there was a general demand in England, and at high rates, for small portions of land, parts of large estates, lawyers would soon find ready means of meeting it.

The truth is, that the distribution of landed property in England mainly depends, as has already been observed, upon causes deeper and wider than artificial

arrangements created by the law. What these causes are the writer will endeavour to explain in a subsequent article.

December 22nd, 1866.

On the Ownership and Movement of Landed Property in England.

No. 2. *Economist.*

In a previous article, the writer has endeavoured to show that the existing distribution of landed property in England, its concentration in few hands, and the tendency to the absorption of small freeholds, held for purposes of cultivation, into neighbouring estates, although owing in some degree doubtless to the state of the law which allows of entails, primogeniture, and other impediments to the free movement of land, is not sufficiently explained by the existence of these obstacles to ready sale and purchase.

It has been further remarked that the risk and trouble connected with defective titles and the expense of conveyance are equally insufficient to explain the facts before us.

The time has now arrived when it becomes proper to state and explain the great and overwhelming cause which prevents the division of English land into small parcels.

This great cause is, that the selling price of land is too high to tempt the small capitalist, unless under special circumstances. In his view land does not pay. He well knows that if he is to let it to a farmer he cannot expect a return at the best of more than 3 per

cent., and that if he is to cultivate it himself he will have to furnish additional money, with great chance of getting no return at all. Under this persuasion he places his savings in house property, the funds, in railway shares, or bonds, or on mortgage; perhaps he burns his fingers in dealing in the shares of new Joint Stock Companies, which sometimes yield, and often promise a return of 15 or 20 per cent.

Here, then, we see why there is so little competition for moderate quantities of land, say farms of 100 or 200 acres, only fit for cultivation. It is quite different when land possesses an exceptional and extraneous value, as for building purposes, and is likely hereafter to yield a larger return. Then the small capitalist becomes an eager purchaser.

This state of things, too, sufficiently explains why it is that the number of proprietors holding small quantities of land for purposes of cultivation has diminished, and is likely perhaps still further to diminish. The price offered for them is too tempting to be declined. The freeholder of twenty acres, who has supported himself and family in a state of great penury by farming it himself, is offered for it £1000. or £1200., a sum which, if employed in trade, when added to what may be considered his salary, will double or triple his income, and increase most materially the comfort of his household.

Again, take the case of the freeholder of a higher class. The man who owns a farm of 100 acres, and has a capital besides of say £1000. employed in its cultivation. His total income can hardly exceed £300. per annum, viz. £150. rent, and £150. the profit of

capital. But look at his position if he sells his farm for from £4500. to £5000. and withdraws the floating capital. He will then possess in money from £5500. to £6000., and if experienced in agriculture may take a larger farm from a neighbouring estate, certainly double and perhaps triple his income, and become a far more important person, with greatly increased means of providing for his family.

But, then, it is asked, how comes it that large estates sell so readily at over thirty years' purchase, when there is so little demand for smaller portions of land, unless with a view to add them to larger properties?

An explanation of this phenomenon may be well given in an illustrative story, which will stand for a whole class:—

Squire A., of —— Hall, in Blankshire, finds, that after paying his stepmother's jointure, providing for the portions of three or four brothers and sisters, and for the interest on one or two ugly mortgages, little or nothing remains for his own support and that of his family, which comprehends a son in the army; another studying for the Church, who is destined to take the family living; and two younger boys, who are to be fitted out for emigration to New Zealand; not to mention two or three daughters.

All the available timber has been cut, unless in the park, and some even there, and this resource can yield no further supplies. In this state of things a trusted friend or two—besides the agent and family lawyer—are called to council, and it is finally resolved that the estate must be sold; and, further, that the best chance of obtaining the highest price, is to put up the bulk of

the estate in one lot, making, however, separate lots of a few fields near the market town, and of two or three detached farms likely to be bought at very high prices by neighbouring proprietors.

An entail, should it exist, opposes but a trifling obstacle, as the eldest son, now of age, is willing to join his father in cutting it off.

The scheme answers fairly well. The smaller lots find ready purchasers as building or accommodation land, while the hall and adjoining farms fall into the hands of Mr. B., a wealthy millowner at Manchester, at what he, perhaps, considers a normal value, as being calculated to pay him 3 per cent. for his money. In this calculation, however, he makes a sad mistake, unless he puts the house and park at £1,300 per annum rent, as the auctioneer did in his particulars, and forgets that the estate is altogether out of condition, and will require a large outlay in the restoration of farm buildings, cottages, etc., not to mention improvements. The mansion, too, is old fashioned, and unsuited to the requirements of modern life; and, as is soon discovered, will require a new roof and expensive alterations and improvements. The final result is that Mr. B. gets, at the best, only $2\frac{1}{2}$, possibly indeed only 2 per cent. for his money, and that he is, nevertheless, satisfied with his bargain. Whence his satisfaction arises, we will now endeavour to explain.

Like most Englishmen of the upper and middle classes, he likes a country life. It is not impossible that he may be himself a bit of a sportsman, at any rate his sons, brought up at Eton and Cambridge, are ardent lovers of the sports of the field. Then the status of a

country gentleman, so attractive in the eyes of an Englishman, has great charms for him. There is a seat on the bench at Petty Sessions, the Sheriffalty, a squeeze of the hand from the Lord Lieutenant. The county balls for his wife and daughters, and perhaps, an opening to the House of Commons. Mr. B. is a sensible man, his reason may prompt him to laugh at such empty gawds; but, nevertheless, they attract him in spite of himself.

It may happen that he was holder of the largest mortgage on —— Hall. Such a circumstance would, of course, facilitate the money arrangement, and then, after all, land is constantly rising in value in England, and a price, supposed to be high to-day, ten years hence, will turn out to be an excellent bargain.

In this case, it may be remarked that the title is known to be good by all the attorneys in the county; it having passed through the hands of many of them. The conveyance, too, is a very simple affair.

Thus ends the connection between Squire A. and the Hall, which had belonged to the family even during the wars of the Roses. The parish church will continue for generations to come, to exhibit the monuments in marble or alabaster of successive owners of the mansion belonging to that race, but all further connection between them and their ancestral property has ceased for ever.

Let us hope that when all debts and incumbrances are discharged a surplus will remain which will enable the dispossessed to live in tolerable comfort, and furnish means for their younger members to make a fresh start in the career of life. After all, they are English

gentlemen and ladies, formed of good sound material, physically and morally, and quite capable of holding their own against most competitors.

What has preceded will, it is hoped, sufficiently explain how it happens that small quantities of land, for purposes of cultivation, excite so little competition in this country, while larger estates are eagerly sought for.

The question may now reasonably be asked—Why is it that on the Continent, and we may take France for an instance, small parcels of land for purposes of cultivation are so eagerly desired and sell for so exorbitant a price?

Why does the French peasant give in some cases forty years' purchase for a field, and borrow the money to pay for it at 6 per cent., or even higher?

The answer is obvious. The French peasant, until quite recently, had no confidence in any species of property except land. He cared nothing about its value to let, but was quite satisfied if, after it came into his possession, he could extract from it by his labour and that of his family some little excess beyond what would be required to discharge taxes and interest on the money borrowed to pay for it. He regarded his little freehold as the barrier between him and starvation, and that with some reason in a country where poor laws do not exist, and where, if in a district away from large towns, without manufactures, and mainly held by peasant proprietors, there can hardly be a large, steady, and continuous demand for labour.

It is true that under the rule of the reigning sovereign, the French peasant has learnt that there are

other modes of employing his savings than in the purchase of land. Many a hoard of 5-franc pieces have been taken from an old stocking, and placed in the public funds, or in industrial enterprises, and it is not unlikely that an extravagant competition for small portions of land may somewhat slacken to the south of the Channel.

In what precedes, it has not been the object of the writer to criticise the existing law of England in its application to real property, but simply to show that it alone will not explain the fact that small freehold properties in England held for purposes of cultivation have diminished, and that an explanation is to be sought for in natural causes.

If it be considered of great importance that the land should be more minutely divided, the object can only be attained by direct legislation. For instance, by a restriction on the complete power of bequest now existing, or an imitation of the Roman law, which enacted that nobody should hold more than 500 jugera of the public domain, although he was not restricted as to his private property. It must not, however, be understood that the writer is in favour of any such alteration.

Despairing as he does of any attempt to introduce into England the system of peasant proprietors, or anything at all resembling this, he will say in conclusion that, in his opinion, few more important improvements could be made in the condition of our rural districts than some scheme which would enable the little farmer to cultivate his land with as small a comparative outlay as the large farmer, and with as great a comparative return.

The break between the labourer and the large farmer or his bailiff, in what are called improved districts, the South of Scotland for instance, is far too great. It remains to be seen if anything like a system of co-operation could be framed which would bridge over the chasm that now separates them, and afford to the lowest members of the agricultural class a better chance of rising in the world within their several districts.

Jan. 5th, 1867.

Austria, with Reference to the Doctrine of Nationalities.

Economist.

In an article which appeared in the "Economist" some months ago, the Doctrine of Nationalities was stated to be as follows :—

"1. Each nation or race has an indefensible right to govern itself."

"2. Where a nation has been separated by the course of events, its divided portions have an irresistible claim in point of moral justice to unite together, and any State or Government which opposes their efforts to do so, is guilty of tyranny and oppression."

The writer of the article in question, when commenting on this doctrine, endeavoured to show that it by no means deserves the almost general popularity which it has enjoyed since 1848, when, for the first time, it assumed the position of a political dogma, claiming universal adhesion.

It was further remarked that the French and English,

who proclaim most loudly the obligation of other nations and Governments to respect and to carry out to its fullest extent the doctrine of nationalities, most resolutely set it at nought in their own political practice.

At any rate, in France and the British Islands, the governing races—Celto-Roman and Teutonic—who impose their languages, laws, and feelings on the other races who inhabit portions of their territories, are by far the most numerous, and possess an immeasurable superiority in all that constitutes political power, over the subject people.

Let us now survey the very different condition of Austria.

In that empire, by a succession of marriages, wars, and treaties, commencing with the election of Rudolph of Hapsburg, to the throne of Germany, a state has been formed, which, after all its losses, contains about 33 millions of inhabitants, and some of the most fertile regions of Europe, but which is formed of the most heterogeneous collection of races that can well be imagined.

This divergence of race exists not merely in the empire, regarded as a whole, but is found in almost every separate province. There is hardly a section of any considerable extent which cannot exhibit a diversity of race and language among its inhabitants.

The Germans, on the whole, however (the Slavons being so much divided by place, dialect, feeling, and tradition, as not to be regarded in the character of a single people), are the most numerous, and in their superior civilization and wealth, rise above the other races. This circumstance, and the fact that the ruling Sove-

reigns of the families of Hapsburg and Lorraine have always been Germans, and for many generations Emperors of Germany, have given a German character to the institutions and policy of Austria.

The following table exhibits a close approximation to the existing state of the Austrian population as divided into the several races which comprise it:—

Germans	8,200,000
NORTHERN SLAVONS. Poles, Czecks, Ruthenians, &c. &c. .	11,300,000
SOUTHERN SLAVONS. Croats, Serbs, Dalmatians . .	4,000,000
Magyars	5,000,000
Roumans	2,700,000
Jews	1,000,000
Italians	500,000
	32,700,000

The total Slavon population of the Empire exceeds 15 millions.

Thus, then, we see that Austria is made up of a congeries of different nations, while, as has been already remarked, her separate parts are almost equally heterogeneous.

In Gallicia, there are Poles and Ruthenians. In Bohemia and Moravia, Czecks and Germans. In Hungary, Magyars, Germans, Serbs, Croats, Roumans, etc. Even in the German provinces, a good many Wends and some Italians.

Now, it can hardly be disputed that it is a matter of

the dearest interest to every race, and, indeed, almost every family in the Austrian State, that the Empire should be kept together.

A general disruption could hardly fail to give rise to a scene of the most dire confusion; to civil wars in many provinces, of the most bloody and destructive character, and as to some of these provinces, to foreign conquest. It is almost impossible that any one section, setting up for itself, could obtain and preserve a stable and peaceable independence.

It appears certain, then, that to the inhabitants of the Austrian Empire, the doctrine of nationalities has been a treacherous and delusive guide, which has exercised, and does now exercise a most prejudicial influence on their welfare, and has hitherto successfully obstructed every attempt to form a regular and stable system of rule, either autocratic or constitutional.

But how, then, can the future of the Austrian Empire in general, and of its component parts, be best assured? In the opinion of the writer, by adopting a scheme identical in principle with that which has been forced on Francis Joseph and his ministers, viz., a sort of federal union; separate legislature for each province, with limited powers; and a general Diet for the whole Empire, charged with matters in which all are concerned. In short, a constitutional system, somewhat resembling that of the United States, with an Emperor instead of a President at its head.

The establishment of a dualism, as it has been called, in which Hungary was to form a completely separate and almost independent State, taking with it the countries annexed, would of course be injurious to this scheme. It may be hoped that the terms agreed upon

between the Imperial Government and the popular leaders at Pesth may stop far short of this. At any rate, the existence of this dualism must be regarded as unfortunate.

It cannot be denied that the efforts of the Austrian Government to keep the Empire together in the interests of its own people, and of Europe at large, have been greatly impeded by the wide-spread influence of the doctrine of nationalities within its own States, and by the support which the doctrine in its application to Austria has received from the public opinion and newspapers of other countries.

We, in England, have not hesitated to applaud and urge on every Separatist party and tendency. As of the Gallician Poles against the Ruthenians, of the Czecks in Bohemia against the Germans, of the Magyars in Hungary against the Slavons and Roumans, and of all against the Germans and the Central Government.

It would be surely more wise as well as more benevolent to adopt an opposite course, and to aid, by our sympathy at least, in the difficult enterprise now in progress of keeping the Empire together. It is greatly for our interest and that of Europe that Austria should continue to be a great and powerful State—at any rate, that she should have ample means of self-defence. It is still more the interest of her varied population that this should be the case.

Let us, then, change our course, and frown down the disintegrating projects which threaten to tear the Empire to pieces.

One source of the course adopted by the English

Press respecting Austrian Politics is to be found in the extreme unpopularity of the House of Lorraine in this country. It seems to be assumed that the Sovereigns of that family have been tyrants and oppressors. Now, nothing can be more remote from the truth. Maria Theresa, the heiress of the house of Hapsburg, from whose marriage with Francis of Lorraine the recent Sovereigns have descended, was a person of excellent intentions and of considerable abilities. In her time commenced a series of attempts, which have never been intermitted, to ameliorate by legislation the condition of her subjects, and especially of the peasant serfs. Her eldest son, Joseph II., was perhaps the most active and ardent, though not the wisest, reformer that ever sat upon a throne. Most of his measures were abolished, either by himself or subsequently to his death; but some still survive, and serve to keep alive respect for his memory.

Leaving no son, Joseph was succeeded by his brother Leopold, who, in his previous career of Grand Duke of Tuscany, had evinced a degree of enlightenment and of zeal for the good of his subjects equal to that of Joseph, but marked by more judgment and discretion. He had little time for the display of these qualities on the Imperial Throne, as his reign was short, and was employed first in remedying the effects of Joseph's indiscretions, and then in meeting the outburst of the French revolution. He may be blamed for commencing the great war, but who, in his position, could have acted otherwise? His son, Francis II., is laughed at for certain unwise remarks upon Constitutions, but, at any rate, during a long reign, the early

part having been very unfortunate, he succeeded in retaining the respect and affection of a large portion of his subjects, including those who knew him best.

His son Ferdinand, amiable and weak, quailed before the storm of 1848, and was succeeded by his grandson, Francis Joseph, the reigning Sovereign, who has, at any rate, exhibited energy, honesty, and a fair share of ability.

His efforts to do the impossible, and his never ceasing misfortunes, are said to have made him an old man at thirty-seven. The existing evils, however, are not attributable to any crimes arising from evil intention on his part. At any rate, he has done his best. For the good of Austria and Europe, let us hope that the remainder of his reign may be more prosperous than that which has past. The prospect at present is certainly not encouraging, and the agreement with Hungary hardly improves it.

March 16th, 1867.

On International Policy and Morality, with reference to the question of Peace and War.

Economist.

No person can have observed the state of the public mind as evinced in the utterings of the Press, in Parliamentary discussions, and in the measures and conduct of the British Government, which follows almost uniformly impulses derived from without, and not be struck with the chaotic feelings and opinions which

now pervade our councils and actions upon the important question of peace and war.

The question usually presents itself to our consideration in a concrete form. Shall we, things being as they are, go to war with such or such foreign Power? or shall we, things being as they are, consent to peace on such or such terms?

In coming to a conclusion, however, on these questions, in which the lives of thousands and the welfare of millions, perhaps the very existence of the State is involved, we have no fixed and staple principles by which to guide our resolutions.

In former days nations were ready to fight for territory, land, or plunder, or to propagate a religion, or to gratify the passions of revenge or of hatred, or simply for glory and empire.

At present it is to be hoped, that in England, at least, none of these motives would be deemed sufficient to justify an appeal to arms, although but a generation or two ago some of them would have been considered thoroughly valid, even here, in support of a declaration of war, as they would even now in many countries.

The object of the present article is to call public attention to this most important subject, and to suggest a few simple rules which, in the opinion of the writer, might be usefully adopted as calculated to guide our decisions in case of our being involved in disputes with other nations.

It has been long maintained by some divines and philosophers that war, when avoidable, is a horrible crime. The Quakers alone have held it to be unlawful in any form and under any pretext. Setting aside the

Quaker view, what is the principle which ought to guide our resolution when deliberating upon the question of peace or war?

The principle of utility taken in its widest and deepest dimensions, so wide and deep, however, that it will be expedient for practical purposes to consider it as simple expediency, guided and controlled by a deep sense of morality.

Nations have a corporate being, like individuals they may sin, and be sinned against. Like individuals, too, they are responsible for their actions, obtain a reward for good, and are punished for misconduct.

It is difficult to see how, under the rule above laid down, a war essentially of conquest can ever be justified, although it may happen, and has happened, that a war apparently offensive, may be really defensive, as in the case of a peaceful people, who suffered from the depredations of a neighbouring robber tribe. With a few exceptions, of which that above cited may be taken as a sample, the writer would be inclined to lay it down as a rule, that only defensive war is permissible.

A purely defensive war is more than permissible, it is indeed obligatory—under the law of expediency. Conquest by the foreigner, especially of so rich and industrious a country as England, would be an enormous evil, involving the sacrifice of life and of property, and a feeling of humiliation more painful than either. Such would be the case even were the conquerors humane and highly civilized like the French or Anglo-Americans.

But the right and duty of absolute self-defence being granted, can we go a step further? Is it expedient and

morally right, to resist the aggrandisement of other States, which, if not checked, might threaten our security? Did our ancestors, who resisted in arms the career of conquest of Louis XIV. or that still more formidable of Napoleon, deserve praise or blame?

The answer surely ought to be that they sacrificed life and treasure in a great and holy cause, for which they deserve the reverence of their descendants and the respect and gratitude of Europe.

But let us suppose that the present Sovereign of France should imitate his uncle—should attempt to seize Belgium or Rhenish Germany—ought we to remain neutral?

Decidedly not. The aggrandizement of France by the absorption of a vast extent of fertile territory, with from eight to ten millions of inhabitants, much seaboard, and the Scheldt, would render her so formidable and threatening to our own security, that on the ground of expediency alone, we should be bound to resist her, could we do so with any chance of success. As it is, we are engaged by solemn treaties, to protect the neutrality of Belgium, and cannot flinch from this duty, without incurring moral degradation, unless released from our pledge by the express wishes of the Belgians themselves.

And here it may be remarked, that a nation is as much bound to the strict observance of treaties, as a man of truth and honour is to the performance of his engagements. This circumstance ought to render us specially careful not to entangle ourselves with treaties which may subsequently prove inconvenient. It would perhaps be well if treaties were considered to be laws,

placed under the control of the Courts of Justice in each country.

It is the fashion, at present, to ridicule the attempt to maintain the principle of a balance of power, but surely that principle is only ridiculous when pushed to an extreme, as it was then invoked to justify a war with Russia, eighty or ninety years ago, in order to prevent the permanent occupation of Otchakov. Properly applied, it has been made, and may again be made, a strong barrier against the claims of might over right, and a bulwark of the independence of nations.

The maintenance of a balance of power was first brought forward, as a political maxim, by the Italian republicans of the middle ages, who numbered in their ranks some of the wisest of mankind, and it is yet to be shown that they were wrong.

The moderate views, as to the lawfulness of war, maintained by the writer, has hitherto, alas! made but little progress in the world. The public opinion of most European countries, and of the United States, as evinced by the Mexican war, sanctions and applauds wars of conquest, and if in England the idea of making war in order to acquire territory is almost obsolete, this circumstance may be mainly attributed to the fact that we are islanders, and that no foreign territory in Europe lies conveniently for us and could be permanently retained, even if conquered.

It is sometimes said that wars are always the work of kings and ministers, and that if the people alone held the reins of power, wars would cease. Nothing

can be more erroneous than this opinion applied to the case of England.

All the great wars of the last century were thoroughly popular at their commencement, although becoming less so towards their close, as happened with the American war.

The war of 1739 was forced by the public voice upon a reluctant Government, and so was the Russian war of 1854. The latter, too, was urged in defence of a barbarous and effete despotism, the scandal of Europe, which *a priori* one would hardly have imagined likely to excite a general sympathy.

Quite recently, the Americans, the most democratic of nations, have hazarded a war with France, in maintenance of the Monroe doctrine, which is opposed to any sound view of international justice. What should we say of France, of Russia, or Prussia, if they were to declare that they would not tolerate the creation of any new Republic in Europe?

At any rate we may be assured that the wit of man has not hitherto devised a scheme of government which can thoroughly control the pugnacious propensities of mankind.

We will conclude by an application of the principles laid down in what precedes to those recent events in which the Government of England declined to engage in a war, although exposed to strong temptation. They were those of the South *versus* the North in America, of Poland against Russia, and of Denmark against Germany in Europe. In all these cases it seems clear to the writer that the conduct of England

was right. Let us make a few remarks upon each in succession.

There can be no doubt but that the United States and France are the only Powers in the world from whom at present we have anything to fear, and that a break up of the United States, which our intervention might have accomplished, would have delivered us from a great danger; but then we had no just cause for war, and hostilities, which might have led to a perpetuation of slavery, would have been abhorrent to the feelings of most right-minded men. In short, there was a sort of expediency in favour of war, especially as we should have had France for an ally; but then morality said sternly No!

In the case of Poland we had no treaty obligations. A restoration of Poland is all but an impossibility, and at any rate would not further any English interest. Denmark was diplomatically wrong in her quarrel. It mattered not to us whether the Elbe Duchies belonged to her or to Prussia, their inhabitants preferring the latter. In acknowledging Christian IX. as their Duke on the death of Frederick VII., we had done all we were bound to do.

In both these cases we could only have waged war with any chance of success in alliance with France, who, if we were successful, would certainly have repaid herself by large cessions on the Rhine, which would have directly clashed with our best interests.

In short, little could be adduced in defence of a war for Poland and Denmark, except a desire to help the weak against the strong, which may be called the David and Goliath argument. And this, however

amiable, can hardly be deemed sufficient by reasonable people to justify a war. Neither would have been in any sense defensive wars, or justified by expediency or any moral obligations.

It is greatly to be lamented that in these two cases our diplomatic intervention was marked by so much violence and asperity. We excited hopes in the weaker parties which we never meant to gratify, although thus stimulating them to resistance, and we created feelings of hostility in the victors which will long continue to exist.

The writer is thoroughly sensible how imperfectly he has treated his subject, but at any rate what precedes may tend to excite public attention to a matter of supreme importance, well deserving of far more attention than it has hitherto received.

April 13th, 1867.

On Capital and Labour, and on the Effect of Trades' Union on Wages.

Economist.

A few weeks ago there appeared in the columns of the "Economist" some excellent articles on this subject, to which at this moment the writer has no ready means of access. The matter to which they applied is now of such supreme importance that a few remarks upon it from the pen of another, who, at any rate, has reflected upon it long and anxiously, may not be deemed superfluous.

Ricardo, in his great work, devoted much attention to the question of price, profits, and wages, and came

to the conclusion that as wages rise, profits must fall, and *vice versâ*. In this view he was doubtless right if he regarded the wages and profits as being derived from an undeviating fund. In fact, however, this fund is not undeviating; on the contrary, it frequently varies in the same country, and is rarely the same in different countries at the same time.

In other words, the productiveness of industry is by no means always equal. Thus, we may readily imagine that a given amount of capital and labour employed in raising wheat on the poor and exhausted soil of the Eastern States of the American Union might only produce fifty quarters, while on the virgin land of the West, it might produce 100 quarters.

Supposing that the division between capital and labour was the same in both cases, say fifty per cent. to each, the labourers and capitalists in the West would each gain fifty quarters, or the equivalent of fifty quarters, in clothing, food, etc., while the labourers and capitalists in the East would only gain each twenty-five quarters.

What precedes, is very abstract in its nature, but will be found, nevertheless, to have a most important and practical bearing upon the main subject under discussion.

We now proceed to consider the important question as to how wages and profits are regulated at any given time, and we must first observe that the debateable ground between them is much restricted by natural causes. The labourer must at any rate get enough to support existence, or he cannot live. But practically in a great and civilized country, he will obtain much more

than this. He will not accept wages which are insufficient to enable him to support himself, a wife, and children, in such a way as he may consider suitable and becoming.

On the other hand, should the capitalist work at a loss, his capital will disappear, and there will remain nothing out of which wages can be paid.

But of course the capitalist will not go on producing, unless he can obtain such a profit as he may deem reasonable. He will otherwise protect himself by shifting his capital to some other employment at home, or by transferring it to another country.

There is thus, in all cases, a certain rate of profit and a certain rate of wages, between which, at some intermediate point, the demand and supply meet and adjust themselves, like other things, in an open market.

And here, it may be observed, that the competition thus pointed at is not confined to labourers on one hand and capitalists on the other. There is a constant competition going on of the members of each class against each other. Should the rate of wages in a given branch of industry be exceptionally high, a stream of labour will flow into that employment from other quarters.

Again, profits above the average will infallibly attract fresh capital till an equilibrium has been attained.

The interference of Trades' Unions with industry has taken two directions.

Firstly, as respects capitalists. They have striven to enhance wages directly, or, what they consider equivalent, they have demanded the same wages for diminished hours of work. They have also prescribed to the

employers certain artificial rules, such as that they shall not employ non-union men, or machinery calculated to economise labour, etc. etc.

Secondly, as respects the labourer. That he shall only do a limited amount of work, or labour for a limited number of hours; and whatever may be his bodily strength or skill, in short, his capacity for earning higher wages, that he shall be content to receive no more than his companions of inferior natural or acquired power.

The above is, of course, a very imperfect sketch of the modes employed by Trades' Unions in their interference with industry, but will suffice for the object of this article.

The chief means of coercion as respects the masters has been strikes. As respects the men, exclusion from employment and personal injury to the refractory, varying from simple dissuasion, to wounds and even death.

It need not be disputed that in certain trades, and at particular times these efforts of Trades' Unions may have been partially successful. But that they either have, or ever can permanently raise wages, or improve the condition of the labourer, appears impossible:—

1. Because, as we have seen, the debateable ground between capital and labour is restricted within narrow limits.

2. Because Trades' Unions, by the regulations which they enforce, lower both the quantity and quality of labour, and thus have a necessary tendency to render industry less productive than it would otherwise be. Referring to the illustration given at the head of this article, they strive to bring the 100 quarters of wheat

grown in the Western States, to something less, so that the gross divisible produce is diminished. Indeed, in this way, they have sometimes completely destroyed a prosperous branch of industry, have injured the capitalist and reduced themselves to beggary.

There can be no doubt as to their power of dividing the wages earned in a particular trade among the general mass of workers equally, if the better workers will agree to make the necessary sacrifice in favour of the more idle, the less strong, or the unskilful; but that such an arrangement can be permanent, and generally successful, or that it could add to the happiness and virtue of the community of labourers, would appear an impossibility. Great merit is claimed for the superior workmen, who are willing to make an enormous sacrifice for their weaker brethren, and in one point of view with justice. Yet, it may be doubted whether, according to the rules of morality they are justified in exposing their families to privations and diminishing their chances of rising in the world in the doubtful hope of benefitting the members of their class less highly endowed than themselves.

It is difficult to imagine that the doctrine of free trade, which, when directed to production and interchange in general, has been found in every case so beneficial, should altogether fail when applied to the important relation of capitalist and labourer.

What would be said if all the tradesmen in a town were to throw their gains into a common fund and divide them among the whole body, without any reference to the separate profits of each tradesman, attempting at the same time to lower the quality and

raise the price of the goods sold ? Could such a scheme ultimately benefit themselves, and would not the attempt be a sort of insult to the community ? Yet it is difficult to see any difference in principle between such a scheme and that of the Trades' Unions.

In the opinion of the writer, there can ultimately be no advantage to the labouring class from an attempt to raise wages or to regulate labour artificially, but he is still more convinced that the attempt has hitherto led to enormous suffering and loss. Let the reader figure to himself the sum lost in wages foreborne in the various strikes of the last few years, and add to this the cost of chairmen, and committees, and agents, and of the general machinery of the system, and the sum would be appalling.

It would, indeed, be an extraordinary and inexplicable circumstance, if a scheme directly opposed to the principles of economical science, were to result in affording permanent advantage to any class of society.

It must not be imagined from what precedes, that all unions and combinations of workmen are to be considered as inexpedient. Their great utility as benefit societies and in the maintenance of co-operative stores is indubitable, and they may possibly, by friendly conference with employers, lead to arrangements beneficial to both.

They might also gradually accumulate funds to be employed in aid of emigration, where a particular branch of trade was overstocked with labourers, or in establishing co-operative societies with an industrial object.

Doubts may fairly be entertained as to whether

industrial enterprises, based on co-operation, would generally succeed, when opposed to the superior capital, zeal, intelligence, and activity of individuals. But, at any rate, it is of the greatest importance that the experiment should be fairly tried. All persons of benevolent feelings must ardently wish for its success.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the business of a tailor is one which, as it is simple in itself and demands no large capital, appears to open a favourable chance of success, and that the tailors of London would have acted more wisely by adopting this scheme of bettering their condition than simply that of a general strike.

Sept. 21, 1867.

Economist.

October, 1867.

On some Political Effects of the Scientific Progress of later Times.

The progress which has been made during the last two generations in searching out the secrets of nature and in subjecting her latent forces to the service of man, has never been equalled or even approached during any period of similar duration in the history of the world.

We will enumerate, in somewhat like chronological order, the most important of the discoveries thus alluded to.

The improvement of the steam engine, gas illumination, steam navigation, railways, photography, the electric telegraph.

Let the reader figure to himself, if he can, what a step backward for mankind the sudden removal of one of these would be. How the well being of the world would be prejudiced. How the comforts of almost every person in all civilised countries would be interfered with. It would seem to most of us that the march of human events would be arrested if we were suddenly replaced in the same condition as that of our forefathers 70 or 80 years ago.

No one indeed can doubt that the material condition of mankind has been vastly improved in consequence of the recent changes, and the same thing may be said in many respects as to his moral condition. Still, there are matters falling chiefly and primarily under the domain of politics, where it appears to the writer that the line of movement has been rather retrograde than progressive, and to some of these the attention of the reader is now called.

The independence of all but the larger European states is completely destroyed. None but the five great Powers can any longer exert self-action. The minor states, such as Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian monarchies, Greece, Turkey and Portugal—exist only on sufferance, and are mainly supported by the mutual jealousies of the great monarchies, aided by a respect for law and justice, which, however feeble, is more forcibly felt by mankind at large than in former times.

Italy and Spain occupy what may be considered an intermediate position. The first, indeed, may hereafter, if wisely governed, rise above that state of feebleness which now characterises her; while Spain, owing to the

nature of her territories and the peculiar qualities of her people, possesses powers of resistance which might intimidate or weary out the most powerful invader.

Let us now cast our eyes backwards and regard the state of Europe as respects the independence of nations in former times.

Three hundred years ago the revolt of the Seven United Provinces took place. For nearly eighty years they contended against Spain, which for most part of the time had the largest fleets, the best trained armies, and the greatest generals in the world at her disposition; yet the Dutch finally and completely succeeded; and two centuries ago they struggled against the combined efforts of France and England, and came safely out of the conflict.

During the great war, which ended in the overthrow of the attempt of Louis XIV. to establish his supremacy in Europe, they were one of the most important members of the Grand Alliance.

The resistance of Venice to the league of Cambray, may be cited as another instance of the power of resistance in small States in the early part of the sixteenth century.

Again, early in the seventeenth century, Gustavus Adolphus, landing in Pomerania with 15,000 men, gave a check to the supremacy of the House of Austria and the Papal authority, from which neither has ever recovered.

We may here, too, allude to the effectual resistance of Frederick of Prussia, to the combined attacks of France, Austria, and Russia, during the seven years' war.

But how, it will be asked, are these changes to be connected with recent scientific discoveries?

The answer is, that the improvements in the art of administration now enable the great Powers to put forth all their strength, and that this improvement in the art of administration owes a great part of its efficiency to railroads, good ordinary roads, the electric telegraph, &c., &c.

Time and space have ever been great obstacles to the full exertion of military power on the part of Governments ruling over extensive territories. The first is now in some respects annihilated; the second reduced to a fraction of its former influence.

It is probable that the various States which owned Philip II. as their sovereign, contained as large a population as that of Prussia before the Bohemian campaign, yet Philip II. never brought upon one field of battle, unless at St. Quentin, which was just beyond the frontier of his richest and most populous provinces, so many as 50,000 men, while Prussia, out of half a million of men under arms, displayed, on the field of Sadowa, more than 200,000.

In fact, the overthrow of Austria was closely connected with her defective administration, and this again with the want of railroads, &c., &c.

It is, of course, much easier to administer well, and, indeed, to govern well, a small country than a large one. Thus Holland could, two or three centuries ago, really exert all her strength, while Spain could only call forth a very small portion of her latent power.

Of course, it need hardly be remarked, that the general quality of the system of rule in the two coun-

tries, leading in the one to a rapid increase of population, wealth, and knowledge, while her enemy was sinking rapidly into poverty and ignorance, had much to do with the result of the struggle between them.

Other examples might readily be cited from the page of history, calculated to show how the influence of defective administration on large States in former times, protected the smaller States in the enjoyment of independence.

But then it will be said: Is it better on the whole for mankind that they should be divided into many States of moderate size, than into a few large States? There are many reasons for saying that it is so.

Small States differing in race, language, and form of government, exhibit a greater variety in the moral and intellectual condition of their inhabitants than can be expected, were they to be united in one great State.

In the former condition of things too, there will be far more scope for the exhibition of much of the highest order of talent. There will be more Ministers, more Chief Judges, &c., &c.

In a country like France, within a few years, there will be no variety. The Gascon, the Picard, and the Norman will blend together, until the whole population will appear as if cast in the same mould.

Now, surely the existence of variety among mankind is a good. One set of men possess what another wants, and the result is advantageous on the whole.

Who can doubt that there exists far more mental power and varied knowledge in the two millions of Swiss, than in an equal population forming four or five French Departments, or that the Swiss would go

backwards after a few generations, if conquered by France and governed on the French system?

Or who, again, can doubt that the union of Belgium with France, or of Holland with Germany, would be a retrograde change for the smaller countries?

There would be a less demand in them than now exists for superior ability and virtue of certain kinds, and the supply of such high qualities would fall off. Experience seems to confirm this opinion.

It is an indisputable fact, that the number of great men has been far larger, proportionally, in small than in large communities. In proof of this, it is only necessary to point to the Greek Republics, Athens especially—to Florence in the middle ages; to England—then a country with a small population—in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; to Holland, and even to Scotland, which, although united to England under one Sovereign since the accession of James I., yet has retained, even to the present time, a separate political existence.

It may be doubted whether the absorption, in form or in substance, of the smaller States by Prussia is likely to be advantageous to Germany, having reference simply to her internal condition.

It is, however, advantageous to her, and that in the highest degree, as affording the only means by which she can be preserved from the gigantic evil of being ravaged and plundered by the French hereafter, as has happened to her five or six times over since the early part of the thirty years' war.

We have given reasons which will account for the existence in great numbers of some classes of dis-

tinguished men in small States; but it does not appear why, under the law of supply and demand, great poets and artists, &c., should also usually have been citizens of small States. Yet every body knows that such has been the fact. Perhaps the late Mr. Buckle, who was of opinion that everything appertaining to man fell under the rule of average, would have been able to explain this phenomenon.

A careful review of the probable condition of the civilized world, when it becomes divided, as will hereafter happen, among a few large States, would lead to the anticipation that the people of the future will perhaps be prosperous and happy, but that they will be far more homogeneous and more uniform in quality than at present; that with an increase of wealth, and the more equal spread of knowledge and education, the general level will be raised, but that there will be fewer lofty eminencies than in times past.

One is sometimes tempted to ask, are there any, or at any rate many, great men in our day? To this question no satisfactory answer can be given by their contemporaries.

It must be left to future generations to decide upon the merits of a Stephenson, a Grote, a Tennyson, a Mill, a Bismarck, even of a Napoleon, and to assign them appropriate niches in the Temple of Fame.

Economist.

Nov. 9th, 1867.

On the occupation of land in England.

There is a class of political writers and speakers in this country who are never tired of denouncing what they call the Land Laws of England, as a relic of feudal barbarism, and the landowners as a set of persons who strive to maintain and enforce these laws for their own interest, and whose existence and conduct on a whole is injurious to the welfare of the community at large.

These gentlemen usually regard the maintenance of a large class of what are called Peasant Proprietors, in other words, of persons subsisting by the cultivation of small portions of land, their own property, as essential to the moral and political well-being of a country.

They point to France, Belgium, Switzerland, &c., as being in possession of this advantage. They assume that England once possessed it in her yeomanry, and that the gradual absorption of the yeoman properties into larger estates is an artificial process, which could not have occurred unless under the influence of unwise legislation.

It is no part of the writer's purpose to enter upon these facts and opinions in their entirety. His object is to give reasons for supposing that the system now existing in England, under which the separation of the ownership from the occupation of land is the general rule, and the landowners and farmers form separate classes, is one which, for England possesses great economical advantages, under which alone our vast popu-

lation could be fed, and which has grown up naturally under the influence of the circumstances in which our country has been placed.

A peasant proprietary live upon the soil, and, as a rule, raise but a small surplus for sale. If the amount of capital and labour employed by them in a given district could be truly calculated, it would be found that their productive industry was most wastefully employed, and that a set of farmer capitalists occupying the same extent would produce far more and with a less outlay.

The comparison in kind, although not in degree, is something like that between a domestic manufacture and that in a factory, between the spinning wheel and the jenny.

The small cultivator carries on all his operations at a disadvantage. He can never do his work expeditiously, and rarely at the propitious moment. He must keep too many horses or oxen for his general purposes, or he will not have enough to plough his land, or to carry his corn at the right time. He is probably ignorant and ill-educated; and, if otherwise, has not the means of purchasing and employing improved implements and expensive animals.

If the ownership of land were in itself so very desirable, it is very remarkable that the tenant-farmer so seldom attempts to become a landowner. Yet that he does not do so may be a matter of observation in every part of the kingdom.

It is difficult to imagine that in a country where there is found a set of capitalists who specially devote themselves to the cultivation of land, and who, with

abundant opportunities of becoming proprietors, deliberately prefer to hire the land of others, adopt in so doing a course hostile to their own interest; or that if they are right in their views as respects their own interest, they thereby act injuriously to the community at large.

The reasons for their conduct are obvious. The tenant farmer would make a great sacrifice in purchasing land; he would be employing his money at 3 per cent. instead of 15 per cent. As things are now he enters into a sort of partnership with his landlord, in which the latter is content with a very moderate return for his share in the joint enterprise. Putting the matter in another point of view it may be said that the former borrows the largest amount of the capital at a rate of interest which does not exceed 3 per cent.

Upon similar grounds the yeoman sells his freehold. He will not hold a sort of property which yields him 3 per cent. when he can get for the money which he obtains for it, perhaps 5 per cent. on a perfectly secure mortgage, 7 per cent. by building or buying cottages, or from 10 to 15 per cent. in some industrial enterprise. The truth is, that in spite of our land laws, however bad they may be, the principle of free trade regulates in England the ownership and occupation of land.

Notwithstanding entails and settlements there is plenty of land on sale in almost every district, and any one desirous of becoming a landowner may always buy land at the market price, say 30 years' purchase, that rate, be it remarked, being lower than in most rich and civilized countries, such as France, Holland and Belgium. Improvements in the laws which would

tend to make land more easily transferable are, of course, desirable, and for none more than the landowner; but the bugbear of an uncertain title, or the expense of transfer, greatly less than the correponding charges in France, are rarely obstacles to a willing purchaser.

Lavergne's book, in which he compares the agriculture of France with that of England, shows decisively the great superiority of the latter, and that notwithstanding the climate and soil of France are more favourable than those of England. Surely the maxim, "By their fruits ye shall know them," is applicable in this case.

The writer is of course aware, that there are large estates in France, that money rents are usual in some provinces, that the Metayer system exists to an enormous extent, and that some of the largest estates in Europe are to be found in Belgium, which some persons imagine to be wholly cultivated by peasant proprietors. These facts may be considered to cut both ways. At any rate, their bearing may be left to the reader's consideration.

So natural does the general occupation of the soil by tenant farmers in England appear to the writer, that he is convined, if by some great political convulsion or any other cause, the number of landowners were to be increased a hundred fold without the enactment of laws specially intended to prevent the accumulation of land in fewer hands, a steady and continued sale of property would take place, leading sooner or later, as its final result, to the recreation of large estates.

In coming to this conclusion, the writer feels no small regret. He is by no means unaware of the many social

and political advantages connected with the existence of a class of persons supporting themselves by the cultivation of small quantities of land, their own property. Such persons, if usually poor and ignorant, are honest, thrifty, and industrious, and form the best ballast when the vessel of the State is exposed to political or social storms.

If Peasant Proprietors cannot be expected to exist in England, and, if simply in an economical point of view their existence is hardly to be desired, there seems a reasonable hope that the system of co-operation may be usefully applied to agriculture, and that small farmers may be enabled to carry on their business successfully, through the means of hired implements and machinery.

The number of cottages, with or without gardens, owned by their occupants, is annually increasing, because this description of property yields a satisfactory return. The same thing would take place with small quantities of land for cultivation, did they hold out the prospect of paying a fair rate of profit to the purchaser.

In France, the offer of a large estate in small lots is that most likely to obtain the highest price for it.

In England it does not answer to divide an estate into lots unless under exceptional circumstances, such as its vicinity to a large town.

It is quite true that more capital might be employed on the land of England, with advantage, and that what is employed might be better employed ; but the fact is no less true with respect to other industrial occupations.

Assuming that the existing division of land is, as a

general rule, the most suitable for England in an economical point of view, few benefactors could be found more worthy of the national gratitude than he who could devise a system under which small quantities of land could be profitably occupied by tenant farmers.

Economist.

December 14, 1867.

On the Reign of the Middle Classes.

It is usual when a Monarch has ceased to reign, owing to death, deposition, abdication, or foreign conquest, to pass in review his acts and character, from which useful inferences may generally be drawn.

Now, although Queen Victoria still reigns over us, and as we all hope may long continue to reign, yet we know that an English monarch neither does, nor even can govern. The sovereignty resides in that portion of the people which returns the majority of the House of Commons for the time being.

The late Reform Bill has so greatly enlarged and altered the character of the constituency that the majority in the House of Commons will no longer represent the same persons, wishes, and feelings as in recent times.

Since the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, what may be called the middle class has been supreme. It will be supreme no longer, and the object of the following paper will be to pass judgment on the character of its rule, which has now lasted for thirty-five years.

But who, it will be asked, does the writer mean by the middle classes? He may answer by saying, the classes forming the present constituency, or that part of the nation who do not belong either to what novelists and newspaper writers call the Upper Ten thousand, or to that class who are not employed in manual labour as a means of gaining their bread. It has been defined by some as formed of those who have no titles and good coats. Of course any definition having to deal with a subject so vast and complicated, is liable to the charge of inadequacy; but the above distinctions will be intelligible to the reader, and will sufficiently explain the writer's meaning.

The middle class of England is represented in France by the Bourgeoisie, who ruled that country from 1830 to 1848; but it is far more numerous and has more Catholic feeling in the former country than the latter, and has displayed a great superiority in its system of rule. The middle class has been supreme since 1832, but we must not suppose that it was previously weak and powerless.

The feudal system was far less firmly established in England than in France or Germany. Serfage seems to have fallen into desuetude in the 14th and to have almost ceased to exist as a practical institution by the close of the 15th century. The old Anglo-Norman nobility perished in the wars of the two Roses, and were succeeded by a new nobility, beginning with the Tudor reigns. It is true, however, that the feudal system was only abolished legally at the Restoration, in 1660. Even in the York and Lancaster times it is probable that the influence of a middle class was felt. The

White Rose was supported by the great towns, London especially, and was opposed by the majority of the great feudal chiefs, yet it succeeded in the struggle. The final success of Henry VIIth was an accident.

Elizabeth, that strange mixture of waywardness and sagacity, was kept on the throne by her popularity with what we must call the middle class, who alike decided the result of the great civil war, and were the main support of the revolution in 1689, and of the succession of the Brunswick dynasty.

During the 18th century the influence of the middle class increased enormously. No great event could then take place without their concurrence. Every war was undertaken and carried on with their consent, and they mainly contributed to force that of 1739, against Spain, on a reluctant Government. It is a fashionable assertion at this time that some, or all of these wars resulted from the prejudices and sinister interest of the King or aristocracy; but this is a mistake. We regard the transactions of the last century with the eyes of the present. Because the middle classes are peacefully disposed now, we suppose that they were always so, and that nobody but Kings or Lords could willingly engage in war.

It is needless to insist on the increasing power of the middle class during the early part of the 19th century, anterior to the Reform Bill, as that is a fact patent to all.

It is a singular circumstance which has been frequently remarked, that the French words, *noble*, *gentilhomme*, *mesalliance*, which grew out of feudalism, and so thoroughly represent its spirit, have no exact repre-

sentatives in the English language. In order to convey their meaning to an Englishman, we are obliged to explain them at length. On the other hand, our word *gentleman* has no French equivalent. The above observation is desirable, because it is so common at present with persons unfriendly to what they call our aristocracy, to reproach them as being feudalists and a privileged class. But to return to our subject.

It is very remarkable that our middle class should have given up the supreme authority which they had enjoyed for a whole generation without a struggle. Their ready resignation was connected with the fact that they had long felt the urgent demands of the working class for admission to power to be founded in justice, and, in fact, to be irresistible. They were, therefore, eager for a settlement of the question, although in the settlement which has been arrived at the concessions have been much greater than they either desired or expected.

The middle class, however, may still feel that they are not absolutely dethroned. They will have a great, although not an overwhelming influence under the new *regime*—and the greater their influence the better it will be for the community at large, even for the working classes themselves.

What precedes will prepare the reader for the real object of this paper—a short review of the facts and character of the middle class reign.

The Reform Bill of 1832, in itself, can hardly be ascribed to middle class influence, at any rate, exclusively. It was the result of many forces, some of them

antagonistic, which were guided, and, as it were, welded together by the able and honest statesmen at the head of affairs.

With the passage of the Reform Bill commenced a long course of wise and beneficent legislation. Let us enumerate a few of the most important laws brought forward and adopted by the altered Government. First, the Poor Law Bill. Those only who belong to the last generation can form an adequate idea of the mischief, the moral and physical degradation, from which this great measure relieved large portions of the south, east, and centre of England.

It has arrested the growth of pauperism for thirty years, and although at present vagrancy and vagabondage are on the increase, and are likely to increase further under the fostering influence of more recent legislation and administration, yet at any rate we now know how to relieve destitution without inflicting too much suffering on the independent labourer, or ruining the rate-payer. It is highly probable, if not certain, that a coming generation, will have once more to fight the battle with pauperism, and that under circumstances far more formidable than the last time. The field of conflict will then, probably, be not the rural districts, but the towns, the great centres of manufacturing industry, and where the opposition may be organized and wielded by the Trades' Unions, which, to their infinite honour, have hitherto abstained from using the ready weapons which the Poor Laws afford them.

Municipal Reform is another measure which has done infinite good, both in its direct effects and in the political education which it has afforded to numbers of

men, who would otherwise remain wholly ignorant of a species of knowledge which cannot be too widely spread among a free people.

We can barely find space to hint at many subjects, such as the reforms in the Church of England and Ireland, imperfect indeed, and in the last named country, only an instalment of what is desirable, but still improvements.

We have not attained to a Code, but at any rate, both the civil and criminal law have been greatly improved. The Civil Law has been rendered more rapid in its movements, and more conformable to the dictates of sense and reason, while the institution of County Courts has brought justice to every man's door. As respects Criminal Law, sanguinary punishments have been rendered less frequent, and, therefore, probably more effective. In short, in this branch of legislation, although much remains to be done, the progress under middle-class rule has been highly satisfactory.

The new currency laws, if not perfect, have at any rate effected an enormous improvement over the former state of things. The public administration has been vastly ameliorated, all accessible sinecures have been abolished; and, on the whole, it may be asserted that in no age or country did there ever exist a body of public servants who discharged their duties more honestly, more intelligently, and with greater zeal, than do those of England at the present time.

The most unscrupulous slanderer would now hesitate to charge personal corruption, beyond a little petty jobbery, on a person high in office, and the man who accused a minister of taking a bribe would be laughed

at for his pains. The ranks of all official men are, at any rate, purer than at any former time.

Greater advantages were expected to flow from the system of competitive examinations than have been realised. It has not attracted men of the first class into the service of the State; such persons find that they can bring their talents to a better market. It is also found impossible sufficiently to test the desirable qualities unless from experience. Of two men equal in all other respects, one will pass through the ordeal of examination far better than the other.

At any rate, competitive examination must have kept a great many blockheads out of place, and has much improved the position of Ministers and other superior officials by diminishing their responsibility and lessening the urgency of candidates for employment.

We now come to free trade, including the repeal of the Navigation laws, the great and crowning victory of middle class rule. Of this it may be truly said, that while it has conferred on the whole community benefits vast in extent and importance, it could hardly have been carried had England been ruled either by a simple aristocracy, or by a democracy of mere numbers. It may be doubted, indeed, whether under the new *regime*, we shall be able to retain the inestimable blessings of free trade.

Having now particularised the more important changes in the way of legislation made during the last thirty-five years, we will conclude with a few remarks on the general spirit and tendency which has actuated the ruling powers.

The general tendency of middle class government has been peaceable and thrifty. In its eyes, one of

the chief merits of a Ministry was to keep down expenditure to the lowest possible point, and so effective was its desire in this respect, that an important duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the time being, was not to select an object for fresh taxation, but to select a tax for abolition.

It had long been assumed as an incontrovertible fact, both by Englishmen and foreigners, that our taxation was exceptionally severe, and that we paid to the State in a higher ratio than other nations.

This opinion was never true, but it continued to be felt and expressed long after it had become ridiculously false, and when of all great and civilized countries England was that in which the blessings of good government were obtained at the smallest proportionate sacrifice,—smallest, that is to say, in relation to the national wealth or income.

In spite of this disposition to economy, so characteristic of a class wholly composed of tax-payers, it is highly to their honour that they were ever ready to spend money when, according to their views, such expenditure was fairly demanded for the public good.

The gift of twenty millions for slave emancipation was a sacrifice to a feeling of moral duty hardly to be paralleled in history, and very large sums have been expended during the last thirty years upon education and various branches of the civil administration, without an audible complaint.

At one time it was assumed that we were never to have more war, and that all past wars had been the special fault of the aristocracy, begun and carried on for its particular advantage, although it was impos-

sible to show that peers could gain by war more than the commonalty, and it is a fact that aristocracies are usually peaceable. At any rate a peace feeling existed and prevailed to such an extent, that at length when the middle class changed its mind, and drove a reluctant ministry into a war with Russia, we had neither an army nor a fleet worthy of the name. We have profited somewhat since by the experience then gained, but the national defences are still in an imperfect and disorganized condition.

One especial merit may be pointed out in middle class feeling. It abandoned altogether the spirit of conquest, and we have thus shown an immense superiority over our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic. And now a few words as to the aspirations and opinions of the lately ruling class upon the subject of international policy.

It had long been assumed, and with truth, that France and America were the only states from which we had anything to fear. This opinion has been thoroughly modified as regards France. We are no longer jealous of her aggrandisement, and even the absorption by her of Belgium and Rhenish Germany, the darling object of a majority of Frenchmen, which would be so vitally dangerous, even to the existence of England, has been regarded here it would seem as hardly an object of regret; at any rate, not as an object which we should be bound to resist by the force of arms.

We have been strenuous upholders of the doctrine of nationalities, but only when applicable to Powers other than France, England, and Turkey. Among foreign states the chief object of our hostile feelings has been

Russia, and it is not easy to explain the cause of our animosity.

Russia fought with us in the great struggle against Napoleonic tyranny, and was, perhaps, the main cause of the final triumph of good over evil. The time may yet come when her assistance may again be required in defence of European freedom, but this circumstance we appear totally to forget.

The Emperor of Russia, in the emancipation of the serfs, has risked his throne and life in the performance of one of the noblest acts of wise benevolence ever undertaken by a Sovereign; but for this we English have barely vouchsafed him a cold approval. The reasons of this want of warm appreciation, however insufficient, are not far to seek. We have persuaded ourselves that a darling object of Russian ambition is the overthrow of our Indian Empire, and that the capture of Constantinople and dismemberment of Turkey would be a great step in the attainment of this object.

The Polish question, not thoroughly understood, augments our anti-Muscovite feeling and as one anomaly leads to another, our earnest efforts have been employed to uphold in Turkey an effete, barbarous, and unimprovable despotism, to which that of the Bourbons at Naples was as light to darkness, and which has turned into deserts many of the fairest provinces upon earth. In dread of the Czar, we discourage and frown down the righteous efforts of the Sultan's Christian subjects to throw off the yoke of the oppressor. Greeks, Servians, Bulgarians, and Roumenians, are in almost equal degree the objects of our dislike; and the doctrine

of nationalities, which we often desire so strenuously to uphold, is persistently ignored, when cited in their favour.

The Russian war, the result of our views on Eastern policy, forced on an unwilling Ministry by the force of public opinion, can hardly be thought to have been productive of honour to us, or an adequate degree of national benefit. It was not, however, without a collateral advantage, inasmuch as it wakened us from the dream of universal peace, and induced us to improve the national defences.

But now let us consider the final judgment which we are to pronounce on the spirit of middle-class rule. Its enemies affirm that there was nothing noble, heroic, or self-sacrificing in it; that its objects were low and selfish. On the other hand, as in the case of other Sovereigns during the continuance of its sway, plenty of flatterers existed, who lauded its merits to the skies, and were never tired of contrasting its admirable management of railroads, banks, manufactures, etc.—the special fields of middle-class enterprise—with the shortcomings of officials who were always spoken of as belonging to the aristocracy. In later times, and with a view to coming changes, there have not, however, been wanting hostile critics who have denounced the shortcomings of the middle class when compared with the heroic virtues of artizans.

But what shall we say, with an earnest desire to form an impartial judgment, and what will be the probable doom of future generations?

That, assuming strict justice between man and man, and due protection to person and property so as to allow

industry the fullest development, and the attainment of these advantages combined with a due regard to economy to be the chief objects for which mankind is called upon to submit to the restraints of law, these objects were, perhaps, never before in any country so fully attained, or at so small a sacrifice, as in England between the years 1832 and 1867. It may easily happen that in future, the period of middle-class rule may be looked back upon as our golden age.

Let us hope that our future Sovereign may not throw away the blessings we now enjoy in the pursuit of good, more imaginative and sensational, which probably, after all, we may never attain.

ECONOMIST.

Feb. 22, 1868.

ON THE IRISH QUESTION.

The two existing facts which characterise Ireland as a whole, and distinguish it from Great Britain, are its greater poverty and the disaffection of a large portion of its inhabitants.

To remove or to alleviate these great evils is, and ought to be, one of the first objects of a British Ministry, and of all those who take part in public affairs.

Very many remedies have been suggested as likely to afford a radical cure for what is a source of weakness to the Empire, and of disgrace to us in the eyes of foreigners, who are often ready, and with apparent reason, to throw Ireland in our teeth as a sufficient proof that we are guilty of the tyranny and oppression of a conquered race.

The object of this paper is to pass in review, of

course with brevity, a few of the most plausible of the schemes proposed for the solution of the Irish difficulty. Before, however, we commence this review, it will be convenient to make some general remarks which are calculated to throw light upon what will follow.

Ireland is inhabited by two distinct peoples. The majority are Celts, and, generally speaking, Roman Catholics. The minority are the descendants of Scotch or English settlers, almost all Protestants, and, as respects the Presbyterians of the North, especially, most ardent Protestants.

The Protestants form rather less than one-fourth of the whole population; but such is their superior energy and intelligence that, supposing—not as an event at all likely to occur, but as one at any rate physically possible—that the people of Great Britain should resolve to abandon all connection with Ireland, it is more than probable that the civil war, which would at once break out, would lead either to the subjugation of the Celts, or at any rate to the division of Ireland into two separate States.

The Protestants of Ireland are thoroughly loyal, although a little displeased at the favoritism which, in their opinion, has been extended to their foes in the matters of Processions and Patronage; but this feeling would disappear at once if the Queen were to summon them to arm against those whom they call the Croppies. The memory of Londonderry, of the Boyne, and of Aghrim, has not vanished from their minds.

Again, it must not be imagined that all Irish Ca-

tholics are disloyal. The landowners of that faith, the commercial and professional classes in general, and, in truth, almost all who have anything to lose, are attached to the British connection, and ready to support it. Even among the peasantry the proportion, who are Fenians, or who would take part in a Fenian insurrection, is very much less than is imagined. There are many large tracts of country where the farmers and labourers are quiet and fairly contented, and such a state of things is often to be found on the estates of proprietors, either wholly or partially non-resident. The arrests of farmers under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Acts have been very few in number.

The Catholic clergy is, as a body, opposed to Fenianism, which they regard truly as anti-religious in its spirit; but it must be allowed that their loyalty is not very warm, at any rate, not very demonstrative; and that their public utterances, from Cardinal Cullen downwards, are full of denunciations of the Government, and little calculated to aid in its attempts to remove the spirit of disaffection. The truth is, that they fear to face unpopularity with a large section of their flocks, or strongly to oppose many of those who pay them.

It is undeniable that, dating from about the year 1850, when the effect of the famine and large emigration was fully felt, the general condition of Ireland began steadily to improve. Cultivation has extended; draining and other agricultural ameliorations have made considerable progress. The Encumbered Estates Bill, under which property of the value of nearly 38 millions sterling has been sold, has placed a vast extent of land in the hands of proprietors, of whom many are

able and willing to improve it; and railroads have been constructed, which, if not profitable to the shareholders, have been so to the country at large.

Three successive bad seasons have somewhat retarded, but have not altogether arrested, a progress to the better, which will doubtless go on, probably in an accelerated ratio, with the return of fruitful seasons, especially if tranquillity can be restored and retained.

Since the Emancipation Bill was passed, it can hardly be denied but that the Imperial Government and Legislature have generally done the best they could for Ireland, according to the measure of their power and intelligence. They have taxed lightly, have aided largely in the spread of education, and have allowed an amount of personal freedom in action, speech, and print, such as never was exceeded in any country in the world. The Catholics, too, have had an ample share of official patronage. Considering, indeed, their position, the writer doubts if more than two great mistakes can be imputed to the Government:—

1st. The non-payment of the Catholic clergy, which is really an injury.

2ndly. The maintenance of the Established Church, which is an insult of the deepest dye.

Fenianism, that peculiar form of treason and rebellion, is essentially of foreign growth. It arose, and has been supported, in, and from America, and could all communication with that country be cut off, it would, in all probability, die out. It dates from the first existence of a class of violent and unscrupulous men, used to bloodshed and adventure, who were thrown out of occupation by the sudden close of the civil war in America, and who, animated by an unceasing

hatred of England, determined to gratify this passion at all risks.

But it is now time to remark upon the remedies which have been proposed for bestowing on Ireland that prosperity for which she has so long sighed in vain. We will take them in order, beginning with the strongest and most radical. It is that which the Fenians propose, namely, complete separation from England, confiscation of property more or less extensive, and the establishment of an Irish Republic. The success of this scheme may be pronounced impossible. The object, opposed as it would be by the whole force of England, and by, at any rate, a large minority in Ireland, could never succeed; it is indeed a mere dream, which, if realized in any sense, could produced little but a chaos.

The repeal of the Union is now advocated by few. It was buried in the grave with O'Connell, whose policy it exactly suited. He might have thought it a good weapon with which to oppose and frighten the Government and people of England, although he can hardly have dreamed that it could ever be obtained.

The establishment of several elective bodies, with more or less legislative and administrative power, but all in subservience to Imperial authority, has been spoken of. This is a vague speculation, which the writer cannot pretend to criticise. He is, however, an opponent of centralization, and always anxious that as much free action should be left to the people in their several districts as they can usefully employ. The Vestry, the Town Council, the Board of Guardians, the Highway Board, etc. etc., all do good service in their way, and if any of them are wanted in Ireland, by all

means let them be established. Perhaps elected County councils, with some power of taxation, might be useful.

We now come to certain schemes brought forward by men of high name, who, imagining that the great source of the evils of Ireland is connected with what is called the Land Question, propose radical changes in the ownership and occupation of the soil.

Thus, there are many plans for the creation of peasant proprietors, for whom one set of our foremost thinkers have a great admiration. These schemes vary from absolute spoliation to purchases of land and its distribution in fee by the State. Others suggest that the land thus acquired should be let in small lots at fixed rents, either in perpetuity, or for long terms.

Another proposal is that tenant rights, something like that now existing in Ulster, should be established for the whole of Ireland; or, at any rate, that every tenant should have a legal claim for unexhausted, or even for prospective improvements, made either with, or without the consent of the landlords.

The writer dissents, though with diffidence, from the views of these high authorities; he has little faith in what are called by some heroic remedies, although a set of well considered regulations to adjust the relations between the outgoing, and incoming occupier, would doubtless be very useful.

A scheme which would reach only a small proportion of the occupiers of land would, of course, excite the most vehement dissatisfaction in the minds of all other occupiers. The majority would infallibly demand, and with a show of justice, what had been granted to a minority, and the grievance would be most keenly felt

by the very large number, who are now satisfied with their lot. Besides, how is it possible to grant exceptional advantages to the occupiers of land in Ireland, and refuse these advantages to their neighbours in Great Britain?

Mr. Bright proposes that the estates of non-resident proprietors should be purchased and distributed on perpetual or long leases. On this it may be remarked that the estates of non-residents are among the best managed, and cultivated by the most contented tenantry. It may be added that rents would never be paid to the States unless levied by force of arms. After all, is there any sufficient reason to suppose that a distribution of the land in Ireland among occupiers, either in fee, or with long or even perpetual leases, would conduce to their happiness or to the prosperity of the country? They would probably create mere pauper warrens, as was the case with the long or perpetual leases so common in Ireland before the Potato Famine.

The writer would even venture to hint that peasant proprietors are an institution which can hardly continue to exist in any country where property is thoroughly secure, and where an advanced state of industry in all its branches creates a demand for a numerous class of highly paid labourers. In such a state of things the small landowner will infallibly sell his lands, for which he will, probably, obtain from thirty to forty years purchase, and employ his money more profitably.

Peasant properties, cultivated by their owners, differ but little in principle from domestic manufactures; and as these, unless in special cases, have yielded to the factory system, so will peasant proprietors gradually

become either farmers or well paid labourers, owning perhaps a house and garden, and placing their savings in securities yielding a higher return than they obtained from a few miserable acres of the soil.

Let us now look at a few of the practical difficulties which attend all or any of these schemes. They all involve confiscation, or something approaching it. We are asked, at any rate, to compel proprietors to sell who are not disposed to sell of their own free will—many of these proprietors having bought recently under the Encumbered Estates Acts.

The proposal to create some sort of tenant-right in Ireland, analogous to the customs of the country, which almost everywhere exist in England, to take effect on the cessation of a tenantcy where there is no written contract between the parties concerned, would seem quite reasonable, and might prevent a few disputes. It is supported by the weighty authority of Lord Kimberley, who, indeed, would probably go further.

The real remedy, however, would be, that in Ireland all permanent improvements should be done by the landlord, as is the case in England.

But to conclude. As respects the general question of the condition of Ireland, would it not be more wise to leave things to their natural course—to let every man buy or sell, let or hire, according to his own views of what is best for his own interest? This is the system which prevails in all civilised countries. It is that under which England has become great and wealthy, and under which Ireland has progressed since the Potato Famine. This is the system of *laissez*

faire, in which the writer is disposed to place his trust, rather than in the new-fangled remedies of which we have lately heard so much, and are likely to hear so much more. In the meantime, emigration will go on to the great advantage of those who seek their fortune in another hemisphere, and hardly less to the advantage of those who remain at home.

The abuses connected with ecclesiastical matters should of course be corrected by stringent measures of reform.

What has preceded might readily be expanded into a volume. It can, of course, be little more than a series of hints when compressed into a newspaper article.

ECONOMIST.

May 9, 1868.

ON THE POOR LAWS.

It has often been remarked that individuals sometimes learn by experience, but nations never. As respects nations, the evidence of fact is far from uniform. On one side we may point to France, where the recollection of the horrors of the great Revolution is so vivid that even the name of a Republic is a source of alarm to the largest portion of the nation; so much so that, when, owing to the culpable weakness of Louis Philippe and his Ministers, the French people found Democracy enthroned at the Hotel de Ville, they at once set themselves to work to get rid of it. Thus, too, the election of Louis Napoleon to the Presi-

dency was a national protest against the Republics. Even the *coup d'etat* and re-establishment of a Monarchy, far less restricted than that of the Orleans dynasty, was hailed with delight by a large majority of the people, who preferred what they thought security to freedom.

The example of England, in one most important matter, differs altogether from that of France. The Poor Laws are here alluded to. These have an influence on the moral and physical well-being of a nation only inferior (if, indeed, it be inferior) to the political constitution of the State; and as respects them, it would seem that we have here, in a great degree, forgotten the lessons of the past.

From the latter half of the seventeenth century, public attention has been directed to the Poor Laws. It was discovered that they were greatly liable to abuse, and repeated attempts were made to reform them. These attempts were continued as the evils they were meant to remedy increased, during the whole of the eighteenth and early part of the present century, without any marked success; and for a long time the mischief was considered, by many of our deepest thinkers, to be inherent in the nature of a Poor Law, and only remediable by its total abolition.

Yet even the boldest flinched from the idea of total abolition, with the confusion and civil war which might have been its result. In truth, the case seemed hopeless. It was not so. The New Poor Law, as it was then called, worked by a series of able men at the head of, or employed by, the Poor Law Board, effected a cure, which, if not permanent and radical, was so effec-

tive, that our contemporaries of this generation appear to have quite forgotten what was so well known to their fathers, and to be ready to plunge into a sea of evils quite as appalling, if not more so, than that which existed forty years ago.

And here, a few words on the nature of Poor Laws, and on the principles under which alone they can be safely carried out.

In every country—at any rate, in every old country, there will be a certain number of people, who, from age, infirmity, or disease, will be liable to suffer the extremity of destitution, unless relieved by public or private charity, and the opinion, of at least all Protestant countries, points to the expediency of employing public charity as the preferable course. It will here be advisable to call attention to a distinction between poverty and pauperism. The former implies simply a want of things necessary to comfortable existence; the latter, the condition of those who rely upon public succour. There may be much poverty with little or no pauperism, and much pauperism with comparatively less poverty.

Before 1834, there were many parishes in England where nearly the whole population were paupers, and the amount which each individual received was in nearly inverse relation to his desert. The worst got the most, and ascending in the moral scale, the relief accorded became less and less, until the very best received nothing. This was the general rule, but there were divergencies in practice. The administration of relief was in a high degree irregular, incomplete, and capricious.

A Poor Law must have some tendency to create poverty and destitution by diminishing the motives to industry and thrift. Under it, a man, however idle and vicious he may be, is aware that he will not have to endure the extreme penalty which would otherwise befall him. A Poor Law, too, will probably lower the rate of wages, by doing away with the necessity of its including among the requirements of the labourer a premium of assurance against the ordinary accidents or incidents of life, such as disease or old age.

The majority of the inmates of the casual wards in our Workhouses eschew labour, and pass their lives in oscillating from workhouse to jail, and back again, with occasional intervals of mendicancy and theft. They are called, rather euphemistically by some, houseless wanderers, and by the police, tramps and vagrants. Such a class could hardly exist without poor laws.

In spite, however, of the necessary evils of a Poor Law, it must be allowed that it can hardly be dispensed with in a country like England. Without it, occasional instances of suffering and death of the most distressing character, would sometimes occur, whereas at present all may feel secure that none such could happen, unless from pure accident or the grossest neglect. Should there be persons who do not agree with the writer in thinking that the above advantages, along with others derivable from a Poor Law, compensate its many evils, they must, at any rate be convinced, that to abolish Poor Laws in England would be an utter impossibility. We have them, and must have them, for good or for bad, and it is the part of wisdom so to frame and

administer them that they may produce as much good and as little harm as possible.

There is one maxim which should never be lost sight of, as it lies at the root of all good poor law legislation, viz., that relief should be given in such a way that neither the person relieved nor those of his class should regard his position as being superior to that of the independent labourer. In order to attain this object it is absolutely necessary to devise and to be able to apply some test of destitution. Rags, dirt, disease, real or apparent, will not always suffice. These may be feigned altogether, or assumed for the occasion, and there are only two tests which have hitherto been successfully made use of. The best is the Workhouse test, which although excellent, cannot be applied in all cases, as for instance, where the number of applicants is exceptionally large. The second is the Labour test, which ought to be so used as to make the earnings for equal work rather less than they would be were the pauper to pass into the ranks of independent labourers.

It need hardly be observed that there are large numbers of indigent persons whose destitution is so palpable as to render the application of a test unnecessary. Such are the aged and infirm, the sick, the widow with children, and the orphan.

Even while agreeing in the necessity of Poor Laws, it must never be forgotten that an immense field open to abuse accompanies them—that they have a constant tendency to an increase of expenditure, and that the evils to which they are liable consist mainly in a lax administration, and a gradual removal of the barriers which separate vice and idleness from virtuous and

honest industry. In truth, the ordinary failings of the poor law administrator do not lie on the side of rigour and harshness, as appears commonly to be supposed, but in an exactly opposite direction. Indeed, he has many misleading motives, some good and others bad, constantly before him; as, for example, a feeling of benevolence carried to an injurious excess; the desire to relieve a person personally known to him, or to add something to insufficient wages; the wish to obtain popular applause as a friend of humanity. And here it may be noticed as a remarkable fact that while the broad pages of our newspapers are full of recitals of the shortcomings of Boards of Guardians in the way of harshness and rigour, charges of a lax and lavish expenditure, and an encourgement of vice and idleness, are never brought against them; and yet we may be tolerably sure that the latter faults are by far the most common.

It has been usually thought, and justly too, that the best, if not the only, mode of securing a due amount of care and frugality in the relief of pauperism, was to place the administration of the laws in the hands of those who have to furnish the money, or their elected representatives. Of these, in consequence, the Boards of Guardians are formed with the addition of any Justices of the Peace resident within the Union who may choose to attend; the latter being in general among the greatest rate-payers, and bringing with them, it may be supposed, a larger and more instructed intelligence than the farmers and shopkeepers who usually form their colleagues. The Poor Law Board has, however, wisely checked the possible mistakes of the Boards of

Guardians, by laying down certain rules, among which the most important and useful is that which confines relief of the able-bodied, under ordinary circumstances, to the workhouse.

Let us now cast a glance on the legislation of the last few years, and its probable effect. We have had the district schools for children; the receptacles for casuals in London, supported by a general instead of a local rate; the increase of workhouse hospitals; the payment of schoolmasters and mistresses out of the Consolidated Fund; and the Union Chargeability Act. Less important changes may be passed over in silence.

Against these changes, taken individually, little can be said. Still, it cannot be denied that each separately, and the whole together, in a still greater degree, tend to improve the condition of the pauper, and to place him in a position better than that of the independent labourer. In truth, it is certain that at present the pauper is in many respects preferred to his less fortunate brother who supports himself by the sweat of his brow. He is better tended in sickness either in or out of the workhouse, better lodged and clothed in the workhouse; while an education is provided for his children there, such as the smaller tradesman even cannot hope to secure for his.

While all this is going on, the public is still calling for greater liberality. Many well-meaning persons are urging an extension of the area of rateability, and even propose that poor law relief should be furnished from the Consolidated fund. The effect of the former change would be a vast increase of expenditure and demoralisation. The latter would speedily make the

cost of pauperism, perhaps, equal to the charge for the National Debt.

One of the best effects of well-managed Poor Laws is that they put an end to all claim for the permission of mendicancy. Alas! with us mendicants abound; and a magistrate of the City has lately been called to severe account for giving a very mild application of the law, which he has sworn to administer, in the case of a few beggars who were brought before him.

Few can be aware, unless from experience, of the vast number of persons to be found who will incur great privations, and resort to the most varied ingenuity, with the view of obtaining subsistence without labour. A whole district will be speedily pauperised if this class of persons is encouraged by the laws or by the public, and the taint of pauperism, if it once finds entrance into the social system, is most difficult of cure.

The recent state of things at the East end of London calls for special remark. A population said to amount to half a million has been exposed to the most corruptive and debasing influences, and a premium held out to idleness and other social vices such as never appeared in England on so large a scale.

There we have seen, perhaps, for the first time, the charity of the benevolent and the produce of rates employed in supporting the policy of Trades' Unions. We have seen, too, a tendency to swell the ranks of pauperism from the artisan class, who hitherto, to their honour be it said, have generally shewn a noble spirit of self-reliance. The pauperism of fifty years ago was mainly confined to the rural districts, where it is now, generally speaking, kept within due bounds, and where

a generation has grown up since 1832, to which the abuses of the old system are unknown, unless by tradition. Pauperism in the large towns would exhibit a far more formidable aspect, and when it had reached a certain height could hardly be checked without a social convulsion.

Let us suppose the Trades' Union were to direct strikes, and throw their members by hundreds of thousands on the Rates for support. They would thus punish the capitalist class, to whom they are so much opposed, and would create an amount of distress and confusion such as to appal the imagination.

On such a subject it is difficult to restrain the pen, but, in conclusion, it may be asserted that the means of attaining a moderate degree of security are in our own hands. We have simply to adhere strictly to the principles of the existing laws :—

1. The enforcement of a regular test of destitution in all doubtful cases.

2. A limited area of taxation, and a system of administration in the hands of elected Agents of the Ratepayers acting under an enlightened central body, which can lay down general rules and enforce a uniformity of practice.

The evils connected with our Poor Laws are to be found, not in their want of liberality, as is commonly supposed, but in their tendency to create and foster pauperism.

It must not be inferred from what precedes that the writer fails to do justice to the liberality and benevolence of those who so eagerly strive to alleviate the sufferings of the poorest and least fortunate of society.

On the contrary, he fully sympathises with these feelings. His object, indeed, is mainly to shew that when imprudently indulged, they create more poverty and misery than they can relieve.

ECONOMIST.

June 27, 1868.

ON THE OWNERSHIP AND OCCUPATION OF LAND IN ENGLAND.

A sect of philosophers now exist in the world who appear to regard the class of landowners who do not cultivate their possessions, but live upon the rents paid them by the actual cultivators, with intense dislike, and as a sort of blot and excrescence on the social system, the removal of which would greatly improve the condition of the body politic.

The object of the following paper will be to examine whether or no the accusations against landowners, especially in England, are well founded, or whether we ought not rather to look upon these as a class of persons who naturally arise at a particular period in the economical development of a country, and whose existence greatly conduces to the prosperity of its agriculture, so important an element in its material progress.

If there is any part of the science of Political Economy better understood than another, it is the theory of rent. As respects it, no material difference of opinion has existed for many years. Let us take the definition

of Professor Fawcett, which well expresses the received doctrine. He tells us "that the rent of land represents the pecuniary value of the advantage which such land possesses over the worst land in cultivation which of course pays only a nominal rent." We may add the remark that when successive doses of capital are laid out upon the same land, rent arises from all but the last. The existence of rent then is a natural incident, which cannot be prevented and ought not to be deplored.

In the case of the man who occupies his own land the rent remains with the actual cultivator, and forms an addition to his remuneration for an outlay of labour and capital. In some cases the actual cultivator pays his rent in labour either wholly or chiefly. This was the state of things in all Feudal countries, and existed in England until the time of the Tudor Sovereigns, when the landowners preferred money to corporal service, turned small arable holdings into large pastoral occupations, and broke up what may be called the cottier system.

There never existed in England a system of peasant proprietorship at all analogous to those to be found on the Continent, especially in countries conquered and governed by the Romans, and always subject more or less to Roman law.

The form of rent differs greatly in different circumstances and in different countries. That which exists in Great Britain, where the landowner as a rule furnishes, besides the land itself, the capital fixed in buildings, etc., the tenant simply paying a money rent for their use, is also common on the Continent; but in some parts of France, in Spain, and Italy, what is called

the *métayer* system is more common. There usually the owner furnishes the land, buildings, and a portion of the floating capital, receiving in return a portion—in general half—of the gross produce in kind.

In all old countries where land of varying qualities is taken into cultivation, the best land must yield a rent, and its produce must be regarded as divided into wages of labour, profits of capital, and rent, which severally fall to the labourer, the farmer, and the owner, although it may often happen that the same person appears in two, or even in all these capacities. There is, however, a fourth person who is little regarded by many economists, but who nevertheless occupies an important position in the organization of agriculture. This person is the mortgagee. He is to be found wherever land can furnish a valid security for a loan, and in countries where the custom of hiring the land of another is unpopular or little understood and practised, he becomes to a great extent the recipient of the rent.

Thus in the United States, instead of letting his land the proprietor sells it out and out, receiving we will suppose 10 per cent. money down, and the remainder of his claim in nine annual instalments with interest, retaining his hold upon the land as his security until the debt is fully discharged. In this case, he really receives rent in the shape of interest and capital. The same thing exists in Norway. Land is rarely, if ever, sold in that country for ready money. Tenant occupiers are not numerous, and the proportion of landed property mortgaged is very large.

Let us now consider what form of the occupation of land is, on the whole, most advantageous. The answer

must surely be that which produces the largest return —that in which the inherent qualities of the soil, with the help of a sufficient and skilful application of capital and labour, are made to produce the greatest quantity and value. Now example is better than theory, and we find that Great Britain, with a soil and climate far inferior to that of France, perhaps on the whole, the most advanced of large Continental countries, produces a double return both in value and quantity—that in fact it is the best cultivated country of great extent in Europe.

Peasant proprietors are very industrious and very thrifty, but they have seldom sufficient capital, and if they had it they can seldom apply it skilfully and at the propitious time. Their animals and implements are usually of bad quality, and if they are to have enough of them during a busy time of the year, they must often be puzzled to find employment for them during the rest of the twelve months. Yet in Belgium, France, and Switzerland, districts may no doubt be found where the result of peasant ownership is favourable. The example of Flanders, so often cited in its favour, possesses but little value, as a large portion of the cultivators there are tenant farmers holding on short leases and at rack rents.

Even the *métayer* system, perhaps the worst of all, as involving almost necessarily the application of insufficient capital, much fraud, and interminable disputes, and as yielding in general a very poor return, is not inconsistent with skilful cultivation under favoured circumstances, as may be seen in Tuscany, in parts of

the former Roman States, and doubtless in other countries.

A complete separation between the ownership and occupation of land can hardly take place until there has been a large accumulation of capital, giving rise to the existence of a class of persons willing to employ their money in a species of property yielding a very low rate of interest, provided it be accompanied with perfect security and some social advantages, and this state of things can hardly exist but in an old country. In the United States and in our Colonies nobody probably would be willing to make an investment which would pay less than 5 or 6 per cent. People in those countries, generally speaking, buy land to sell again, but not with a view of letting it.

We will now explain why it is that the occupation of land by farmers instead of owners is on the whole the most advantageous. The occupier is in the most favourable position, other things being equal, when he can devote the largest amount of capital and intelligence to the actual cultivation of the soil. This is the case with the man who farms the land of another on the English system. He ought to be regarded as a borrower of the land or of its value, at a rate of interest probably less than 3 per cent.

Let us take the case of a farm of 200 acres, with a rent of say 30*s* an acre. This represents a sum of £10,000, which did the land belong to the occupier, he must find from his own means or borrow at a rate of certainly not less than 4 per cent.—probably higher—with the risk of being called upon for re-payment at the most inconvenient moment.

Suppose the land to be his own and unmortgaged and that he possesses besides £2000 of active capital, how will his income stand?

Rent	£300
Profit on active capital, and pay for personal service say £15 per cent. . . .	300
Total 5 per cent. on £12,000	£600

Suppose him to possess £12,000, but that he hires the land of another, and employs £2000 in its cultivation.

Profit on active capital as before .	£300
Return from £10,000 vested in cottage property, or on mortgage, or in railroad bonds, etc. probably on an average 5 per cent. .	500
Total income	£800

Or one-third more than in the former case, with less risk.

Should he, however, employ all his means in the business of a farmer, he might expect to obtain an income of from £1200 to £1500 per annum.

What precedes, however, gives a very imperfect notion of the relative advantages possessed by the farmer over the small freehold occupier.

Let us suppose that a man worth £2000 resolves to purchase land and cultivate it himself, and that he lays out £1500 in one capacity, and retains £500 in the other. How will his income stand?

Rent	£45
Profits on active capital . . .	50
Personal service . . .	50
Total income	£145

Less than that of many mechanics.

In all probability within a few years he will become embarrassed and borrow, or will be tempted or necessitated to sell his land, and at any rate he will occupy a lower position and more restricted income than if he had employed his capital in cultivating the land of another. The preceding examples, however, although useful as illustrations, still hardly exhibit the loss of income or of profit which arises from the employment of money in England in the purchase rather than in the hiring of land. This may be put down on a low calculation at 7 per cent., the difference between 10 per cent. and 3 per cent. per annum.

So long then as a class of persons is to be found who will hold or purchase land paying only 3 per cent., it will be the interest of the actual cultivator to hire rather than to buy land. The cultivation of land in small quantities, especially by its owners, bears a close analogy to the process of domestic manufacture once almost universal, which has generally yielded to the factory system.

It is impossible that a small capitalist could ever find his interest in purchasing land for cultivation in England, unless the price of land should fall from thirty years purchase to fifteen, or at least to twenty years purchase. In other words, to from two-thirds to half of its present price.

It is often said that the reason why land in England is so seldom occupied by the owners for the purpose of cultivation is to be found in what are called the land laws, which are said to keep land out of the market and confine its ownership to a few persons.

The power of entailing and making settlements produces doubtless some effects in this way, although at present entails and settlements almost always contain ample powers of sale and exchange. At any rate, there is plenty of land in England inviting purchasers both of large and small quantities, and that in almost every county. In the district best known to the writer, most of the land has been sold more than once in his life time.

Besides, it is not found that land is exceptionally dear in England, but rather the reverse. In France, Holland, Belgium, the best governed and most wealthy parts of the Continent, it is said to be worth more than thirty years' purchase, which is reckoned upon as the normal rate here. Indeed, with reference to the price of the funds, which do not pay more than $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., it may be considered that land in England is relatively cheap.

It would not be difficult to explain why it is that land is relatively dear upon the Continent, when compared to its price in England. We may, however, point at the fear of revolutions, the absence of poor laws in Catholic countries, old habits, and the influence of laws derived mainly from those of Rome, as the most efficient causes of the phenomenon.

It is probable that if ever a change of circumstances should occur on the Continent, we shall find the number of small freehold occupations diminish, and the farming of land become gradually more common than at present.

There are doubtless many social and political advantages connected with peasant proprietorship to which the writer is not insensible. He would wish to see

these advantages realised in England, but of this there appears no chance.

It may be safely asserted that the ownership of land in England is really natural, and arranged upon free trade principles. It has assumed the conditions under which the land itself and the capital and labour bestowed upon it are most advantageously employed as respects the return derived from them.

Supposing that by means of either direct confiscation or some less violent measure the land in this country should be placed in the hands of a multiplicity of owners, and supposing, what is difficult to imagine, that a sense of security should ever be restored, we should find a gradual return to the present state of things, in which the ownership and occupation of the soil are usually dissevered.

In conclusion, a few words may be said in defence of that much abused class—the landowners. They are neither much better nor much worse than other people. Like them they follow what they consider their own interests, but living as they do in glass houses peculiarly open to attack, they can hardly be exceptionally bad, and they certainly bear their full share of public burdens.

ECONOMIST.

November 7, 1868.

ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT: ITS ADVANTAGES, DEFICIENCIES, AND THE BEST MODE OF OBVIATING ITS DANGERS.

In his work on Democracy in America, the late A. de Tocqueville, one of the most acute of political

philosophers, informs us that the tendency of things is to make democratic government universal, and that our efforts should be directed to tame Democracy.

Since his death much progress has been made towards the fulfilment of his prophecy. The late Reform Bill in England is a step towards it, and in the rest of Europe there are no countries excepting Turkey and Russia which have not representative assemblies of some sort or other.

The object of the present and a succeeding paper will be to point out some of the dangers likely to attend the future development of the system, and the best modes of obviating these dangers, making use, so far as they may be applicable, of the lessons which history affords us.

In ancient times democracies in our sense, did not, and could not, exist. The general prevalence of slavery degraded a large portion of the population to the condition of brutes. The political unit was universally the city, not the territory, and civic rights were strictly guarded. Thus at Athens the citizens were only about 20,000, who ruled over not only their slaves, but over a large number of metæci,—free denizens,—not to mention numerous tributary cities. The feelings of Athenian citizens were doubtless democratic as respected themselves, among whom they struggled against all superiorities; but as respected those outside the magic circle, they were in the highest degree aristocratic. Rome was never really democratic. The disputes as to the form of government in the Eternal City turned upon the question,—should the supreme power be in the hands of many, of a few, or of one?

In point of fact, it may be remarked that until the discovery of the great principle of representation, which was hardly known to the ancients, Democracy, unless in a single city or a small territory, was impossible. The physical obstacles to it were insurmountable.

Descending from classical times, the first States with political systems approaching to Democracy were the Italian cities of the middle ages, and those of the Low Countries, and of Germany, France, etc.

In all these the units of power were the various guilds of traders and artisans, while the State unit was the city. If territories were annexed, outside the walls and its banlieu, they were usually treated as subject, and had little, if any, political power. The communities thus adverted to formed Oases in the feudal desert, and attained an amount of wealth, power, and civilization which cannot even now be regarded without the highest admiration.

Democracies hitherto have always terminated either in foreign conquests or in tyrannies. As to the former, nothing need be said. They were usually accidental and unavoidable; but something may be said as to the latter.

The first Tyrant, or Monarch as we may call him, to use a neutral term, was usually the chief of the popular party. Such was Julius Cæsar. The Medici at Florence, and the Visconti at Milan, also occupied this position. They were submitted to because the quiet people among the several populations were sick of civil disturbances, thought they should obtain better security under a single ruler, and were willing to sacrifice

liberty for peace, in all which hopes and expectations they often found themselves deceived. We see something of a similar feeling in our times. The French, after the horrors of the early years of the Great Revolution, readily submitted to the first Napoleon, who left them without a shadow of civil freedom, and for all we can see would have remained his faithful subjects had it not been for the disasters resulting from his foreign policy.

Under the elder and the younger Bourbons, the French had a taste of Parliamentary government and of a greater amount of individual freedom than they ever had before or are likely to have again; but they evidently did not much prize it; especially as it was deformed by enormous jobbery; and although no doubt the revolution of 1848 was an accident, aided by the inconceivable weakness of the Government, and altogether opposed to the real wishes of the population, yet the nation submitted to it in silence, and mainly evinced its displeasure by the choice of Deputies to the National Assembly whose chief efforts were directed to the taming of the Democracy or to its overthrow. Before the *coup d' etât* of 1851, everybody knew that the struggle was approaching; and when it was decided in the streets of Paris, the nation at large cheerfully submitted to the new ruler, thus once more shewing their preference of security to freedom.

It can hardly be doubted but that the spirit of the French nation is eminently democratic. Everything in the shape of privilege and superiority is most distasteful to them, and as a consequence of this feeling the French prefer a uniform subjection to a single

ruler, where all are alike, to that graduated hierarchy of station which exists in a country like England.

The form in which Democracy is likely to appear in modern European States is that of a Legislature comprising an assembly chosen by a suffrage nearly universal, with frequent elections, and with a single president or other high functionary, also elected, above it, or at its head. It may be that two Chambers may be wisely preferred, in order to ensure a double examination of proposed laws; but this machinery would nevertheless leave the supreme power in the hands of the most numerous or most popular assembly. The Deputies would probably be paid. There can be no doubt but that a Legislature thus formed, representing the views and wishes of a simple majority of the population, and almost depriving of influence the richest, most instructed, and most far-seeing, would be exposed in a high degree to the seduction of the most loud and unscrupulous demagogue, who would do his best to gain applause and influence by flattering the taste and prejudices of the mass. That in a society thus constituted any attention would be paid to the advice and exhortation of a Mill in favour of minorities could hardly be expected. The Demagogue, like the Autocrat, spurns all restraint on his fancies or his will.

The rights of property would in all probability be little respected. The rich would be envied and disliked. Wealth, if rendered insecure, would speedily diminish, being either destroyed and not reproduced, or it would emigrate to countries where it would be more safe.

Now, let us suppose that in countries like France, Germany, or England, each containing from thirty to

forty millions of people, the form of rule sketched above were established, could it endure? Reason, and the experience derived from the past, would unhesitatingly answer this question in the negative. After a duration more or less protracted, and after a struggle more or less severe, it would be overthrown and replaced probably by a despot, under whose sceptre peace and security might seem more attainable.

The picture of the failure faintly sketched above is not enticing. In a succeeding article an attempt will be made to point out how, using the expression of De Tocqueville, Democracy may be tamed. How, in short, its evils may be corrected, and its advantages, which are many, and great, may be retained.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the writer is far from anticipating any danger to the throne of Queen Victoria. According to the opinion of M. Louis Blanc, she has never been other than the head of a Republic; and respected and beloved as she is by a vast majority of the nation, her throne may be deemed secure, in spite of any political storms which may rage around it. Should she have a successor of a different character, the monarchy, if we may be allowed so to call it, would indeed be in danger.

Economist.

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On Democracy and the best Means of Obviating its Defects.

In a preceding article the nature and fate of Republics in past ages have been considered, and it has

been shewn that they differed in their kind from the Democratic Governments which might be expected to arise at the present time should the prophecy of De Tocqueville be realized. In the present article an attempt will be made to discover and elucidate the best means of what De Tocqueville calls taming the Democracy, so as to obviate some of its evils and dangers while preserving all that is good in it.

Now what are the advantages and what the evils of Democracy? It is with the cure or mitigation of the latter that we have to deal. The advantages are:—

1st. That it is popular. By the supposition it satisfies or at least pleases the greater number, and is calculated to excite feelings of the most devoted patriotism.

2nd. It is honest; being the image of the majority, it necessarily strives to carry into effect the wishes and feelings of this majority. A monarch or an aristocracy may knowingly injure the nation over which they rule. A democracy can have no motives hostile to itself.

3rd. It is overwhelmingly powerful, but that may be regarded as a good or an evil, according to the good or evil tendency of its actions.

There can be no doubt but that the most obvious and best means of taming Democracy is education. An ignorant population, incapable of forming a correct idea of what legislation can effect for it, will infallibly expect too much. They will attribute every evil they may experience to the crimes and errors of the ruling authority, and will be ready six months hence to break to pieces the idol they now worship. Communistic views carried to their extremest point will have especial charms for them, and even repeated failures in the

attempt to realise a perfect equality will hardly remove their errors. But what are the special evils of Democracy which we are called upon to cure or mitigate?

1st. Ignorance—an inability to comprehend political or moral truths. Hence the liability of being led astray by the arts of the demagogue.

2nd. Fickleness and impulsiveness.

3rd. Envious dislike and jealousy of all superiorities.

4th. A strong tendency to oppress all minorities.

In the United States the advantage, or rather necessity of education, in this point of view, is almost universally felt. Great and expensive efforts are used for its promotion, and the result is that the population, with less perhaps of book learning than that of Prussia or Holland, for all political purposes, may be regarded as the best educated of any that has hitherto existed upon earth. Now what is the result? That this educated population acts wisely; that it usually selects for its agents the persons most fitted by wisdom and virtue to fill offices of trust; that its judgment upon public measures are such as to approve themselves to the wise and good?

Alas! the result is far otherwise. The best men, finding they have no chance of gaining popular favour, usually withdraw from politics, and leave the field open to a lower class of adventurers, with fewer scruples and more subserviency, ready at any moment to make sacrifices of principle in order to sail with the prevailing wind.

A nation instructed up to the point permitted by the requisite attention to the active business of life ought to be well aware that it contains in its ranks a class of men

who, having made the matter of legislation their especial study, are eminently fitted to form the governing Assembly, and to fill the chief offices of state, and would select such for the public service. It may, however, be safely asserted that no nation has ever yet reached this acme of civilization and refinement. Few men attempt to dictate to their physicians or lawyers their prescriptions or declarations, but most men, especially those worst informed, consider themselves fully able to direct the schemes and measures of ministers and generals, as we found to our cost during the Russian war.

The maxim that it is desirable to sell dear and buy cheap would seem so undeniable, that a very low rate of instruction would induce a nation to apply to public affairs that principle upon which each individual acts in his private transactions, yet no democratic community has yet been found which could be induced to adopt it steadily in its legislative action. It would seem then, on the whole, that although education may do much in facilitating the processes of Government, and in removing or diminishing some of the dangers attendant on democratic rule, it cannot be relied upon for obviating all risk of miscarriage. But if education alone be unlikely to lead to the best form of government, can nothing else be suggested with a view to control the democratic despot? Is there no hope? We think there is—the dividing and fractionising of power and carefully avoiding centralization and bureaucracy. In propounding this scheme we need not depend upon mere theory. We have a living example before us, viz., that of the United States. There the division of power is carried further than in any country which ever

existed upon earth. First, there is the General Government, with the President, Senate, and House of Representatives, each possessing distinct attributes and powers. Then come the State Governments, usually formed upon the same plan as that which has its seat at Washington. Afterwards, we have the Towns and Cities and Counties, each entitled to legislate and administer within its separate sphere of action. In a descending series, we finally reach the township—the monad of American polity, which grows up as it were spontaneously wherever man occupies and cultivates the desert.

But even the above sketch fails to give a correct idea of the way in which power is fractionized in the United States, for outside of the purely political machinery there exists an infinity of corporations, religious, commercial, and various, which possess great influence on the course of political events. The advantages of the state of things thus pourtrayed are many and enormous. We can only point out a few of them, and as the first and greatest the extent to which protection is afforded to minorities and the democratic despot hampered and controlled. His fiats cannot at once be carried out. Dissentients are able to struggle and oppose long enough at any rate to give time for reflection and perhaps for a change of opinion.

Then comes the opening of an enormous field for the gratification of private ambition, the love of power or distinction, and also for that form of individual education which fits a man for leading and ruling other men. In an ordinary despotism, either monarchial or democratic, there is only room for a few superiorities in the

shape of a Monarch or President, Ministers, etc. In the United States there is room for thousands whose ambition is thus gratified, and who learn more or less the most difficult perhaps of all arts, that of government. Nor can it be said that a political system, in which an infinity of separate parts, each possessing certain attributes, find a place, is a source of inconvenient weakness. A complete negative to this notion is to be found in the history of the late war. Surely since man first met man in a battle-field never was there exhibited more political power, more patriotism and courage, more spirit of self-sacrifice, than was displayed in this bloody conflict.

There exists at present a tendency in the United States, as might be expected under the circumstances, to exalt the central authority at the expense of those beneath it. Let us hope that the good sense of the people will counteract this tendency. Should it be carried to its utmost limit, and America become another France, it is highly probable that as there the Democracy would soon be represented by a single despot, and that freedom would be sacrificed on the altars of peace and security. And here it may be remarked that the peculiar form of government existing in America arose naturally from the circumstances in which it had been placed under British rule. The founders of the Republic were good and wise men, but their form of action was in great part forced upon them by natural causes.

We have now nearly reached the end of our task, that of pointing out how the object of taming the Democracy can best be attained. The only means at our

disposal are education and the fractionising power. Of these, probably, the latter is the most difficult.

Begin at the bottom of the scale and intrust to each section of the community, in an ascending series, as much authority as it can properly exercise; so that when we reach the summit of the pyramid little will be left for the crowning authority to do. Such should be the general idea. The ingenious scheme of Mr. Hare, admirable as an illustration of a principle, can hardly be considered practical or at all likely to be adopted. That a majority would ever be induced to give up the supreme and sole power when once in its hands is more than can be expected from human nature. Mr. Bright thinks it an abuse that a minority at Birmingham should have any power at all, and his mind and feelings are a living image of Democracy.

If we turn our eyes from America to Europe, and thence to the rising communities in Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, the object of wise politicians should be firstly to educate; secondly, to struggle to the utmost against all centralising tendencies, and to create institutions in which minorities may find a place, and be able to make themselves heard and felt. A highly centralised Government must be a despotism, whatever else it may be called.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that America is not the only country which has exhibited the good effects of fractionising power. Holland, or, to speak more correctly, the United Provinces, afford perhaps a still more striking example. Under the old Dutch Republic, political power was divided into minute portions under a system so complicated as to be

all but unintelligible to a foreigner. Now, few countries have been better governed, or have exhibited a higher development of wealth, power, intellect, and knowledge, than the fatherland of William the Silent, of Olden Barneveld, of Grotius, of Rembrandt, of De Ruyter, and of William the Third.

What precedes is of course only a sketch, which would require a volume for its complete development. At any rate it is honest, and the result of much reflection.

ECONOMIST.

December 26th, 1868.

ON THE EFFECT OF POOR LAWS UPON AGRICULTURAL WAGES.

A great deal has been said and written, and that for a long time past, upon the rate of agricultural wages, —its sufficiency or insufficiency. Upon one point only both speakers and writers appear generally to agree. Almost all think that the work of labourers in husbandry in a large part of England is worse paid than the benevolent would wish, and that an increase in their earnings is greatly to be desired. In the progress of the discussions on this most important subject, great difficulties have been experienced in arriving at a correct knowledge as to what these earnings really are. At any rate this much is certain, that they cannot be ascertained by taking alone the sum paid weekly at

ordinary times and seasons for the most simple labour. In order to arrive at a satisfactory result, we must also learn what is paid during harvest, or for piece-work, or in the shape of potato ground; what is given in beer or cider; to what extent the wife and children are employed, and what they receive either when working on the land, or in some form of domestic manufacture. The ordinary rent of cottages and of allotments, both often let at below a paying rent, and thus forming an addition to wages, will also have to be taken into account.

Some persons, among whom that excellent gentleman, Canon Girdlestone, occupies a conspicuous place, have allowed their zeal to out-run their discretion, and have made the low rate of agricultural wages a matter of bitter reproach against other classes engaged in the business of agriculture. A feeling of hostility is thus displayed and excited, calculated rather to delay than hasten a beneficial result upon which the well-being of so many of our countrymen depends, and the speedy attainment of which must appear so desirable to every rightly-constituted mind. These gentlemen appear to forget that wages are the result of a bargain in which one party strives to gain as much and the other to give as little as he can, and which in principle hardly differs from the mode in which the price of corn or of cattle is fixed every market day.

They forget, too, that there is a natural rate of wages, viz., that rate at which the labourer will consent to marry and rear up a fresh class of labourers to succeed him; and that agricultural wages can only rise if a different ratio can be established between the demand and supply of labour, between the number of

labourers wanting employment, and the quantity of land and of capital which is to furnish them with employment.

In one instance, indeed, Canon Girdlestone appears sensible of the truth, viz., where he promotes emigration from a poorly-paying district to one in which wages are higher. In this case, however, he ought to remember that whatever is gained by the emigrant is to a great degree obtained at the expense of the labourer previously settled, and thus exposed to be underbid by a foreign competitor.

It is a very remarkable circumstance that in estimating the pecuniary condition of the agricultural labourer, the effect of the Poor Laws has, so far as the writer can discover, been thoroughly neglected and left altogether out of view. Yet it is perfectly certain that his ordinary wages, taking into view his whole life, are perceptibly, and indeed considerably, augmented from this source. The poor rates relieve him from certain charges which would otherwise necessarily fall upon him. Let us take the case of a typical agricultural household, containing a man, his wife, and four children, and the practice of a district where the writer resides—this district being rich, and by no means heavily pauperised.

The labourer, in case of serious illness in his family, may count first upon gratuitous medical attendance, medicine, and certain food specially recommended by the medical officer, such as mutton, wine, and brandy. If the labourer himself be the invalid he will also receive a weekly allowance of bread and money. This is his position in youth and middle age; but when he

becomes old and infirm he may expect to fall into the category of a regular out-door pauper, and will probably obtain a weekly allowance of 2*s* and a loaf, with a similar allowance for his wife, should she also be infirm, and also what is called a medical ticket, which commands the attendance of the medical officer, without any special direction from the Board of Guardians for both. In certain cases the services of a nurse are also paid for. The workhouse is of course always open to the aged labourer, and within its walls he is supplied with lodging, clothing, and a dietary, such as he never enjoyed in his days of health.

It might not be impossible to estimate with an approach to correctness the pecuniary value of the addition thus made from the poor rates to the ordinary income of the labourer. At any rate it must be considerable; quite enough, if fairly estimated, to add perceptibly to his ordinary wages. It must also be recollected that he is almost relieved in many cases, not merely from the charge of finding the means of support for himself and his immediate household, but from a species of charge which naturally accrues in countries where Poor Laws do not exist, viz., that of relieving infirm relatives, such as parents, brothers, or sisters.

After what precedes, the reader will perhaps be as much astounded as the writer at the extent to which benefit societies exist in the agricultural districts of England. Their bad condition and frequent insolvency may perhaps be traced in a great degree to the Poor Laws, but that they exist at all is a fact which reflects the highest credit on the labouring class.

Up to this point we have been employed in considering the addition made from the rates to the ordinary earnings of the labourer, but we must now look at their effect in another point of view—that is, the extent to which they depress the natural rate of wages.

Supposing the natural price of labour, in other words, the normal condition of the labourer, his wants, tastes, and habits, not to be lower without poor-rates than with them, it is perfectly clear that the rate of wages would be higher did these laws not exist. In such a state of things the labourer would be exposed to all the expenses that now fall upon him, and to many besides now paid out of the rates. He would have to keep himself without the refuge of the workhouse if work was slack; to provide against sickness; to make provision for old age, and to have a little over in order to help connections and friends worse off than himself. Some help from the benevolence of the rich he would certainly receive in case of extreme need, but upon this he would hardly reckon as a secure and certain source of succour.

It is probable indeed that the help of Poor Laws is over-discounted by the working class, and that without them wages would be greater by the whole amount they now furnish, and something more. The existing state of things tells with special severity upon single men, upon those with few children, and upon the best of the class, who, by superior industry and thrift, are enabled to provide for their households without the aid of the Union. The earnings of such men are, without doubt, diminished by the competition of the paupers, who can afford to underwork them.

If this be so, we may well think that the writers and speakers who are always exclaiming against the Boards of Guardians, and who clamour for higher and more relief in favour of those whom they call the poor, are deeply injuring the whole class of labourers, and that the rate of wages, other things being equal, must fall with any large increase in the area and scale of relief.

Some persons, indeed, of whom the late Mr. M. T. Sadler may be taken as a specimen, have maintained that large out-door relief had a tendency to raise wages, inasmuch as labourers who were refused what they considered reasonable wages would throw themselves on the rates.

It may be answered that if such persons were relieved without a severe self-acting test, or, in other words, if their applications were not refused, we should have to support a large portion of the population from the rates, and a species of communism would be created fatal to the industry and morality of the country. Much more might be said on this point, but it would carry us too far.

It may here be asked, if what precedes be the ultimate view of the writer, does he not think Poor Laws a pernicious institution which ought to be abolished?

His reply is that, firstly, he considers their abolition impossible. They are so thoroughly rooted in the habits and feelings of the nation that they could not be abolished without a social war; secondly, that they may be safely maintained upon the principle contained in the Act of 1832, viz. the placing the pauper in a worse condition in his own opinion, and that of

others, than the independent labourer, without creating an unmanageable amount of pauperism, while yet affording the assurance that, unless from accident, nobody shall suffer the extremity of want. He must, however, remark that recent changes in the law itself, in the spirit of its administration, and in the way in which it is commonly regarded, have greatly tended to foster pauperism and to discourage industry, honesty, and thrift.

On the Irish Church Question.

Spring of 1869.

The rule that those who serve the Altar must live by the Altar, may be considered to be one of the widest application. Unless the Clergy have private fortunes, or, unless like St. Paul, they obtain the means of subsistence from some subsidiary employment this rule must be universal. The object of the present paper will be to pass into review the several methods under which this rule is, or has been applied, and to point out that form of its application which seems most suitable to the condition of Ireland.

The most simple form is what exists in the United States, among the Dissenting bodies in the United Kingdom, and to a considerable extent in some of our Colonies, and which seems at any rate just and simple. Under this form the adherents of each particular sect pay their own clergyman.

It is probable, however, that in many cases the contributions of the Flock are aided by a gradual creation of endowments, and that this is a process likely to increase.

Another form for the maintenance of the Clergy is that of Endowment, to which customary payments for certain ministerial functions, usually in the aggregate but of small amount, are added.

Such was formerly the state of things in all Christian countries. It still exists as respects the Established Church in the United Kingdom; in Scandinavia, and it is believed in other Teutonic countries.

The third scheme treats the clergy as State functionaries, whose salaries are provided for in the national Budget, like those who hold civil or military appointments. It exists in those European countries wherein the Church property has been confiscated, such as France, a large portion of Germany, and will hereafter exist in Italy, and in the Iberian peninsula.

Now the question arises which of these schemes is most suitable to Ireland? Mr. Gladstone and his supporters say the first. The writer is inclined to say the last.

It is hardly worth discussing the point as to whether the established Church in Ireland should be maintained as the sole religious corporation connected with the State. It has long been tried in the balance and found wanting, and may be pronounced to be perhaps the greatest insult, scandal, and abuse which now exists in any civilised country.

Let us look at what the condition of Ireland will be as respects the maintenance of the clergy, supposing the Gladstonian process to be fully carried out.

The 600,000 or 700,000 Episcopalians will of course be displeased at having their clergy hitherto supported by endowments, thrown for their support on the liberality of their congregations. They will feel further

aggrieved at the loss of their political position owing to the exclusion of their Bishops from the House of Lords, and from the feeling that they are called upon to make these sacrifices in deference of Romanist complaints.

The Presbyterians, also 600,000 or 700,000 in number, and by far the most active and energetic of the people of Ireland, although no lovers of Episcopacy, yet are inclined to take the side of Protestantism against Romanism, and would regret to see what they look upon as a triumph of the Pope and the Croppies. The abolition of the Regium Donum will be an additional grievance to them.

But what will the Catholics say and feel on the subject, and what will be their sentiments supposing the proposed scheme to be carried out?

The disestablishment taken alone will of course be a source of triumph, and they will rejoice over the abasement of a foe, but then their feeling of satisfaction will be a good deal dashed by the loss of the Grant to Maynooth, the maintenance of which establishment will be thrown upon them. The demands of the Catholic Clergy on their flocks will be heavier than at present by £30,000 per annum, and the peasants will lose in the Protestant clergyman a benevolent gentleman who has often assisted them in time of need.

On the whole there seems no reason to imagine that the Catholic population will be more loyal than at present. Their clergy, although not naturally disposed to regard with favour Republicanism, or Fenianism, or Repeal, or any other form, which Irish discontent may hereafter take, will be compelled in order to live, to

fall in with the humour of their flocks, and from Cardinal Cullen downwards to the parish priest will continue to talk sedition and semi-treason as heretofore.

This then will be the state of Ireland when Gladstonized. The Protestants of both denominations injured in their feelings and pockets. The Catholics also injured in their pockets with only a sentimental gain to set against the loss.

It must be allowed that, supposing the Episcopal church to be disestablished, there are only two courses open to us, we must pay the clergy of all denominations or none at all.

In what precedes, it has been endeavoured to shew that the latter would be in a high degree inexpedient. If this be so, we surely ought to adopt the alternative. But it may be said that such a course is impossible, that the English people would never consent to pay a Catholic clergy, and that the latter would never accept a subvention from the State.

To this we may reply that the English people, in deference to the opinion entertained by almost every statesman, who has considered Irish affairs from the time of Pitt downwards, may change its mind, especially if convinced that the leaving the Catholic clergy to the support of their flocks may be shewn to impose a charge on the Exchequer equal to a large increase in the Income Tax, involved in the necessary concomitant of wide-spread disaffection. At any rate, let the money for Catholic clergy be voted. Should they refuse to take it, about as unlikely an event as can well be imagined, we shall thus far at any rate have shewn our wish to do justice to Ireland, and the Presbyterians

will be able to accept the portions allotted to them with a good grace.

Should, after all, the proposed scheme be carried out in its entirety, the fact will afford something like a proof of what is so often alleged, that the Imperial Parliament is unable or unwilling to legislate wisely and justly for Ireland.

The National Defences.

Spring of 1869.

As respects the most important subject of this article, the opinion of the English public oscillates between two extremes. At one time we look over the Channel and are seized with a fever of apprehension. At another, we suffer from a cold fit of economy. We dread that we shall be ruined, because our public expenditure has increased by a million or two, and we make wild efforts at retrenchment.

In neither case do we coolly examine our position, and make up our mind as to the size and character of the Army and Navy, and the extent and nature of the fortifications required to place us in a condition of security. Upon this point, we are in a state of simple conjecture.

Now we are most of us agreed that England should be placed in a state of reasonable safety—and it is quite certain that she is well able to bear any outlay that may be required for the attainment of this object. A very short statement will suffice to satisfy the most hesitating upon this latter point.

The annual savings of the country have been estimated at 150 millions, and this, although the annual losses from insolvency, of which the greater part represent abortive speculations, expenditure in excess of income, in a word, deductions from Income before a balance is struck, were many years ago supposed to reach 50 millions. This being so, it seems not a little surprising that while the loss of many millions on abortive railroads, or Great Eastern steam ships, or in Foreign Loans, excites only a passing attention, the fate of ministries sometimes appears to depend upon the addition or diminution of 1*d.* in the pound in the Income Tax, which few people are conscious of in their annual outlay, or of a million more or less in the cost of our armaments.

It is probable that the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the time being is usually one of the most economical persons in the empire, and such are the necessities of his position, that his demands upon the public purse, may be regarded as probably the minimum required in the real interest of the country. In truth, he is far more likely to err on the side of frugality than on that of extravagance.

It must be amusing to be present at an interview between the Finance Minister and the Commander-in-Chief or First Lord, or Secretary of the Admiralty, during the preparations of the estimates for the ensuing year. The earnest declarations of the first-named Minister that accusations of extravagance against him are to be the favourite weapon of the Opposition during the next session of Parliament, and that the Army and Fleet must be reduced to the lowest limit. The

asseverations of the officials immediately responsible for our armaments, that the Army and Fleet have been already reduced so much as to expose the country to imminent risk in the event of a sudden war with France or America, the Powers from which alone we have to fear.

All the persons concerned in this interview are probably acting in what they believe the honest discharge of their duty, and would be unworthy servants of the State if they took a different course.

It need hardly be said that the public at large, even Parliament itself, has insufficient means of knowing on which side the truth lies, and the main object of this letter is to point out a mode of arriving at a more satisfactory conclusion than that which now exists with respect to the normal amount and character of our armaments. A reasonable suggestion is that a Royal Commission should be named, composed of a few of the most competent persons whom the country can furnish—soldiers, sailors, statesmen, including Mr. Bright, if he would accept the task, charged to consider and report upon the whole of this most important subject, and that thus the nation being no longer kept in the dark might be able to make up its mind with a full knowledge of facts, and after due deliberation.

The Commission would of course be required to enter at length into a detail of the dangers to which the country is exposed, of which we have a most inadequate idea. Some persons of course might fear that a published statement on the highest authority of our strength and weaknesses might be dangerous, as affording useful information to an enemy. In truth,

however, this apprehension is altogether misplaced. We may be sure that in the archives of the Minister of War in Paris are to be found the most exact details as to our defences of all kinds, and plans of attack suitable to every contingency.

That the recommendations of a Commission such as above sketched out would be identical with the aspirations of our most parsimonious politicians could hardly be expected, but it would at any rate enable us to judge what amount of preparation would place us in security, or what amount of saving would compensate a given amount of risk. And here it may be remarked that a sudden attack such as that of France upon Austria in 1859, or of Prussia upon Austria in 1866, is what we have most to fear. Give us time for preparation, say six months, and we could resist on our soil all Europe in arms, and deliver perhaps as hard blows as we received. Our risk would be confined to the first weeks or months, and would be intensified by an event such as the possible defeat of our home navy, which would lay the British Islands open to invasion by an army of 200,000 or 300,000 disciplined troops. Descents on England or Ireland, especially the latter, by smaller bodies, might be expected in any case.

And now a few words more on our existing Armaments, respecting which the English Public is apt to be led astray by vague ideas. Nothing need be said as to the troops stationed in India, with any reference to the English exchequer, inasmuch as India pays for them.

A certain number of Regiments, are, however, employed in our various foreign possessions and colonies,

other than mere fortresses, such as Gibraltar, Malta, &c., at our expense. These it is now proposed to recall, unless the colonists should be prepared to pay for them. Upon the justice or expediency of this scheme it is not proposed to enter on the present occasion; at any rate, however, it may be suggested that the existence of these troops is not without its advantages. In case of necessity they might be brought home in order to aid in the defence of the mother country, whereas, if recalled, in order simply to save the expense of their maintenance, they would be disbanded, and would cease to exist as soldiers.

Much has been said as to the inutility of maintaining cruisers in various parts of the world, or of building any unarmoured ships. These are matters upon which the writer is as ignorant as the angry critics who usually discuss them, and which would of course form a part of the subjects to be referred to the suggested commission. It may, however, here be remarked that, devoid of all protection from the State, our commercial marine would be exposed to piracy in many parts of the world, and, in the event of a war with a Great Power, would be swept off the ocean.

France and America are striving to increase and improve their unarmoured squadrons. This we are told would be a great mistake on our part. Let the public have the best means of judging which is in the right. The actual strength of the regular army now stationed in the British Islands does not perhaps exceed 70,000 men, and this force, after furnishing garrisons to the places which could not be left without troops, would hardly yield an army of 20,000 for the

field. To afford any sufficient means of resistance, recourse must be had to a Reserve, first in the shape of the Militia—then of the Volunteers. But neither are at present in a condition to face the trained soldiers of an invading foe.

The better organization of our Reserve would therefore be one of the most important objects to be submitted to the projected Commission. They would of course take into full consideration the projects of all our military reformers, of whom Sir Charles Trevelyan may be deemed the most prominent, and enable the Public to decide upon the propriety of abolishing Purchase, of raising officers from the ranks, of rewarding old soldiers by civil appointments, and of thus rendering military service more popular. Upon this matter the writer does not offer any decisive opinion. He may, however, venture to say that Purchase ought to be abolished as a public scandal, and that promotion from the ranks has never yet been found applicable unless in an army raised by conscription. In the United States, where the army resembles ours in the mode of enlistment, promotion from the ranks under ordinary circumstances is almost unknown.

Army reformers appear usually to forget one important consideration which ought always to be kept in mind, viz. That our troops in their actual state go through more hard work than any in the world, and that they have never met with their superiors on the field of battle. They are not the "Papalini," whom Napoleon used to ridicule.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that a nation ought to be regarded by the persons who compose it,

as having an individual existence, with its separate responsibility, its virtues and its vices, its privileges, duties and obligations. Now, among its duties and obligations the maintenance of adequate defensive means may be placed in the first rank. By neglecting it, the existing generation of Englishmen would not only incur the contempt of other nations, but bring upon their descendants a succession of evils, which might extend to distant generations.

History may furnish us with many examples of the disastrous consequences arising from neglect of the means of defence and of the military virtues. In the 15th century, Italy contained the best cultivated territories, inhabited by the richest and best educated population then to be found in Europe. In short, Italy possessed everything desirable, excepting the warlike qualities. In the year 1494, the invasion of Charles VIII. King of France took place. During the space of nearly half a century afterwards, Italy was overrun, ravaged and plundered by French, Swiss, Germans and Spaniards, and when confusion ceased and a new order of things was established, she found herself under the domination of foreigners, from which, after more than three centuries of oppression, she has only escaped in our times.

France and Germany.

Spring of 1869.

Let us first state the case as between them as it appears to a German.

Cardinal Richelieu was the first French statesman who saw the political advantages which France might

obtain by availing herself of the internal division of Germany. Although a Catholic himself, the minister of a Catholic Sovereign who had crushed the Protestants in his own country, Richelieu had no scruples in assisting those of Germany with the view of breaking up the power of the House of Austria.

The policy which he thus inaugurated has been steadily pursued by his successors. During less than 250 years Germany has been invaded, ravaged, and plundered by the French, five or six times over. By the Peace of Westphalia, they obtained Alsace; Strasbourg was seized—one may say stolen, during peace. The war for the succession of Poland gave them Lorraine in its final result. The wars of the Revolution added the Rhenish Provinces, happily but for a few years. Napoleon I. seized all the territories which contain the lower courses and mouths of the great German rivers emptying themselves into the North Sea—the Rhine, the Ems, the Weser, and the Elbe. The old Hanseatic cities, Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubec, became French. Dantzic and Berlin were occupied by French garrisons. A French Vice-royalty, with Jerome Bonaparte at its head, under the title of King, was created in Westphalia, with Cassel for its capital. An outlying part of France, called the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, was established in Poland, with the effect, perhaps with the intention, of taking Germany in the rear. For many years large French armies were quartered on Germany and maintained at its expense. From Prussia, reduced by the Peace of Tilsit to a population of five millions, in the course of six years more than fifty millions sterling was exacted in money

and kind; while multitudes of Germans were forced into the Imperial armies to fight for a cause which was not theirs.

At length came the events of 1812. The destruction of the mighty host which invaded Russia, and which contained Germans in a large proportion, took off the immediate pressure from the German people. Hardly a family or an individual was to be found who had not some loss or grievance of which to complain. Prussia was the first to rise. From a poor and exhausted population of five millions, within a very short time an army of 200,000 men was raised. The other States of Germany showed a spirit of patriotism hardly inferior. A second French army almost equal to that which had perished in Russia was destroyed in 1813. In 1814, France was invaded by Northern and Central Europe, Paris captured, Napoleon dethroned, and France reduced to the limits belonging to her before the Revolution. The events of 1815 were an episode which hardly affected the condition of things.

Such is the simple statement of the case Germany *v.* France in its first aspect. It must surely appear to an impartial thinker that in the events above narrated there is nothing of which the French can fairly complain. Indeed, they may well be satisfied that on the day of their misfortune no attempt was made to recover for Germany the Provinces torn from her in the preceding two centuries. She was left as Louis XIV. and Louis XV. had made her. A vanquished country had perhaps never before been treated with so much leniency.

Yet of the treaties of 1814 and 1815 the French have never ceased to complain. The present Emperor

is always talking of the justice and expediency of tearing them to pieces, and seems to consider the present condition of Germany as an especial grievance, and that he has a sort of vested interest in its division and consequent weakness.

Indeed he has done what he could to prevent the union of its several parts. He fully expected, and had indeed planned, to pick up a portion of the Rhenish provinces as a result of the recent war. He might have stopped the war by a timely remonstrance, but he permitted it to proceed with a purely selfish object which luckily failed.

Since the conclusion of peace between Prussia and Austria, and the formation of the North German Confederation, we have had the attempt to obtain Luxembourg; then came the project for a Custom-House union with Holland and Belgium, and the persistent attempts to obtain an alliance with Italy and Austria; since then the hint at a Congress, which should proclaim the nullity of the treaties of 1814 and 1815 and should place the line of the Maine and consequent division between Northern and Southern Germany under the guarantee of the Great Powers, making it a portion of the public law of Europe. Later still came the dispute with Belgium as to the Arlon line and its transfer to the Eastern Railway of France. Finally, we have an army raised to 1,200,000 men, which can have no other object than foreign conquest.

A claim is often made by Frenchmen for a cession of all the territories on the left bank of the Rhine down to the sea, as included in what they call the natural boundaries of France. This claim the Germans

strenuously reject—laugh at the natural boundaries, irrespective of tongue, usage, and treaties, and think that the Vosges and the Ardennes form an existing boundary at least equally natural.

We have now sufficiently explained the case Germany *v.* France. Let us now see what is the case of France *v.* Germany. Surely this is of the most feeble kind.

It is hardly worth while to mention the invasion of Champagne in 1792.

The two invasions of France in 1814 and 1815 were simply retaliatory. Germany merely took part in them as a portion of Europe, and surely no conquered country was ever better treated than France was on this occasion.

But now comes the real grievance, that Germany with a view simply to preserve her independence, has made a great sacrifice of provincial interests and feelings, and has striven to consolidate herself. She threatens nobody, and least of all France, which is by far the most powerful state in Europe, and able on her own soil to resist the efforts of the whole Continent. Yet, although having given no provocation, she is threatened by a host larger than that of Xerxes, and is compelled to remain fully armed at an enormous sacrifice, in order to resist the tiger should he at any moment determine to spring. Her attitude is purely defensive. On which side should the sympathy of England be cast? Surely on that of Germany. Let us suppose a case, as nearly like hers as can be imagined, with due reference to interferent circumstances. Imagine that the British islands had been

overrun, and a peace concluded on the terms that 200,000 French soldiers should be quartered on and maintained by them. That London, Portsmouth, and Plymouth should be occupied by French garrisons, that 500 millions should be levied by contributions in six years; and, finally that Devonshire, Cornwall, Munster, and Connaught should be ceded to France. Let us imagine that then a patriotic effort, with the aid of allies, should expel the invaders and restore us to a normal condition. France might possibly think that the restoration of British freedom was a gross insult and grievance, and might ask with loud menace that her insular conquests should be restored to her; and if we largely increase our fleets and armies in order to be prepared to repel invasion, she might consider this precaution an increased injury. But what should we think? And in what would our case differ from that of Germany *v.* France at present? Can it be doubted that the cause of Germany is that of peace and liberty, indeed of humanity, and that it demands our warmest sympathies?

There is another point of view on which it is unnecessary to enlarge. That of our interest. The Rhenish provinces absorbed, Belgium must of course follow, and we shall see fertile territories inhabited by nearly 10 millions of rich and civilized people added to France, and this in defiance of every principle of European justice and policy. Now France is the only European country from which we have anything to fear. Should we not be bound to oppose her enormous aggrandizement by force of arms?

THE END.